

Memo to the Okemos Public Schools Board of Education: Proposed Changes to the Elementary Student and Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Deletions to language in the handbook are indicated using strikethrough. Updates and additions indicated in bold, italicized and underlined.

#1 Attendance (pg. 7)

Update - remove “Unless students are excused” to better reflect current communication practices related to absences.

If a child is too sick to attend school in the morning, it is necessary to call the school. If a child is absent and the school has not been notified, the secretary will call home to verify the absence. ~~Unless students are excused,~~ School personnel will bring excessive absences or tardiness to the parents'/guardians' attention. If the situation does not improve, involvement of the attendance officer, protective services, or loss of credit for the school year may be necessary.

#2 Recess (pg. 8)

Update - specify what extreme temperatures and guidelines will be used for recess.

Because fresh air and exercise have been proven to promote physical, social, emotional and educational growth of students, each school provides at least two outdoor recesses daily, weather permitting. It is very important that children wear appropriate clothes for outdoor- recess, including items such as: hats, coats, boots, snow pants and gloves or mittens. Please label all clothing with children's names.

Children should be in school only when they are well enough to go outside. A doctor's statement is required if a child is to be excused from recess.

In the cases of extreme weather, students will have indoor recess and will follow indoor arrival and dismissal procedures. Extreme cold temperature is considered 0° F or below (including wind chill) and extreme hot temperature will follow the MHSAA guidelines for outdoor activities.

#3 Cold/COVID-19 Influenza, Fever (pg. 13):

Update - Specify fever temperature per health guidance. Remove checking fever with hand.

A fever is a warning that all is not right with the body and is signaled by a body temperature of 100.4 degrees fahrenheit or higher. The best way to check for fever is with a thermometer. ~~If no thermometer is available, check the child's forehead with the back of the hand.~~

#4 HEAD LICE (pg. 14):

Update - Remove statement regarding students' return to school to better reflect Okemos' DEI approach.

Head lice can be transmitted where any group assembles regularly, especially among children whose hats and jackets hang close together. Itching or scratching may be a sign of lice, but sometimes there are no signs until you look closely. Please check your child's head frequently. Look around the ears and back of the neck. Be sure you have good light; stand near a window or use a lamp. Nits (lice eggs) look like little white spots hanging on a shaft of the hair. They are difficult to move or pull off the hair. Dandruff or scalp flakes move very easily. Nits do not.

If there are lice, notify the school and start treatment immediately. ~~A student may not return to class until your student has been determined to be nit and lice free.~~

#5 Early Release (pg. 27)

Update - remove information about early release as we no longer release at these times.

~~Early Release~~

~~The required professional development time for our teachers has been restructured into two-hour blocks. This restructuring time will allow our teachers to meet in “professional learning communities” to focus on improving teaching quality contributing to student learning. Lunch will be offered on early release days as will transportation.~~

~~The dates for 2023-24 are:~~

~~September 14, October 26, November 16, December 7, January TBD, February TBD, March TBD, April TBD, May TBD~~

~~The School Start and End Times for early release are:~~

~~Grades K-4 8:50 AM — 1:50 PM~~

~~Grades 5-6 8:45 AM — 1:35 PM~~

~~Grades 7-8 8:00 AM — 12:50 PM~~

~~Grades 9-12 7:45 AM — 12:35 PM~~

Additional Notes: The handbook was reviewed for gender-neutral language and corrections were made as necessary. Changes to personnel, medical forms, event dates, and grammar (without altering context) were also updated or removed.