



The St. Johns County School District will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

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Principal's Message

Welcome to Ocean Palms Elementary School, where readers are leaders and all students are encouraged to dream big and set goals, while working toward their highest potential every day. This planner has been prepared to assist in making the school year successful for both you and your child.

The handbook is designed as a resource with an alphabetical reference of important information. We hope that you will find this useful as questions or concerns arise throughout the school year and that it will be a meaningful tool for you.

We are enthusiastic about the 2016-2017 school year. It is a privilege to spend each day learning and growing with your child. At Ocean Palms, it all matters; ***Everything, Every day, Everyone.***

Access to our School

All adults must be registered volunteers to enter the school building during school hours. You must complete the district's Volunteer Application if you wish to volunteer in a classroom, participate in any class activities, chaperone/attend a field study, eat in the cafeteria, participate in a conference, or attend any performance or event during school hours.

Please follow the link on the Volunteer tab of the Ocean Palms or St. Johns County School District websites to apply.
<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/cr/volunteer/access>

Once registered as a volunteer, all visitors sign-in at the front desk and present a valid state identification in order to receive a Volunteer Badge to be worn in the building.

Address and Telephone Number Changes

Please notify our office immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, or

emergency contact information. This is all very important in case your child becomes ill or injured.

If your address has changed, please bring in three proofs of residency reflecting the updated information.

Arrival Procedures

Students who arrive at school before 8:00 a.m. must be enrolled in the Ocean Palms Before-Care program. School supervision of students begins at 8:00 a.m. when parents may drop off students in the car circle. Please ensure that your children only exit the vehicle on the right (sidewalk) side of the vehicle. Students may enter classrooms at 8:20 a.m. Students arriving from 8:00-8:20 a.m. must be quiet in the hallways, sitting in their grade level designated area and reading a book.

Attendance

The importance of regular attendance cannot be over emphasized. All students should be in school every day that they are physically able. It is extremely difficult to successfully keep up with class work if attendance is irregular.

Excused absences include: Personal illness, family emergency, death in the family, religious holidays of the student's established religious faith, required court or law agency appearances, public functions, state competitions, scheduled doctor or dentist appointments.

Unexcused absences include: shopping trips, pleasure trips, suspension from school, appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency, truancy. For a complete list of excused and unexcused absences, students and parents should refer to the *Student Code of Conduct.*

When Absent: Parents must notify the school office of a child's absence. Any student who has been absent from school shall bring a note from a parent

or guardian within forty-eight (48) hours of returning to school stating the cause of the absence. Notes and emails should include the following information: full name, teacher, and specific reason for the absence. Failure to bring in a note will result in an automatic unexcused absence. If your child is absent for two or more days, contact your child's teacher to arrange for the school work your child has missed. For other absences, please notify the principal in writing prior to the absence.

Tardiness: School begins at 8:30 am. Any student reporting to school after that time is tardy. Any tardy student must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the front office to receive an admittance slip before going to the classroom. Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and has a negative impact on student achievement.

Early dismissal: Children will be released only to their parents or to individuals named on the Student Information card. Remember a photo ID is required. Students may not be checked out later than 2:15 pm each day and 1:15 pm on Wednesdays.

Before and After School Care

The Ocean Palms Elementary Extended Day D.E.N. (Develop, Enrich, Nurture) is a community service for students in grades K-5 who attend Ocean Palms. Our mission is to provide a place where children feel safe, happy, encouraged, and acknowledged. All employees of the program are St. Johns County School District employees and are under the direction of the Community Services Specialist, Ms. Kim LaMondie. Students rotate through a variety of daily activities focusing on academic support, character development, indoor and outdoor recreation, and arts and crafts. Please visit the Ocean Palms Extended Day website for more information, <http://www.ope.stjohns.k12.fl.us/extendedday/> or call 547-4150.

Birthdays

If you wish to bring in a birthday treat on your child's special day, it must be pre-approved by the classroom teacher. While we honor and cherish each child's birthday, our primary goal is to preserve the routine and structure of the academic day. Due to food allergies, there will be no birthday treats allowed in the cafeteria. Your child's homeroom teacher will provide an appropriate time for you to drop off the treat and your treat must be approved by the teacher for potential food allergens. The safety and health of all students is a priority.

Blackboard Connect

Blackboard Connect is a rapid phone, email, and/or text notification system provided by our school district to communicate important or emergency information efficiently. This system will be used for providing accurate information to parents/guardians about safety and daily attendance, as well as communication from the principal.

Bus Regulations

Students are given the privilege of using the services of the St. Johns County School District for transportation to and from school as well as to and from field trips. Standards of discipline must be maintained at all times in order to satisfy safety requirements. Whenever a driver must direct his/her full attention away from the road, danger exists. No student will be allowed to endanger the other students on the bus. Cell phones and other digital devices are not to be used and must remain in the off position to and from school. Parents are not to board the bus at any time. A complete list of bus regulations is available in the Student Code of Conduct.

Cafeteria Prices/Payment

Elementary, middle and high school lunch menus are available on [Nutrislice.com](http://stjohns.nutrislice.com).

<http://stjohns.nutrislice.com/menu/ocean-palms>

This system greatly enhances our school lunch menus by providing photos and nutritional information of the menu items, as well as a Spanish language version of the menus.

Parents may also access printable versions of our menus and view them on mobile devices with the Nutrislice [iOS](#) and [Android](#) app.

Prices: The St. Johns County School Board approved the following prices for meals for the 2016-2017 school year. Elementary school prices are \$2.55 for lunch and \$1.25 for breakfast. Reduced lunch prices are \$0.40 for lunch and \$0.30 for breakfast.

A La Carte Items: Ocean Palms provides several a la carte items in the cafeteria. These items include choices such as baked chips, pizza, Gatorade, juices, frozen fruit bars and ice cream. These items range in price from \$0.30 to \$2.50 and are not included in the free and reduced meal program.

Parental Restrictions: Restrictions can be placed on your student's meal account by requesting, in writing, the restrictions. Once restrictions are placed, they can only be removed by the parent in a written letter/email to the food service manager.

Payments: Students may bring cash or check to pay for lunch or make pre-payments to your student's meal account with your VISA, MasterCard or Discover credit card through the PayPams online system. For cash or check, please indicate the student's name and meal account number. For more information on PayPams, check your First Day Folder or access their website at: <https://www.paypams.com> or call 1-888-994-5100.

Free and Reduced Applications: Parents are encouraged to complete one application per family. Please return the application to the school where the youngest child is enrolled. The approval process can take up to ten (10) days to complete.

Food Allergies: If your child has food allergies, please provide the school nurse with a physician's note indicating the allergies and appropriate medical attention required.

Refunds: Refunds are addressed at the school level and require a written request. Please contact the food service manager for a refund.

Account Balances: Student account balances can be obtained on the website www.paypams.com at no charge to you. Your student's account balance, either positive or negative, from the previous school year will roll into the new school year unless a refund has been requested. Although students are to pay for their meal upon receipt, students may forget their lunch or lunch money. Students will be permitted to charge two meals to their account. There will be no charging of any a la carte food items including entrees or snacks.

Cafeteria Rules

Always Walk: Relax, take your time, and walk.

Sit Properly: Bottoms down, feet under the table, body facing your food, and keep your hands and feet to yourself.

Use Quiet Voices: It's great to visit with the friends sitting next to you, but remember that you are inside and need to use "sound" judgment.

Use Your Manners: Please eat neatly, clean up after yourself, and respect other people and their property. Use "please" and "thank you" when addressing both adults and classmates.

Raise Your Hand: Please raise your hand for help or to get permission to get up from your seat.

No Sharing Food: Many of our students have food allergies or other food restrictions. Please keep your food to yourself.

No Toys: Toys are great for home, but not in the cafeteria.

Cell Phones

Students may possess cell phones and other wireless communication devices at school, on buses, and at school functions. However, they must be turned off, stored in student's backpack, purse, locker or vehicle. The device shall not be used during the school day without administrative approval or on school buses to and from school. Failure to comply may result in the device being confiscated. Repeated failure to comply will be considered defiance of school rules.

Parents, for the safety of our children, staff and visitors, please refrain from the use of cell phones during parent drop off and pick up.

Ocean Palms Elementary is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Class Size Amendment

The St. Johns County School District is required by the state of Florida to fully implement the Class Size Amendment (CSA). The CSA requires that core classes not exceed the following numbers of students in specific grade levels:

Pre-K – Grade 3	18 students
Grade 4 – Grade 8	22 students
Grade 9 – Grade 12	25 students

Our school district utilizes teacher associates as one method to meet the Class Size Amendment.

Dismissal Procedures

Times: Students are dismissed at 2:50 pm all days except, Wednesday. On Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 1:50 pm.

Bikers and Walkers: Parents picking up bikers and walkers may wait at the fenced-in bike area. Please do not enter the building to meet your child. During inclement weather bikers and walkers will be held

inside the building and will only be released to a parent or individual on the Student Emergency Information card.

Parent Pick Up: Those parents picking up children in the car line, must remain in their cars at all times. A hanging sign or name plate listing children's names and grade levels needs to be displayed in the front window. **Cell phone use is prohibited in the car line. This procedure is for the utmost safety of the children.**

Dress Code

The dress and grooming of our students should contribute to the health and safety of the individual, promote a positive educational environment and not disrupt the educational activities and processes of the school. Ocean Palms Elementary follows the school district's dress code guidelines explained in *the Student Code of Conduct*. Of most importance to our elementary students are:

- Students must wear shoes that are safe and appropriate for the learning environment. All shoes and sandals must have a back or strap on the heel.
- Caps, hats, and sunglasses shall not be worn within the building, although they are acceptable outdoors for sun protection.
- Tops and shirts must cover the entire shoulder and not be revealing or distracting. Midriff or "cut out" tops may not be worn. Skirts or shorts should be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. Revealing clothing, yoga pants, and pajamas are not acceptable.
- Pants must be worn at the waist. No underwear may be exposed.
- For special events and occasions, the principal may choose to modify dress code policies. (For example, Pajama Day or Hat Day celebrations.)

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year. We conduct monthly fire drills as required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code. We will also practice drills for the following scenarios: severe weather (high winds), evacuation and lockdown. Our school district also requires bus evacuation drills for our bus riders. Safety is of the utmost importance.

Home Access Center

The Home Access Center (HAC), is a web-based application that is part of our Student Information System called eSchoolPlus.

<https://homeaccess.stjohns.k12.fl.us>

This system provides parents and students with a daily summary page, schedule and attendance, discipline information, class work, test scores and course requests for all students in grades 3-12. ***This system will also be utilized for parents to access reports cards in grades K-5.*** Please complete the necessary registration paperwork included in your first day packet and return it to the school as soon as possible. You will receive a login and temporary password. Extra copies of instructions for Home Access Center can be located at the front office. This information will also be reviewed at Open House.

Homework

Students should expect to have an average of 10 minutes of homework per grade level (i.e., 4th grade= 40 minutes) in addition to reading and practicing math facts. Long term assignments and projects may be assigned periodically. We do not interrupt class for homework deliveries. All homework delivered to the school will be placed in the teacher's mailbox to retrieve at his or her convenience.

Items Brought To School

Animals: No animals should be brought on to the school campus, unless they are approved service animals.

Toys: Toys should not be brought to school. Bringing a toy gun or any other weapon to school could result in disciplinary action.

Students and/or Visitors Requesting a Waiver for Personal Electronic Property: Students and visitors requesting to operate their personal electronic property within the district must obtain written approval by completing the Waiver for Personal Electronic Property found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. This waiver must be signed by the school or district department administrator prior to operating any equipment in the St. Johns County School District schools or offices. Any student or visitor operating personal electronic equipment must also sign the Acceptable Use Procedures Agreement form, also located in the *Student Code of Conduct*. **Ocean Palms Elementary School is not responsible for the loss of any electronic devices.**

Skateboards: Skateboards, scooters, or roller blades may not be brought to school for any reason.

Lost and Found: Please put your child's name in all clothing, backpacks, and lunchboxes. In the event that your child does misplace an item they can check the 'Lost and Found' for lunch boxes and clothing. Articles such as glasses and jewelry will be placed in the front office. Unclaimed articles are periodically donated to organizations that support those in need.

Medication

If a child needs to take a prescribed medication during the school day, a parent or guardian must bring the original bottle of medication to the clinic and complete a Medication Authorization form. A doctor's note is also required for dispensing over the counter drugs such as Tylenol or cough syrup.

Physical Education/Activities

To ensure the safety of our children during physical activity, it is highly recommended that every child wear socks and sneakers to school. Children will participate in some type of physical activity on a daily basis. On days where students have PE, it is important that they are not wearing crocs, sandals, boots, ballerina flats or flip flops which can present a safety risk during these more rigorous activities. **Water bottles, hats, and sunscreen are always recommended for outside activities. Sunscreen must be applied at home.**

Pillars of Character and Leadership

At Ocean Palms Elementary, the St. Johns County Pillars of Character and student leadership are considered to be vitally important to our students' development. Incorporating these practices within our school environment and curriculum helps students become caring contributors to society and equips them for success in the 21st century. Critical skills and characteristics such as: trustworthiness, motivation, problem solving skills, goal setting, personal responsibility and the value of teamwork are embedded throughout the school day.

The Character Counts Pillars are:

★ Citizenship ★ Responsibility ★ Fairness
★ Caring ★ Trustworthiness ★ Respect

School Advisory Council (SAC)

The School Advisory Council is a state-mandated organization that allows for school-based management and accountability. An improvement plan is developed each year, largely composed of defined areas of growth based on school data. The School Advisory Council is made up of faculty, parents, and other members of the school community. SAC meetings are held at Ocean Palms Elementary School on the third Thursday of every month @ 3:15 pm in the school media center.

Transportation Changes

If you need to make a transportation change for your child, please send a **written note** to your child's teacher that morning. In the event that a note could not be sent, you may call or email the Front Office (547-3760) BEFORE 12:15 p.m. Please remember that only adults on your approved list may pick up your child. We apologize for any inconvenience, but the safety of our children is our number one priority.

Videos, Photographs, Recordings (NEW)

Students, parents and visitors are not allowed to videotape, photograph or make audio recordings while on school premises except for Open House and public events (including plays, musicals, fairs, fundraiser raisers, and awards/recognitions.) All recording devices must be turned off at school. The purpose of this general rule is to foster an appropriate educational environment, prevent unwarranted disclosure of student images and information, and to comply with the requirements of the negotiated agreement with the St. Johns Education Association. (*Student Code of Conduct, page 53.*)