

**Oxford High School  
STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK  
2017 – 2018**



**Dorothy Potter**  
Principal

**Robert Schumann**  
Assistant Principal

**Cathie Cortina**  
**Terry McCullough**  
**Michelle Miller**  
Administrative Assistants

**61 Quaker Farms Road**  
**Oxford, CT 06478**

**(203) 888 – 2468**  
**(203) 881 – 5250 fax**

**Website: [www.oxfordpublicschools.org](http://www.oxfordpublicschools.org)**

**OXFORD HIGH SCHOOL**  
Oxford, Connecticut

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year at Oxford High School. I strongly believe that a great education is the best gift you can give yourself, and I will work hard to help you reach your personal, academic, and social goals. This handbook represents the thoughtful work of your teachers, students and administrators.

Each student and parent should read through the handbook carefully because it contains important information regarding academic, behavioral, and extracurricular expectations for all students. All staff members, including teachers and administration, will work hard to apply these guidelines consistently throughout your educational career.

At Oxford High School we appreciate and value every member of our learning community as each member has something valuable to contribute to the achievement of your goals. The expectations outlined in this handbook should be clearly present in everyday interactions among your peers and the adults in every area of the school, as well as in our community. You are representatives of Oxford High School.

We have approximately 720 days together, freshman year to graduation, to move our students through rigorous curricular work and graduation requirements. We expect all students to challenge themselves and to choose courses from our Program of Studies. To accomplish this, we expect students to come to school each and every day prepared to learn. Attendance is crucial to academic success. If you are having difficulty achieving academic success, you must seek assistance immediately from any one of our teachers or support staff. Do not wait until the last minute. We want to help and support you, and your part in this process is to talk with an adult about your needs.

The 2017-2018 school year will be filled with success as we continue to move Oxford High School forward. Please use this handbook as a reference guide for important information, and make sure that you understand our expectations.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Potter

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## **CORE BELIEFS**

The Oxford High School core values are to support, inspire, and encourage all students to strive for academic success as they develop into productive members of society.

## **PREFACE**

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct which is intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Students and parents are responsible to keep current of changes in policy which affect portions of this handbook. Changes will be made available to students and parents through Oxford High School’s website, newsletters, and other communications.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources.

The Director of Pupil Services is the designated district compliance officer who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The OHS Assistant Principal is the designated compliance officer for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## **ADMISSION/PLACEMENT**

A student seeking enrollment in Oxford High School for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, out-of-state attendance, private school attendance or admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program should contact the principal. Students seeking enrollment to Oxford High School must meet residency policy requirements set forth by the Board of Education. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and review of his/her records. After such assessment and consultation with the parents, the principal will determine the grade placement of the child. Nonresidents may apply to attend Oxford High School on a tuition basis provided space is available. Nonresident students from other school districts within the state, (districts in the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and New London regions) who apply pursuant to Board of Education regulations, may enroll in particular programs or schools within the district on a space available basis, without payment of tuition, as part of the inter-district public school attendance program called Open Choice. The Regional Educational Service Centers will determine which school districts are close enough to make transportation feasible. A student who has attained the age of sixteen and who has voluntarily terminated enrollment in the district's schools and subsequently seeks admission may be denied readmission for up to ninety school days from the date of such termination. A student, nineteen years of age or older may be placed in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program if he/she cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one. Students who are classified as homeless under federal law and do not have a fixed residence will be admitted pursuant to federal law.

## **ADVERTISING**

The public schools maintain careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District-prescribed standards shall be met.

## **ASBESTOS**

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The District has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Request to review these plans may be made in the school office. There is no asbestos at Oxford High School.

## **ASSEMBLIES**

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the

student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in school is the primary responsibility of the students and their parents. Oxford High School has established an attendance policy for the following reasons:

- Regular attendance and satisfactory performance in the classroom go “hand-in-hand.” First, the sequential presentation of concepts requires a continuity of instruction. Second, even if all work missed is adequately completed; students lose a great deal by absences. The classroom is a cooperative learning experience; the exchange of ideas with peers, the oral defense of opinion, the discovery through laboratory exploration, the discussion of material not covered in the text and the presentation of films and lectures are all essential components. Since excessive absence and tardiness prevent a student from gaining the total content and the full benefit of a course, attendance is a significant factor in student achievement.

- One of the objectives of Oxford High School is to prepare students for the outside world. Success on the job and in college depends on good attendance.

- Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g. field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is suspended may not participate in activities, school functions, or other extracurricular activities from the time the student is informed of the suspension until the time the student has served the suspension **and** has attended one day of classes following the suspension.

## **Truancy**

A student age five to eighteen inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. Truancy will result in mandated reporting in addition to the possibility of disciplinary action. Tests and academic work missed in an unexcused class will be recorded as a zero. Students classified as truant will not participate in class field trips, extracurricular activities, or athletics.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. The Superintendent of Schools will file a written complaint with Superior Court Juvenile Matters if the parent fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the student's truancy problem.

## **Excused Absences**

A student's absence shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation; and
- B. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
  - a. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence);
  - b. Student's observance of a religious holiday;
  - c. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
  - d. Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
  - e. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
  - f. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with the Connecticut State Department of Education Guidance.

The administration will determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. The school does not consider all absences from class or school which have been explained by parents to be excused. Students who have been absent from school must ***provide documentation*** to explain the student's absence if it is to be considered excused; otherwise, it will be treated as unexcused.

Parents are requested to call the Main Office by 7:20 a.m. at 203-888-2468 to excuse their child from being absent or tardy to school.

Discretion should be used in planning family vacations; travel should only be scheduled during school vacation periods.

In case of illness while in school, the student must report to the health office. The nurse, with parental permission, will make the decision to dismiss the student from school.

Students are required to attend all classes. Students will not be excused from any class while they remain on campus. Therefore, written notes **will not** be accepted for classes missed during the middle of the day. Any student who needs to be dismissed early must bring proper notification from their parents to the Main Office by 7:20am when they arrive at school on the day for which it is being requested.



Any student who leaves school without permission will be subject to disciplinary action and the recording of an unexcused absence for each class missed. Students should not expect permission to go home for equipment, uniforms, projects, assignments, etc.

### **Unexcused Absences**

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence including documentation requirements; or
- B. Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action.

Students may not make up work missed due to unexcused absences.

**Class cuts** and repeated tardies will be addressed as disciplinary infractions according to the OHS Student Code of Conduct and will be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Tardiness**

Any student who arrives to a first period class after 7:20 a.m. will be considered late to school. Only when the school is responsible for a student's lateness (i.e., the school bus is late and all students on that bus arrive late) will tardiness be excused. Students more than 20 minutes late to class or miss more than 20 minutes of class unexcused are considered absent.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Oxford Board of Education holds regular business meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., typically at the Oxford High School media center. Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

Meetings of the Board follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement, not more than 5 minutes in length, or to express a viewpoint. In addition, if they give advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda for a more thorough discussion of the topic.

The Board's main purpose is policy setting designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public's opinion on district issues, which can assist them in formulating policy which reflects community values and expectations.

## **BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE**

As new technologies continue to change the world in which we live, they also provide many new and positive educational benefits for classroom instruction. To prepare students as 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers and learners, students and staff in the Oxford Public School District are now encouraged to bring their own technology to campus.

### **Guidelines for the Use of Personal Technology on Campus**

Technology has changed the way we approach education as we prepare our students for future opportunities. We understand the many positive educational benefits of using technology in the classroom and importance of the integration of technology in our curriculum. In an effort to encourage our students to develop their technology skills, students and staff in the Oxford Public Schools may use their own technology at school for educational purposes. However, if a student is unable or chooses not to use their personal device, the district will provide an alternative device in class.

### **Definition of Personal Technology**

For purposes of this policy, “personal technology” means a privately owned, wireless, and portable electronic hand-held equipment that includes, but is not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems and smart technologies, portable internet devices, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), hand held entertainment systems or portable information technology systems that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing, etc.

### **Use of Technology for Instructional Purposes**

Use of technology in school is a privilege which comes with great responsibility. Students and staff will only be allowed to use their personal electronic device(s) for educational purposes at school. Checking personal email, socializing via texts or instant messages, or otherwise engaging in personal pursuits is prohibited during the instructional time. A student may communicate with a parent or guardian in extenuating circumstances.

Students and staff are responsible for charging and maintaining their own devices. The school system is not responsible for providing “charging stations.”

### **Internet Access on School Grounds**

Only the internet gateway provided by the school may be accessed while on campus. Personal technology, including cell phones and cell network adapters are not permitted to be used to access outside internet sources at any time.

### **Compliance with Other Board Policies**

When participating in BYOD, students and staff must adhere to the Code of Conduct, as well as all Board policies, particularly the Oxford Public School District’s Acceptable Use Policy. This means that students and teachers who use their personal technology at school must abide by the established policies regarding acceptable use of the Internet, bullying, harassment, cheating, threats, student confidentiality and other misconduct that violates school rules or causes a disruption of educational activities.

### **Additional Guidelines**

- Teachers have the discretion to determine when students may use personal technology in the classroom. Students must immediately comply with their teachers' requests to shut down or put away personal technology.
- Staff may confiscate a personal device if the student does not comply with established rules, but must return said device at the end of the class.
- Teachers do not have the right to peruse personal student information on the device unless there is concern regarding the safety of the student or others in coordination with administration.
- All personal technology must be in silent mode.
- Students may not use personal technology during any assessments or tests unless otherwise directed by school personnel.
- Students shall not transmit, post, or otherwise publicly share photographs or videos that they have taken of any person on school grounds or in a school vehicle.

### **Security and Damages**

Responsibility to keep personal technology secure rests with the individual owner. The Oxford Public School District, including its staff or employees, is not liable for any device stolen or damaged on campus. If a device is stolen or damaged, it will be handled through the administrative office in a manner similar to the loss or damage of other personal property. It is recommended that students personalize their devices for easy identification and utilize protective cases.

The Oxford Public School District Technology Department will not service any non-district owned technology, which includes troubleshooting, software and/or hardware issues. Students and staff are responsible for securing their devices and making sure that they have up-to-date anti-virus software installed, if applicable.

### **Failure to Follow BYOD Guidelines**

Misuse of personal technology in violation of these guidelines may result in the loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use or possession of personal technology on school grounds, or other disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

## **BULLYING**

**Bullying behavior by any student is strictly prohibited.** Such conduct may result in notification to law enforcement along with disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion. "Bullying" means (1) the repeated use by one or more students of oral, written or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same district, or (2) a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property,
2. Places the student into reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
3. Creates a hostile environment at school for the student,
4. Infringes on the rights of the student at school, or
5. Substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall include but not be limited to, an oral, written or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or any other vehicle owned or leased or used by a local or regional Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional Board of Education.

Bullying is also prohibited outside of school setting if such bullying results in any of the following: (1) creates a hostile environment at school for the student at whom the bullying was directed, (2) infringes on the rights of the student whom the bullying was directed at school, or (3) substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may make verbal or written reports of suspected bullying behavior, and students are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying behavior to school employees. Reporting forms are available in the main office and online on the schools website. Any reports of bullying will be promptly reviewed by the school's Safe School Climate Specialist. When a student reports an act of bullying and wishes to remain anonymous, the Safe School Climate Specialist will meet with that student to discuss the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity may have on the investigation of the complaint and possible remedial action. If acts of bullying are verified, the school will take prompt corrective action that is reasonably calculated to stop the bullying and prevent any recurrence of such behavior.

## **CAFETERIA**

Rules of good manners, proper decorum, and cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Food and beverages can only be consumed in designated areas of the building.

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced price lunches are available based on financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from the main office.

Food and beverages offered for sale to students, whether in the cafeteria, school store, or vending machines will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. All sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur.

### **CHEATING/ PLAGIARISM**

All forms of cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable. The misrepresenting by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. In addition, submitting the same or portions of the same assignment, in different classes, without prior approval by the teacher, will be considered a misrepresentation of student work and therefore cheating. Allowing others to use one's work is considered cheating as well. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidences require disciplinary action.

**First Offense** – Student will receive a zero for the assignment. The teacher will contact the student's parent and with the student fill out the *Cheating/Plagiarism Incident Report* explaining the incident and then submit the form to administration. The administration will then meet with the student and complete the report which will be kept in the student's file. The administration will contact the student's parent and advise the parent of the consequences for further offenses. The student will have five days to appeal any charges of academic dishonesty.

**Second Offense** – The student will receive a zero for the assignment as well as one day of in-school suspension regardless of whether or not the first offense occurred in the same class. The teacher will contact the student's parent and with the student fill out the *Cheating/Plagiarism Incident Report* explaining the incident and then submit the form to the administration. The administration will then meet with the student and complete the report which will be kept in the student's file. The administration will contact the student's parent and advise the parent of the consequences for further offenses. The student will have five days to appeal any charges of academic dishonesty.

**Third Offense** - The teacher will submit the form that explains the offense to an administrator. The student will receive a zero for the assignment and discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The administrator will schedule a meeting with the student and his/her parents to explain the disciplinary action. The student will have five days to appeal any charges of academic dishonesty.

Cheating/plagiarism may result in loss of membership in student organizations as well as consideration as class valedictorian or salutatorian.

## **CHILD ABUSE/MANDATED REPORTER**

Teachers, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatments such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Completion of the OHS Student Handbook form by students and parents serves as the user agreement regarding the appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using district computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Uses of social networking websites such as Facebook are prohibited during school hours and may result in loss of computer privileges and other disciplinary action may be taken.

## **CONDUCT-STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Oxford Board of Education expects the highest standards of conduct from all of its students at all times, whether in school, out of school, or at a school sponsored activity. The District promotes an educational environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning, allowing students to pursue opportunities for growth and achieve their full potential. Students and staff have the right to expect mutual courtesy, respect, fair and equitable treatment, and to be informed of their respective rights and responsibilities. These expectations emphasize that proper student behavior is obligatory, and conduct incompatible with or disruptive to the education process is unacceptable.

Students who infringe on the rights of others, or who violate school policies and regulations, will be subject to corrective disciplinary action including, without limitation, removal from class, transfer to another class or school, suspension from school, and/or expulsion from school. The District is committed to upholding the use of mandatory expulsion proceedings when applicable under state law with respect to conduct committed on or off school grounds which has been identified by the legislature of the State of Connecticut as incompatible with the education process in our schools.

Whenever a disciplinary measure is employed, it shall be fair, reasonable, and consistent. No student shall be disciplined on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, and past/present history of mental disorder and/or disability.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, for conduct on or off school property, on school transportation, or at a school sponsored activity, that endangers persons or property, is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or that violates a publicized policy of the Oxford Board of Education. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, those behaviors found in the Code of Conduct.

- 1) Willfully striking a student, members of the school staff, or others;
- 2) Theft, attempted theft, and possession of stolen goods;
- 3) Use of obscene or profane language or gestures to a student or member of the school staff;
- 4) Commission of an act of discrimination or harassment toward any student or school staff member based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability;
- 5) Violation of smoking, dress, or transportation regulations;
- 6) Deliberate refusal to obey an order or directive from a member of the school staff, or disruptive classroom behavior;
- 7) Deliberate refusal by a student to identify himself/herself to a staff member when asked;
- 8) A walk-out from, or sit-in within a classroom or school building;
- 9) Blackmailing, threatening, or intimidating school staff or students;
- 10) Possession of any weapon, deadly weapon, pistol, knife, blackjack, bludgeon, metal knuckles, BB or pellet gun, explosive device, firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, whether functional or not, or any other dangerous object or facsimile or replica thereof;
- 11) Unauthorized entrance into any school building or aiding or abetting an unauthorized entrance;
- 12) Presence in unauthorized location in school building or on school grounds;
- 13) Possession or ignition of any fireworks or other explosive materials, or ignition of any material causing a fire;
- 14) Violation of the Oxford Network/Internet policy;
- 15) Unauthorized possession, sale, distribution, offering for sale or distribution, or consumption of a controlled substance, drug, narcotic, or alcoholic beverage.

Controlled substances, drugs, and narcotics may include but are not limited to amphetamine-type, barbiturate-type, cannabis-type, cocaine-type, hallucinogenic, morphine-type, and other stimulant and depressant drugs, and in addition those substances known as Methaqualone. Unauthorized use or possession of such substances shall mean use or possession without a valid prescription.

- 16) Possession of paraphernalia used or designed to be used in the consumption, sale or distribution of dangerous drugs or narcotics, as defined in sub-paragraph 14) above.
- 17) Willful destruction of real, personal, or school property, such as cutting, defacing or otherwise injuring property in any way;
- 18) Use of electronic devices (cell phone, i-pod, etc.) during school day;
- 19) Multiple school and class tardiness, class or study hall cutting, or failure to attend detention;
- 20) Trespassing on school grounds while on suspension or expulsion;
- 21) Falsely reporting an incident (such as a “bomb threat” or “tampering with a fire alarm”) to schools or to police;
- 22) Repeated and/or intentional defiance of school rules and the valid authority of teachers, supervisors, or administrators;
- 23) Repeated and/or intentional defiance of student transportation rules;
- 24) Leaving school without permission;
- 25) Impeding investigations/falsifying information;
- 26) Lying to avoid blame.
- 27) Any other violation of school rules or regulations or a series of violations which administration deems to be a disruption to the educational process.

Disciplinary responses to violation of the Student Code of Conduct include:

- Teacher intervention/detention
- Administrative intervention/detention
- 1-5 day in-school suspension
- 1-10 day out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion

School officials shall have the option to use their discretion when implementing disciplinary actions.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

- 1) Being respectful to fellow students, school employees, and school property;
- 2) Attending all classes as scheduled;
- 3) Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments;
- 4) Dressing appropriately for school and school functions (see dress code);
- 5) Having a signed pass when in the halls while classes are in session;
- 6) Behaving in a responsible manner;



- 7) Paying required fees and fines;
- 8) Representing Oxford when participating or attending school sponsored events with the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, and sportsmanship;
- 9) Abiding by the code/standard of conduct;
- 10) Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety;
- 11) Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels;
- 12) Cooperating with staff investigations or disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

### **Smoking**

Students shall not smoke, use or possess tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and/or paraphernalia (i.e., electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, etc.) on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law. Students violating this policy will be subject to a fine and/or summons as provided by law. The school will also take disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Substance Abuse**

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Any student in possession of or under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- 10 days out-of school suspension
- Exclusion from all co-curricular and extracurricular activities for the duration of the suspension
- Police notification
- Recommended expulsion

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. The student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

### **Dangerous Weapons and Instruments**

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as, appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found to possess a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be expelled from school.

### **Out of School Misconduct**

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of a publicized board policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Examples of off-school conduct that may result in such discipline include but are not limited to:

1. Sale, possession, use, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including marital arts weapons;
2. Use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs;
3. Violent conduct;
4. Making of a bomb threat;
5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff; where any such activity has the reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of school property, individuals thereon, and/or the educational process.

### **DISCIPLINE**

A student who violates the school's/district's code of conduct on or off school property shall be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive to the educational process and violates publicized school/board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

School administration will determine whether conduct is “seriously disruptive of the education process” for purposes of suspension or recommended expulsion. The Board of Education or impartial hearing board will conduct hearings in matters of expulsion.

**Detention**

A student may be detained outside of school hours for not more than three hours on one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. Student will be given 24-hour notice before being required to serve detention

**Suspension**

An Administrator may remove a student from all classes when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

However, no student shall be suspended without due process by an administrator designee through which the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension. Parent/Guardian will be notified by the administration of a student's suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

**Expulsion**

The administration may remove a student from all classes when the student deliberately causes a serious disruption to the teaching and learning process within the classroom.

The Board of Education or impartial hearing board may expel a student from school privileges if, after a full hearing, it finds that the student's conduct endangers person(s), property or the educational process or is in violation of a publicized Board policy. Students who have been expelled may be eligible for an alternative educational program.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extracurricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion.

In accordance with the policies mandated by the state of Connecticut, student possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances with the intent to sell as well as student possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity or off school grounds is cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education record. The

record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

For students, high school is not only a time of academic challenge, but a time of balancing the need for increased independence and autonomous decision making with a continued need for structure and support. As the final opportunity for students to prepare for post secondary experiences as responsible individuals, the student Code of Conduct for the maintenance of order on school property provides for individual discretion, while holding students responsible for their actions. To obtain this end, high school students must work cooperatively with all adults in the building and actively contribute to promoting mutual respect between all members of the high school community.

### **Persistently Dangerous Schools/Victim of Violent Crime**

Students enrolled in a school identified as “persistently dangerous” by the State Department of Education or a student who is the victim of a violent criminal offense, as defined by the State Department of Education, are entitled to transfer to a safe school elsewhere in the district with free transportation.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS**

Printed materials may be distributed to parents via students as a means of communications. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations, will be referred to the office of the superintendent to determine whether the request complies with school policy.

The principal or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.
2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity, or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.
4. Does not promote profit making organizations.
5. Does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Materials that have a religious content may be made available to students during non-instructional time. The District has the right to impose neutral time, place and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not endorsed or sponsored by the District.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by the principal. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspapers and yearbook.

## **DRESS CODE**

Oxford Public Schools encourage students to dress in a manner that demonstrates pride in themselves and in their school.

The school system *requires* that attire be safe, appropriate to the activity, and not distracting or disruptive of the educational program.

I. The following guidelines apply to all regular school activities:

1. Shoes appropriate for school activities must be worn at all times. Footwear standards are maintained for the prevention of accidents and injury. High-heeled shoes or sandal styles that make walking, running or other activities less safe for students should not be worn.
2. Clothing and jewelry must be safe and free of writing, pictures, or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, or sexually suggestive or which advocate violence, racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
3. No clothing, article of clothing, or manner of wearing clothes that is inappropriately revealing is permitted. Underwear should not be visible. Shoulders and midriff should be covered. Shorts and Skirts must be finger-tip length.
4. Clothing or jewelry which is distracting, or disruptive to the educational program, or which is gang-related, or which poses a threat to the physical well-being and safety of the student or others, shall *not* be worn on campus or at school activities.
5. Any clothing or lack of clothing, which may distract from the educational process, will not be permitted. Hats, halter tops, muscle shirts and other revealing types of clothing are not considered acceptable.

II. The administration and staff may establish additional dress and grooming regulations, when necessary, for regular school activities and/or for times when students are engaged in extra-curricular or other special school activities.

III. Coaches and teachers may find it necessary to impose more stringent dress requirements to accommodate the special needs of certain sports and/or classes.

IV. The Principal/designee may confiscate inappropriate attire and provide a suitable substitute if available, and/or phone home to inform parents that a change of attire must be provided before the student is permitted to return to scheduled classes.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

To achieve its mission, Oxford High School's learning experiences are designed to guarantee that every student achieves the following expectations:

- Think critically and inquisitively
  - Sustain processes of reflective inquiry and problem solving.
  - Listen, view and read with comprehension and purpose.
- Communicate effectively and creatively
  - Write clearly, imaginatively, cogently, and persuasively, in modes appropriate to the audience and point.
  - Speak confidently and effectively
  - Develop a personal creative voice and express ideas through a variety of media.
- Access, evaluate, and use information for a variety of tasks and purposes
  - Determine what is needed, identify and prioritize sources based on credibility and relevance
  - Use digital and print resources to access and retrieve information
  - Examine, evaluate and analyze ideas from multiple perspectives, audiences, and points of view
  - Evaluate information in terms of relevance, credibility and the social, economic, political, legal, and ethical issues that may impact it
  - Apply information to accomplish specified purpose.
- Master appropriate content and skills from a variety of disciplines
  - Build foundational understandings from a range of academic areas
  - Explore, retain, and interpret advanced concepts and knowledge in selected areas of interest
  - Demonstrate mastery of digital literacy in a variety of contexts.
- Make connections among and between critical concepts for learning
  - Make connections between one's own life experiences and those of others.
  - Identify and analyze patterns of meaning that occur within areas of study.

### **Civic and Social:**

- Demonstrate citizenship and social responsibility
  - Knowledge of foundational values of citizenship in a democracy.
  - Contribution to the community.
  - Understanding of interdependence, respect, and responsibility for others in and beyond the Oxford Community.
- Personal character and growth
  - Awareness of the importance of physical and emotional well being.
  - Respect for self and others.
  - Honesty and integrity.
  - Self awareness and purpose.

## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION**

In the event school is closed because of bad weather or another emergency, announcements will be made on radio stations STAR 99.9 FM, WICC, WEBE 108, WKCI FM, WELI AM, Channel 8, Channel 30, Channel 3. Emergency closings will also be posted on the districts website, <http://www.oxfordpublicschools.org> .

## **EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION**

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Bilingual Education, or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of a written request for such exemption from his/her parent or guardian.

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES – Students are required to be in attendance during the school day in order to participate in athletic or extra-curricular activities. Exceptions must be approved by administration.**

### **Athletics**

Athletics are considered an integral part of our school’s educational program. Whether participation is on the intramural, interscholastic, or class level, students have an opportunity to acquire qualities of fitness, self-discipline, and cooperation.

Student interscholastic activities shall be governed by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) regulations. Eligibility for participation is governed by state law as well as the regulation of the CIAC. Please refer to the OHS Athletic Handbook for more detailed information.

### **Clubs and Performing Groups**

Student clubs, performing groups, athletic teams and other extracurricular activities may establish rules of conduct for participants that may exceed the expectations for students in general.

### **Dances and Social Events**

School dances may be scheduled periodically during the school year. Only legally enrolled students of this school may attend dances unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the administration. Students are expected to dress appropriately for all dances. Students must be in attendance and considered present the day of a dance or social event.

Standards of dress, admission costs, and other pertinent instructions for a particular dance will be announced prior to the dance.

### **Student Publications**

The official student newspaper provides an instructional device in the teaching of writing and other journalistic skills. It also provides a forum for the opinion of students, school

staff and members of the community, as well as to serve the entire school by reporting school activities.

The newspaper advisor shall have the primary responsibility of reviewing each article prior to its publication. The school principal or his/her designated representative other than the newspaper advisor will have the final review and approval.

## **FACILITIES**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place.

After dismissal and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately.

## **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. A student is expected, however, to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, erasers, and notebooks. The student may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

1. Student Activity Fees (used for funding or subsidizing class activities, particularly in the planning stages.)
2. Security deposits.
3. The materials for a class project that the student will keep.
4. Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
5. Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, etc.
6. Student accident insurance.
7. Insurance on school-owned instruments, instrument rental and uniform maintenance.
8. Parking fees and student identification cards.
9. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment.
10. Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by the principal. Students may also be barred from attending field trips due to poor academic standing or attendance issues. While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that conduct and dress standards will be appropriate for the field trip activity.



## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a guidance counselor, advisor or administrator to request confidential help.

## **FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill may be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

When the alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

### **Graduation Requirements**

Students must successfully complete the required number of credits and must demonstrate proficiency in the skills identified by the board of education, as required for graduation. A multi-facet assessment procedure will be used, including specific target scores on the Connecticut Academic Performance Science Test and Smarter Balance assessments.

### **Grading Scale**

Students are graded on a numerical scale from 0-100.

### **Report Cards**

Student grades and absences will be available to parents and students via the Power School portals at completion of each grading period

### **Weighted Grading**

A weighted grading system will be used for honors and advanced placement classes only. Weighted grades will impact honor roll, class standing, and cumulative GPA calculations. Weighted grades will not appear on report cards. They will appear on transcripts.

## **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING**

Social services and counseling are provided by professionally qualified members of the school staff. Resources at OHS include school counselors, a school psychologist, and a social worker. School psychologist and counselors are located on the second floor in the main office. Each student is assigned to a school counselor based on an alphabetical

distribution as they enter freshman year. School counselors work with their assigned students as they progress through high school over a four-year period.

Counseling services address the personal/social, academic, and college and career readiness of all students in a variety of settings. Students in grades 9-11 are scheduled for developmental guidance lessons each year. In addition, each student will meet with their counselor during the course selection process to review course requests as they relate to future planning goals. Students may schedule appointments to see their school counselor by stopping in the main office before school, between classes, or after school.

Referral for psychological and/or psychiatric assistance by other social services agencies within or outside the school may also be recommended. Please note: The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parents/guardian's written consent.

### **HARASSMENT STATEMENT**

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or any disability they may have. The district maintains zero tolerance for harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or the principal. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to the principal or assistant principal. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary.

### **HAZING ACTIVITIES**

Hazing, bullying or abuse of students or staff will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in an act that injures, degrades or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interferes with a student's opportunity to obtain an education shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

The nurse's office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the (school nurse) in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The (school nurse) is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

### **Administration of Medication**

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the RN. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the RN. All medication must be in original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A diabetic student may test his/her own blood glucose level per the written order of a physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self testing. Such self testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases**

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

### **Disabilities**

School district will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

### **Homebound**

Home instruction may be provided to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons after 10 consecutive days of absence. A diagnosis is required from a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance due to expulsion.

### **Homeless Students**

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is the Director of Pupil Services. Please contact Central Office (203) 888-7754.

### **Immunizations**

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Rubella and Hemophilus Influenza Type B.\* Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eighth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding immunizations contact the school nurse.

### **Physical Examinations**

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 10.

### **HOMEWORK**

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

## **INSURANCE**

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Brochures are distributed to all students at the beginning of each academic year. While the program is not mandatory, it is suggested that parents take advantage of the opportunity to provide adequate protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangements are contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Oxford Public Schools assumes no liability from disputes arising from such contract.

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS**

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the LEP program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

## **LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER**

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, media, and other materials located in the media center. Students are responsible for any material they sign out. Materials must be returned to the librarian or the assistant at the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage. A student's grades, transcript or report card may be withheld until a student's obligation is met.

Guidelines have been established for the use of the Internet. Student violations of the guidelines can result in the termination of access privileges and in disciplinary actions. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students must sign an acceptable use policy which indicates that a student agrees to use the Internet exclusively for educational purposes. Each contract must also include a signature from the student's parent/guardian.

## **MAKE-UP WORK**

A student will be permitted to make-up missed work and to turn in projects due in any class missed due to excused or verified absences. Secondary teachers may assign a late penalty to any project in accordance with time-lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students. Students may be assigned make-up work based on the instructional objectives of the subject or course and the needs of the student. The student is responsible for obtaining and completing make-up work within the time specified by the teacher. Students will not be able to make-up work due to unexcused absences from class.

## **NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)**

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions and assessment instruments.

## **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier honors organization, established to recognize outstanding high school students and to give these students opportunities to excel in leadership and service within their schools and their communities. More than just an honor roll, the Oxford High School chapter of the National Honor Society is a vibrant community of students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Character; and who continue to make positive contributions to these communities throughout their high school years.

At Oxford High School, eligible students are those sophomores and juniors who have achieved a weighted grade point average of 95+ over two academic years, and whose credentials have been reviewed and approved by the OHS NHS executive panel. Other selection requirements include an original essay and documentation of substantive volunteerism, community service, and participation in the life of Oxford High School and the Oxford community.

Once qualified, students are formally invited to apply; at that time, they will receive a complete packet of information about the responsibilities and privileges of membership. The application process at OHS usually begins in the spring and culminates in an induction ceremony at the end of the school year. Annual dues are applicable.

For additional information, see the OHS website.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers may be typically held at any time during the school year.

Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS**

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to model the behaviors that encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

To the extent possible, school-to-parent communication will be through email and the [oxfordhighschool.org](http://oxfordhighschool.org) website. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to update email address information through Power School.

### **PESTICIDE APPLICATION**

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the Business Manager at (203) 888-7754.

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT**

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school principal.

Students must demonstrate attainment of the basic skills needed for graduation based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

## **PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT**

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student. The student will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities will be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

Each student is assigned a hall locker and/or other equipment. These items are the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year, should be kept in good order and not abused.

Students should not attempt to repair school equipment but should notify the main office immediately if it is not functioning properly. Any damage done will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was loaned for the current year. Students may not bring in locks from home and attach to assigned lockers. ***Students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school, liability for these items remains with the student.***

## **PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE**

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

## **SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION**

Student safety on campus and at school related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff that are overseeing the welfare of students.



## **SCHOLARSHIPS, FINANCIAL AID AND AWARDS**

Students should start early to establish records worthy of scholarship consideration. In general requirements for scholarship consideration are some combination of the following: exemplary attendance record, serious attention to studies, good character, community service, financial need and involvement in the activities of the school.

Many scholarships and awards are available to qualified students. Students should consult a Guidance Counselor for information about what scholarships are available and how, when and where to apply.

## **SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES**

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President's Day are encouraged. Oxford High School reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to observe an appropriate time to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation is voluntary. Non-participants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

School officials may search students, their belongings and other equipment assigned to them by school personnel particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities. Breathalyzers may be used, at the discretion of school personnel, when circumstances warrant.

Searches of desks or lockers, which are the property of the school district, may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy or the law. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Student vehicles parked on school grounds may be searched if there is reasonable cause to search.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The district wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when the allegations are not minor and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, the Assistant Principal at the High School.

### **STUDENT AUTOMOBILE USE**

Students' use of motor vehicles at Oxford High School is a privilege granted by the school to authorized students only.

Students are subject to the rules, regulations and administrative guidelines in the parking regulations and must comply with all state laws and licensure requirements.

#### **Driving/Parking Regulations**

- 1) Seniors and juniors who have paid for the privilege and have successfully completed any mandated programs may drive to school. Each driver must have a permit that may be obtained in the Main Office. After the driving permit is signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the school and the fee is paid, the student will be issued a windshield tag for his/her car. Parking tags may not be transferred to another student.
- 2) OHS parking tags are to be hung from the rear view mirror.
- 3) Any student parking on school property without a properly issued tag may be towed at his/her expense.
- 4) Student parking areas are well defined, and students must use only these areas for parking.
- 5) Students who drive by a school bus with flashing lights in operation while on school property will lose parking privileges and may be subject to police action.
- 6) Students must observe all safety procedures.
- 7) Students must obey the signals and directives of any staff members regarding the parking and operation of any motor vehicle on the school grounds as well as for infractions of the school conduct.

- 8) The privilege of driving a vehicle to school may be revoked without refund of fee if the student exhibits unsafe driving, has excessive tardiness, leaves school without permission or parks illegally or has violated the school code of conduct.
- 9) After cars are parked, the student must move immediately to the school. **The parking lots and cars are off limits during the school day.** Access to a car during the day will only be allowed with Administration approval.
- 10) Students who are passengers may also receive appropriate consequences for aforementioned infractions.

**Note:** Any student reported illegally parking at OHS will not be eligible for a parking permit for one month after the infraction occurred.

### **STUDENT PUBLICATIONS**

The Oxford High School staff encourages student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views and a means of communicating both within and beyond the school community.

All student publications must comply with the rules for responsible journalism and is to be approved by administration before publication. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, also statements, materials advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school policies and/or regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted and are subject to disciplinary action.

Expressions of personal opinion must be clearly identified as such and must bear the name of the author. Opportunity for the expression of opinions differing from those of the student publishers must be provided.

In addition, student newspapers and/or publications which are paid for by the school district and/or produced under the direction of a teacher as part of the school curriculum are not considered a public forum. In such cases, the Board of Education reserves the right to edit or delete such student speech which is feeling is inconsistent with the district's basic educational mission.

### **Distribution of Literature**

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings provided such distribution does not interfere with or disrupt the educational process. No literature may be distributed unless a copy is submitted and approved in advance by the Superintendent of Schools and the Building Principal.

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student

from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a

complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

When a student moves to a new school system or charter school, Oxford High School will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending district is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

### **STUDENT SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Students will receive a schedule at the start of each school year. Every attempt is made to honor elective requests however academic subjects are the priority and an elective conflict may result.

If a student is applying for a medical waiver from physical education, the student must attend all gym classes until a written statement from the doctor is given to the school nurse and the nurse signs the waiver.

Unless extenuating circumstances are approved by administration, a student who drops a course after the first 4 weeks of a full-year course, or after the first 2 weeks of a semester course, will receive a withdrawal on the report card.

The process to make schedule changes within the permitted timeline is as follows:

1. Obtain and fill out a Course-Change form from the Student Counseling Office.
2. Obtain the signatures of the student's counselor, the department chairperson(s), and the teachers involved on the form.
3. Obtain a parent's signature(s) on the form.
4. Return the form to the guidance counselor for processing and approval to the principal's office. Remember: you must attend your originally scheduled class until this form is processed.

In the event a change of level in a course is approved, grades accumulated up to the time of change will follow the student with appropriate weighting.

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Students in danger of failing will be notified prior to a retention decision. The school district may require a student to attend one or more alternatives for credit recovery, including summer school.

### **TESTING**

All students in grade 10 will participate in the Science CAPT test. Grade 11 students will participate in the SAT. Special education students participate in the State assessments except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's PPT. The CAPT/SAT assessments are measures used to determine if students have met the identified standards as required by the State.. Student scores the CAPT Science shall be included on transcripts and permanent records. Students attending a district school identified under the No Child Left Behind Act for improvement, corrective action or restructuring may, as required by law, may transfer to another district school and/or receive supplementary educational services at district expense in compliance with federal legislation.

### **TEXTBOOK CARE AND OBLIGATIONS**

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, schedules, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library book or other educational materials.

## **TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES**

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

## **TITLE I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs.

## **TRANSFERS AND WITHDRAWALS**

Students withdrawing from school must notify the guidance office one week in advance of their last day. At that time, they will be given forms for their parents to complete. Included will be a formal written statement of withdrawal and release of records form.

On their last day of attendance, students will be given a form that must be signed by each of their teachers. This form will indicate their grade at the time of withdrawal and that all materials have been returned. Records cannot be forwarded until all materials have been returned.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus may result in suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
4. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
5. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
6. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
7. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco.
8. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
9. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed. Unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, will subject the passenger to disciplinary action.

10. Any harassing or bullying behavior will be addressed through the Bullying policy outline in this handbook (pg 9).
11. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
12. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned unless a written notification from the parent is given to the main office in the morning by 7:20 and stamped by administration.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline infraction arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the administration, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required to investigate the alleged infraction.
2. The administration may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The administration and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES**

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Board of Education Central Office (203)888-7754 and/or the All Star Bus Company (203)888-2128. A written record of all complaints will be maintained and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

### **VACATIONS**

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times which coincide with school vacations.

### **VIDEO RECORDERS ON SCHOOL BUSES/SCHOOL CAMPUS**

The district has installed video recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Videotaping will be done randomly during the school year, students will not be notified when a recording device has been installed and in use on their bus. Tapes will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.



Video/audio equipment will be used to monitor student behavior throughout common areas of the campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The principal or his/her designee will review the tapes routinely and document students' misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the School/District discipline policies.

## **VISITORS**

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit district schools. All visitors must first report to the main office. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the principal's approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

## **WEB SITES**

School web pages must contain material that reflects on educational purposes. School web pages are not to be used for personal, commercial or political purposes; and are considered a publication of the Board of Education. The Principal or his/her designee will approve all material posted on the school's web page. Students maintaining personal web pages may be subject to disciplinary action for the content of such sites under certain conditions.

## **WELLNESS**

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. All food and beverages are to be consumed in only designated areas of the building. Students and staff members may bring water to school in reusable containers with caps that can be sealed against spilling. Water will be accessible and may be consumed in classrooms throughout the school day except where specific safety, health, and maintenance concerns preclude this practice; e.g., science labs, computer labs, auditoriums, or library media center. A sequential program of physical education is provided.