The OSS Mission
Our mission, as an independent, tuition-free, non-sectarian middle school, is to educate and inspire economically disadvantaged girls from the New Bedford area. Our Sisters' School empowers girls to step into the future with valuable life skills and a mindset of achievement and excellence by providing a safe, supportive, and academically challenging environment.

The OSS Vision
Our Sisters' School is an independent tuition-free day school for girls in Grades 5-8, providing a safe, supportive, and challenging educational program for students of all faiths in the New Bedford area. Founded by a coalition of residents from the South Coast region interested in education, OSS seeks to foster the academic competence, social confidence, cultural proficiency, intellectual curiosity, integrity, and hope of its students, and to nurture in a small school setting the full potential of their whole character. Our goal is to help girls become lifelong learners who will contribute productively to the world they inherit. The School's faculty and staff work closely with the students' families and other volunteers, building ties between school and community and developing the kinds of personal and institutional support that will ensure the continuing success of OSS students in high school, college, and later life.

A Little Bit of History
Our Sisters' School was established in 2007 by a group of professional, community-minded individuals desiring to improve educational opportunities for young women in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Our doors opened to the first group of students in 2008 and welcomed a group of 5th and 6th graders, who bravely led the way and were inspired by the legacy of Sister Sailors before them. The name of our humble yet powerful school traces back to New Bedford's historic whaling era, when it was uncommon for women to join seafaring whaling crews on extended voyages. Known as Sister Sailors, these brave women were seeking, on the far-flung oceans of the world, precisely what the Sister Students of New Bedford are seeking today: to sail beyond familiar horizons into unknown oceans of adventure, learning and possibility. Sister sailors then, Sister students today. Tomorrow? Sister Teachers, Sister Doctors, Sister Scientists, Sister Artists, Sister Journalists, Sister Leaders! Everything is possible!
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2019-2020 Our Sisters’ School Calendar

July:
July 6: Cape Verdean Parade, 9am at OSS. Parade starts at 11am at Buttonwood Park
July 8: Begin 6 weeks of scheduled summer homework tutoring (ending Aug 20)

August:
August 6: Begin formal staff orientation for new staff
August 12: Begin all staff orientation
August 14 and 15: Uniform Fittings ALL grades, 4-6pm
August 14: Mandatory New Family Orientation 5:30-7pm
August 15: Mandatory Returning Family Orientation 5:30-7pm
August 20: End summer tutoring program; Summer Homework due before 5pm
August 27-28: Student Council Retreat

September: Latinx Heritage Month 9/15-10/15
September 2: Labor Day, No School
September 3-5: Grades 7 & 8 to Driftwood (8am depart OSS, return the 5th by 1:30pm)
September 5-7: Grades 5 & 6 to Driftwood (12:00pm depart OSS, return the 7th by 1:30pm)
September 10: 1st day back in the building; 4:15 dismissal this week September 11: OSS to CBC begins tomorrow with 7th grade
September 13: OSS In the Wind or Water Day
September 16: Secondary School Program Planning Meeting for all 7th and 8th-grade parents and students 5:30-6:30
September 16: 2018-19 Tri 3 Honors and High Honors awards at Community Meeting
September 16: Evening Study Hall begins, 5:15pm dismissal, daily M-Th
September 20: Club Introduction for the year - Choose T1 Clubs
September 24: Secondary School Fair at Alma del Mar, mandatory for all 7th and 8th-grade students and their families. 6:00-7:30pm

October: Latinx Heritage Month 9/15-10/15
October 3: Mandatory Back to School Night, 5:15-6:30 pm
October 4: Begin T1 Clubs
October 7: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
October 11: September and October all school Birthday Celebration with Pace Passes
October 14: No School, Indigenous Peoples’ Day
October 15: No School, Professional Work Day
October 17: Fall Festival
October 18: Mid-Trimester progress reports distributed
October 21-25: STEAM Week
October 25: School Picture Day (School uniforms expected)
October 29: SSAT Practice Test for grade 8 (morning)
October 31: Shift from CBC sailing to CBC Winter Program until Jan 17th
**November:** Native American Heritage Month
November 4: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
November 4, 12, 18: 7th and 8th graders visit many local high schools during the school day
November 5: NB schools kitchen closed, OSS students pack own lunch
November 7: PTO meeting, OSS Library, 5:30pm
November 8: Select Tri 2 clubs at community meeting
November 11: Veterans Day Observed, No School
November 12, 18: 7th and 8th graders visit many local high schools during the school day

**November 14: Mandatory Family Meeting 4:15-5:15**
November 15: T1 Clubs End
November 15: Trimester 1 Ends – Grades Close
November 18: 7th and 8th graders visit many local high schools during the school day
November 19: SSAT for 8th grade (morning)
November 22: Professional Work Day, No School
November 25: 7th annual Attitude of Gratitude Dinner for all alumnae and Grade 8, 5-7:30pm
November 26: Self e-STEAM conference
November 26: T1 report cards go home today in Friday Folders
November 27: No School, Thanksgiving Break (school resumes Dec 2)

**December:** Human Rights Month
December 2: Back to School, 7:45am; Begin T2 Clubs
December 2-6: Secondary School Applications Focus Week for 8th grade
December 6: Nov. and Dec. all school Birthday Celebration with Pace Passes
December 6: T2 Clubs chosen - display of T1 work?
December 9: Tri 1 Honors and High Honors awards+ at Community Meeting
December 11: Student Conferences, 3:15pm dismissal
December 12: Student Conferences, 3:15pm dismissal
December 13: Student Conferences by appointment, No School
December 16: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
December 20: Holiday Performance Showcase 3:00-4:00pm, 4:15pm dismissal
December 23: No School, Begin Winter Break

**January:**
January 6: No School, Professional Development Day
January 7: Back to School, 7:45am
January 10: T2 Clubs Begin
January 14: SSAT practice test for 7th grade (morning)
January 20: No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 20: All-School MLK Day Service Project (optional)
January 21: No School, Professional Work Day
January 22: Begin Zoo+ winter programming until April 16th
January 23: Variety Show 4:15-6pm
January 27: Bring a 4th Grader to OSS Day
January 27: NB schools kitchen closed, OSS students pack own lunch
January 27: Mid-Trimester progress reports distributed
January 30: PTO meeting, OSS Library, 5:30pm
**February:** Black(er) History Month

**February 6: Mandatory Family Meeting, 4:15 – 5:15pm**
February 7: January and February all school Birthday Celebration 11:15 with Pace Passes

February 10-14: Spirit Week
February 10: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
February 14: Winter Carnival
February 17-21: **No School,** February Vacation
February 24: Back to school, 7:45 am
February 27: Humanities Showcase 4:15pm-5:15pm
February 28: Tri 2 ends - Grades Close

**March:** Women’s History and Climate Justice Months
March 6: T3 Clubs chosen during community meeting, T2 Cubs Ends
March 9 -10: NELMS conference field trip w. Eugenio+
March 14 or 28: MaBaCh, 9am-2pm; the Friday before MaBaCh is an OSS 11:45 dismissal
March 16: **No School,** Professional Work Day
March 16-19: Spring Fling evening activities for OSS alumnae
March 20: 2nd Trimester report cards go home in Friday Folders
March 20: Senior Appreciation Dinner, 8th grade and high school seniors, 4:15
March 20: Begin T3 Clubs
March 27: Tri 2 Honors and High Honors awards+ at Community Meeting

**April:** Climate Justice and Poetry Months
April 6: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
April 9: Student Service Hours Due
April 10: **No School,** Good Friday
April 13: March and April all school Birthday Celebration with Pace Passes
April 16: End Zoo+ winter programing
April 16: **Science Fair, 3:45 – 5:15pm. (Mandatory for all students)**
April 17: Volunteer Luncheon
April 20-24: **No School,** Spring School Vacation
April 27: **No School,** Professional Work Day
April 28: Back to School at 7:45am
April 28: All school shift back to CBC Sailing
April 30: PTO meeting, OSS Library, 5:30pm

**May:** Asian American Heritage Month
May 3: Annual OSS Car Wash 11-2pm (no rain date)
May 4-8: Teacher Appreciation Week

**May 7: Mandatory Family Meeting, 4:15 – 5:15pm**
May 8: Mid-Trimester Progress Reports distributed
May 12: SSAT for 7th grade (the real one)
May 15: Professional Work Afternoon, **11:45 am Dismissal**
May 15: Tentative Nativity Dance 7-9pm
May 18: Tool Belt Awards at Community Meeting
May 21 and May 22: OSS Festival of Arts and Achievement
May 25: **No School**, Memorial Day  
May 26: All building morning cleanup post FAA  
May 29: Portfolios due, T3 Clubs End  
May 30: Saturday Work Day for Portfolio Finish-ups

**June:** Pride Month  
June 3: Portfolio Presentations; **3:15pm dismissal**  
June 4: Portfolio Presentations; **3:15pm dismissal**  
June 4: Last day at CBC for the school year  
June 5: Portfolio Presentations by appointment; **no school**  
June 5: Tri 3 ends - Grades close but can still be impacted before report cards are finalized  
June 8th: Community Core Closing Fire Ceremony during Community Meeting  
**Week of June 8:** **Begin 11:45am Dismissal**  
June 8: Summer homework distributed to grades 5-7  
June 9: 8th Grade Graduation, 5:30 – 6:30pm  
June 10: Last day of School: Field Day, Yearbooks, May-August all-school birthday celebration with Pace Passes  
June 10: End of School Family Picnic, 12 – 2:00pm. Be there!  
June 15-17: June School 9am-12 noon  
June 22: Trimester 3 Report Cards mailed home

*This calendar is subject to change

**Mandatory Events and Meetings:**  
Aug. 14 or 15: New or Returning Family Orientation  
Oct. 3: Mandatory Back to School Night  
Nov. 14: Mandatory Family Meeting  
Feb. 6: Mandatory Family Meeting  
May 7: Mandatory Family Meeting  
*Families assigned an extra 2 hours of OSS service for any missed Mandatory Events or Meetings, regardless of the reason.

**HIGHLY Highly Suggested:**  
Dec. 20: Holiday Performance Showcase  
Feb. 27: Humanities Showcase  
Apr 16: Science Fair  
May 3: Car Wash  
May 4-8: Teacher Appreciation Week  
May 21 and May 22: OSS Festival of Arts and Achievement  
June 10: End of School Family Picnic
Our Sisters’ School Core Values

As teachers and students working together toward our mission, we are guided by four key values: Community, Citizenship, Leadership and Excellence. These values, and examples of the ways in which they infuse each aspect of the OSS experience, are outlined below.

**Community** is at the heart of why we’re here. Our Sisters’ School was founded by a team of community-minded citizens who chose to invest in the economically disadvantaged girls of New Bedford. They know that helping middle school girls realize their potential creates a ripple effect of benefits – raising local achievement levels, elevating standards and expectations, and improving prospects across the community.

As an all-girls school, ineligible for state funding, we rely on our community’s generous support to carry on our work. The community sustains us in other ways as well, populating our executive board, providing academic coaching, leading clubs and sports - all on a volunteer basis. Our community ties are also strengthened by partnerships with parents and families and by our alliances with other area nonprofits.

Our students know that their community values them, and they return this generous spirit through the second of our four core values: Citizenship.

**Citizenship** is lending a hand to do what needs to be done. In addition to academic aspirations, Our Sisters’ School promotes Citizenship values such as honesty, integrity, empathy, respect for others, diversity, and community service. Citizenship reflects our students’ deep sense of responsibility. They know what needs to be done, and they do it.

Whether it is serving as a mentor or advocate, interning at a local organization, or participating in Community Core Advisory, our students gain confidence, experience, and inspiration by giving back. Having regular opportunities to share their gifts with others helps students further develop as active members of their community, responsible citizens, and role models for others.

This commitment to Citizenship creates a strong foundation for the third of our four core values: Leadership.

**Leadership** is seeing, showing, and paving a better way. If we could, we would offer a classroom seat to every middle school girl in our area who wants to attend. However, limitations require us to prioritize and select among applicants. In addition to passing literacy and math assessments, successful candidates possess what we call the “eye of the tiger.” By that we mean that they convey a focused determination and an attentive eagerness. They see promise in the future and have passion for what they and others can achieve.

During their time at Our Sisters’ School, our students are empowered by a “growth mindset” that links success to their own aspirations, through effort and courage. Students learn that acting with confidence is how we build confidence; it’s how we learn, grow, and succeed. As
leaders, our students take responsibility for gaining the skills and experiences that the pursuit of their dreams will require.

Leadership paves the way for the fourth of our four core values: Excellence.

**Excellence** is achieving mastery, one step at a time. Excellence is both the pinnacle and the foundation of our journey. It is what we want to achieve, and how we achieve it, step-by-step. At Our Sisters’ School, we promote excellence through what we call our ABC’s - clear, compelling, uncompromising standards for Academic, Behavioral, and Community performance. We also cultivate excellence through a focus on Deeper Learning competencies such as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication and collaboration.

Anchored by a student-centered philosophy, our belief is that excellence requires all students to have a voice in their learning and to find meaning in their work. Our teaching strategies are designed to maximize the classroom learning experience, leveraging hands-on activities, cooperative learning and individualized, expressive tasks to achieve conceptual understanding of skills. While addressing academic skills and standards, we teach students how to learn effectively, to self-manage, and to self-assess.

When students graduate from OSS, we know they are stepping into the future with valuable skills, tools, and mindsets of achievement and excellence.

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**The ABC’s of Student Expectations**

**Academic**
- Master the fundamental academic skills needed to continue their education and pursue jobs that provide financial independence and personal gratification.
- Develop the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, use of technology, etc.
- Develop communication and interpersonal skills that are essential in both independent and collaborative situations.
- Develop intellectual curiosity and skills to benefit from learning opportunities throughout life.

**Behavioral**
- Demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
- Feel confident in managing academic, social and emotional challenges for successful outcomes.
- Behave with integrity and compassion.
- Embrace diversity.

**Community**
- Become active members of their community and responsible citizens.
- Support the OSS community by serving as a mentor, volunteer, advocate and
ambassador for OSS alumnæ and students.

- Demonstrate leadership in their communities by being a role model for friends, family and community.

THE OSS SCHOOL DAY

School Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday: 7:45am to 5:15pm
(Breakfast is served at 7:30 and OSS cannot offer supervision of students inside or outside the building before that time.)

Friday: 8:30am to 4:15pm

Tardiness:
Any student who has not entered the building and/or is not prepared to begin the day before 7:45am Monday–Thursday, and 8:30am on Fridays must report to the school office to sign in, and they will be marked tardy. Families are expected to accompany their student into the front office to co-sign when a student is more than 15 minutes tardy. (As soon as a family realizes a student will arrive tardy, a phone call to the school’s front office is appreciated.)

Unless there are special circumstances approved by the administration, students who are tardy more than ten times or are absent from school more than six days in any one school year will be referred for a conference to consider the appropriateness of continuing as a student at OSS. We closely track tardiness at OSS as a training tool for secondary schools, where student promptness is always enforced.

Absences:
If a student must be absent, a parent or guardian should notify the School each morning that the student will be absent. Students should not be the ones to communicate their own absences.

Absences are excused in the case of illness, emergency, or when the School grants that it is in the best interest of the student to miss school and the student is in good standing with the school.

A note from the student’s parent/guardian explaining the absence is required for the student to be permitted to return to school. If a student is absent for more than 3 consecutive days for a medical reason, a doctor’s note must be included for the absence to be excused, otherwise a parent note is adequate. Students are responsible for completing all work missed and should proactively ask a teacher or a classmate for details so it can be completed promptly upon their return to school.

Families are required to request permission for a student to be absent for unusual circumstances, such as family travel. The family must complete an Official OSS Time Out of School Request Form **four weeks** prior to the start of the requested vacation. Families that fail to complete the request form 4 weeks prior to travel, or do not have the request officially
granted by the Head of School will be required to complete additional Family Service Hours billed at 1 hour per day the student is absent. It is a burden on the School to accommodate student absences, so a formal request to the Head of School via the Official Request form is essential. **Accordingly, unless discussed and approved in advance by the Head of School, students are not excused from school for anything other than a family or medical emergency.**

The Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 76, Section 2) specifies that a student under sixteen years of age may not be absent more than seven (7) unexcused days of scheduled school in any six (6) month period. Families/ guardians are required under the law to ensure regular school attendance of their children and are subject to penalty by fine for failure to comply with the law. **Chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness reflect a serious academic problem that may warrant expulsion from the school.**

**Early Dismissal Protocol:** Families/guardians must come to the main office to sign out a student for early dismissal. In order for a dismissal to be excused, there must be a medical reason, family emergency, or special permission given from the administration. If a student is dismissed for a medical appointment, upon return to school, the student must bring a doctor’s note for the dismissal to be excused. Students will NOT be dismissed early on an ongoing basis without permission from the Head of School.

Students currently on high honor roll and those who are selected or given permission by the Head of School may be released early in order to pursue opportunities “off campus”.

**Transportation**

Families/guardians must make arrangements to have their children dropped off **before 7:45 AM Monday–Thursday and before 8:30 AM on Friday** and to have their children picked up at **5:15 PM Monday–Thursday and 4:15 PM on Friday**.

Please consult the OSS Family Directory if you need to contact other families to arrange for alternative transportation for your child. In order to ensure that carpooling is safe and efficient, we ask families to notify the main office and confirm with the driver that they will indeed arrive on time and be prepared to bring your child home. To ensure safety, if you are carpooling outside of the OSS community, you must register the new driver with OSS and make sure all parties give consent to the new driver.

Families are expected to pick up their student promptly at dismissal. In the event that a family is late picking up their student, the family will be given a 15 minute grace period, then billed in 15 minute increments for any time thereafter at $15.00 per hour. This accrued amount can be “paid” off by working extra Family Service Hours or monetarily paid off at the end of the school year. The total amount due will be calculated by OSS staff. to staff members who extend their day to provide this extra supervision.

**Morning Drop-Off Protocol:** Drop-Off occurs over approximately 15 minutes and typically does not have OSS staff outside to supervise, therefore adult drivers are asked to be vigilant.
about student safety.

- Vehicles should ALWAYS be in a single file and NEVER drive around another vehicle. Please wait until the line moves before driving forward.
- The first 3 cars in line may release their students and students are to walk IN FRONT of their own vehicles and to the walkway to the school.
- If you or your student need more than 20 seconds to exit the vehicle (i.e., they have to get a large project from the trunk, have to collect belongings from around the vehicle, Friday Folder still needs to be signed, etc), please park your vehicle and attend to what you need, then get back in the Drop-Off lane.

* Note, OSS doors open at 7:30am and not before. If you must drop your student off before 7:30, they will be unsupervised and will have to wait outside until 7:30am.

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** Morning Drop-Off Diagram **

- Entrance
  - Vehicles carefully drive single file and **DO NOT pass** other vehicles with exiting students!!

- Exit
  - **Cars move through the turn one at a time**
  - Vehicles pull to the side and park if their student is not ready to quickly exit their vehicle!

- Our Sisters’ School

** Dismissal Protocol:**

Vehicles should create 2 lanes in both parking lots to prevent vehicles from having to be parked on Hawthorne Street. Note: this is DIFFERENT from drop off- where we only have 1 lane.

- Students and supervising staff will walk between the 2 lanes of cars and students will
enter their vehicles as they pass.

- **Vehicles should remain parked and completely still when students are walking in the lot.** This is imperative for student safety! Even if there is a “gap” between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you, please keep your vehicle parked until an OSS staff releases the line.
- Vehicles are expected to exit onto Hawthorn Street after passing the front door of the school. Vehicles are not permitted to use the “escape hatch” around the synagogue.

**End of School Day Dismissal Diagram**

- Entrance
  - Vehicles line up side by side
  - Cars move through the turn one at a time, rotating between each line

- Exit
  - Vehicles line up side by side

**Note, for safety reasons, students are not allowed to enter cars that are on Hawthorn Street. Cars should avoid waiting on Hawthorn Street by creating double lines on both sides of the parking lot.**

- **Our Sisters’ School**

  *Escape Hatch* **
  *Cars are NOT PERMITTED to exit here*

**Students in cars that violate our prescribed and agreed upon traffic patterns for either Drop-Off or Dismissal will serve Silent Reflections on behalf of their drivers.**

**Family Involvement**

Everyone involved with OSS contributes time, energy, and talent to our success. Families play a critical role in partnering with OSS to provide a quality educational experience for all students. Students and their families/guardians sign an agreement letter indicating their full commitment to the goals of OSS, and to high academic and personal standards. Demonstrated commitment is a condition of continued enrollment at OSS. **Families are expected to contribute to the OSS community by:**
Family Service Program:

1. Families are required to commit to a minimum of 15 hours of service per academic year. This only includes service to the School (community service outside of the school i.e., volunteering at church or a community organization, does not count towards Family Service Hours).

2. Any service to the School or tasks that directly impact the school qualify as family service hours. Families can participate by helping to keep our building clean, working in the office, helping put together classroom materials for teachers, etc.

3. Family service hours must be scheduled with the School prior to completion. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Margaret McSweeny to schedule service hours.

4. Family Service Hours must be recorded in the Family Service Log in the office or shared with Mrs. McSweeny via email and confirmed by an OSS staff member. It is the family’s responsibility to correctly record their hours.

5. Some types of family service will require the completion of background checks; please check with the Volunteer Coordinator for more information. Our Volunteer Coordinator will be more than happy to work with families finding times and tasks that are mutually suitable.

6. Each “academic year” of family service begins July 1st and runs through mid May of the following year. This is done with the expectation that families with balances will pay or work off the remaining hours before the last day of school.

7. Failure to meet this requirement will jeopardize your student’s invitation to return to OSS for the following school year. The School places a high value on community participation.

8. Unless you are coordinating the event and have pre-approval from the school administration, participation in fundraising and community service events do not count toward family service hours.

9. Family Service Hours that are not completed by the end of June will be billed at $15/hr. Transcripts and report cards will be withheld from families whose balances are not zeroed out.

Volunteer Drivers:
OSS regularly asks for volunteer family drivers to transport students for field trips or internships. All volunteer drivers must have a current CORI check, a valid driver’s license, proof of current insurance for the vehicle they will be driving, and an acceptable driving record. They must further understand that they are only protected by their own insurance policies.

Regular Family Meetings:
Our regular family meetings allow us to embrace the input of our families as we develop our school program. It is mandatory that every student have a parent/guardian or family representative (over the age of 18) present at every meeting. Check the calendar for
meeting dates and times. **Families who fail to attend mandatory family meetings will be expected to complete 2 additional service hours for each meeting missed**, regardless of explanation or reasoning. Family representatives checking in 15 minutes or later after the start time of the Family Meetings will not receive credit for attendance to that meeting and will be billed accordingly.

**Annual Activities Fee:**
Our Annual Activities Fee is the annual contribution families commit to our school. Families will contribute the equivalent of $25.00 per month for the ten months of the school year ($250.00 total per year) for each child attending Our Sisters’ School. Payment should be made in full at the START of the school year; prior to students departing for Driftwood Camp. In difficult circumstances, alternative plans can be made with the Head of School. **Report cards and transcripts are not released for students whose accounts are not at a zero balance.**

If the Annual Activity Fee creates a significant financial hardship for your family, please contact the Head of School to discuss the possibility of other arrangements.

**Food at OSS**
**Healthy Choices:**
Children benefit from eating healthy foods. **Fast-food, soda, coffee and sugary snacks are prohibited.** A few cookies or a small amount of chips are acceptable, but please keep it reasonable.

**Water Bottles:**
Reusable water bottles are highly encouraged and can be brought in from home or purchased from the school for $2.00. Water bottles can be refilled throughout the day at the school’s water bottle filling station. Single-use plastic bottles are strongly discouraged.

**Breakfast:**
Students have the option of enjoying a free breakfast delivered from the New Bedford Public School System, or eating breakfast at home before coming to school. Please help your child make healthy dietary choices. Research has shown that children who regularly eat breakfast have better behavior and academic success than children who skip breakfast. Healthy breakfast options often include: eggs, whole grain toast, fresh fruit, low-sugar yogurt, and whole grain cereals. Breakfast begins at 7:30 Monday through Thursday, and at 8:00 am on Fridays (provided that a parent volunteer supervises Friday breakfast).

**Lunch:**
Students have the option of enjoying a free lunch delivered from the New Bedford Public School System, or bringing their own lunch from home. If choosing to order a lunch, students must be present during homeroom to submit their order. Otherwise, they will be expected to come prepared with their own lunch. Lunches are stored in student lockers and there are no microwaves available to warm food. OSS will provide forks for all students to use during lunchtime. If your student packs a lunch that requires a utensil other than a fork, they must bring that utensil from home.
Where can students be, and what can they do during lunch?
1. In the Community Room
2. Outside (with supervision)
3. In the library browsing very very very quietly for a book
4. Serving a Silent Reflection in the 5th grade classroom
5. In the bathroom, using the toilet or sink appropriately
6. In the hallway getting a drink or moving efficiently to locker for coat to outside, or reverse
7. On a rainy day, teachers will announce where they will be hosting supervision and/or activities that may be additional to the above standard options.

Evening Snack:
Students are encouraged to bring a light snack to enjoy in the beginning of Evening Study times, Monday through Thursday from 4:15-4:30pm. Snacks should be quick, tidy and healthy ex: fruit, cheese sticks or non-sugary granola or cereal bars (Nutella is NOT considered healthy)

Breakfast and lunch are to be enjoyed in the Community Room, not in the classrooms. Ants are drawn to crumbs so snacks are not to be enjoyed while travelling in the hallways.

Drinks in classes: Water is the ONLY drink permitted in classrooms, and students are strongly encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle to school. Our environmental focus discourages use of disposable (even recyclable) one-time-use bottles.

Drinks at lunch: Students are allowed juice and sports drinks at lunch only. Soda and caffeinated drinks are never allowed at school, nor are Dunkin’ beverages such as hot cocoa or coffee.

*OSS provides free breakfast and lunch through the New Bedford Public School System. We appreciate the resources that come to us and will serve them even though they create a lot of trash through juice and cereal containers. Our goal is to manage a feasible strategy for recycling more and more over time. Along these lines, when we host family picnics, we appreciate that paper or recyclable plates and/or utensils be provided. Styrofoam plates, for example, are not recyclable and are not biodegradable.

Homeroom

Students are expected to enter their homeroom focused on getting ready for the day. A silent reflection may be assigned if a student is distracting to others. Students should unload belongings from their backpack. The homeroom teacher will check for any uniform infraction and handle it swiftly and politely. Lunch orders will be taken and promptly delivered to the front office along with notes, Friday Folders, and other materials as appropriate. Attendance will be loaded into Gradelink.

What do students do once they are organized for the day?
1. Check their OSS email
2. Review for any upcoming tests or quizzes
3. Use Chromebooks to print out homework (homeroom is NOT a time to complete
homework assignments)
4. Make a quick trip to the bathroom

Homework

Homework is an integral part of an OSS education, and will be assigned daily, and often over the weekends and school vacations. Each student should carefully record all homework assignments in her agenda when it is announced. OSS students could be expected to dedicate an additional 1.5 hours to the careful completion of their homework assignments.

Consequences for missing assignments are up to each individual teacher’s discretion. Teachers will refer students to the Head of School for a family conference if a student routinely struggles to complete homework.

Evening Study

All students are required to attend Evening Study four nights per week - except for students who are currently on the High Honor Roll, or who have received special permission ahead of time by the Head of School (it is the family’s responsibility to contact the Head of School in advance to request special permission). Evening Study is supervised by OSS faculty and volunteers from 4:15pm to 5:15pm, Monday through Thursday, and is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To provide a very quiet, comfortable, safe, and productive environment for students to complete their homework assignments.
- To provide academic coaching for students having difficulty with their schoolwork and assignments.

Expectations for Evening Study:

Arrival:
1. Students enter quietly and get straight to work at their desks as close to 4:15pm as they can.
2. Students may snack during Evening Study Hall at the discretion of the supervising staff.
3. Students will tidy their desks and make sure there is no remaining trash at their desks prior to departure.

Dismissal:
1. Evening Study ends promptly in time for our 5:15 dismissal when “cars should be rolling.” Cleanup needs to be as rapid as possible - right before 5:15- so that students maximize work time, clean thoroughly and depart the building on time.
2. Chromebooks need to be in the cart, plugged in, and accounted for. All students are responsible for their own Chromebook.
3. Students tidy their classroom before being dismissed; personal belongings need to be collected and the floor needs to be either vacuumed or “human vacuumed”, depending on need and time.
4. Lights are turned off, windows are closed, and the students line up quietly in the hallway until they are dismissed.
5. The homeroom teacher then follows the class outside, through the passage of cars, and back up to the front door, ensuring students get safely into proper cars.
6. Supervisors will ensure appropriate student behavior and will let the Head of School know if expectations are not met. Supervisors will let the Head of School know if a child’s ride is more than 15 min late for pick up.

**Student Community Service Program**

All OSS students are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of service to the community per academic year. Students may begin accumulating hours on July 1st, and all 15 hours must be completed in early April. Students who do not complete their community service hours in early April will be assigned an additional three hours of service to be completed by the end of the same school year.

Students are introduced to community service activities through the school’s Community Service Program (CSP). Throughout the year OSS will partner with programs in the city to support students with opportunities to complete their community service hours. In order for a student to attend school-led service activities, they must have pre-registered and have a signed permission slip. Students should not rely solely on school-led opportunities to complete all 15 hours necessary. If a student or family RSVP to attend a service opportunity, it is expected that they do indeed attend or that they communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator before the scheduled event. If a “no-show” occurs, the student will be assigned a Silent Reflection. If a “no-show” occurs to an event that had limited spaces, the student will be assigned a Silent Reflection and will be required to complete an additional hour of service.

Students are encouraged to independently complete community service hours through activities that match their interests and provide more in-depth experiences. **When students complete community service hours independent from the school-led service activities, they must have the Community Service Form filled out by an authorized representative of the program in which they are participating. This cannot be an immediate family member. The form must then be returned to the main office or to Mrs. McSweeny via email in order for their service to be counted. The expectation is that the form is turned in the month the service was completed. Copies of the Community Service Form can be found in the main office.** Activities that students are paid to complete or activities for immediate family members do not count toward community service hours. If you are unsure if an activity will count towards community service hours, contact Mrs. McSweeny before the activity to check.

**To help ensure prompt completion, if students’ service hours are not logged in full by a date in early April -specified by the service coordinator-, three additional hours will be added to the total number of hours due. All service hours must be completed before a student may graduate or advance to the next grade.**
School Dress Code
Students should come to school prepared to focus on learning. Our goal is to focus on education and enrichment without distractions from clothing that may negatively affect student learning.

If a student is not in compliance with the dress code, the student will receive a silent reflection and/or will be asked to hand the item (necklace, sweatshirt etc.) to their teacher or to the Head of School until the end of the school day.

Finances should never prevent a student from being in uniform, and OSS will help families in need. Families for whom purchasing the uniform would add financial strain should contact the office. The School reserves the right to make a determination on the appropriateness of student dress and attire. Here is an interesting article with all sorts of school uniform related facts: https://www.creditdonkey.com/school-uniform-statistics.html

WARM TOPS:
Families can order navy blue sweatshirts or sports jackets with the school logo. Students are also permitted to wear simple solid navy sweatshirts, sweaters or fleeces without the OSS logo (no prints, words, or designs). These are the only allowable warm top options. Jackets and hoodies are not allowed to be worn inside the school building.

SHIRT:
Families must order OSS polo shirts from the school’s provider. Students will be considered out of uniform if their shirts are much too big, or much too small, therefore it is the family’s responsibility to order shirt sizes appropriately.

During hot weather (80 degrees and above), students may wear their OSS sports shirts which may also be ordered through the school.

During cold weather, students may wear long-sleeve t-shirts underneath their short-sleeve OSS polo shirts (families may also elect to purchase long sleeved OSS polos if desired). Long sleeve t-shirts worn underneath the polo shirt must be navy blue, light blue, white, tan, or brown.

BOTTOMS:
Students may wear plain navy blue athletic pants, shorts, or skirts. Please take the weather into consideration. Skirts must at least reach fingertips and because we often play and participate in fitness, shorts should be worn under skirts. Students are strongly encouraged to also have a nice pair of khakis pants and/or skirt for special events. Students will be notified when it is appropriate to wear khaki bottoms and should always wear their navy blue bottoms unless otherwise notified.

SHOES:
Sneakers must be worn at all times at OSS and are the only acceptable footwear. All sneakers must have minimal decorations and be OSS colors (dark blue, light blue (not turquoise), white, tan, black or gray); black sneakers are also permitted. Sneakers should not be a financial burden to families nor so expensive that a student’s movement is hindered, therefore we ask
families to purchase reasonably priced, functional sneakers. Sneakers must be tied, velcroed, or otherwise fastened at all times. **Students who are unable to manage their shoe laces will be asked to purchase shoes with velcro rather than laces.**

If a student chooses to wear sandals on a dress-down day, the sandals must have a back strap to stay secured on the foot (no flip-flops or slides permitted).

During the winter months, students may wear winter boots to school but must change into their sneakers as soon as they arrive. Boots must be stored inside student lockers until dismissal or during lunch for warm, wintry play.

**STEP IT UP OPTION:**
Students are encouraged to wear khaki pants or appropriate khaki skirts for special events. This option is reserved for events when more formal attire is recommended.

**ADDITIONAL ACCESSORIES:**
1. Grades 5-7 are not allowed to wear ANY makeup or nail polish. Students in grade 8 can wear neutral colored makeup, *minimal* products, and nail polish that is clear or a natural-looking color. Eyelash extensions are not considered “minimal”, and are not permitted.

2. No fake finger nails (gels or fills) are allowed.

3. Students’ jewelry should be limited to simple earrings and simple necklaces. Jewelry should not be distracting, dangerous to anyone, or of monetary value. If jewelry is worn, necklaces must be worn tucked inside uniform shirts. Body piercings outside of simple earrings are not allowed.

4. Hair accessories (headbands, hair clips, etc.) are acceptable for any grade *unless the accessory is deemed distracting.*

5. Inside the school building, no hats can be worn except for OSS issued winter hats.

6. Hair and extensions should always be of a natural hair color (ex: not purple, green or blue…), even during the summer (because it is difficult to get dye out before school starts again).

7. Coats are permitted only for outdoor activities.

8. Writing of any kind on hands, skin, or clothing is not allowed.

9. Watches are permitted, however “smart watches” are not. Any wristwear or other body wear that connects to the internet or can be used as a phone is not permitted.

**PACE Passes:**
Students can earn a dress down pass for achievements such as: Tool Belt Award, community service hours, fitness awards, honor roll and birthday celebrations. In order to ensure school photos are consistent in appearance, students may NOT use a Pace Pass on a day when school photos are anticipated (ex: when awards are granted or when the School is planning to host guests or family members).
Communicating Student Progress & Achievement
Our Sisters’ School views families as partners in ensuring progress and achievement for students, and creates numerous opportunities for collaboration around student learning.

1. OSS teachers regularly complete written evaluations documenting student grades on tests, projects, quizzes, and homework, as well as personal work habits.
2. On Fridays, students bring home two copies of their weekly evaluations in their school issued Friday Folders, one for their family to keep and one to be signed and returned to the office each Monday morning. *Silent reflections are assigned to students who fail to return signed Friday Folder materials on time.*
3. Portfolio presentations and conferences are scheduled throughout the school year. Portfolios provide a system to track and celebrate student growth over time. Families, students and faculty are required to attend. Students lead the conferences, presenting selected pieces of work to their families and highlighting their learning, their strengths, and their remaining challenges. Each conference ends with a discussion of goals for the coming term, as well as areas where families and faculty can provide additional support to students. Portfolio presentations are essential for transitions between grades as they help teachers, families, and students track progress and evaluate preparedness for the next grade.

**OSS Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>High Honor Roll: GPA of 3.8-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>Honor Roll: GPA of 3.6-3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>IC: Incomplete Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>69 or less (not yet, below grade level standard)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Promotion/Retention & Invitation to Return**

When making decisions about a student’s promotion to the next grade level, the School reviews information about the student’s academic grades, standardized assessment results, anecdotal teacher evaluation of student, and emotional/social maturity. If a student is struggling at OSS, families will see this reflected in comments and grades, particularly at Mid and End of Trimester report cards. Students may be required to attend mandatory tutoring or additional programs/services.

In some cases, the school may mandate retention as a condition of enrollment, or may retain a student with passing grades if the school feels it is in the best interest of the child. Every attempt will be made to communicate these decisions with families as early in the school year as possible, however year-end assessment data will also be used in making these decisions, and may not be available until close to the conclusion of the school year.

At the end of each school year, students may be issued a letter inviting them to return. Failure to fulfill school expectations (academic, behavioral, developmental or participatory) by either
the student or the family will result in this letter of invitation not being granted; in effect, the student will unenrolled from OSS.

Electronics

**Telephone, Email and Social Media Usage:** Students are not permitted to use school telephones or personal cell phones unless permission is granted by a staff person. Students will not be disturbed during class time or activities to receive non-emergency telephone calls. We prefer that students who don’t feel well at school request to call home from a school phone rather than privately emailing families so that we can do our best to support the student. Use of social media is prohibited unless specifically directed by a teacher.

**Headset and music use:** The general rule is that students are **not** permitted to listen to music during class or any other time. Teachers are allowed to make exceptions in special circumstances. Student headsets are meant for academic purposes: e.g. language class, Khan Academy video, or a science video.

**Use of Unauthorized Electronics:** The School reserves the right to confiscate any unauthorized item in the student’s possession on school premises, including but not limited to toys, games and other unauthorized devices. All electronics must be turned off and remain in a student's locker during the school day. Guardians may pick up confiscated items from the Head of School.

**Cell Phones:**
Cell phones are allowed to be carried into the school building, and must be immediately turned off and stored in student lockers, never to be seen or heard while in the building.

On occasion, teachers may allow students to use personal cell phones during instruction to aid in a project that is enhanced by the use of technology. The teacher will clearly explain expectations including the start and end times that cell phones are allowed to be out and in use. Students are expected to return cell phones to the off position and place them back in their lockers immediately after permissible classroom use.
Non-class specific cell phone usage is never permitted in the building and only very limited and responsible use of cell phones is permitted during field trips. **If use is deemed inappropriate, a teacher will take the phone and deliver it to the Head of School to be retrieved after school hours by a parent or guardian.**

**Chromebooks**

**1:1 Laptop Responsibility Contract**

**Description**
Students participating in the OSS 1:1 program will be issued a school-owned Chromebook and a laptop charger.

**Expectations for Responsibility and Internet Safety**
Students must be responsible, honest, and appropriate with their laptops. Students and
parents/guardians will be held responsible for any violations that occur and families will be responsible for lost, damaged, or misused equipment. OSS is committed to fostering Internet safety. While using your school-issued Chromebook, OSS provides appropriate content filtering. Any attempts to defeat or bypass the OSS network or to modify the Chrome operating system may result in administrative disciplinary action.

Third Party Applications
OSS is absolved of all responsibility as it relates to student use/purchase of any and all third party applications.

Games
Unless specifically directed by a teacher, students may not play games on an OSS laptop. At OSS we value community and social time, and laptop games detract from our collaborative culture. Students who choose to play games during school hours will face disciplinary action.

Guidelines for caring for your laptop
- Chromebooks must be put away in their charging stations when students are not currently using them.
- When students unplug their Chromebooks from the charging station, they must do so gently. It is very easy to break a Chromebook by yanking out a charger.
- Students may not carry around their laptops with the screens open, or hold them in one hand.
- Food and drinks may not be out when computers are on desks.
- Computer screen must be visible by the teacher, on a flat, safe surface (but not the floor).
- School ID stickers and labels may not be removed from a Chromebook. If a label needs to be repaired, the student should notify Mrs. LeBlanc. If the student picks at or removes the label, that student will be assigned a Silent Reflection.
- Remember, Chromebooks are the property of OSS. Do not try to repair or take apart any part of your laptop, and do not write, draw, paint, or place stickers/labels on them.

* Students are responsible for the laptop they have been issued. Laptops damaged or in need of repair must be reported immediately. Students will write an incident report, give the damaged laptop to the Director of Operations who will meet with the Head of School. The student will be issued a replacement laptop as soon as possible so as not to interfere with their academics. Parents will be notified of the damage and associated cost as soon as possible.

Current Charge Structure for Chromebooks:
- Damaged beyond repair, lost or stolen laptop: $250
- Deep scratches, chipped plastic, or cuts to the rubberized surfaces: $30
- Broken key(s): $30
- Damaged, lost, or stolen power adapter: $30

Student Release Form:
Throughout the year, OSS students make many visits at local community centers. In order to streamline our permission form system, we ask families to pre-approve all field trips to: The Community Boating Center, The Lloyd Center, Buttonwood Zoo and the Whaling Museum.
Illness and Medication

If students become ill during the school day, they should let their teacher know so that they can receive care. The teacher will send the students to the health center where they can rest and receive first aid support. If needed, an OSS staff member will call a family member to bring the child home. If a student suffers a head injury (suspected concussion), the School will contact a family member so that they may be brought to a doctor to be evaluated.

The School cannot offer full day sick care. Families/guardians must make arrangements to have their sick children taken home. In the school registration process, each family must provide the name of an adult who will be responsible for the child if a parent/guardian cannot be reached in the case of illness or other emergency. It is critical that families/guardians keep the school informed of any changes in emergency contact arrangements. If neither the families/guardians nor the emergency contact person can be reached, the school will act in what they consider to be the best interest of the child, including sending the student to the emergency room for treatment or further diagnosis as needed.

Infectious disease control measures that are practiced at OSS include compliance with state immunization requirements for school entry, the use of universal precautions, and the use of illness stop-spread prevention guidelines, which may involve temporary exclusion of a child from school. Communicable diseases or conditions that warrant exclusion include, but are not limited to: lice, varicella/chicken pox, H1N1/swine flu, strep throat and conjunctivitis (pink eye). If your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease, please call to inform the school.

All medications, including over-the-counter medications, brought to school should be delivered to the main office by FAMILIES/GUARDIANS along with the appropriate documentation. Students will NOT be permitted to self-administer medication without an Authorization for Dispensing Medication form signed by the parent/guardian and/or a Medication Order completed and signed by a licensed prescriber. Medicines should be delivered to the School in a container labeled by a pharmacy or manufacturer.

Over-the-counter cough drops of any sort are allowable as long as they are consumed discreetly, responsibly and are not shared. In the event that cough drops are shared, become distracting or are consumed like candy rather than like medication, the student will be asked to deliver the cough drops to the office and may retrieve them at the end of the school day.

The School will make a very limited number of over-the-counter medications (OTC) available to students. Only students who have a signed authorization from families/guardians will be allowed to self administer the following medications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTC Product</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tylenol Regular Strength</td>
<td>325 mg</td>
<td>11 &amp; under – 1 tablet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 &amp; over – 2 tablets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advil Regular Strength</td>
<td>200 mg</td>
<td>12 &amp; over – 1 tablet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each student is required to have up-to-date immunizations and an annual physical examination. Documentation of both must be provided to OSS on an annual basis,
before the 1st day of school.

In Case of an Emergency

- In the case of a student crisis, we will call the appropriate services: police, ambulance, or crisis center and inform the family.

- In the case of a school-wide emergency, such as a lockdown or fire, we will inform families as quickly as possible.

- If a student is missing we will check the building and school grounds thoroughly, contact the family immediately, and call the police.

- Professionals (teachers, staff, etc.) who work with children are mandated reporters for any observed or suspected abuse.

- In case of a building evacuation requiring relocation, the designated meeting location is the Buttonwood Education Center at the Zoo.

Citizenship and the Disciplinary Process

Students at OSS are expected to behave as engaged community members, displaying the best possible citizenship at all times. We work hard to develop an environment of support through character development and social emotional growth. We collaborate with families to develop students’ abilities to take responsibility for their actions and to learn from them. Knowing that middle school children are young and need guidance, we are prepared and intentional about offering direction. If traditional directions, re-directions or coaching are not sufficient, a team of teachers will review a broad range of proactive and reactive support interventions. OSS is committed to restorative practices and will guide students through methods of healing relationships with individuals or the community whenever needed.

Our Sisters’ School is fully funded by grants and private donations. All students who attend OSS are on full scholarship. These scholarships are granted only for as long as students demonstrate that this investment in their OSS education is good for them, their peers, and OSS. OSS employs teachers with a broad range of experience ranging from novice to master. OSS runs on a very limited budget, does not have a special education program, does not employ a guidance counselor, teacher aides or a full-time nurse. OSS is not in a position to host students who require regular behavioral redirection or severe academic interventions. Neither physical nor emotional bullying is tolerated. Any such offense requires disciplinary steps.

OSS students may not date other OSS students; our community is too small, dating is exclusionary, and a break up creates complex dynamics that can distract and possibly endanger the safety of the community.

In the spirit of inclusivity, a value at OSS, students are not allowed to create or distribute party invitations during the school day. If your family is planning a party for your OSS student, please
encourage them to do so discreetly and/or consider inviting the whole class.

On a routine basis the faculty and staff will handle minor disciplinary infractions and class attentiveness issues. As a general rule, we will use the following strategies with students who are not performing up to their potential. Each situation requires an individual response based on the student’s needs and the circumstances particular to the situation. However, the following general procedures will be applied progressively in the case of repeated and/or escalating non-productive or counterproductive behavior, in non-emergency situations:

**Description of Formal Consequences:**

**Silent Reflection:** The purpose of a Silent Reflection is to give the student an opportunity to reflect on behaviors and set a new course for improving performance in school. Any staff in the building can assign a Silent Reflection at his or her discretion. Silent Reflections can be given for issues including but not limited to: incomplete homework assignments, inappropriate laptop usage or care, out-of-uniform apparel, disruptive behavior, or tardiness to classes. A missing, tardy or incomplete Friday Folder will result in an automatic Silent Reflection. A Silent Reflection does not count as an official detention and will not go on the student’s permanent record. The accumulation of 4 Silent Reflections in the same month will result in a Saturday Study Hall (see below).

- **Silent Reflection Protocol:** Students who receive a Silent Reflection will serve it during the next lunch period. Students in Silent Reflection will fill out a reflection sheet that will be sent home, submitted to the teacher who assigned the Silent Reflection, and kept in the student’s file. A teacher will review the written reflection with the student to ensure that the student has a clear understanding of their infraction and has developed a strategy to ensure that recurrence will not be a problem. *If students are more than 10 minutes late for a Silent Reflection,* they will need to serve the remainder of the reflection period, as well as an additional Silent Reflection the following day.

- **Family/Guardian Responsibilities:** If students receive a Silent Reflection, their families/guardians will receive a copy of their child’s Reflection in their Friday Folder. The family is required to review, sign and return the Reflection to the front office.

**In-School Suspension:** Students may be referred for in-school suspension by the Head of School when they have not responded to repeated efforts by their teacher(s) to change behaviors that are unacceptable or for repeated or habitual, lesser infractions of school rules. In-school suspensions may also be used as a first-time consequence for more serious infractions. An in-school suspension will require students to remain on the school premises and complete the work assigned by their regular teachers; these students will be separated from classmates and peers, and will lose all social and academic privileges.

**Saturday Study Hall:** Students may be assigned a Saturday Study Hall (SSH) by the Head of School for either academic or social mishaps, or after the accumulation of four Silent Reflections in one month. Students attending SSH are required to be in school uniform and bring school appropriate snacks if desired. Chromebooks may ONLY be used to complete school assignments if permission is given by supervising teacher, and no other technology is permitted. SSH usually runs on the 4th Saturday of the month from 9:00am to noon. Families will be notified of any changes to the schedule.
**Home Suspension:** Violations of school rules may result in a short-term (10 or fewer days) or long-term (11 or more days) home suspension, or, when appropriate, expulsion from the School (immediate and permanent removal from the school). Only the Head of School may suspend a student from school. Students and their families/guardians will meet with the Head of School to discuss more serious consequences if a student accumulates five or more days of home suspension. All of the foregoing consequences are accompanied by procedures to ensure due process, as described in the procedural due process sections below.

Likely OSS Disciplinary Steps:
- Verbal warning(s) by teacher
- In class time-out or time-out in neighboring classroom
- Silent Reflection (this is not equivalent to a detention and will not go on a student’s permanent record)
- In-class or afterschool writing assignment to be reviewed and signed by a parent.
- Discussion with teacher and parent/guardian by telephone.
- Saturday Study Hall (this is the equivalent of a detention and will go on a student’s permanent record).
- Teacher conference with parent/guardian in person.
- Referral to the Head of School for an in-person family meeting.
- In-school suspension.
- Home suspension followed by a parent/guardian conference before the student may return to school.
- Expulsion, and when appropriate, referral to law enforcement personnel and/or courts.

** The Head of School has the right to rescind a scholarship at any time, for any reason.

**Academic Integrity**

OSS prides itself on being a school of integrity and honesty. We expect honesty in all situations. At all levels of the school, considerable trust is placed in our students. Students have a wide range of obligations and privileges, both personal and academic. Therefore, students are expected to be worthy of trust, to be able to make a clear distinction between their own work and that of someone else, and to be open and straightforward in their dealings with other people. Lying, cheating, and stealing will not be tolerated and will be cause for suspension or other disciplinary actions at the discretion of the Head of School.

Academic dishonesty can be considered anything from copying someone’s homework, to plagiarizing another person’s writing in an essay, to bringing the answers to a test into the classroom, or failing to cite a source. Any form of cheating is unacceptable at OSS and will be dealt with in the following way:

**Step One:** A conversational warning to student and family from teacher; Head of School will be informed of the incident and a note will be put into the student’s record. A Silent Reflection will be assigned and carefully reviewed. A failing grade will be assigned for the assignment in question.

**Step Two:** For a repeat offense, a meeting with family will be called, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment in question, a Silent Reflection and a Saturday Study Hall will be assigned.
**Step Three:** For a 3rd offense, a meeting with family will be called, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment in question, a Silent Reflection and an In-School Suspension will be served.

**Step Four:** Student will be expelled.

As mandated by Massachusetts state law, Our Sisters’ School abides by the following rules and regulations:

Conduct that Result in Home Suspension or Expulsion:

- Use or possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, tobacco and tobacco products, or other illegal substance, including unlawful possession of prescription medications (see section 37H of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts State Law);
- Assault (including sexual), battery, or causing physical injury, of another student or a staff member (for the latter, see section 37H of Chapter 71, above);
- Possession or use of a weapon, simulated weapon, or other device than could be used as a weapon or incendiary device or part thereof including firecrackers and matches (see section 37H of Chapter 71, above);
- Fighting, verbally assaulting, or threatening an employee of the school, a visitor, or another student;
- Throwing of personal or school objects from windows or in stairwells, whether or not directed at an individual;
- Vandalizing, defacing or destroying any part of the school or school department [or another student's] property (also requires restitution);
- Bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), abuse, or physical or psychological intimidation of another person or serious threats to cause future harm to the school, particular student(s), the student body, or the faculty;
- Use of vulgar, sexist or demeaning language;
- Engaging in verbal abuse such as name-calling, ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory or discriminatory statements addressed to others that may bring about disruption of the school program, violence, or otherwise detract from the school’s educational mission;
- Defiance of the authority of school personnel, including but not limited to refusal to obey a lawful directive of an administrator, teacher or other school staff member;
- Endangering the safety of other on a school bus or other school transportation by, among other things, throwing objects out of windows or distracting the driver in any way;
- Leaving school premises without approval (including unauthorized presence in non-school areas of the building); refusal to attend class or engaging in other activities that cause disruption or disorder in the classroom;
- Theft or threat thereof, or forgery or the attempt to do either;
- Extortion or threat thereof, demanding money or something of value from another student;
- Scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating and plagiarism (representing someone else’s work as your own), and giving false verbal or written information to a school employee;
- Improper use of computers/networks (e.g., inappropriate internet sites; threats to others);
- Behavior that is contrary to school and community standards of decency such as inappropriate touching, groping and displays of affection, or behavior that seriously disrupts the educational purpose of the school or endangers the safety of others;
- Violation of a civil or criminal statutes, laws or school regulations (see section 37H ½ of Chapter 71, above with respect to felony charges and convictions);
- Inciting or daring others to do anything prohibited by the above statements.

Alternatives to Suspension

While the school reserves the right to suspend students, well grounded research on the effects of detentions and out-of-school suspensions on drop-out rates indicates that students are more likely to drop out when schools resort to punitive actions for behaviors that are more aptly viewed as manifestations of personal health and self-esteem issues. Whenever possible, the school will focus on developing personal responsibility and restitution rather than suspensions to redress grievances. However, the common welfare and well-being of all students is a paramount concern of the school. Therefore, suspensions and expulsions will be distributed as deemed necessary by the Head of School.

Possession of Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons
The OSS Board of Trustees and staff are dedicated to providing a healthy, safe, and productive learning and recreation environment for its students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. Therefore, the Board of Trustees absolutely prohibits the use, possession or distribution by any individual, including school staff, of tobacco products within the school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses or in other school vehicles and at all school-sponsored functions; the use or possession of any weapon (or realistic simulation); and the use or possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia or illegal substance (or realistic simulations). Violations will be dealt with swiftly and decisively.

Specifically, Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 71, § 37H provides in relevant part:

a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school.

b. Any student who assaults school staff or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school.

c. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Head of School and/or Board of Trustees. After said hearing, the Head of School/Board of Trustees may, at their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b);

d. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal the Board of Trustees. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Board of her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Board. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

e. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Head of School of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

**Felony Complaints and Convictions**

As prescribed by state law, students who are charged with a felony related to the use or possession of the above listed products and items, or any other felonious activity, will be scheduled for an expulsion hearing to be effective until the charges are dropped or the student is returned to the community.

Specifically, Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 71 §37H ½, provides:

"(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion.
I, ____________________________, understand that my child’s education at Our Sisters’ School is a rare opportunity, offering my student and family numerous choices for my child’s future. I understand that this opportunity will cost the school significantly more than $20,000 for my child’s place, and will require a great commitment of time, energy, and care on the part of Our Sisters’ School’s faculty and administration. In return, this opportunity requires that I participate fully and work together with the faculty and staff. In signing my child’s contract for the coming school year, I pledge to do the following:

**Attendance and Punctuality**
- I understand that it is my family’s responsibility to provide student transportation.
- I will make sure my child arrives to school every day by 7:30am (8:15am on Fridays) if my child is going to eat breakfast at school, or by 7:45 am (8:30 on Fridays), if they have eaten breakfast at home.
- I will pick my child up promptly at the time indicated by the School every day (5:15pm Mon-Thurs; 4:15pm on Fridays unless otherwise communicated because of special events, half-days, etc.), or make sure that another capable adult picks up my child on time.
- If I decide to take my child out of school during regular school hours, I will communicate with Ms. Herman **proactively** (ahead of time) to see if the absences can be considered excused.

**Uniform/Hygiene**
- I will purchase the required uniform pieces for my child, and when uniform items wear out or my child outgrows them, I will replace them promptly.
- I will make sure my child comes to school clean and well groomed every day.
- I will make sure that a clean and **proper** uniform is worn every day, including footwear.
- I will make sure that removable items (i.e sweatshirts) are clearly labeled with my child’s name or initials.

**Homework and Commitment to Academic Achievement**
- I will have high expectations for my child’s academic success and will not make excuses for why my student has not done the required work.
- I will monitor every evening that school work is done completely and with quality effort, and will make sure my child understands that homework always comes before television or play.
- I will read to my child or encourage my child to **read at least 30 minutes every single night**.
- I will check my child’s backpack and folder every evening, especially on Friday’s, and make sure their work is complete, organized, and that any forms are carefully read, signed and returned to the School.
- I will work cooperatively with my child’s teachers and thoughtfully consider any suggestions they make about what I can do at home to help my child succeed.
**Behavior and Values**

- I will uphold the philosophy and goals of Our Sisters’ School and its Code of Conduct.
- I understand that consequences are not handed out thoughtlessly or lightly. Student behavior at OSS is typically impeccable and students needing multiple redirections for any kind of disruptive behavior are likely to be asked to leave or not asked to return. I understand that OSS’ primary focus is on the health of the School and the academic growth for all students. Disruptive student behavior of any sort will simply not be tolerated.
- I will expect good behavior from my child, and support the school in requiring good behavior from my child at all times.
- I will take any call from the School about a problem with my child’s behavior, and follow up promptly and seriously with my child.
- I have read the disciplinary actions outlined in the Family Handbook and understand that the Head of School exercises full discretion in the provision or removal of my student’s scholarship at any time, remembering that a full scholarship is required for attendance.

**Communication**

- I will check my child’s Friday Folder every Friday, read all items, and return the folder with my signature in my child’s backpack every Monday morning before school begins.
- I will communicate regularly and honestly with my child’s teachers, and inform them about anything happening at home that could be affecting my child’s behavior and learning in school.
- I will give the School accurate phone numbers and email addresses where I can be reached during the day, and will be responsible for informing the School immediately of any changes in my contact information.
- I will make sure the School has accurate emergency contact names and numbers in case I cannot be reached, and there is an emergency with my child.
- I understand that Our Sisters’ School often uses email to communicate, and I give the school permission to do this. I also commit to checking my email frequently for school communications.
- I will immediately respond to any call or email that comes from the School, whether it be from my child’s teacher, from the office, from the school nurse, from Ms. Herman or from any other member of the staff.
- I, or a family representative, will attend mandatory family meetings throughout the year. I understand that should my family miss a mandatory meeting, 2 service hours will be added to the Family Service Hours balance regardless of the reason for the missed meeting.

**Health**

- I will make sure that my child’s medical forms are up to date.
- I will make sure that prescription medications are never in the hands of my student, and always delivered directly to an OSS adult on the administrative team.
- I understand that Our Sisters’ School does not have a full-time nurse or counselor and cannot provide support for many health related needs. Should a student develop a health related need while at Our Sisters’ School, the School may not be in a position to adequately support a given student and the student may have to withdraw from the school.
Giving Back: My Contribute to Our Sisters’ School

● I will pay a $250 dollar annual fee at the START of each school year (unless I make special arrangements in advance with the Head of School).
● I understand the failure to meet my financial obligation may result in my student’s inability to advance to the next grade and/or the withholding of important school documents.
● I understand that I need to give back to Our Sisters’ School, and I commit to volunteering at the school for a minimum of 15 hours per academic year, per child (July 1st to June 30th of the following year). I will compensate the school for any incomplete Family Service Hours at the rate of $15.00 per hour.
● I understand that all OSS students complete 15 hours of community service - outside of the school.

Computer Use

● I have read the Chromebook and Ipad Contracts, agree to the terms stated in the documents, and returned the signed contracts with this Parent Pledge.

I understand that how well I uphold my commitment to the School as outlined on these two pages will be a factor the school considers when deciding whether or not to offer my child a contract for the next school year.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s):
______________________________ Date: _________________
______________________________ Date: _________________

Please return this signed Parent Pledge to the front office for the 2019-2020 school year
Chromebook Contract

School Rules on Computer Account Use

When using my OSS computer account, I agree to:

● Accept personal responsibility and follow all rules when using my account
● Conduct myself in a safe, respectful and responsible manner on any OSS computer
● Use an OSS account for any OSS related email
● Only use my computer for educational purposes
● Make sure no one else uses my OSS account or my computer
● Notify a teacher or school employee immediately of any improper use by myself or others
● Protect my password and respect the privacy of others’ passwords

Additionally, I understand that I am to follow the rules and avoid:

● Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
● Using inappropriate language
● Harassing, insulting or attacking others
● Damaging computers, computer systems, software, or computer networks
● Violating copyright laws (for example, by illegally listening to music online) and plagiarizing from websites
● Using another’s ID/password
● Using Facebook, Twitter and any other social media unless given special permission by an OSS staff member
● Using my Chromebook to take or post selfies or as a device to listen to music without permission

Additional notes:

● The school staff will make every effort to guide usage, but is not able to constantly restrict, monitor or control the communications of students utilizing the school network.
● Use of school computers and internet access is a privilege - not a right. Access may be denied to those students who violate basic school rules. Saturday Study Halls will be assigned to students who chronically or egregiously fail to honor this computer usage agreement. Students who can’t reliably use an OSS computer appropriately may not be able to function as an OSS student and therefore, may need to withdraw from OSS.
● Computer network storage spaces are treated as school property. Students should not expect that files stored on school servers will be private.
● Families also share the responsibility for computer guidance and should contact the school’s administration if they need guidance or need to report any problems.
● Students may not touch or use another student’s Chromebook.

____________________________________  _______________________
Student name/signature                      Date

____________________________________  _______________________
Family member signature                     Date
iPad Agreement:

Dear OSS Parents,

We use iPads as part of our STEAM Lab curriculum to enhance our learning and to allow us to explore several exciting technologies in-depth with our students. These iPads will allow us to further delve into the wonderful worlds of programming, green screen/Chroma keying, animation, and many more!

We reviewed with students, in detail, the respect and responsibility that is required of them when using these new pieces of equipment. We then signed “iPad Oaths” to clarify and solidify our expectations in regards to the handling and care of these tools. The bullet points below from the “iPad Oath” outline how we expect each student to handle the responsibility of utilizing the iPads:

I will:

- Follow the technology use guidelines in our Student Handbook
- Handle my iPad carefully and respectfully
- Be on task and use iPad tools as directed
- Make sure my hands are clean before I touch the iPad
- Ask permission before recording audio and taking photos/videos of my community
- Report loss or damage of my iPad immediately to a teacher
- Leave my iPad in its case at all times
- Only use the APPs my teacher has told me I may use for class
- Not open the iPad Settings or change any profile configurations under any circumstances
- Always know where my iPad is!
- Always return my iPad to the cart at the end of each class

It was then made clear that if any of these expectations are not observed, one or all of the following will be a result:

- Immediate loss of iPad privileges and other technologies in STEAM Lab
- Saturday Study Hall
- In the event of loss or damages, the student and their family will be held financially accountable

It is such a joy and privilege to teach this fantastic new curriculum, and we look forward to continuing to hold our students to a high standard of excellence and responsibility! If you have any questions regarding STEAM Lab or technology policies please refer to the Technology use guidelines in the OSS Student Handbook, or reach out to us for further clarification.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Eugenio

*Please sign that you have read and understand the iPad Agreement:

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<th>Student name/signature</th>
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<th>Family member signature</th>
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Notes: