



Onondaga Hill Middle School



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Student and Family Handbook

4860 Onondaga Road
Syracuse, NY 13215
315-426-3400

www.westhillschools.org

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OHMS MISSION STATEMENT

The Middle School years are special, full of change, challenge and adventure. We will guide our students from childhood to young adulthood by helping them develop self-respect and respect for others. We will encourage individually and socially responsible attitudes and behaviors.

We will provide the resources for students to grow intellectually in every way and stimulate students to be active participants in their learning. We will foster the joy of creative learning and teaching. In a clean, safe, and secure setting, we will encourage our students to value and care for our shared environment.

We recognize that education is a continuing process involving home, school, and community. We will work together with students to promote pride in ourselves, each other, and our school, and strive to make the years at Onondaga Hill Middle School exciting and rewarding.

A Message from the Principal

Welcome back! We look forward to the 2022-2023 school year. Please spend some time familiarizing yourself with this handbook. This is a resource to use throughout the school year to provide you with answers to your questions or guide you to those people that can best help you. Enclosed you will find information about our school's schedules, policies and procedures. Another good place to check for more up-to-date information is our school website. At www.westhillschools.org click onto Onondaga Hill Middle School to find specific information relating to OHMS. You can also view our daily announcements during the school year on our homepage.

Mark Bednarski

Principal

About Our School

OHMS serves approximately 500 students in grades 5 through 8. As the only middle school in the Westhill District, we take seriously our mission to guide students through an exciting and challenging four-year social, emotional and academic transition.

Each of our fifth grade classrooms is self-contained with a classroom teacher delivering the core academic program and providing focus for students.

In sixth grade, students are assigned a homeroom teacher who provides ELA instruction and either social studies or science. The student will have one other teacher that will teach math and either social studies or science. The two-teacher team will stay keenly aware of the students' progress. Members of the class move through the day as a group, much like an elementary setting but beginning to experience more staff as we transition them to a secondary schedule in 7th grade.

Seventh and eighth grade students attend classes in fairly typical secondary school fashion, changing classes and teachers each period throughout the day.

Students and their parents may take advantage of many guidance and counseling services. Programs and events such as Career Day and Healthy Choices Week have been developed to support and encourage students. A wide variety of intramural and interscholastic sports, musical performance groups, social events and co-curricular activities are available to students. We will continue our journey with the Positivity Project. Please visit their website at www.posproject.org for more information.

Communication is key to a successful school experience, and we encourage participation of our parents in helping to shape the program we offer students. Much of what we are able to offer students, and many of the policies that govern day to day operations at OHMS, are a direct result of parent input and participation.



Daily Schedule

Homeroom	7:33 - 7:38
P2	7:38 - 7:48
1 st	7:48 - 8:29
2 nd	8:32 - 9:13
3 rd	9:16 - 9:57
4 th	10:00 - 10:41
5th Lunch	10:44 - 11:14
5/6 th	10:44 - 11:25
6/7 th	11:17 - 11:58
7th Lunch	11:28 - 11:58
7/8 th	11:28 - 12:09
8/9 th	12:01 - 12:42
9th Lunch	12:12 - 12:42
10 th	12:45 - 1:26
11 th	1:29 - 2:11
IA	2:20 - 2:55

OHMS Staff

Assistant Principal - Mrs. Ta
 Counselor- Ms. Caporizzo (6th & 8th)
 Counselor - Mrs. Pisegna (5th & 7th)
 Building Secretary - Mrs. Goldthwaite
 Typist I - Mrs. Vitale
 Guidance Secretary - Mrs. Cortez

Social Worker - Mr. Maroney
 School Psychologist - Mrs. Connelly
 Nurse - Mrs. Allen
 Health Office Secretary - Mrs.
 Pendergast
 Head Custodian - Mr. Woods

Grade Level Teachers

5th Grade Team

Mrs. Bove
 Mrs. Clemo
 Mrs. Downing/Ms. Feyerabend
 Mrs. Evans
 Mrs. Fairbanks
 Mrs. Martin
 Ms. Smith

6th Grade Team

Mrs. Castracane
 Mrs. Delay
 Mr. Jackson
 Ms. Lyons/Mrs. Beavaus
 Ms. McPeak
 Mrs. Prince

7th & 8th Grade ELA

Mr. Eassa
 Ms. Hallman
 Mrs. Wight

7th & 8th Grade Mathematics

Mrs. Bricco
 Mr. Lindberg
 Mrs. Ruestch

7th & 8th Grade Social Studies

Mr. DuBois
 Mrs. Fessinger
 Mrs. Milligan

7th & 8th Grade Science

Mrs. Derrenbacher

Mr. Heath

Mrs. Hathaway

7th & 8th Grade LOTE

Mrs. Jimenez - *Spanish & French*
 Mrs. Maglente - *Spanish*
 Mr. Zimmerman - *French*

Special Areas & Student Support

Mrs. Tittus - Art
 Mrs. Ramos-Burrows - Art
 Mrs. Cieply – Music/Chorus
 Mr. Riley – Music/Band
 Mrs. Rogers – Physical Education
 Mr. Clavijo – Physical Education
 Mr. Vogt - Health/PE
 Ms. Gullotto - Home & Careers
 Mrs. Jackson – Reading Support
 Ms. Feeney - Library
 Mr. Schibeci - Math Support
 Mrs. Bergett – Speech
 Mrs. Buell – Music/Band
 Mr. Crowell – Technology
 Mr. Van Epps – Music/Band
 Mr. Sweeney - Technology

Special Education & Resource

Mrs. Chamberlain
 Mrs. Dubois
 Ms. Sterly
 Mrs. Benjamin (Mrs. Dantz, sem. 1)
 Mr. Iamondo
 Mrs. Lamson

Teaching Assistants

Mrs. Stoltz
Ms. Arscott
Mrs. Barcza
Mrs. Anderson
Mrs. DeTomaso

Mrs. Mercer
Ms. Davis
Mrs. Mooney
Mrs. Hunt
Mrs. Smith

OHMS Counseling Services

Provide. . .

Individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, referrals to professional services, school wide events

Assist with. . .

Career education, student orientations, test and record interpretation, and referrals for academic support and special needs

Consult with. . .

Teachers, parents, administrators, support staff, outside agencies

Accommodate the needs of. . .

Students, parents, teachers, administrators

Guide. . .

Student decision-making regarding academic, career and life goals, and social/emotional issues

Educate about. . .

Adjusting to middle school, peer pressure, self-esteem, relationships, loss and separation, transitions, drugs and alcohol

For questions or to connect with a counselor, please email

JPisegna@westhillschools.org (5th & 7th Grade) or ACaporizzo@westhillschools.org (6th & 8th Grade)

*For questions/concerns regarding:**Call:*

General

Mr. Bednarski, 315-426-3400
Mrs. Ta, 315-426-3400Grades, student progress, or concerns
related to a particular classYour child's teacher
315-426-3400

Your child's overall academic progress

Your child's counselor
315-426-3400, ext. 3431

Your child's overall social progress

Your child's counselor
315-426-3400, ext. 3431

Scheduling and registration

Your child's counselor
315-426-3400, ext. 3431

Known absences

Health Office
315-426-3400, ext. 3422

To sign your child out for an appointment

Health Office
315-426-3400, ext. 3422
(after 10AM, main office)

A discipline problem on the bus

Transportation
315-426-3030 or main office

Parent Council

Main Office
315-426-3400

Breakfast, lunch, or cafeteria

Mrs. Burkett, Cafeteria Manager
315-426-3451

Special Education

Mrs. Lachenauer, Director of SpEd
315-426-3280

Information on busses

Transportation
315-426-3030

To fax an item

Main office fax
315-492-0156

Homework for extended absences

Check google classroom and email
your child's teachers

OHMS Course Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum and instructional practices are aligned to the NYS Learning Standards.

Art

Grades 5-8

Art History	Printmaking
Art Production	Fiber Arts
Aesthetics	Art Based on Culture
Art Criticism	Ceramics
Observational Drawing	3-D Constructions
Painting	

Computer Integration

Grades 5-8

Students will meet the Westhill Technology Competencies through projects that incorporate a variety of software programs integrated within their classes. Students will use the Google Education platform, online research, and multimedia to enhance projects. Students will learn to access, organize and analyze the vast resources that are available to them.

English Language Arts

Grades 5-8

Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking through:

EL Program – Grades 5 & 6	Short Stories
Poetry	Fiction & Nonfiction Novels
Myths, Legends, Fables	Biographies

NYS ELA Assessment, Grades 5-8

Health

Grade 7

Health and Wellness
Decision Making
Character Exploitation
Alcohol and Drugs

Grade 8

Health and the Reproductive System
Sexually Transmitted Diseases
HIV/AIDS
Personal Safety
Chronic Disease

Home and Careers (Grades 7 & 8)

Decision Making
 Problem Solving
 Digital/Media Literacy
 Hand Sewing
 Machine Sewing

Baking
 Career Development
 Money Management
 Meal Preparation

Languages Other Than English: French and Spanish (Grades 7 & 8)

Listening
 Writing
 Speaking
 Reading
 Cultural Awareness

Grade 8 Proficiency Exam for high school credit

Mathematics

Grades 5-8

iReady (5/6)
 Mathematical Reasoning
 Number and Numeration
 Operations

Modeling/Multiple Representation
 Measurement
 Uncertainty
 Patterns/Functions

NYS Math Assessment, Grades 5-8 Algebra Regents for students in Integrated Algebra 8

Music

General Music - Grades 5 and 6

Creating Music
 Performing Music
 Elements of Music
 Appreciation of Music
 Composers
 Broadway Musicals

Performing Ensembles - Grades 5-8

5th Grade Band
 Chorus 5/6
 6th Grade Band
 Chorus 7/8
 7th/8th Grade Band
 Harmonizers 7/8
 Jazz & Pep Bands

Physical Education (varies year to year)

Archery
Racquetball
Badminton
Self Defense
Basketball
Soccer
Cooperative Games
Conditioning
Cross Country
Project Adventure

Floor Hockey
Softball
Dance
Table Tennis
European Handball
Track and Field
Flag Football
Volleyball
Fitness Walking
Golf

Science

Grade 5

How can we provide freshwater to those in need?
How can we predict change in ecosystems?
How can we use the sky to navigate?
How can we identify materials based on their properties?

Grade 6

Matter and its Interactions
Energy, Forces and Motion
Space Systems Exploration

Grade 7

Living organisms, structure and function
Growth, development and reproduction
Genes and heredity
Ecosystems
Natural selection

Grade 8

Energy, waves and information technology
Earth's history
Earth's systems
Weather, climate, and human impact

**Earth Science Regents Exam for accelerated class
NYS Science Assessment, Grade 8**



Social Studies

Grade 5

United States, Latin America, Canada:
History, Geography, Economy,
Government

Grade 6

Eastern Hemisphere Nations:
History, Geography, Economy,
Government

Grades 7 and 8

Global Heritage of the American
People prior to 1500
European Exploration and
Colonization of the Americas
Experiments in Government
Division and Reunion
The US as an Independent Nation
The United States Between the Wars
The Changing Nature of Americans,
WWII to the Present
Citizenship in Today's World

Technology

Grade 7

Surveying
Bridges
Earthquake Simulation
General Construction
Transportation - Race Car

Grade 8

General Communications
Mechanical Drawing
Computers
Manufacturing
Magnetic-Levitation

Advanced/Honors Tracks

Advanced Math 7 leading to Integrated Algebra in 8th grade

The advanced math class in 7th grade essentially covers the 8th grade curriculum in one year, making it possible to take the Integrated Algebra Regents Class in 8th grade. Students are required to take Advanced Math 7 as a prerequisite to Integrated Algebra in 8th grade. Students must maintain an average of 85 for the year.

Earth Science 8

Earth Science 8 is a high school class offered in 8th grade to students who meet the rigorous criteria to qualify after 7th grade. All 7th grade students will be evaluated for placement into Earth Science.

9th grade Honors English and Social Studies

At the end of 8th grade, students will be evaluated for placement in 9th grade honors ELA and Social Studies. Please refer to the WHS student handbook for further details.

Advanced/Honors Criteria

There are stringent criteria to qualify for accelerated/honors classes. They are listed below in no particular order of importance:

- Teacher recommendation (math/science knowledge, thinking skills, work habits, participation, etc.)
- Teacher Assessments
- NYS Assessments
- History of academic performance at OHMS
- AIMS web assessments (standardized math and ELA tests)

Please keep in mind these are rigorous courses. In 8th grade, Algebra and Earth Science become part of a student's permanent high school transcript. We thoroughly examine every student to determine if they meet the criteria to be eligible.

If students do not meet the criteria, please keep in mind there are many opportunities to take college level courses at the high school *without* being accelerated.

Important Dates for 2022-2023

Check the District Website for the most up-to-date information!

First Day of School for Students: 9/6
 No School - Columbus Day: October 10th
 Staff Development Day - November 8th
 No School - Veterans Day: November 11th
 No School - Thanksgiving Recess: November 23rd-25th
 No School - Holiday Break: December 23rd-January 2nd
 No School - Martin Luther King Day: January 16th
 No School - Presidents' Day/Winter Recess: February 20th-24th
 Staff Development Day - March 13th
 No School - Spring Recess: April 3rd-7th
 No School - Memorial Day Weekend: May 26th-29th
 No School - Juneteenth: June 19th
 Last Day of School for Students: June 23rd
NYS Assessment Dates for 2022-2023:
 Grades 5-8 ELA: April 24th and April 25th
 Grades 5-8 Math: May 3rd and May 4th
 Grade 8 Science Performance Test: May 23rd
 Grade 8 Science Written Test: June 5th
 NYSESLAT: Schedule TBD, Taking Place 4/26-5/17
 Algebra Regents: June 15th (pm)
 Earth Science Regents: June 16th (am)

Important Information

The District Website: www.westhillschools.org

Announcements

Announcements will be made over the public address system at 7:35 each morning and, if necessary, again at 2:10 each afternoon. It is important that students listen carefully when the announcements are read since most announcements affect most of our students. Daily announcements will also be posted on our school website, www.westhillschools.org.

Attendance

Every day counts! Attend today, succeed tomorrow!

Showing up every day matters for R.E.A.L.! It is an opportunity to:

- Build **R**outines
- Increase **E**ngagement
- Provide **A**ccess to resources
- Support **L**earning

Routines: Daily attendance routines, created at home or in school, can reduce stress for students and families and create a sense of safety and security, especially after chaotic transitions.

Engagement: Being in school helps students to get to know peers, teachers and school staff, and to create trusting relationships that motivate students to participate in learning.

Access to Resources: Schools help students and families gain access to basic resources such as meals, physical and mental health services, and fun enrichment activities including sports, clubs, music, afterschool and summer programs.

Learning: Learning is most meaningful when it is active, social, and allows students to apply concepts to real life situations. Showing up to school regularly helps students engage in learning that builds proficiency in reading and math that will help them to graduate from high school.

If your child is reluctant to attend school for any reason, please reach out to their counselor or the main office. We have systems in place to support you and your family with any barriers you may be facing.

Sample Routines for Attendance Success:

- Set an early and consistent bedtime to ensure plenty of rest for the school day.
- Set your alarm - make sure it works! Give yourself some extra time for unexpected delays.
- Pick and lay out your clothing the night before.

- Make sure your backpack is packed with all of the supplies and materials you need for the next day.
- Place your backpack, shoes/winter boots, and coat by the door before going to bed.
- Try to schedule dentist and doctor appointments during non-school hours.
- Try not to schedule vacations and trips unless it is during one of our breaks.
- Use the bus! It is reliable and FREE transportation for your child!

General Attendance Procedures & Information:


- Please notify the Health Office at 426-3400 any time your child will be absent from school for an entire day due to illness or any other reason. You may leave a message before or after school hours. If your child is absent and you do not call in, either the health office attendant or an automated system will call you.
- Homeroom begins promptly at 7:33. Students who arrive late to school should report to the Health Office before going to class. Students are considered tardy if they are not in their homeroom by the 7:33 bell.
- If you need to sign your child out of school during school hours for appointments, please send a note to the health office with your child stating the time and reason. Students will **only** be released to their parents, legal guardians, or persons officially designated by parents.
- Students reporting to school after being absent are required to deliver an absence excuse to the health office.
- Absences will be recorded as either “Excused” or “Unexcused.” Excused absences recognized under Education Law include: illness, illness or death in the family, medical appointments, impassable roads or weather that makes travel unsafe, religious observance, approved school-supervised trips, music lessons, CSE meetings, test modifications that extend time, court appointment and/or legal circumstances. Absence or tardiness for any other reason is considered unexcused and is recorded on the student’s permanent attendance record.
- Chronic absenteeism can add up quickly. A student is considered **chronically absent** by NYS law if they are absent from school 10% or more of the time. This would mean missing 2 days of school per month. Chronic absenteeism and late arrivals to school causes students to fall behind academically, reduces teacher effectiveness, and hinders district goals.
- If your child misses the bus, we may be able to transport them to arrive later to school. Please call the main office to coordinate.

Just as we respond to students' academic and social/emotional needs, we will provide levels of response to students with frequent late arrivals or absences.

Possible Responses to Absences and Tardies:

- Letter from Mrs. Ta listing the number of accrued tardies and absences.
- Phone call from a member of our Attendance Team.
- Participation in a family meeting with the Attendance Team to create and develop a "Student Success Plan."
- Partnering with a staff member who will serve as a "Check In/Check Out" mentor - including students who have had attendance struggles in years past.
- Addressing emotional needs regarding an absence.
- Possible tutoring or extra support from staff to make-up missed work.
- Work with social worker - potential home visit.

Members of the OHMS Attendance Team: Mrs. Ta, Ms. Caporizzo, Mrs. Pisegna, Mr. Maroney, Mrs. Gullotto, Mrs. Bove, Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Hunt, Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Lamson, Mrs. Derrenbacher, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Pendergast



WesthillCSD

September is ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH!

Did You Know? As Little As...

2

missed
days of
school per
month


=

10%

of the
school
year
missed


Chronic absenteeism and late arrivals to school causes students to fall behind academically, reduces teacher effectiveness, and hinders district goals.

What can we do?




Students

The more you miss school, the more your grades and future success will be impacted.




Teachers

Awareness is key: knowing which students are absent, finding out why, and working with administrators and counselors can help focus interventions.



Administrators

Collecting and sharing the right data with families and community members will be important in helping us develop a positive course of action.



Families

Building partnerships and relationships with home will benefit the whole child. Families need to be informed of the resources available for them.



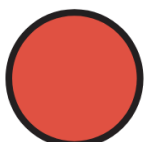
Every Day Counts

Attend today – achieve tomorrow!

Did You Know.....?

- That a student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is less likely to graduate from high school or ever enroll in college?
 - By missing just one day every two weeks, you would be on track to miss two full weeks in a semester or nearly a month of school for the year?
 - Freshmen who miss more than two weeks of school fail, on average, at least two classes—no matter whether they arrive at high school with top test scores or below-average scores?
- In fact, freshmen who arrive with high test scores but miss two weeks of school per semester are more likely to fail a course than freshmen with low test scores who miss just one week.*

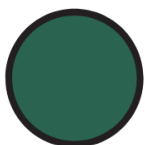
When do absences become a problem?



Chronic absence –
18 or more days



Warning signs – 10–
17 days



Satisfactory – 9 or
fewer days

Why It Matters

- **Showing up every day is a skill** that you are developing that will help you do well in class and with getting and keeping a job later on.
- **School only gets harder when you skip a class.** Sometimes it's tempting to skip or stay home because you are tired or don't understand what's going on in class. But missing a day only makes that worse because you aren't learning something that will help you understand a lesson later on.
- **Chronic absence can affect your ability to earn a living.** High school dropouts are less likely to succeed in a career. In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, \$1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime.

Throughout the course of a 180-day school year

What You Can Do

- **Get to school on time and don't skip classes.** You may think it doesn't matter to blow off your first or last class of the day, but it does. Even occasional skipping leads to dramatically lower grades, and it sends the wrong message to teachers about your desire to succeed.
- **Ask your teachers for help.** Teachers should be helping struggling students, but sometimes it falls on you to ask for help. We know from our research that students do better in their courses when they trust their teachers and count on them for support.
- **Make academics your top priority.** This means trying hard on assignments even when they aren't interesting and choosing to study instead of socializing when there is a big test. Students with good study habits have higher grades and fail fewer courses than classmates who don't make homework a priority.
- **If you're having trouble getting to school** — and have challenges such as transportation, bullies, etc.— tell someone, such as a teacher, guidance counselor or your family. We have systems in place to help you and your whole family.

Backpacks

While all students have access to lockers to securely store their belongings, the use of backpacks is permitted throughout the school day.

Birthday Celebrations

*Fifth grade birthday celebrations are welcome on a day designated by the student's parents and teacher.

In an effort to minimize disruption, and not hurt the feelings of fellow students, parents are asked to:

- refrain from sending birthday party invitations to school for delivery.
- refrain from sending in pizza, cakes, etc., for consumption during lunch in the cafeteria.

Buses and Transportation

Students being transported to and from school by their parents should be dropped off or picked up at the side parking lot between 7:15 - 7:30 AM, and 2:10 - 3:00 PM to allow buses to enter the bus circle. It is permissible to enter the circle during other times of the day.

Students who walk to school must cross at the designated area. They should be very mindful of traffic, as Rt. 173 is busy and potentially dangerous. All students who would like to walk should have a parent/guardian note on file with our Secretary, Mrs. Goldthwaite.

Guidelines for Student Conduct on School Buses:

- Students are to be at their bus stop five minutes prior to bus arrival time.
- The bus driver is in charge of and responsible for the bus and all passengers.
- Students are to remain seated at all times.
- Drivers may require students to sit in assigned seats as necessary.
- Students are only allowed to ride the bus to and from their own stop. They may not use the bus to be transported to a friend's house.

Students who are the victim of inappropriate behavior when riding to or from school should immediately report the situation to the bus driver. Should the behavior continue, report the event to a school administrator.

IA Bus:

*Students who stay after school for legitimate reasons during the IA period are welcome to ride the IA bus home.

- Sign up for the IA bus in the Main Office prior to the 11th period of the day you are staying for IA.
- All students must sign up prior to taking the bus.

- Should the bus list be full, parents will need to arrange for alternate transportation. Parents are welcome to transport children home after IA.

Please be advised that the IA bus does not follow the regular bus route, so drop off points are in the vicinity of various streets. Your child may be walking a greater distance than normal to get home. New students should ask the driver for assistance as to the closest bus stop.

If your child does not arrive home when expected...

Do not panic! Experience has shown us that one of the following has most likely occurred:

- Your child stayed after school.
- The bus is running late.
- Your child is at a friend's house or received a ride from a friend.

Feel free to call the Main Office at 426-3400 and we will assist you in locating your child. Additional information may be obtained by calling the Westhill Transportation Center at 426-3030.

Cafeteria

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase one in the cafeteria. Monthly menus will be posted in each homeroom.

Students are expected to adhere to the following rules during lunch:

- Use appropriate manners.
- Keep conversations to a reasonable sound level.
- Clean up and dispose of all trash after eating.
- Follow all supervisors' instructions.

Inappropriate behavior may result in a written cafeteria notice sent home, and continued misbehavior will be referred to an administrator and will result in disciplinary action, which can include removal from the cafeteria.

Chromebooks

We are very fortunate to be able to offer 1:1 chromebooks for all students in grades 5-8. Please refer to the Westhill 1:1 Agreement Plan for more detailed information.

Students will be responsible for the proper care and safety associated with their device. The same standards of acceptable student conduct that apply to any school activity shall apply to use of the district computer system. Student data files and other electronic storage areas will be treated like school lockers. This means that electronic storage areas shall be considered to be school district property subject to control and inspection. Students should not expect information that is stored on the district system to be private.

Students in 5th and 6th grade are required to keep their chromebooks in school overnight on designated carts in their classrooms.

Students in 7th and 8th grade must bring their fully charged chromebooks with them to all of their classes.

In the event that a chromebook or charger is lost, stolen, or damaged, the student should notify their building principal. A loaner will be provided, but it may not be the same style device. The cost to replace or repair broken/lost chargers or stylus pens may be the responsibility of the student.

Communication

We all have a shared responsibility to support students as they learn and grow through their middle school years. Open lines of communication are critical as we work together through the many challenges and exciting experiences of your child's adolescence. There is an abundance of information available on our district website - including a detailed calendar of events and our daily building announcements. All of our staff can be contacted via email. Staff share important information via their Google Classrooms, so be sure to check your student's Google Classrooms for information about homework, tests, and projects. You can call our Main Office, Health Office, or Guidance Office to ask questions or get clarification on anything. Some staff members use ParentSquare to send text messages to your phone, and we often use ParentSquare to send important district communications. For more information and detailed directions to download ParentSquare, please visit our website.

Co-Curricular Eligibility Policy

Our Co-Curricular Eligibility Policy is under review as of the time of the printing of this handbook. It will be available for you to view beginning September 1st, 2022 on the district website.

Counseling Office

The Counseling Office hours are 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Mrs. Cortez will assist you in getting in touch with a counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker. The phone number is **426-3400, ext. 3431**. Parents that wish to meet with a school counselor should call first to make an appointment.

COVID-19

At the time of the printing of this handbook, the following procedures are in place for COVID-19:

- If you test positive, you must isolate for five days.
- If your symptoms are resolving and you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, you may return to school after five days.

- Upon returning to school, you must wear a well-fitting mask for days five-ten.

We are no longer contact tracing, so please monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19 and remain home if sick or symptomatic.

Masks are not required in school, but anyone is welcome to wear one at any point. We also have a limited supply of home tests, so please call the Main Office if you or your family would like a testing kit.

Emergency School Closing and Delayed Opening

If there is an emergency school closing, a message will be sent via email and ParentSquare to notify you. It will be announced on local radio and TV stations at approximately 6:30 a.m. In the instance where school opening is delayed, please observe the following:

- One hour delayed opening - School begins at 8:33. Students will go to their regular bus stops one hour later than regular time. School will be dismissed at the usual time.
- Two hour delayed opening - School begins at 9:33. Students will go to their bus stops two hours later than usual. School will be dismissed at the usual time.

Opening delays will also be announced by email/ParentSquare, local radio, and TV stations beginning at approximately 6:30 a.m.

Family or Home Crisis

The school is not always aware of problems at home that are affecting a student's progress. If a student is under stress from an illness, death in the family, or some other problem, the family is asked to contact the school counselor, school nurse, or building administrator. It is very important for a student to have someone at school who understands what they are going through. We have systems in place to support students and their families during difficult times.

Field Trips

If field trips are arranged by staff, students must submit a written permission form and, in some cases, emergency health form before attending field trips.

- Students are reminded that they represent Onondaga Hill Middle School during trips and that all school rules are in effect during school sanctioned field trips.
- Students who demonstrate persistent misbehavior or safety concerns may be excluded from participation.
- Students who do not wish to attend a class field trip are expected to attend school.
- **Students who bring their electronic devices are solely responsible for them, not the school or bus company.**

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held throughout the school year for preparation in the event of a real emergency.

Please adhere to the following guidelines during fire drills:

- Everyone must leave the building.
- Refrain from talking so instructions can be heard.
- Exit the building with your class in an orderly fashion.
- Stay with your class once outside of the building.
- Do not run.
- Do not stop at your locker, regardless of the weather.
- Once outside, walk well away from the building.
- At the end of the fire drill, return to class in a quiet, orderly manner.

Grade Reports and Honor Roll

6th, 7th, and 8th Grade report cards are issued on the Parent Portal at 10, 20, 30, and 40 weeks. 5th Grade report cards are mailed home on a trimester basis.

The following guidelines pertain to eligibility for the Honor Roll:

Honor Roll: A GPA of 85% or above with no failing grades in any subjects.

High Honor Roll: A GPA of 93% or above with no failing grades in any subjects.

NOTE: Class grades are calculated as a proportion of the number of days a class meets each term.

Health Office

The Health Office is open from 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Mrs. Amy Pendergast is the secretary (works 7:30-10:00 am) and will assist you in getting in touch with the nurse. The phone number is **426-3400, ext. 3422**.

Students should report to the Health Office when returning after an illness or when tardy. In both instances, your child will need a note.

If your child requires medication during the day, you will need to provide a doctor's note and a note from home describing this request.

If your child will be absent for an extended period of time (3 days or more), you may call for schoolwork and/or homework to be collected. However, for a 1-2 day illness, it is advised to use a buddy system for work collection.

Please call the Health Office if your child will be absent from school. If your child is not in school and the Health Office has not been notified by 9:00 a.m., we will begin

making calls to ascertain the whereabouts of your child. It is important for parents to update the Health Emergency cards so we know where to reach you in case of an illness or injury during the school day.

Instructional Assistance - IA

Monday through Thursday, all staff members are available to provide students with extra help and support from 2:20-2:55 pm. Students should take advantage of this opportunity to seek clarity on assignments or receive individualized support from staff.

A student who is struggling in multiple academic areas may be required to stay IA on a schedule with their teachers. Staff will coordinate this on a case-by-case basis. Failure to stay for a required IA period may result in an office referral.

Lockers

Lockers are provided for all students to store coats, books and personal items. The lockers are numbered and have a combination lock.

It is strongly recommended that students keep their locker combination to themselves to insure the safety of their belongings. It is also recommended that large sums of money or expensive personal items not be brought to school.

Any students having problems opening or closing their locker should notify their homeroom teacher or the Main Office immediately. Separate lockers are also available to band members for instrument storage.

Any student who intentionally causes damage to a locker will face disciplinary action and will be responsible for payment of the replacement or repair costs. Tampering with or attempting to enter the locker of another student calls for disciplinary action as well.

Lost and Found

People would be amazed at the numbers and kinds of items that are collected in the "lost and found" in each wing. If your child is missing an item, please make sure he/she checks the bins frequently. In most cases, items are not stolen and will eventually turn up in one of these locations. We strongly recommend that parents label clothing and personal items so they may be easily returned when misplaced. Parents are welcome to come in after school and check the lost and found.

Main Office

The Main Office hours are 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM. Office secretaries Mrs. Sheri Goldthwaite and Mrs. Lucia Vitale are ready and willing to assist you in any way possible. Oftentimes parents need to get an item, lunch, or project to their child. The Main Office is the drop off point. Please label the item with your child's name. In case

of an emergency or if you need to get an important message to your child, we will be happy to assist you.

Passes

When classes are in session, students are required to obtain a signed hall pass when leaving the classroom. Signed passes are also required for tardy arrivals to class. If a student would like to work with a teacher during their study hall to get extra help or make-up an assignment, they must have a pre-signed pass from the teacher.

Phones and Cell Phone Policy

There is a phone in each classroom should you need to leave a message for a teacher. If a student needs to make a phone call, they may use the phones in the Main Office. Cell phone use in the building is prohibited. Students needing to use a cell phone must do so in the main office. No electronic devices are allowed in the cafeteria.

The consequences for cell phone use are as follows:

- 1st offense: warning and/or detention
- 2nd offense: late detention

Earbuds/Headphones

We've seen an increase in the number of students who are bringing wireless/bluetooth earbuds/headphones to school. These items are prohibited as they cause a safety concern and disruption to the learning environment (unless directed by a teacher to use for a specific assignment).

The consequences for earbud/headphone use are as follows:

- 1st offense: warning and/or detention
- 2nd offense: late detention

Phone Communication

Teachers' phone extensions are listed on the website directory. Calls made directly to teachers are forwarded to an automated voice mail. Other district phone numbers can be found on the district website and in the district calendar.

Sports IA

Sports IA is designed to provide a supervised area for students who are staying after school for 3:00 practices. Usually held in the cafeteria, this time should be used wisely by students to complete homework. While students are permitted to socialize, they are expected to talk in a quiet voice, be considerate of those working, and follow the directions of the Sports IA supervisors.

Study Hall Behavior Expectations

Study halls are intended to function as quiet, orderly environments providing students the opportunity to read, study, work on school assignments and participate in quiet, structured activities. Students should be productive the entire period.

Students are expected to:

- Read for the first 20 minutes of study hall. Reading may be school or personal related. Books or periodicals are acceptable.
- Complete homework and study for upcoming tests.
- Bring necessary materials every day.
- Follow the study hall rules at all times.

Textbooks & Library Books

Textbooks are furnished, as needed, to students in the Westhill Central Schools and are very expensive to replace. Books are seldom “stolen” but regularly are misplaced. Students are advised to check at home carefully and retrace their steps at school should any textbook become missing.

Students are responsible for:

- The proper care of all books. In the case of excessive wear on textbooks, a fee will be collected.
- Returning all textbooks and library books at the end of the school year. Students must pay for any lost books.
- Checking classrooms or the lost and found boxes around the building to find missing books.

Visitors

All visitors to OHMS must enter through the main door and report to the Main Office. Visitors who will be staying should sign-in and wear a nametag.

Student Activities

Students are encouraged to take part in one of the many activities that Onondaga Hill Middle School has to offer. Sign ups and information will be made during the morning announcements.

Clubs

Clubs usually meet during the IA period - 2:20-2:55 pm. Previous clubs have included: Student Council, Math Club, School Newspaper, Yearbook Committee, Crafts and Laughs Club, French Club, Battle of the Books, Sustainability Club, Mindfulness Matters, Books and Bites, Chess Club, Makerspace Club, and Future Educators of America.

Intramurals - After School

The Intramural Program provides an opportunity for students in Grades 5-8 to participate in sports activities. There are a variety of sporting competitions held. These are scheduled during the IA period from 2:20- 2:55 PM and will be announced.

Modified Sports

The following district teams are provided for seventh and eighth grade students for the fall, winter and spring:

- Modified Football (Boys)
- Modified Soccer (Boys and Girls)
- Modified Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
- Modified Volleyball (Boys and Girls)
- Modified Basketball (Boys and Girls)
- Modified Baseball (Boys)
- Modified Softball (Girls)
- Modified Lacrosse (Boys and Girls)
- Golf (girls and boys may try out for high school teams)

Students who participate in Modified Sports are subject to the district's athletic policies including those regarding academic eligibility. Should you have any questions, you may contact the Athletic Director, Ms. Jennifer Smarelli at 426-3100.

Social Activities

Students at OHMS enjoy a variety of activities scheduled throughout the year. Consult the Westhill District Calendar for exact dates and times of these events. Some activities include:

- Spring Party/Dance
- Tubing Nights
- Bingo/Pizza Parties for 5th & 6th graders
- Annual Halloween Party for 7th & 8th graders, and classroom parties for 5th & 6th graders

Parents are asked to adhere to grade level requirements of all activities.

Students who demonstrate persistent misbehavior or safety concerns may be excluded from participation in activities.

Teacher Requests and Placement

Each spring, particularly at grades five and six, we receive a large number of parent requests for a particular teacher assignment or to avoid a particular teacher(s). In discussions with those parents, we often find those requests to be based upon neighborhood conversations about which teachers are "good" and which are not. Those who work daily in the middle school find most of those rumors and public assessments to be inaccurate.

Parent requests are difficult to grant. Assignment of students to particular classes and teachers is a complex process. Classes are formed to mirror the attributes of the grade level as a whole. We seek to balance each class with regard to a myriad of

factors including, but not limited to, gender, ability, behavior, and academic strengths/weaknesses. Specialized groups of students requiring resource support, special education or specialized related services are placed in particular classes to assure that their services may be scheduled without disruption to the academic program. Additionally, we factor in recommendations in regard to issues such as avoiding conflicts or distracting situations with other students.

It may not necessarily be in the best interest of individual students or the grade level as a whole to honor personal teacher requests. When only “personality” or “teaching style” are considered in placements, more educationally valid reasons are often overlooked. A very important component of the middle school experience and “coming of age” is for students to learn to deal effectively with individuals having diverse interests, backgrounds, temperaments and personalities. This, of course, includes their teachers.

Many parents who have made teacher requests have been surprised by matches that worked well and those that did not. In hindsight, many who have made requests in the past, admit to wishing they had left well enough alone. Students are generally resilient and adapt well to a variety of teaching styles and personalities. When there are problems, school counselors are experienced in dealing effectively with such matters. An early parent conference with a teacher often sets a positive tone for a successful experience.

Our general recommendation is to avoid the temptation of making specific teacher requests. However, there are a few unique cases in which it may be appropriate to request that a child not be assigned to a particular classroom. These might include a past conflict or neighborhood dispute with a particular student or teacher, a personal association that could possibly compromise the teacher-student relationship, and severe or ongoing problems with another student.

In these cases, our policy dictates that a request be made in writing to the middle school principal prior to the conclusion of the placement process in early June. The specific issues should be included. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis. Additional information may be requested before a final decision is rendered. Once a decision has been made, the parents will be notified.

Family & Community Activities

Meet the Teacher Night

“Meet the Teacher Night” is an annual event at OHMS held in early fall. Parents are provided the opportunity to follow their child’s schedule of classes through an

abbreviated “school day.” This is an informative event for parents, and we ask that students refrain from coming. Parents may arrange for future parent/teacher conferences during this evening.

Spring Open House

“Open House” is also an annual event at OHMS for parents and students. This event provides an opportunity for our students to showcase their learning and projects completed throughout the year.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are an excellent way for parents and teachers to work together to help ensure success in learning.

5th grade parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the Fall and on an as needed basis in the Spring. Please see the school calendar for the dates and/or times. 6th – 8th grade conferences are scheduled by the counselors and/or individual teachers on an as needed basis. Teachers or parents may initiate the conference by calling or emailing staff.

In an attempt to make the best use of conference time, we ask parents who are separated or divorced to make arrangements to attend one conference together, if possible.

Parent Council

Meeting Dates: Sep. 13, Nov. 15, Jan. 11, Mar. 15

Activities: Sponsor Parent Council Guest Speakers, provide a forum for parents, coordinate social opportunities for OHMS students such as the Halloween Party, bingo parties, Spring Dance, and moving-up festivities.

Functions: Enlighten parents with regard to parent/school related issues; provide and supervise Parent Council sponsored social activities for students; assist OHMS staff with various School activities; organize fundraisers that help defray costs for special programs to further educate our students in the Arts, and to help defray cost of student field trips.

Officers:

President – TBD

Vice President – Carrie Ellis/Kristin Pease

Treasurer– Shannon Chase

Secretary – Maureen Henesey

OHMS Code of Conduct

The following Code outlines various offenses on school property or at a school function and the consequences that may result at Onondaga Hill Middle School. Middle School students span a wide range of ages and developmental maturity. Therefore, consequences are decided on a case-by-case basis and may increase in their severity for chronic offenders who violate the same rule repeatedly, or who show disregard for many rules. **A complete copy of the Westhill Central School District Code of Conduct has been updated as of September 1st, 2022, and is available in the main office and on our website.**

Levels of Consequences for Behavior Related Offenses

Level I: Options may include:

- Conference with student
- Warning/verbal reprimand
- Time Out
- Communication with parent
- Teacher detention (2:20-2:55)
- Regular administrative detention (2:20-2:55)
- Loss of privileges
- Restitution in accordance with law, from the parent/guardian and/or student for any costs or damages incurred by the District as a result of the student's misconduct.
- Referral to counseling staff

Level II - Options may include:

- Administrative late detention (2:20-4:00) if mutually agreed upon with parents to provide transportation at 4:00 pm. Otherwise, an equivalent amount of regular detentions will be assigned (three).
- Administrative hearing
- Loss of transportation privileges
- Removal from class
- 1-2 day out of school suspension

Level III- Options may include:

- 3-5 days out-of-school suspension
- Superintendent's Hearing

Level IV - Options may include:

- Expulsion

General Offenses

These items refer to behavior that disrupts the educational process or interferes with the teacher's authority in the classroom. Cursing, swearing and the use of other vulgar language is not permitted, nor is attire that is deemed offensive or disruptive.

General disruptive behavior	Level I - II
Inappropriate attire	Level I - II
Use of profanity	Level I - II

Attendance Related

These items refer to students who are late or absent from classes for unexcused reasons. Students must bring absence excuses from home any time they miss all or part of a school day. Students are never permitted to leave school grounds during regular school hours, unless being picked up by a parent or guardian and we have a note on file.

Unexcused tardiness to class	Level I - II
Unexcused tardiness to school	Level I - II
Cutting class	Level I - II
Truancy from school	Level II
Failure to bring in absence excuses	Level I - II
Leaving school grounds without permission	Level II - III

Interaction With Others

Respect is earned by the way a student responds to the teachers and classmates. Students who treat others with respect will undoubtedly earn the respect of their teachers and peers. Students are not to threaten, intimidate, bully, make statements that may harm the reputation of others, or make others feel uncomfortable in the school setting.

Disrespect to a peer	Level I - II
Disrespect to a staff member	Level II - III
Harassment/Bullying, threatening of peers	Level I - IV
Cyberbullying	Level I - IV
Excessive public displays of affection	Level I - II
Defamation	Level I - II
Endangerment	Level I - II
Acts of intimidation	Level I - III
Hazing	Level I - IV

Insubordination

Students may not refuse to follow reasonable requests of teachers, staff or administration. Staff members deserve to be shown respect at all times.

Disrespect toward a staff member	Level II - III
Insubordination	Level I - III
Failure to identify oneself to a staff member	Level I - III
Failure to serve assigned consequences	Level I - II

Possession or Use

The use or possession of tobacco products, lighters, alcohol, narcotics, firearms, or other dangerous weapons is strictly forbidden on school grounds, buses, school buildings, and school functions. Students who bring in other substances with the intent to fraudulently sell or claim as a narcotic, are also in violation of this Code. The dispensing of any over-the-counter medications must be arranged with the school nurse. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary consequences. Students are not to bring in any item which is deemed to be disruptive to the educational process.

Alcohol and other Substance Use/Abuse	Level III - IV
Possession of fireworks	Level II - III
Possession or use of tobacco products	Level I - II
Possession of a weapon	Level III - IV
Violation of medication policies	Level I - II
Possession of substance for "drug related" purpose	Level II - III
Possession of disruptive items	Level I - II

Aggressive Behavior

These items refer to unwanted and inappropriate verbal, written, or physical contact directed toward another person, including that of a sexual nature. Hostile confrontation between two or more students will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment	Level I - IV
Harassment of a peer or staff member	Level I - IV
Fighting	Level II - IV
Assault	Level II - IV

Miscellaneous: These items vary in severity:

Loitering	Level I-II
Trespassing	Level II-III
Theft	Level II-III
Gambling	Level I-II
Abuse of School Property	Level I-II
Vandalism	Level II-III
Cheating, academic dishonesty, plagiarism	Level I-III
Inappropriate cafeteria behavior	Level I-II

Inappropriate bus behavior	Level I-II
Indecent exposure	Level II-III
Arson	Level III-IV
Bomb threats	Level III-IV
Intentionally reporting a false alarm	Level III-IV
Violation of district computer policy	Level I-II

Dress Code

Our dress code is being updated by a group of family, community, student and staff stakeholders. An updated policy will be available on our district website on September 1st, 2022.

Dignity for All Students: Prohibiting Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination

Please review on the District Website as needed.