

OAK STREET SCHOOL
HANDBOOK
2008-2009

Please take time to familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook—many school policies and procedures are covered in this section.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CHANGE OF ADDRESS / TELEPHONE

The school should be notified promptly of any address or telephone number changes, including cell phone numbers. In addition, please notify the Transportation Office at 541-9574.

SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE

8:45 a.m.	School opens and children enter the building (Supervision is provided at both entrances starting at 8:30 a.m.)
9:00 a.m.	Tardy bell rings / Instruction begins
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal

REPORTING CHILD ABSENCE

Please call 204-2565 ext. 350 by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent or late so that we have an accurate account of the whereabouts of all our students. For more details about sick child procedures, refer to Health Service Information on page 20.

CHANGE IN SCHOOL TIMES DUE TO WEATHER

The school district uses an automated phone notification system to notify each family of any time changes in the school day. For detailed information on school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissal, please refer to School Schedule Changes (Snow Days), page 26.

PARKING

The Henry Street parking lot adjacent to the office is designated as the parent and visitor parking lot during school hours. You may park in this lot between 9:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. if you need to drop off or pick up your child. Before 9:00 a.m. and after 2:45 p.m. visitors must park on Rankin Avenue or Henry Street.

Please use ONLY designated parking spots when parking in the Henry Street parking lot—the lot and driveway must be accessible to school buses and emergency vehicles at ALL times.

Please do NOT park in the Oak Street parking lot—it is ONLY for faculty and staff use. We ask that you park on nearby side streets if you are picking up your child from the Oak Street entrance.

VISITING SCHOOL

After 9:00 a.m. all building doors are locked. Visitors must use the Henry Street entrance located by the main office. For security reasons, a buzzer system is used to enter the building. After pushing the button, please state your name and reason for visiting Oak Street School and the secretaries will release the door lock. All visitors must sign in at the main office and obtain a visitor's badge.

CLASS TRIPS OR FIELD TRIPS

When a school trip is planned, a form will be sent home for the parent to sign. This trip

form must be returned before a child may go on the trip with the class. A parent may not take another child home after a trip without a note from the other child's parent.

CLASSROOM PARTIES

Classroom parties may be held as follows unless otherwise approved by the Principal: Halloween, December Holidays, Valentine's Day, and End of the Year.

Due to the high number of students with various food allergies as well as the state and national nutrition policies, distribution of "Goody Bags" that contain food items are prohibited.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

Parents who bring lunches, backpacks, instruments, etc. are asked to bring the items to the office. Children will be permitted to pick up items at their teacher's convenience or on the way to lunch, to avoid disrupting lessons.

Parents and students are not allowed to return after school hours to pick up forgotten textbooks or homework materials. This is to ensure the safety of our students and to keep confidential student records secure. It is also hoped that this will foster increased responsibility.

LOST AND FOUND

Children should inquire at the office about possessions lost at school. A lost-and-found bin for lunchboxes and clothing is maintained outside the gym. Parents may find it advisable to check the lost-and-found themselves from time to time. Parents are urged to label lunchboxes, clothing and boots so they may be easily identified. Indicate the child's name along with the grade and teacher's initial (for example, 4-R).

DRESS CODE GUIDELINES

Dress your child appropriately for the school environment. Casual, neat, and modest clothing is acceptable. Suitable footwear is necessary to ensure your child's safety on the playground equipment. Since the children go outside for recess except during severe or inclement weather, be sure their clothing is suitable for the weather conditions. During the cold weather months, children are encouraged to wear hats, gloves, scarves, coats, and, if needed, boots.

On the days your child has physical education, he or she should wear sneakers and appropriate clothing. The following attire is not permitted in school:

- T-shirts with offensive wording;
- Midriff tops (tops that expose the belly and back);
- Flip-flops (thongs);
- Skirts/shorts above the mid/thigh;
- Low-cut jeans and pants that expose the belly/back and/or undergarments during normal school activity such as walking, jumping, sitting, playing, etc.

Students are not permitted to wear hats and baseball caps inside the school. These items

can be worn during outside recess periods.

TOYS

Teachers design many important and engaging learning activities for their students. In the interest of maintaining a harmonious, productive and positive learning environment, children are not to bring toys to school from home. The only exception is if the teacher has specifically asked the children to do so because it relates to an instructional activity. Handheld video games and other electronic devices are prohibited in school, on the playground, and on the bus.

SPECIAL SERVICES

In accordance with N.J.A.C.6A:14, the Bernard's Township Public School District provides a free, appropriate education to all students with disabilities ages three through 21 who reside within the school district. Students who may be disabled due to physical, sensory, emotional, communication, cognitive or social difficulties are to be evaluated by the district and educated with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate. No handicapped person shall, on the basis of the handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to, discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from Federal assistance. Parents who suspect that their child has a disabling condition should call Monica Butler, Director of Special Services and Public Law 504 Coordinator, at (908) 204-2600, extension 121.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Bernard's Township Board of Education affirms its responsibility to ensure all students in the public schools of Bernard's Township equal educational opportunity and all employees' equal employment opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin, and social or economic status. Any person who believes that there has been a violation of the Board policy governing affirmative action may file a complaint with Affirmative Action Officer Regina Rudolph at (908) 204-2600 extension 102. To review all policies and procedures of the Board of Education, please visit the district website at www.bernardsboe.com.

LUNCH PROGRAM

LUNCH PERIODS

Time	Lunch Recess
11:00– 11:25 Kindergarten	First Grade
11:25—11:50 First Grade	Kindergarten
11:55—12:20 Fifth Grade	Grade Two
12:20—12:45 Grade Two	Fifth Grade
12:50—1:15 Fourth Grade	Third Grade
1:15—1:40 Third Grade	Fourth Grade

On abbreviated schedule or early dismissal days, no lunch is served in the cafeteria and all students are dismissed at 1:00 p.m. On abbreviated schedule days, teachers will notify you if children will be eating lunch in the classroom.

LUNCH BAGS AND BOXES

Lunch bags and boxes should be clearly marked with your child's name, as well as grade and teacher's initial (for example, 3-N).

BUYING LUNCH—GRADES 1 THROUGH 5

Menus of the school lunches are sent home each month with the children. All lunch preparation is done on the school premises by our cafeteria staff. Currently, lunch costs are:

Lunch (with milk or juice)	\$1.95	Bottled water	\$0.65
Milk or juice	\$0.45	Snapple	\$1.25

Oak Street School uses a computerized debit system in the cafeteria. Students identify themselves to the system using 3-digit identification numbers (the same one used for library checkouts); student photos are also used for security. Payments to your child's account may be made by completing a deposit slip, available in the main office or on the school website www.bernardsboe.com/Oak-Street. Checks should be made out to Bernard's Township Board of Education and placed with the deposit slip in an envelope marked "Lunch Program." Payments should be turned in when the teacher takes the morning lunch count in your child's classroom. Cash will still be accepted in the cafeteria, but use of the debit system is encouraged to keep the lunch lines moving quickly.

BUYING LUNCH—KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten students may bring lunch from home or buy it from the cafeteria. In order to ease the transition to kindergarten, those students buying lunch in September must do so for the entire month. Beginning in October, kindergartners can buy lunch when they choose following the procedure outlined above.

FOOD ALLERGY GUIDELINES

Due to the increasing number of students with food allergies, the following guidelines have been put in place at Oak Street School:

- Sharing of food is not allowed. This is the case in all classes— not just classes with food-allergic children.
- Distribution of "goody bags" (containing food items) during birthdays or holiday celebrations is strictly forbidden.
- Accommodations will be made for children with special needs related to eating in the classrooms.
- All students will bring their own snacks from home. The school will not supply snacks for students.
- Food will no longer be used in conjunction with any classroom reward system as per district, state, and national nutrition policies.

TRANSPORTATION

BUS TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES: K - 12

Buses use the Henry Street School parking lot to drop off and pick up children.

Students MAY NOT ride on buses other than those assigned or exit their assigned bus at different stops. The school district is legally responsible and accountable for the safe transportation of students. All students transported and all bus routes are on file with the Department of Education and our bus contractors. If students were to ride on buses other than those assigned, the Transportation Supervisor would have no way of verifying which students are riding on the buses.

Often police involvement is required when students do not get off at their assigned stops. Therefore, all students MUST be picked up at the same stop each day and discharged at the same location.

The only time a student may ride a different bus is in an emergency, illness or death in the family. In this case, the Transportation Office must be notified by telephone (541-9574) and in writing to be kept on file. If parents are going to be away (vacation or business trip), they must arrange for the caregiver to transport the student to and from their assigned bus stop, or directly to and from school.

BECAUSE THE SECURITY AND SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE, THE PREVIOUS RULES AND REGULATIONS MUST BE FOLLOWED WITHOUT EXCEPTION. We appreciate your support and cooperation in this vital matter.

PROCEDURES FOR WALKERS AND CAR RIDERS

Walkers

Students who walk to and from school accompanied by an adult or independently, including those whose parents park on nearby streets, are considered walkers. Independent Walkers are children whose parents have given the school written permission to walk home without adult supervision. An adult may or may not meet the child along their route home. Independent Walkers should NOT be meeting their parents on school grounds.

There are two areas where walkers can enter and exit the school: the Henry Street entrance and the Oak Street entrance. Dismissal at these entrances is conducted as follows:

- The Henry Street entrance is located at the end of the kindergarten wing. At dismissal, parent should park on side streets and pick up their children in rooms 14 and 17. Independent Walkers will be dismissed directly to the outside.
- The Oak Street entrance is located in the front of the building. At dismissal, parents should park on side streets and meet their children in the auditorium. Independent Walkers will be dismissed directly to the outside.

Car Riders

Students who are dropped off and picked up directly from their parents' vehicles at the Oak Street circular driveway are considered car riders. Due to the large number of cars in the loop, it is important to heed the directions of staff on duty, to move the cars in a safe and expeditious manner. Please do NOT get out of your car—staff members on duty will assist your child in entering or exiting the vehicle.

Please DO NOT park your car in the Oak Street parking lot or leave your vehicle unattended. This creates an unsafe situation for students.

BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS AND SCOOTERS

Students may ride their bicycles to school and use the bike racks at the Henry Street or Oak Street entrances. In the interest of safety, please require your child to wear a safety helmet when riding bikes, skateboards or scooters. Bicycles, skateboards and scooters are NOT to be ridden on school property—students must disembark and walk or carry their bicycles, skateboards or scooters to the bike racks. Since classroom space and storage is extremely limited, children will not be allowed to bring skateboards or scooters into the classroom. The school district is not responsible for stolen bikes, skateboards or scooters.

AFTER SCHOOL PLAY DATES / SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS

The school does not allow students to alter their usual dismissal plan for the purpose of play dates or other social engagements, even when parents provide such permission. This is prompted by our concern for the safety of each child, and will minimize confusion and upset at dismissal time.

Students participating in scout troops which regularly meet in the school after dismissal will walk to their assigned area at the end of the school day. The office requires the troop leader to submit a permission slip for each participating student.

We appreciate your cooperation and will accommodate any emergency. We believe that you will agree that the safe transportation of our students is of primary importance.

STUDENT PICK-UP/BUS CHANGES

If at any time pick-up arrangements change for your child, a note must either be delivered or faxed to the office. For your child's safety, telephone requests will not be honored. Please remember to include your child's last name on any notes written to the school.

EARLY PICK-UP

No one may take a child out of school unless designated by a parent. A note must be sent to school stating that the child will be picked up and by whom. Parents should use the Henry Street Parking lot before 2:45 p.m. Children are to be picked up at the office, not the classroom.

ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The Guidance Department of Oak Street School is designed to assist each student in his/her academic, social and personal development. Guidance is an integral part of the school program and is preventative, diagnostic and remedial in nature. The program provides services to students, faculty and parents with an emphasis on team effort. To be successful in helping our students, communication and collaboration are essential.

Meeting the ongoing needs of individual students is the primary focus of the counselor. Teachers will be given guidance passes in September. Any student may see the counselor by requesting a visit, receiving teacher permission and filling out a pass. If the counselor is not available, the student leaves the pass in the counselor's bag on her door. Every effort is made to see the student at the earliest opportunity.

Staff and parents may also refer students to guidance. Small groups may be seen during lunch time or another time to minimize interference with academic instruction. The counselor will meet with classes to conduct age appropriate lessons based on program modules. Activities with a specific focus may be conducted based on special needs. The counselor will meet with each class at the start of the school year to introduce herself and the counseling services. For more information, please call Mrs. Mary Pasquale at 204-2565 ext. 108.

HEALTH SERVICE INFORMATION

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Please call the nurse's office at 204-2565 ext. 350 by 9:00 a.m. if your child will be absent for the day. If the school nurse is not notified of the student's absence by 9:30 a.m., she will telephone your home or place of business to verify the child's absence. If she is unable to locate you, the police will be called to investigate. This is done to ensure the safety of all our students.

Students who have been absent from school are expected to bring a note of explanation from a parent or guardian. Children returning from a period of illness are expected to resume the normal schedule which includes outdoor play, gym, etc., therefore, they should be well enough to participate and be adequately dressed for the weather conditions. If the doctor does not believe the student is ready to resume a full program, special arrangements can be made with the principal or nurse.

EMERGENCY CARDS

Emergency cards are kept on all students and employees and it is most important that they be kept up-to-date. PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF ANY CHANGES. If no one will be available at your home phone number for an entire day, please tell your child whom you wish the school nurse to notify in case he/she is too ill to remain in school.

MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

If medication (prescription or non-prescription) is needed during the day, please send the pharmacy-labeled medication to the school nurse, WITH A MEDICATION FORM SIGNED BY YOU AND THE DOCTOR. Forms— *Request to Administer Medication* or

Request to Administer Medication - Life Threatening Allergies—can be obtained from the nurse or on the district website www.bernardsboe.com. The school nurse should be advised of any medication that is being taken at home by your child which may in any way affect his/her performance at school.

HEARING AND VISION

All students are screened for vision and hearing yearly. The results, if not within the accepted normal range, will be forwarded to the parent.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXCUSES

A recommendation from the doctor, stating the reason for the excuse and probable duration of the condition, will be necessary for an extended excuse from participation in physical education class. If the excuse is for a day or two, a note from the parent stating the reason for non-participation is to be sent to the school nurse.

ACADEMIC ATTENDANCE

Board of Education policy states: “The Board shall require, from the parent or guardian of each child who has been absent from school or class for any reason, a written statement of cause for such absence or tardiness. The Board, through the school administration, reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each absence of more than three days duration or repeated unexplained absences or tardiness.” Please note that “perfect attendance” certificates are not awarded.

ATTENDANCE CRITERIA

By definition, attendance is a pupil’s presence in school and in the classroom to which he or she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities. A pupil will be considered to have attended school for a full day if he or she has been present at least four (4) hours during the school day.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

By definition, an excused absence is a pupil’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The pupil’s illness.
2. A death or critical illness in the pupil’s immediate family.
3. Observation of the pupil’s religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education.
4. A reasonable number of routine medical or dental appointments.

No other reasons for student absences are deemed to be appropriate by the Board of Education; such absences are considered unexcused. Where extreme extenuating circumstances create the necessity for a student absence due to any other reason, a written request must be submitted at least one week in advance to the school principal.

Unexcused absences are not condoned by the Board of Education. All work or tests missed because of such absences become the student’s responsibility. In the elementary school, the responsibility will generally fall upon the parent. The parent will be expected to contact the teacher after the absence for any missed assignments.

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

It is understood that tests, academic competitions, and assignment deadlines may fall on religious holidays. In these situations, the Board of Education has a policy of providing students a reasonable accommodation, so that the academic activity will not interfere with their religious observance. This means that the teacher or the school will reschedule the test date for any student who is absent on the actual exam day due to a religious holiday. For academic competitions where students are eligible for awards, alternative arrangements will be made to allow students to take part in the competition. Similarly, when assignment due dates correspond with a religious holiday, teachers will provide an alternate date regarding such deadlines.

Teachers will make accommodations for students whose parents submit a written request regarding a religious holiday. Please note that all requests must be in writing.

ATTENDANCE - WRITTEN NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS

Parents will be notified when a student's absences become excessive.

1. When a student has been absent 11 days in any one school year, the principal or assistant principal will notify the student's parent or guardian in writing of the number and dates of absences and possible adverse academic consequences. A copy of the notice will be sent to the District Attendance Officer.
2. When a pupil has been absent 20 days in any one school year, the principal/assistance principal will send a written notice to the student's parent warning of possible adverse academic consequences and requiring a conference with the parents, student, principal and guidance counselor. A copy of the notice will be sent to the District Attendance Officer.
3. When a student has been absent 36 days or more in any one school year, the principal will notify the student's parent in writing that the pupil will be retained at his/her grade level. A copy of the notice will be set to the District Attendance Officer.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is necessary if children are to begin their instructional day prepared and with a positive attitude. Therefore, families of children who have 10 or more tardies will receive a letter from the office as a reminder of the importance of being on time. Children are to be in their classrooms and ready to begin the day by 9:00 a.m. Please note that children who arrive at school right at 9:00 a.m. cannot physically get to their classrooms on time.

ABSENCE AND AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Students who are out sick for the school day are NOT permitted to attend or participate in after-school activities, such as mini-units, intramurals, concerts, and PTO events, later that day.

DISCIPLINE

PROCEDURES

Teachers set down basic rules of behavior. These rules may include: follow directions, raise your hand before speaking, stay in your seat, keep hands, feet and objects to yourself and no foul language or teasing. Rules are enforced quickly and consistently. Disruptions will not be ignored. A warning of consequence will be given.

If warranted, a parent-teacher conference may be requested. If, after several warnings and parent contact, the student's behavior does not improve, it will be brought to the attention of the principal. In cases of severe disruption, the student is sent immediately to the principal. The principal and teacher(s) decide together on the course of action. Parents will be notified of serious misconduct and the consequences for this inappropriate behavior.

INTERVENTION OPTIONS

In cases where serious misconduct has occurred, one of the following options will be used by the principal.

- The student might meet with the principal to develop a plan for resolving the inappropriate behavior. This plan will be sent home for parent review and signature.
- During the school day, if warranted, a student might be removed from his/her program for serious misconduct, and placed on in-school suspension. Parents will be informed of this incident.
- If a student's actions warrant being assigned to a full day of in-school suspension, parents will be informed at least the day before the assigned suspension is scheduled to take place.

DISTRICT POLICY ON HARASSMENT, BULLYING & HAZING

The Board of Education believes that harassing, bullying and hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and the Board prohibits all such harassing, bullying and/or hazing behavior at any time on school premises, at any school sponsored function, or on any school bus. Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of harassment, bullying or hazing, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment, bullying or hazing, shall report the alleged acts immediately to the school principal, or Affirmative Action Officer Regina Rudolph at (908) 204-2600, extension 104, or Superintendent Valerie Goger at (908) 204-2600 extension 101.

PARENT CONCERNS

Parent inquiries for information related to a child's progress in school or to the school's operations and programs are always welcome. The procedure to follow in addressing any concerns is to first contact the child's teacher. Another resource for resolving issues,

depending on the nature of the concern, is the school guidance counselor who is available for consultation. If more information is required or if the matter does not appear to be resolved, the principal should then be called, but only after the parent has spoken to the teacher.

In instances where the parent wishes to discuss the problem beyond the level of the Oak Street School administration, he or she can contact the Superintendent of Schools. If necessary, the Superintendent may then refer the issue to the Board of Education for possible resolution.

HOMework GUIDELINES

These homework guidelines were developed by the Administrative Cabinet consisting of the district principals, assistant principals, curriculum supervisors and curriculum directors, with the input of teachers and parents of the Curriculum Committee.

Homework shall be assigned as reinforcement of class instruction. It shall be of quality and relevance to the subject matter, and further the student's comprehension. Assignments must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Homework should be tied to the curriculum and to a student's instructional level with consideration of the student's ability;
- Homework should have explicit directions and timelines;
- Homework should be designed to review materials and to reinforce skills and materials taught in class, to prepare for an upcoming class topic, to extend or generalize concepts or skills learned from familiar to new situations, and to offer opportunity for the student to integrate, extend or creatively apply skills already learned;
- Homework may not be used as a punitive measure;
- Homework should be reviewed in school to correct and reinforce appropriate learning.

A teacher typically assigns homework 3 to 5 days per week. Developmental, achievement, and ability differences among students all impact the actual time students may spend on assignments. Long-term tasks require additional time management skills. (See Board Policy #2330 for the Policy parameters that frame these guidelines.)

Kindergarten	Varied formal and informal assignments
Grade 1	10-15 minutes per day
Grade 2	15-30 minutes per day
Grade 3	20-40 minutes per day
Grade 4	30-50 minutes per day
Grade 5	40-60 minutes per day
Grades 6, 7, 8	20-30 minutes daily, per course
Grades 9, 10, 11, 12	30 minutes daily, per course

In addition to homework assigned in the elementary grades, parents are encouraged to read to their children on a regular basis and to foster student involvement in pleasure reading. In assigning homework, teachers will consider students' time commitments during days of religious observance.

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS DUE TO ABSENCE/ILLNESS

Every effort is made by staff to deal with absences due to illness. Only after a child has been absent for three or more days will school make-up work be provided. A parent may request this work by calling the school office. Do not request advance class work or homework preceding a vacation scheduled outside of the school calendar. Teachers are not able to provide such a service.

PLEASURE READING

The Bernards Township Board of Education strongly advises parents to encourage pleasure reading at home. Devoting 10-30 minutes to pleasure reading can help establish a lifelong habit and guarantee many hours of enjoyment.

Reading is critical to a student's success in school and the Language Arts curriculum seeks not only to develop strong reading skills, but also to foster a love of reading. While students encounter a broad variety of reading materials in school, any additional reading that occurs at home provides an extra bonus. Parents can help by nurturing pleasure reading in a variety of ways:

- Read aloud to their children;
- Read for their own enjoyment, illustrating the value of reading;
- Bring a variety of reading matter into the home: newspapers, magazines, hobby books, etc.;
- Make sure all family members have a Bernards Township Library card and visit the library and bookstores often, helping children with reading and book selections;
- Set aside family reading time by turning off the television and computers;
- Create a warm, supportive and interesting reading atmosphere.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE CHANGES (SNOW DAYS)

If there are changes in the schedule due to inclement weather, Oak Street School can be:

- **CLOSED** for the entire day;
- **DELAYED** for 2 hours, with school opening at 10:45 a.m. (instruction beginning at 11:00 a.m.); or
- **DISMISSED EARLY** at 1:00 p.m.

The district has an automated phone system, Honeywell Instant Alert for Schools, that is used to make phone and email notifications in the event of a change in the school schedule (as well as other critical news). Instructions for signing up and a link to the Honeywell alert system are available on the homepage of the district website, www.bernardsboe.com. PLEASE NOTE: Lunch will not be served on delayed opening or

early dismissal days.

OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES FOR SCHEDULE CHANGES

Please **DO NOT CALL** the Police Department or the schools. Leave your phone open to receive the district phone notification beginning at 6:00 a.m. You can obtain closing information from the following sources:

NEWS 12 NJ TV WABC Channel 7 TV

WOR 710 AM Radio NJ 101.5 FM Radio

You can also check online at the district web site www.bernardsboe.com or at www.cancellations.com.