

Memo to the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education: Proposed Recommendation & Changes for an Okemos Public Schools District Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026

The OPS instructional leadership team has created a district handbook for all K-12 students for two main reasons: increase alignment between schools and align language with new or updated Board of Education policies.

In addition, given the additional academic components at the high school, there is an accompanying Student/Parent Handbook for High School Academics. We feel it is beneficial for all families to have this information as they plan for their students' learning experience in the district.

The purchase of Thrun Board policies included a sample Student Handbook aligned with the associated policy. Some of that language was utilized in the creation of this handbook.

Additions/Changes

- **Academic Information (p. 6-11)**

- **NEW** - High School Academic Student Handbook (p.9): There are many academic areas that are specific to the high school only. Rather than list all of them in the District handbook, a supplement was created to clearly define programs and processes.
- **NEW** - Homeless Children and Youth (p.9): recommended by Thrun sample handbook and alignment with District policy.
- **NEW** - Placement (p.9): recommended by Thrun sample handbook and alignment with current practices.
- **NEW** - Rights Of Custodial And Non-Custodial Parents (p.10): recommended by Thrun sample handbook
- **NEW** - Universal Accommodations (p.10): Implemented in the 24-25 school year. Teacher & Administrator feedback contributed to slight revisions.
- **NEW** - Video and Film Viewing (p.11): Written to align with current practice.

- **Behavior Expectations (p.12-30)**

- **Thrun Policy Alignment** - This was the bulk of our work. The majority of this section is based on Thrun policy alignment and Thrun sample handbook language. From that point, the leadership team reviewed the recommendations against current handbook language and current practices to ensure consistency and alignment.
- **NEW** - Prohibited Conduct and Potential Consequence(s) Chart: One key area created was the Prohibited Conduct and Potential Consequence(s) chart. Past handbooks had the information provided in a narrative mode. We felt that the chart created clarity and included the associated Board Policy links. The chart includes all Prohibited Conduct that had previously been included in any of the handbooks.
- **Definitions** - Definitions were also a key area of this section. We wanted to be sure that parents and students understood the school language, such as PBIS (p.12) and Restorative Practices (p.22).

- **Behavior Response Language** - All of the language regarding suspensions, expulsions, and appeals comes directly from Board Policy and Thrun sample handbook language. The only exception is keeping the Okemos process for a disciplinary hearing (p.25). We felt that was important to stay in the section.
- **NEW** - An addition in this section was Educational Programming During Suspension or Expulsion (p.26), as recommended by Thrun sample handbook.
- **Building/District Information (p.31-39)**
 - **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
 - **NEW** - Early Release Procedures (p.32): Based on experiences throughout this year, added language to align with current practice.
 - **UPDATE** - Transportation (p.36): revision to the language for obtaining a bus pass so that the accurate process was represented
- **Health and Safety (p.40-46)**
 - **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
 - **NEW** - Asthma Inhalers and Epinephrine Auto-Injectors/Inhalers, to align with Board policy. Addition of form in Appendix C.
 - **NEW** - Sunscreen- To align with best practice, we need to obtain parental permission for student use of sunscreen. Working to add to our back to school forms via PowerSchool.
- **Home/School Connections (p.47-48)**
 - **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
- **Registration and Records (p.49-55)**
 - **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
 - **NEW** - Okemos Public Montessori at Central Elementary: Given the high interest in this choice program, if an OPM student plans an extended vacation beyond fifteen (15) consecutive school days, the district reserves the right to move the student to a traditional program upon their return. The student would then need to reapply to the Montessori program for the following school year.
- **Safety and Security (p.56-58)**
 - **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
 - **UPDATE** - Infectious Diseases p.41: information presented in a table format for ease of reference

- **Technology (p.59-70)**

- **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
- **UPDATE** - Artificial Intelligence (AI) p. 59: combined guidelines from each of the the levels/buildings for a single district approach to using AI tool for learning

- **Additional Resources (p.71-79)**

- **General Revisions** - Adjustments were made to this section to achieve common district language, a focus on code-of-conduct and procedural content, alignment with newly adopted board policies, and ease of usability and reference.
- **NEW** - *Self-Administration of Medication* form as provided by Thurn