



The Middle School Handbook 2023-2024

2023-2024
THE O'NEAL SCHOOL



The O'Neal School is a college preparatory school that is dedicated to the development of academic excellence, strength of character, and physical well-being of its students in an environment where integrity, self-discipline, and consideration for others are fundamental.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

O'Neal promotes excellence at all levels of school life. Students participate in a demanding preparatory program, complemented by extensive co-curricular opportunities. The total O'Neal experience encourages students to reach their fullest intellectual, moral, aesthetic, creative, and physical potential. Implicit in this challenge is the School's belief that, as students mature, they should assume an increasing responsibility in shaping their own educational experiences. Accordingly, they develop the initiative, self-reliance, and independence essential for reaching their full potential and for making the most of their years at O'Neal and beyond.

The O'Neal experience is based on mutual respect and personal integrity. All members of the community are expected to honor the rights of others, to conduct themselves at all times in a moral and decent manner, and to see this responsibility as an integral part of their lives at O'Neal and as citizens of the larger community of the world. The foundation of this belief is the Honor Code that sets the ethical standard that underlies every dimension of school life.

O'Neal encourages close personal relationships among all of its members, in order to nurture and guide its students. These relationships create an atmosphere of trust and support in which students see independence, initiative, and imagination as the means to pursue self-discovery, develop qualities of leadership, and affirm a sense of self-worth. Imbued with these values, students give freely of their time and talents, mindful of how these contributions enhance the quality of school life for the entire community.

O'Neal is a diverse community joined by a single vision. All members, including trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni, contribute to the School in many different ways but share a unified and consistent commitment to the mission of the O'Neal School. At the core, this commitment is to provide a superior education to prepare children for a meaningful life.



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Animals on Campus

Animals are only allowed on campus for the purpose of a specific classroom activity whereby the division head has given approval. Animals, other than service dogs tending to a specific disability, are NOT allowed on campus at any time for any other reason without approval from the administration.

Attendance Policy

Students should arrive on campus between 7:45 and 8:00am. Parents are encouraged to make medical and other appointments after school, if at all possible. Please honor the established dates for school holidays. Leaving early or returning late can be detrimental to your child's academic performance.

When a student is excused, absent, or knows of an upcoming absence, the student must make arrangements with the appropriate teachers to make up the missed work.

If your child will be late or will miss school:

- Please call or email the school to inform the appropriate division of your child's absence or lateness.
- Please call or email the school to inform the appropriate division of your child's need to leave early.

If your child arrives late to school, s/he should sign in with the appropriate administrative assistant. After signing in the student will receive a Late Pass to present to their teacher as they enter class.

Awards

Awards are announced at the end of the academic year during the promotion ceremony.

A **Departmental Award** recognizes the students who demonstrate all-around excellence in their respective areas. Students selected may or may not have the highest average.

The **Fine Arts Award** go to the one student who best represents the arts at O'Neal in the respective areas. The Art Award is synonymous with the Head of School's Gallery and is selected by fine arts faculty.

Citizenship Awards are given at the faculty's discretion to those students who have exemplified outstanding citizenship throughout the year.

The **O'Neal Award** is presented to one student in each grade who best demonstrates hard work and determination in pursuit of classroom excellence.

The **J. Gardiner Dodd Award** is presented to the one student who exemplifies improvement in the areas of attitude and scholastic achievement. This is presented to a student who works hard, is steadfast, and perseveres.



The James R. Miles Award is presented to the student who best displays qualities of determination, unselfishness, cooperation, enthusiasm, and involvement in daily school life. This person should personify the O'Neal student at his or her best, one of whom we are very proud and for whom we have great respect and affection.

Bicycles

Students must follow bicycle safety rules, including wearing a helmet and other necessary safety gear. Bicycles are to be parked in the proper parking areas. Skateboards, scooters, roller blades, bicycles, or any kind of motorized vehicle, are not to be operated on school walkways or in school buildings.

Cell Phones and Headphones

It is not a requirement for a student to have a cell phone on campus. If a student needs to contact home during the day, that student should go to the Middle School Office. If a parent needs to get in touch with a student, the parent should email the student's advisor and Mrs. Jan Simmons or call the Middle School Office. They will get the message to the student.

Cell phones must be silenced and out of sight during class unless a faculty member allows the use of cell phones for instructional purposes. In addition, headphones or earbuds are not allowed to be used during the school day unless express permission has been given by the teacher.

During transitions between classes and community time, cell phones and headphones should not be in use. If a student needs to use their cell phone for any reason, they should seek permission from an adult first.

Violation will result in confiscation of the phone and/or headphones until the end of the school day. Repeated violations will result in additional consequences as determined by the school administration.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Drop-Off

In the morning, students can be dropped off at two locations, depending on whether you need to park or drive through a drop-off line. If you are dropping off, please do so on Wallace O'Neal Way. Students will then enter the building using the middle school doors facing the middle school playground. If you need to park, please use the Middle School parking lot which is accessed via the campus entrance closest to the airport circle. As students walk into Taws Hall, they will be greeted by the Head of Middle School or a teacher. If your child has bags to pull out of the back of the vehicle, please park in one of the designated spots in order to keep the line of cars moving.

Pick-Up

Students in PE and on a middle school sports team should be picked up in the parking lot by the middle school Gaga pit, which is located between Taws Hall and the Hannah Center. After 3:45pm, all middle school students will be sent to the library for After Care. After Care is provided free of charge. If you pick up your child before 3:15pm, please ring the Middle School doorbell (located at the door near the



Middle School parking lot). We will confirm, ask you to sign your child out and send them out to you for pick-up.

Field Trips

All students who go on a field trip must have a signed permission slip on file in the Middle School office before they will be allowed to attend school-sponsored trips.

Fire, Tornado & Lockdown Drills

Emergency drills are conducted at regular intervals required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and takes action as prescribed for each drill as quickly as possible. The teacher in each classroom will give the students instruction for emergency drills.

First Aid & CPR

In the event of injury, parents will be called. Automatic external defibrillators (AED)s are installed in every school building. Many faculty and staff members are trained in CPR. First aid supplies are located in each division. The school nurse will tend to students who become ill or injured during the school day. O'Neal has an athletic trainer for the athletics program after the school day. A student's parent/guardian will be notified should the student need additional care.

Parents are responsible for informing the school nurse of any medical condition that might require special precautions or emergency attention, including potential allergic reactions. In such cases, parents must provide the School with emergency medication and written permission for immediate emergency room care.

Fundraising

Student fundraising must be approved in advance.

Health

Medicine Administered at School

The administration of prescribed and/or over-the-counter medication to students as well as permission for students to self-administer over-the-counter and /or rescue medications requires the completion of an [O'Neal Medication Administration Form](#) – including the signatures of the parent/guardian as well as the student's physician. Please read [O'Neal's Medication Policy](#).

Immunization

No child shall attend O'Neal unless a certificate of immunization indicates that the child has received the age-appropriate immunizations required by North Carolina State Law or that the child has received a medical or religious exemption. The parent, guardian, or responsible person must present a certificate of immunization on the child's first day of attendance to the division head. If a certificate of immunization is not presented on the first day, the division head shall present a notice of deficiency to the parent,



guardian or responsible person. The parent, guardian or responsible person shall have 30 calendar days from the first day of attendance to obtain the required immunization for the child. If the administration of vaccine in a series of doses given at medically approved intervals requires a period more than 30 calendar days, additional days upon certification by a physician may be allowed to obtain the required immunization. Upon termination of 30 calendar days or the extended period, the principal or operator shall not permit the child to attend the school or facility unless the required immunization has been obtained. Ref: GS130A-155

Sickness

If you have any doubts about the state of your student's health on the morning of a school day, **KEEP YOUR STUDENT AT HOME**. We will ask you to come get your student if he/she is unable to participate in our regular program because of illness. Frequent coughing, nasal discharge, diarrhea, vomiting, and/or elevated temperature are reasons to keep your student at home. In the event of sickness with fever, students should not return to school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours.

Head Lice

Head lice are non-discriminatory. The O'Neal School follows the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics which states "It is important to remember that lice is a nuisance, not a serious disease or a sign of poor hygiene. Children can finish the school day, be treated, and return to school the next day". Parents will be notified if their child is found to have lice, so they can be prepared to treat the child after school. The child may then return to school the next day in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Insurance

The School has a supplemental accident insurance policy on all students. Students are covered:

- While on the school premises when classes are in session
- Participating in or attending any school activity sponsored by and under the direct and immediate supervision of the School
- Commuting to and from school without interruption
- Traveling to or from school-sponsored supervised activity in a school-authorized vehicle.

If appropriate, insured parents must file claims with their own insurance company first. It will then be the parents' responsibility to file for the secondary school coverage on the form provided. Details of the school policy and the necessary forms are available in the Business Office.

Lockers

All students have assigned lockers in the Middle School building. Students are expected to keep their personal belongings in their lockers and not in public spaces. Food for snacks or lunch must be kept in sealed containers in order to avoid attracting insects.



Lunch

Parents may order lunch from area vendors by way of the online ordering service, My Hot Lunch Box – www.myhotlunchbox.com. Students may also bring their lunch from home. No food may be ordered by students for delivery to The O'Neal School without prior approval from the Head of Middle School.

Nut Aware Policy

We are a 'Nut Aware' school.

At The O'Neal School we are committed to providing a safe environment that is inclusive for all children. In common with most other schools, we have several children with nut allergies. The purpose of this page is to give families the information they need to support us in providing a safe and inclusive school.

Why 'Nut Aware'?

The O'Neal School is 'Nut Aware'. We do not describe the school as being 'Nut Free' because we can't guarantee that students or adults have not brought nuts, or traces of nuts, into the building.

Prevention

It is our responsibility as a school community to avoid exposing students with allergies to the products which could start an allergic reaction. This means that we take great care to avoid any products that could contain allergens in our school snack program and other food items that are brought into school. We ask parents to exercise care when preparing lunches to carefully check labels and to not send any products which contain nuts, or traces of nuts. We also ask that families exercise care when baking for snacks or fundraisers. **Treats brought in to share must be pre-packaged with a label in place.**

Study Hall

Students in grades 6 – 8 will have study hall while students in grade 5 will have Introduction to Middle School. Both Study Hall and Introduction to Middle School will:

1. Provide students time to complete some homework assignments, to seek out assistance from teachers (when possible), and to make up any assessments.
2. Help teach students organizational skills such as prioritizing, long- and short-term planning, and time management.

Teachers will maintain a studious atmosphere for students to be able to work efficiently.

School Closing / Inclement Weather

If school will be cancelled for all or part of any regularly scheduled day, notification will be sent via email, phone, and text to all families via the School's rapid communications system. The announcement will also appear on the School's website. Various media channels will also be contacted.



Student Records Requests

In order for O'Neal to release any student records, including transcripts, final report cards, and diplomas, a family's account with the Business Office must first be in good standing.

Textbooks

Textbooks are provided to students in grades 5-8 for all Middle School courses. Unless otherwise instructed, students are expected to return them at the end of the year. Students are expected to take care of their textbooks. Families will need to replace lost or damaged books.

Visitors

All visitors must receive permission in advance of the visit from the Head of Middle School to spend time on campus. If you come to campus to bring something to your child or to attend a scheduled appointment with a faculty member, please park in the Middle School Parking Lot, accessed via entering campus on Wolverine Way. Press the doorbell to begin checking in with the Middle School Office. Visitors must register with the Middle School Office when arriving on and leaving from campus.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND STANDARDS

Honor Code

Students enrolled in The O'Neal School are expected to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. The goals of the Honor Code include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. To support, in individual students, the further development of integrity, responsibility, and accountability in both academic and personal matters
2. To instill loyalty to The O'Neal School in the student body as a whole
3. To assist in maintaining a high ethical climate
4. To ensure that a student's work be his or her own and not that of another person
5. To instill in students a constant awareness of the ramifications of their actions and the need not to place themselves in questionable situations or in circumstances which connote dishonest or unlawful acts.

Students are requested to abide by the following pledge as a personal commitment to the honor, integrity, and high standards of the School:

1. I shall be honest in all matters regarding the life of the School. My word may always be trusted.
2. The work that I present will always be my own.
3. I shall not seek unfair advantage over my fellow students by cheating or by plagiarizing.



Even without being required to sign the pledges set forth in the Honor Code, the School expects each student to abide by and support the Honor Code not only for himself or herself, but also for each classmate. Ignorance of the Honor Code is not an excuse for a violation. The O'Neal School Honor Code is broken on any occasion when a student is involved in lying, cheating, stealing, or plagiarism.

General Standards of Behavior

Students are expected to be courteous, respectful, and kind at all times during the school day, while on school vehicles, and while participating in school sponsored events. Students are expected to:

1. Act in accordance with the laws of North Carolina and/or the United States.
2. Treat school and personal property with respect. In a case of defacing or destroying property, the guilty student will be held responsible for full financial repair and restoration.
3. Act safely and consider and respect the safety, physical and emotional, of others. Physical violence and bullying are not tolerated.
4. Respect and contribute to an atmosphere of productive learning and inclusive community. Students should also refrain from inappropriate displays of affection.
5. Treat teachers, administrators, staff, and visitors with respect, kindness, and civility, in person and via online communication.
6. Use respectful and appropriate language at all times. Profanity and prejudicial language are not tolerated.

Off-campus Behavior

A school-sponsored event or activity includes any trip, party, tour, game, or contest which is offered as an integral part of the School's curricular or extracurricular offerings, including but not limited to academic, artistic, musical or athletic events, whether on or off the school campus, and field trips or class trips.

While a student is off The O'Neal School campus and is not engaged in a school-sponsored activity or event, the student is not under the authority of the School. However, all students should realize that they represent O'Neal even when not participating in school-sponsored events. If at any time the Head of School becomes aware of any off-campus behavior by a student which would be a violation of the Honor Code or the laws of the State of North Carolina, the Head of School may hold a compulsory and mandatory meeting with the student and the student's parents regarding the infraction and consequences.

State and Federal Laws

There are certain rules that may have outside legal consequences if violated (and do not fall under the school Honor Code). All parents should be aware that if students violate these rules they could be subject to state or federal laws.

Possession of Weapons

The possession of guns, knives, or weapons of any kind is not permitted on school grounds.



Student Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policies

It is the policy of the School that students should not be subjected to forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, or hazing, while at school or school-sponsored activities. Furthermore, the policy's intent is to address the issue in a proactive manner through the establishment of a system for educating students and staff at the School regarding the identification, prevention, intervention, and reporting of such acts. The School acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The School prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender), sexual orientation, disability, age or any other classifications prohibited by law. The School will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities or programs.

A. PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS AND CONSEQUENCES

1. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Students.

Students, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors are expected to behave in a civil and respectful manner. The School expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying, and hazing. Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by board policy, the Code of Student Conduct and any applicable laws. Any violation of this policy is serious, and the School shall promptly take appropriate action. Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion.

When considering if a response beyond the individual level is appropriate the School will consider the nature and severity of the misconduct to determine whether a classroom or school-wide response is necessary. Such classroom or school-wide responses may include staff training, harassment and bullying prevention programs and other measures deemed appropriate by the Head of School or designee to address the behavior.

2. Retaliation

The School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person for reporting or intending to report violations of this policy, supporting someone for reporting or intending to report a violation of this policy or participating in the investigation of reported violations of this policy. After consideration of the nature and circumstances of the reprisal or retaliation and in accordance with applicable laws, policies and regulations, the Head of School or designee shall determine the consequences and remedial action for a person found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation.



B. APPLICATION OF POLICY

This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and bullying by students, employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy is intended to apply to students via a via other students, faculty, staff, volunteers/visitors or contactors. The School's policies on unlawful discrimination and harassment as applied to employees, volunteers/visitors, and contractors can be found in the School's Employee Handbook. This policy applies to behavior that takes place:

1. in any school building or on any school premises before, during or after school hours;
2. on any bus or other vehicle as part of any school activity;
3. during any school-sponsored activity or extracurricular activity;
4. at any time or place when the individual is subject to the authority of school personnel;
5. at any time or place when the behavior has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the schools; and
6. while using school or personal electronic communications.

C. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. Discrimination

Discrimination means any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category that is protected by law, such as race, color, national origin, sex (including transgender), disability, or age or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

2. Harassment

a. Harassment is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits. "Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that is protected by law or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has



or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic that is protected by law, such as race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including transgender), sexual orientation, disability or age. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying. Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

b. Sexual harassment is one type of harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1) submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's academic progress or completion of a school-related activity;

2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student's performance within a course of study or other school-related activity; or

3) such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational performance, limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment, or creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats, pressure for sexual activity, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual, sexual violence, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

c. Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal or physical aggression, intimidation or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.



3. Bullying

Bullying means unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying may also place a student in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property. Bullying behavior is often repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes intentional actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose or any action that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can also include behavior that constitutes harassment or sexual harassment and can include cyber bullying. Cyberbullying is the use of any electronic communication device to harass, sexually harass, intimidate, or bully.

4. Hazing

North Carolina law makes it unlawful for any student in attendance at any school in the State to engage in hazing, or to aid and abet any other student in the commission of this offense. For the purpose of this section hazing is defined as follows: “to subject another student to physical injury as part of an initiation, or as a prerequisite to membership into any organized school group, including any society, athletic team, fraternity or sorority, or other similar group.”

5. Electronic Communications:

Electronic communications apply to employee and student emails, text messaging, instant messaging, chat rooms, blogging, websites and social networking websites. Employees are required to report any actual or suspected violations of this policy. Students, parents, volunteers, visitors or others are also strongly encouraged to report any actual or suspected incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying. Reports may be made anonymously, and all reports shall be investigated in accordance with that policy.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

- Students may not come onto school grounds, enter school buses, or attend school-sponsored functions while under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or drugs.
- Students may not come on the school grounds, enter school buses, or attend school-sponsored functions while having in their possession any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or other drugs.
- Students may not possess or use tobacco products while on school grounds, on school buses, or while attending any school-sponsored function. This includes electronic products and related paraphernalia.

All prescription medications shall be stored and administered by the school nurse for the benefit of the student while the student is on the school campus.



From time to time, there may be students who, along with their families, are seeking counseling and/or medical assistance or treatment for using or abusing drugs, controlled substances, or alcohol. It is the policy of the School to be as supportive as it can be of such treatment.

If at any time the Head of School is made aware of, or becomes aware of, any off-campus behavior by a student indicating the student may have a drug, controlled substance or alcohol problem, the Head of School may hold a compulsory and mandatory meeting with the student and such student's parents regarding the matter.

As stated in the enrollment contract, the School, in connection with its controlled substances and drug abuse policy or otherwise, reserves the right to conduct examinations, searches, or inspections of students and their personal effects, lockers, lunch boxes, purses, vehicles, and other property located on school premises for drug paraphernalia, items not permitted on school property, drugs, or substances defined in the *North Carolina Controlled Substances Act*. The School's right to conduct examinations and inspections shall include the right to require urine or other samples from any student.

The School prohibits the use, sale, transfer, or possession of any drug paraphernalia and illegal drugs, or substances identified in the *North Carolina Controlled Substances Act*, as well as legal drugs, which have not been legally obtained (i.e. without a valid prescription).

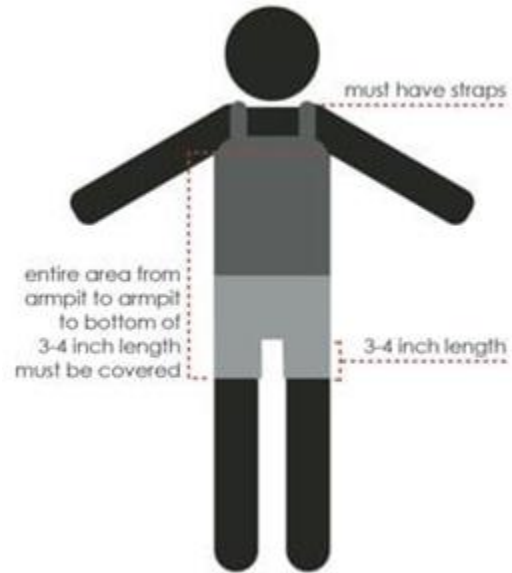
Dress Code

The O'Neal School Dress Code is designed to promote a focused and respectful learning environment consistent with the mission of the School. All students are expected to be neat and clean in dress and appearance; after all, school is an important job. Clothing should be comfortable and practical, must not be offensive, must fit properly, and must be clean and in good repair, i.e., not torn, ripped, or frayed. In addition:

- Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately mid-thigh (see image below).
- O'Neal Falcon wear is acceptable every day except formal dress days.
- Shoes must be always worn and should be safe for the school environment. Appropriate footwear for PE and Athletics must be worn.
- Swimsuits worn for PE class must be one-piece suits or two-piece "tankini" style suits.
- Clothing must be opaque and in good repair (free of rips or tears, even if they are part of the garment design).
- Undergarments must always remain covered.
- Sunglasses and heavy outdoor coats are not permitted indoors.
- Sweaters, fleece tops, and O'Neal sweatshirt/warm up jackets etc. may be worn indoors.
- Sweatpants, yoga pants, and pajama pants are not permitted except on free dress days as announced.
- Students' heads should remain uncovered when indoors throughout the school day unless permitted for religious, medical or other reason by school administration.



- All clothing and personal items should be free of:
 - references to illegal, violent or lewd conduct, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
 - vulgar, discriminatory or obscene language or images
 - hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation or any other protected classification
- These requirements serve as guidelines and the final decision on any attire rests with the School's administration.



Dress Up Days

On special school days designated “Dress Up Days,” students wear dresses, skirts, or dress pants with collared shirts and ties. Sports coats are optional. Jeans are not permitted on Dress Up Days. Dress shoes (or dark colored, clean tennis shoes) are required. Dress Up Days will be announced in advance.

Discipline

The O'Neal School believes in providing a safe and productive environment to promote positive learning and development. Student discipline is essential and allows the student to reach his or her full potential in and outside of the classroom. Consistent, fair enforcement of rules and regulations is paramount as is an environment of mutual respect between staff and student. The foundation of behavior expectations is the Golden Rule, with kindness and thoughtfulness as the guiding precepts of O'Neal: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Faculty, staff, and administrators will respond to misbehavior with appropriate consequences, support, and education.



Detention

Detention will be required of students who do not comply with Middle School expectations. Students may be required to attend a break or lunch detention on a date determined by the adult who assigned the consequence. Depending on the severity of the behavior, a student may be required to serve a detention after school. Parents will be notified by the reporting adult or the Head of Middle School.

Suspensions

Suspensions in the Middle School may be served on- or off-campus at the discretion of the Head of the Middle School. Students receiving on-campus suspensions will sit in an assigned area for the duration of the suspension. During the term of suspension, the student will have no visitors, free break time, or any extracurricular activity. A faculty member or administrative personnel will accompany students in suspension if they leave the assigned area. Each teacher will send the student's daily assignment, quiz, or test to the Middle School Office for delivery to the student. The student shall complete and turn in the assignments.

Expulsion

Expulsion from The O'Neal School is a very serious matter. It results due to extreme or repeated violations of The O'Neal School Honor Code and/or Standards of Behavior. Any decisions regarding expulsion will be made by the Head of School in conjunction with recommendations from the administrative team.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Internet

The Internet is an electronic highway connecting millions of computers and computer users all over the world. The Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. The goal in providing this service to students and teachers is to promote educational excellence in the School by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communications.

With access to computers and people all over the world comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. The School has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network, it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information.

The School firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the School.



Internet access requires proper conduct of end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. The School provides these guidelines to inform users of their responsibilities. If a user violates any of these provisions, his/her school network and/or INTERNET privileges will be reviewed and may be terminated with future access denied. O'Neal does not assume responsibility for inappropriate materials acquired through Internet access at the School.

Technology Acceptable Use

The use of a School account must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of The O'Neal School. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted materials, other confidential or privileged information, and threatening or obscene material. Use for commercial activities is not acceptable. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.

Netiquette

Network users are expected to observe the School's disciplinary rules and standards, including the Honor Code. Users are also expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Be polite. Refrain from abusive messages to others.
2. Use appropriate language in public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages or on any file. This means not using or distributing obscene, profane, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, hate, or disrespectful language online in any form.
3. Do not give out private information including full name, addresses, and/or phone numbers over the Internet.
4. Respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when one inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright (this includes images). If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, one should follow the expressed requirements. If you are unsure whether or not you can use a work, you should request permission from the copyright owner.
5. The use of the network in a way that disrupts other users is prohibited.
6. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property. Users will not repost a message sent to them privately without permission of the person who sent the message.
7. Acts that use any electronic communication device to harass, intimidate, or bully, is known as cyber bullying and is not tolerated.

Violations of The O'Neal School Acceptable Use Policy may lead to in-school suspension, being dropped from computer projects with loss of credit, and/or the termination of network privileges and Internet access. The following are considered serious violations:

1. Attempts to log in without a teacher's permission and/or use of another individual's account



2. Dishonest or deceitful behavior, any attempt to access, use or harm other user's accounts, plagiarism by copying data files
3. Theft or vandalism of hardware, software, or the data of another user
4. Acquisition/dissemination or distribution of inappropriate material such as pornography or hate, and any material that promotes drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products; also restricted are any products that infringe upon the secure files of others. None of the above may be accessed through the network or brought to school.

Personal/School Software

In keeping with copyright laws, software may not be installed on any school computer or file server without express permission of the technology department. Software belonging to the School may not be copied by the student under any circumstances.

Photo or Video Release

The O'Neal School reserves the right to use students' pictures, and videos taken during the school year, as well as any photos or video supplied to the School by the students or their parents/guardians, with permission but without remuneration to such students or parents/guardians.

The O'Neal School and its sponsors reserve the right to use student work to support the curriculum, for school communications, and for demonstration purposes without remuneration to student authors or their parents/guardians.

Privacy and Limitations

Users should be aware that the IT Department is responsible for the administration, maintenance, and compliance issues of all technology resources and has access to and reserves the right to access any information stored on its technology resources or transmitted over the Network.

Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. Users are responsible for their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their accounts. Under no conditions should users provide passwords to others. Users will immediately notify a teacher or member of the technology department if they have found possible security problems. Students should not go looking for security problems. This will be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access. Users will not attempt to learn any system passwords or attempt to log in as another person.



Warranties

The O'Neal School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it provides. The School will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence and errors or omissions of the user. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The School does not assume responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the access provided.

Bring Your Own Device Policy (BYOD):

The O'Neal School's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy requires students in sixth through twelfth grade to bring their personal laptop to school to enhance the instructional learning process. Please review the BYOD requirements for acceptable and recommended devices. Smartphones of any kind are not recognized as acceptable educational devices.

Personal computing devices are to be purchased by the family and will remain the property and responsibility of the family. The O'Neal School is not liable for any device lost, stolen, or damaged on campus. The O'Neal School is not responsible for investigating lost or stolen computing devices however any incidents should be reported immediately to your division head. The O'Neal School's Technology Department is not responsible for maintaining or troubleshooting student devices.

Students are responsible for bringing their device to school daily with a fully charged battery. The battery life of devices should last the full duration of the school-day. The school will provide minimal charging stations in designated areas throughout the school. Students will also need to bring a personal charging cable to make use of the stations.

Each teacher has the discretion to allow and regulate the use of personal devices in the classroom and on specific projects.

Social Media

Faculty and staff are not permitted to friend or follow students. They are also prohibited from posting photos of students on their personal accounts. They are encouraged to send content of school interactions, including the classroom, practices and other activities to falconnews@onealschool.org for posting on the School's main platforms.

As a student of The O'Neal School, you are welcome to participate in interactions with the School online. You are expected to employ responsible behavior, and any disrespect to the School or to your peers — in addition to posting photos of other students without consent — may result in disciplinary action.



ACADEMICS

The O'Neal School offers a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum with demanding standards. At the same time, the academic program is designed to respond to the individual needs and interests of students. Course offerings are continually under review and updated annually in order to meet student needs and interests, and to ensure the inclusion of new skills and concepts.

Curriculum

The course of study at The O'Neal School is a college preparatory, liberal arts program designed to expose students to a broad range of academic disciplines. In Middle School, students not only engage in lessons designed to broaden their horizons and foster a love of learning, but they also learn valuable student and interpersonal skills.

Types of Assessments

All assessments and dates will be posted by faculty to their web pages on the O'Neal website via the Student Portal. The School does not assign any homework, projects, or other assignments over holidays or vacation periods. In addition, no projects will be due nor any other assessment scheduled for the day school resumes.

Homework

Students may have homework daily in many different forms, such as, but not limited to, free reading, required reading, a lesson review or study time, or a written activity. These are assigned in an effort to teach middle school students consistent work habits and effective study skills as they are preparing and learning how to take responsibility for their academics.

The Faculty recognizes that the time required to complete an assignment may vary considerably among individual students. Parents should make an appointment with the teacher to discuss heavy homework loads. Additionally, nights involving major school functions, performances, etc., may be declared “*No Homework Nights*” and are always announced in advance. We hope that such nights will allow for students to participate in school events.

Faculty will post all homework assignments, including studying for tests, on their websites via the School Portal.

Quiz: Covers a limited amount of information and is generally brief and objective in format. Quizzes may be announced in advance or may be given with no notice as a “pop” quiz. The relative grade value of quizzes is significantly less than for tests, labs, essays, or projects.



Test: May cover an entire unit and will require special preparation by the students. Tests will be announced well in advance, and the material to be covered as well as the format of the assessment will be clearly defined. Normally, students are not scheduled to take more than two tests in a given day.

Missing or late assignments

Policies for late assignments will be clearly outlined in the course syllabi. Students are encouraged to speak directly to their teachers if they fall behind with work.

Students who miss classes due to a planned trip must secure their assignments before leaving school. Work is due the day they return unless other arrangements are made with the teachers. Dates for taking missed tests will be determined by the teacher. The student's advisor will help the student create a plan to make up work or to prepare for missing school.

If a student unexpectedly misses classes due to illness or another reason, on the day s/he returns arrangements must be made with each teacher to make up the work and any assessments in a reasonable amount of time. The advisor will assist the student in this instance as well.

Athletes

Members of O'Neal athletic teams are responsible for taking the initiative to obtain homework assignments from classes that they miss due to an early release for a game.

Exams

Exams are administered to 7th and 8th grade students in the core subjects in March. Exams are intended to prepare students for the more comprehensive examinations in the Upper School in core classes and Advanced Placement courses. Exams will count for 10% of the overall final grade.

Grading Scale, Quality Points and Grade Point Average

| | | |
|----|--------|------|
| A+ | 97-100 | 4.25 |
| A | 93-96 | 4.00 |
| A- | 90-92 | 3.75 |
| B+ | 87-89 | 3.50 |
| B | 83-86 | 3.25 |
| B- | 80-82 | 3.00 |
| C+ | 77-79 | 2.75 |
| C | 73-76 | 2.50 |
| C- | 70-72 | 2.25 |
| D+ | 67-69 | 2.00 |
| D | 63-66 | 1.50 |
| D- | 60-62 | 1.00 |

Standardized Testing

The school conducts standardized testing in the spring of each the school year. Students take the ERB test in grades 3 to 8. These tests are used as benchmarks both regionally and nationally. Parents are



provided the results of the tests with a detailed review of the scoring. The School uses these tests as one of several data points in the review of student progress and of the curriculum.

Academic Communication and Support

The O'Neal School strives to maintain a high level of individual academic performance and progress. If at any time a student shows significant progress or struggle, the teacher will reach out first to the student and then follow up with communication to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and advisor. The meeting with the student will include a conversation about preparation, time management, level of understanding, and strategies to improve. Parents/guardians may keep track of student progress by logging into the Student Portal via the school website.

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

Counseling

The school has a full-time counselor on staff for students and parents. All meetings and conversations are confidential. Students may fill out a "request to see me" form or set up an appointment in person.

School Nurse

The school has a full-time registered nurse on staff who will help with any injury or illness that occurs at school. The nurse also administers any prescribed or over-the-counter medication a student might need, as long as the family has turned in the proper paperwork. Please see the Health section of this handbook for more information about medications at school. If a student becomes ill at school, the School Nurse will be called to assess the situation and to call the parents/guardians. The School Nurse will determine, often in consultation with the family, whether or not a student should go home, visit the doctor, or remain at school.

Advisory

The O'Neal School Advisory program provides a faculty mentor for students, creates an advisory group, and facilitates an environment conducive to adolescents' emotional and intellectual growth. The Advisor acts as liaison, mentor, advocate, communication hub, and academic guide. Advisors meet with their advisees each morning for announcements and attendance, and once a week for Advisory. Other meeting times may be scheduled as needed. The advisor provides academic and personal guidance, while the advisory group forms a supportive unit.

As students consistently practice meaningful character and academic development curriculum, they will be empowered to meet O'Neal's college preparatory expectations. In addition, students will cultivate the personal skills that are vital for real-world success.



Middle School Academic Coaching

The Academic Coaching program is designed to assist students with their academic classes, study skills, long term project support, writing assistance, organization, and test preparation. Students have an assigned class period where they work with an academic coach up to four days per week (during a grade level study hall). Academic Coaches serve as proctors for testing accommodations in alignment with College Board guidelines. Coaches also oversee the implementation of individualized academic support plans which are developed in collaboration with families and staff to maximize academic success.

Goals of the Academic Coaching Program.

- **Decrease Academic Struggle:** provide structured support tailored to individualized needs based on academic performance and psycho-educational assessment information.
- **Deliver Quality Instruction:** provide strategic instruction in all academic content areas through the use of research-based methods.
- **Improve Executive Functioning Skills:** Aid in teaching students how to efficiently manage their time, maintain an organizational system, set personal goals, develop quality individualized study skills and test taking strategies so that the student becomes an independent learner.
- **Develop Self-Advocacy:** Teach students to recognize their needs and how to effectively communicate with teachers. AEC coaches also serve as advocates for the student by maintaining communication with parents and classroom teachers.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Attendance Policy for Extra-Curricular Activities

Students must arrive at school by 10:20 AM to participate in any school-sponsored extra-curricular activities on that day, unless excused by a medical appointment. This includes athletic games, rehearsals, and participation in club activities.

Athletics & PE

The athletic and physical education programs emphasize personal improvement, effort, and the value of competition. Students learn the importance of hard work, respect, leadership, good sportsmanship, and personal accountability in practice and competition. These character-building traits ensure better athletes, better students, and better citizens.

Each season, students in grades 6-8 will choose to try out for a competitive team or to enroll in PE. All 5th graders will have PE and are ineligible to join middle school competitive teams due to the rules of our athletic conference (SEMSAC). Athletic teams compete against other schools in our conference. Students in PE will rotate between different units that focus on general physical fitness, sports development, and swimming skills.



Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students may try out for the following Middle School sports teams*:

Fall Sports

Middle School Boys Soccer
Middle School Girls Volleyball
Middle School Cross Country

Winter Sports

Middle School Boys Basketball
Middle School Girls Basketball
Middle School Swimming

Spring Sports

Middle School Boys Baseball
Middle School Girls Soccer
Middle School Boys and Girls Golf

Seventh and eighth graders may try out for the following Junior Varsity and Varsity teams*:

Fall Sports

Varsity and Junior Varsity Boys Soccer
Varsity Boys and Girls Cross Country
Varsity and Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball
Varsity Girls Tennis
Varsity Girls Golf

Winter Sports

Varsity and Junior Varsity Boys Basketball
Varsity and Junior Varsity Girls Basketball
Varsity Cheerleading
Varsity Swimming



Spring Sports

Varsity Boys Baseball

Varsity Soccer

Varsity Boys Tennis

Varsity Boys and Girls Track and Field

Varsity Boys Golf

*The athletic department reserves the right to limit team size in order to ensure an experience in which all students can develop their skills.

Seventh and eighth graders on a Junior Varsity or Varsity level team will have a study hall during H block before joining their teams at 3:30pm.

For information on participation in athletics, please refer to Athletics Policy and Eligibility located in the Athletics Section of the website.

The O'Neal School Code of Sportsmanship

Sports exist in our schools because they are beneficial for our students. Sports are enjoyable, educational, help keep our students physically fit, and provide a healthy outlet for our energies. In order for sports to remain a positive experience for us, we have a code of sportsmanship to guide us, to remind us, to help us conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. The “code” implies an expectation for all coaches, players, cheerleaders, and spectators. That code encompasses a few simple basic ideas:

- Courtesy and respect for the rules, opponents, guests, and officials.
- Enthusiasm for playing the game and modesty and graciousness in victory or defeat.
- Fairness and responsibility to the sport, to our opponents, to our respective schools.

Specifically:

1. We shall not take part in any actions that are derogatory to our opponents, to the officials or in any way in bad taste to spectators in general.
2. We shall respect the property and reputation of our opponents as well as that of our own school.
3. To reinforce the intent of the sportsmanship code, members of The O'Neal School teams are expected to shake hands with their opponents at the end of each athletic contest.

Student Forum

Student Forum Mission: We the students of the O'Neal Middle School Student Forum seek to maintain a unified student body, promote relations between students and faculty, and encourage school pride and loyalty.



Middle School:

The Student Forum will provide Middle School students the opportunity to gain valuable leadership skills by empowering student voice and ownership in impacting positive change across campus. In the Middle School, the Student Forum will be based on grade level representatives. Each grade, 5th through 8th will have one representative elected from each advisory. These elections will occur the fall of each school year. Prior to elections, all Middle School students will engage in lessons within their classes on speech writing, public speaking skills, and overall discussion of leadership traits and characteristics. Ultimately, the Student Forum serves to develop strong, confident student leaders and empowers them to enhance our O'Neal student life experience.

CONCLUSION

The absence of a specific rule in this handbook does not constitute approval for student action. A student is subject to discipline for behavior not mentioned in the handbook. At all times, the goal of school policies and actions is to act in the best interest of the student, student body, and School. The purpose of this handbook is to set a standard of conduct and create an atmosphere of respect and responsibility. Many school policies are designed to address disruptive behavior. However, the most effective behavioral policies are those that are reinforced at home, sending a unified message to our students. Working together, the school, students, and their parents, can have a successful and productive experience. ***Lack of knowledge or understanding of these rules will not be considered a viable excuse.*** The information and regulations set forth in this handbook are to help you have a happy, productive, and successful school year.

As required per EPA Guidelines 40CFR-763.93 (G)(4), The O'Neal School's Asbestos Management Plan is on file in the Business Office.

The O'Neal School admits students of any race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other basis protected by law to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other basis protected by law in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.