

**2016-2017 STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK  
OAK FOREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

1401 West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Houston, Texas 77018  
**713-613-2536**



April Williams, Principal  
Rachel Folse, Assistant Principal  
Patricia Shepherd, Vanguard Coordinator  
Tiffany Osborne, Teacher Specialist  
*Follow us on Twitter @OakForestES*

***Every child, every chance, every day.***

*Oak Forest Elementary Students Are*  
***EMPOWERed***

**E** ffort

**M** otivation

**P** erseverence

**O** wnership

**W** isdom

**E** mpathy

**R** espect

*Being empowered for success begins  
with effort and is founded upon respect.*

How do you show that you are  
**EMPOWERed**?

I show **EFFORT**, I do my best and more!

I have **MOTIVATION**, I am eager to learn!

I will **PERSEVERE**, I keep going!

I take **OWNERSHIP** for my actions, I must  
have self-control!

I use my **WISDOM** to make good choices,  
I think before I act!

I show **EMPATHY**, I care about my world!

I **RESPECT** myself and others with my words  
and actions!

Dear Oak Forest Parents and Students,

This handbook is published so that you may have a reference with information about the daily operations of the school. Please read and use this reference throughout the school year. In addition to the handbook, you are encouraged to become familiar with the provisions of the district-wide **HISD Code of Student Conduct Handbook**.

We are very proud of our outstanding teachers, instructional programs, and supportive community. We are happy to have you with us at Oak Forest Elementary and look forward to a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

April Williams, Principal  
Rachel Folse, Assistant Principal  
Patricia Shepherd, Vanguard Coordinator  
Tiffany Osborne, Teacher Specialist

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## **MISSION STATEMENT:**

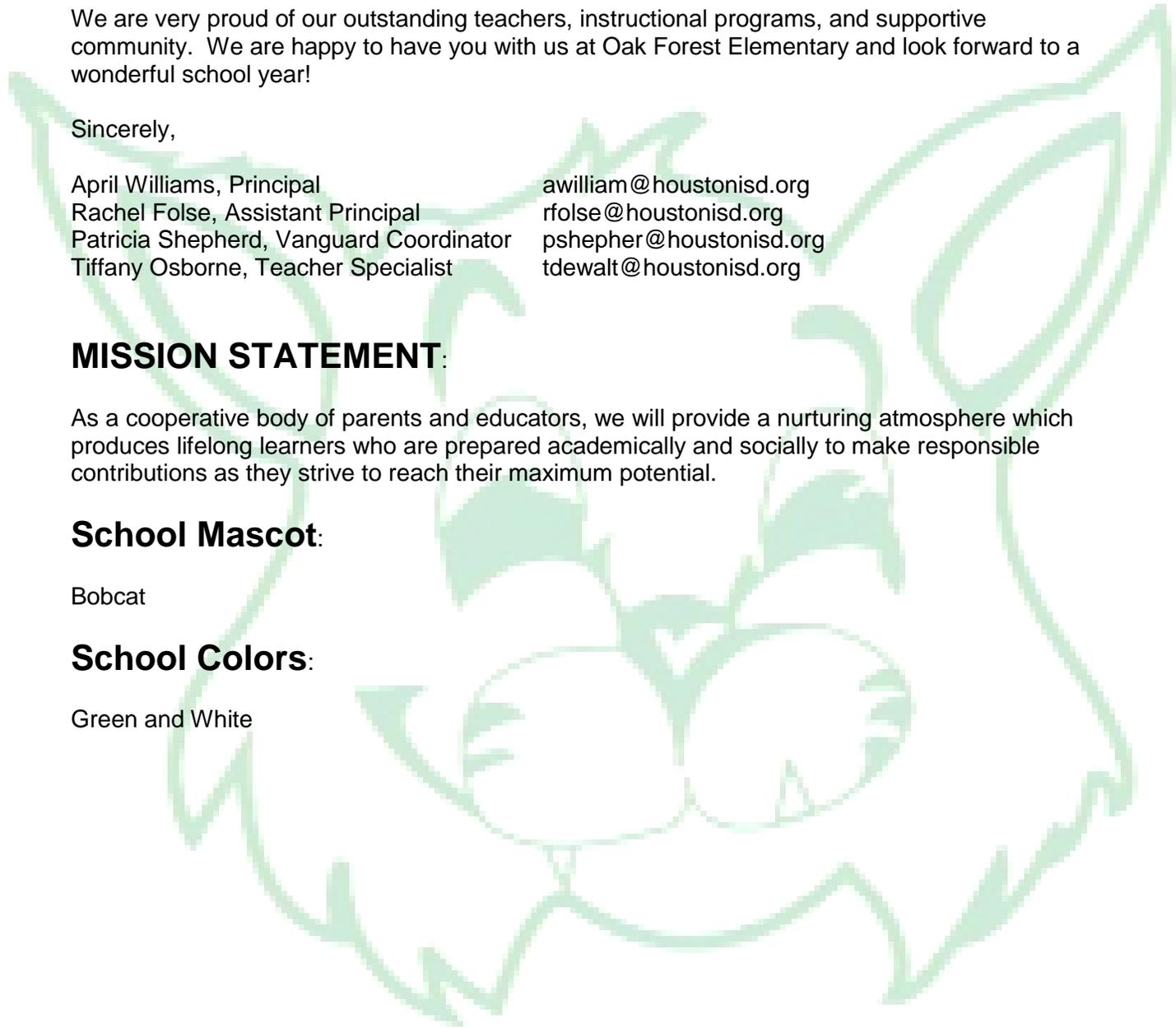
As a cooperative body of parents and educators, we will provide a nurturing atmosphere which produces lifelong learners who are prepared academically and socially to make responsible contributions as they strive to reach their maximum potential.

## **School Mascot:**

Bobcat

## **School Colors:**

Green and White



## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

Students should arrive at school no earlier than 7:00 a.m. Students should report to the following rooms:

Pre-K & Kinder: Blue Commons  
1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup>: Multi-Purpose  
4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>: Cafeteria

The first bell will ring at 7:55 a.m. Students are considered tardy at 8:00 a.m. Tardy slips are issued by the front office staff. A letter will be sent home if your child has excessive (five) tardies or absences. **Further action may be taken if tardiness or unexcused absences continue after the letter.**

We understand that events will occur which may require a parent to be late. Please call the office to inform us of your arrangements. If you are unable to pick up your child/children on time, **please make after-school child care arrangements. SAFETY** is our number one priority. If your student is left after 3:45, they will be sent to After 3 for a fee.

During arrival and dismissal, please pull ***all the way to the end of the car lane***. This speeds up the flow of traffic. Additionally, for safety reasons, please do not pull around other cars.

Cars exiting on to Oak Forest Drive must make a right onto the street during the following times 7:20 a.m. - 8:05 a.m. Students should be let out of their car at the curb in the parking lot. Students should not exit their vehicles on ***43<sup>rd</sup> Street or on Oak Forest Drive***.

If you need to exit your car to let out your child, please park and walk him/her across the car lane in order to help keep the flow of traffic moving in the mornings.

The back driveway off of Lamonte is for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students drop off and pickup only. Students in grades PreK – 2<sup>nd</sup> should be dropped off at the front of the building and picked up by the multipurpose room, even if they have an older sibling. Older siblings will join their younger siblings in the afternoons for dismissal from the multipurpose room or walker line.

## APPOINTMENTS

We encourage you to schedule your child's doctor and dental appointments around school hours. If this is not possible, you must: Come to the main office to sign out your child in order for your child to be released. **Your name must appear on the enrollment card.** Present a picture I.D. If your child is cleared by the doctor/dentist to return the same day to school, present the doctor/dental note upon return. Your child will not be marked absent.

**Students will not be checked out from class between 2:30 and 3:15 pm** as teachers are preparing them for dismissal. If students are checked out for an appointment, a doctor's note must be provided when they return. Students will only be checked out to adults who are listed on the enrollment form. Students who leave campus before dismissal will not be called to wait in the front office before parent/guardian arrives. This is not only a safety issue but will also result in loss of instructional time. If an emergency requires that your child be released to someone else, **you must provide written notice**. Students will not be released to anyone under the age of 18.

## ATTENDANCE & TARDIES

Daily attendance is taken by the classroom teacher at the official attendance time of 10:00 a.m. Students who are not in school at 10:00 a.m. are marked absent. **If a student attends school for part of the day and leaves for an appointment with a medical professional, they can be considered present if they return with a doctor's note.** Students are expected to attend school on a regular basis. Failure of a student to attend when he or she is able to do so may jeopardize promotion to the next grade. **A written explanation, including dates of absences, should be sent to your child's teacher upon their return to school.** Excessive unexcused absences will result in a referral to the district attendance specialist.

Family vacations and midyear trips are unexcused. Please plan your family vacations/trips around the 2016-17 school calendar.

Research shows that loss of more than five days of school could greatly impact social and academic achievement.

## BACK PACKS

Rolling backpacks are not permissible as they are a safety hazard. If your child sustains an injury and has a doctor's note and needs a rolling backpack, please contact the school nurse.

## BUS CONDUCT

Specific student behavior expectations are established for the safe and efficient operation of the school district transportation system. Transportation is considered an extension of the regular school program and students who violate behavior expectations while riding a bus are subject to suspension from riding the bus and/or other penalties established for misbehavior while students are on the school premises. A bus behavior report will be provided to administration. The parent will be notified immediately.

## CAFETERIA GUIDELINES

In addition to our Core Values, the following cafeteria guidelines are in place:

- ❖ Do not share food due to allergies
- ❖ Soft drinks are not allowed
- ❖ Go through the lunch line only once
- ❖ Ask permission to leave your seat

If a child makes poor choices in the cafeteria his/her teacher will administer the same consequences that are applicable in the classroom. Poor choices in the cafeteria will be reflected in the student's conduct sheets.

## CALENDAR

Please refer to the 2016-17 HISD Academic Calendar for important dates such as holidays and report card dates. All school-wide communications will be disseminated on Wednesdays. Please set up a Living Tree account to ensure you receive valuable school information.

## CARPOOL CAR TAGS

All students will receive a carpool tag. Parents **MUST** place this tag on the rearview mirror to expedite the carpool process. If you need additional tags please come to the front office with your ID and we will provide you with another tag.

## CORE VALUES

Our goal is to work collaboratively to create an atmosphere conducive for learning through empowering students to embrace our CORE VALUES and utilize them throughout their lifetime. Please refer to the EMPOWER Values at the beginning of the handbook. In using our Core

Values, children will demonstrate self-discipline strategies that adhere to the guidelines in the HISD **Code of Student Conduct Handbook**. The handbook contains five levels of misconduct and five levels of appropriate disciplinary responses. Parents should discuss the handbook with their child/children. The **STUDENT - PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT in the Code of Student Conduct Handbook** form needs to be signed and returned so it can be placed in the student's permanent record folder.

## DISCIPLINE

Our mission at OFE is to be proactive with discipline through instilling an understanding and desire in our students to exhibit the EMPOWER values. Campus wide and in the classrooms we recognize students for their efforts to become better citizens through demonstrating these values through their actions. When a student makes poor choices, our staff has them identify what EMPOWER value they failed to exhibit and how in the future they could use that value to make better choices. If a student makes poor choices, the following consequences are followed by the classroom teacher:

- Level 1: Class Verbal Reminder
- Level 2: Nonverbal Cues
- Level 3: Student Specific Reminder/Modification
- Level 4: Private Conference
- Level 5: Time Away (in- or out-of-class)
- Level 6: Parent Conference
- Level 7: Administration/referral

In the event a student has made an extremely poor choice, (violent threat/fighting) staff may send the student directly to the office.

Threatening to physically harm or kill another student either verbally, written or through actions are serious violations of the HISD Code of Conduct. Teachers and administration will investigate the intent and seriousness of the violation before deciding on a consequence. All consequences are measured based upon the intent. In grades prekindergarten-second grade, lunch and recess in the office is the first level of consequence for threatening to harm another student. In grades third-fifth the consequence could range up to a suspension.

We encourage you to join us in using the EMPOWER value words at home during your own dialogues about good and bad choices.

## DRESS CODE

Please refer to Appendix A.

**Free Dress** – Occasionally, free dress days will be designated. Any article of clothing that displays alcohol, drug slogans, or other suggestive and inappropriate designs including, but not limited to, those that promote (suggest) violence, or anti-social behavior will not be allowed.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

All electronics are to be kept in backpacks and turned off during the school's instructional hours (8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.) and while students are on the school's grounds (dismissal, tutorials, after school functions, etc).

## ENROLLMENT INFORMATION SHEET

An enrollment information sheet for each student must be on file in the office. If there is a need to contact you during the day, school personnel will use the telephone numbers listed. **If there is a change of address or telephone number during the school year, please notify the**

**school office.** It is very important for the safety of our students that the parent's home, business and emergency numbers are kept current during the school year.

## FIELD TRIPS

Each student must return a written field trip permission slip signed by the parent or guardian. **Notes and telephone calls will not be accepted as a form of permission to attend a field trip.** Field trip permission slips are due at least 48 hours before the field trip. **All chaperones must be cleared through the VIPS process at the beginning of the school year.** See the VIPS section. Siblings will not be permitted to attend field trips due to the supervisory responsibility of each chaperone.

As representatives of Oak Forest Elementary, students should exhibit our Core Values on all field trips. Students who continually make poor choices will require a parental chaperone to attend field trips with them to ensure the safety of all students.

## FOOD PROGRAM

Breakfast is free for all students and will be served in the classroom. Students may purchase their lunch at school or bring one from home. Those who bring a lunch may purchase milk or an a la carte item.

Money may be placed on the lunch card via the internet by accessing the parent online link on the HISD web site at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org) or by paying for the lunch card in the cafeteria on **Monday** mornings for one week, two weeks, etc. Only cash will be accepted in the cafeteria.

## FORGOTTEN ITEMS

Occasionally, as students exit their cars in the morning they realize that they have forgotten a lunch, backpack, instrument, etc. You may leave those items with the front office and we will ensure your child receives it. **Please don't make a habit of dropping off lunch every day for your child.**

Items (homework, lunch kits, etc.) forgotten in the classroom after dismissal may not be retrieved until the following day due to safety concerns and encouraging student responsibility of items.

## FORMS

The following forms must be on file in the office for your child/children

- ❖ Enrollment Information/Rainy Day Procedure Sheet
- ❖ Internet & Email User Agreement and Parent Permission
- ❖ Media Release
- ❖ Student Assistance Questionnaire
- ❖ Code of Conduct Signature Page
- ❖ Student/Parent Handbook Signature Page

## GRADING AND HOMEWORK

Please refer to Appendix B.

## HEALTH

Illnesses and Accidents:

If your child becomes ill or is involved in an accident, school personnel will contact you immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency contact name. Please remember, students with fever or a communicable disease cannot remain at school. Students must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child has head lice, he/she must be examined by the school nurse before returning to class.

Please send a complete change of clothing for all **pre-kindergarten and kindergarten** students in the event they need a change of clothing.

### ***Illness***

Please keep your child home if he/she has a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained rash, or red eyes the night before or the morning of school. Most fevers drop in the morning but will rise again during the day. For this reason, we ask you to keep your child home until he/she has been free of fever for twenty-four hours. If your child has a contagious disease, usually he/she must stay home for at least twenty-four hours on appropriate medication treatment. Please call the school to notify us of your child's illness.

### ***Medication***

H.I.S.D. Policy reads: "School personnel will not administer medical treatment or medication including over the counter drugs." If your child is on a short term medication, please schedule the dosage so that the child receives a morning dose and the remaining doses when he/she returns home. Students on a long term medication will receive the medication only if a physician has stated in writing that the student should have a certain medication during school hours. The official form, which is available from the nurse, must be signed and on file before any long term medication can be given during the school year. Students that may require an emergency medication such as an inhaler for asthma or an Epi Pen for an allergic reaction are also required to have updated medical paperwork yearly. Please see the nurse for the approved forms.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

Communicating with Teachers:

To ensure there is maximum instructional time, OFE maintains a no interruptions policy within each classroom. We encourage consistent communication with parents and staff. Whenever possible, please use email to communicate with your child's teacher. Each teacher has planning times throughout the week for parent-teacher conferences. Parents who come in and request to be allowed to speak with their child's teacher without a scheduled conference will have a message sent to the teacher so that he/she may telephone them to schedule a conference.

Changes to your child's dismissal plan should be made in advance and submitted to the classroom teacher in writing. In case of a last minute change due to an emergency, please notify the main office.

## **LIBRARY**

Books may be checked out and taken home to read or study. **Students must be responsible for the care of the books.** A fee will be charged for lost and/or damaged books.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The "Lost and Found" area is located in the back atrium. **Please label all items with your child's first and last name.** Students should keep valuable items at home. The school is not responsible for lost or broken items. In December, March, and June of each year, all unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

## PAYMENT OF FEES

When paying for pictures, school sponsored fundraisers, or other school activities, please submit payment in cash. Any checks that are returned due to insufficient funds will result in a \$35 charge.

## PEDESTRIAN REGULATIONS

HISD places a crossing guard at the corner of Oak Forest Street and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and at LaMonte and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street from 7:15 a.m. - 8:15 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. to supervise our students. Children must cross at one of the supervised areas. **No child will be allowed to cross the street in the middle of the block.**

## RECESS

Oak Forest students will participate in physical activity for approximately thirty minutes daily. Physical Education, Yoga and Music are all classes that include physical activity and are included toward the state requirement of 135 minutes a week of physical activity. At the teacher's discretion, if the 135 minutes are going to be met that week, recess may not be held on days that include one of the three classes mentioned or if the school has an extracurricular event (performance, Fun Run, etc.).

## TELEPHONE USE

The school telephone is a business telephone. Students may use the telephone in emergency situations only. The student must have a pass from the teacher and the office staff must give permission for the use of the phone.

## TEXTBOOKS

Students will be issued textbooks. Students should carefully check each book. If damaged pages are found, the student should report the information to the teacher. Students are responsible for the care of the books. If the book is lost, the student **must** pay the cost for replacement.

## VOLUNTEERING/VISITING THE SCHOOL

We encourage parents and the community to visit our school. Please contact the office if you are interested in becoming a volunteer. Your time and interest will make a difference in our students. **When you are visiting the school, you must show a valid ID and sign in at the office and wear the visitor's pass that will be given to you. This policy includes HISD employees who are parents.** Please give your badge to the receptionist upon leaving the building. We appreciate you following this policy for the protection and safety of all of the students at Oak Forest.

All volunteers must register for the Volunteer in Public Schools (VIPS) Program and pass a background check at the beginning of each year. This is a three-step process. First, you will need to register at [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org) under the VIPs link. Secondly, you must present a valid picture ID to the VG clerk in the main office to finalize the process. Thirdly, you will need to call the Vanguard clerk to ensure the VIPS information was finalized.

**You will not be allowed to attend field trips as a chaperone if you do not have a VIPS clearance. Background checks require a minimum of four weeks for clearance. If you plan to attend field trips, please register promptly. This process must be completed at the onset of each year.**

# APPENDIX A

## Oak Forest Dress Code Policy

It is our belief that the Uniform/Dress Code Policy helps to maintain a positive learning climate, where distractions are minimized and appropriate focus on learning is maintained.

### Girls may wear:

- Shirt - white uniform blouse, oxford, polo or turtleneck in navy, hunter green, or white
- Jumper - khaki or navy
- Skirt - khaki or navy
- Shorts - khaki or navy, uniform style (must be mid-thigh or longer)
- Slacks - khaki or navy
- Socks or tights
- Tennis shoes or other closed toe shoes that are safe for the playground and P.E.

### Boys may wear:

- Shirt – collared shirt in navy, hunter green, or white
- Slacks - khaki or navy
- Shorts - khaki or navy, knee length uniform style
- Tennis shoes or other closed toe shoes that are safe for the playground and P.E.

### Miscellaneous:

- Many Grade Levels order Spirit T-shirts to be worn on all field trips (check with your teacher).
- Spirit shirts (college or sports) or Oak Forest Spirit shirts may be worn on Wednesdays and Fridays with jeans.
- Students are permitted to have a sweatshirt or jacket at school in case a particular area of the school is cold.

# APPENDIX B

## GRADING AND HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

### Grading

At Oak Forest Elementary we believe that the primary purpose for grades is to provide information and feedback to students and parents. Furthermore; grades should accurately reflect the student's ability to master the grade level standards. Teachers assess student learning in a variety of ways. Grades are based on multiple measures over time such as daily assignments, tests, projects, reports, teacher observation, and participation.

The following is a guideline for what specific grades reflect in terms of student ability:

A- to A+	90-100	Student has a firm grasp of the concepts that were taught in that subject.
B- to B+	80-90	The student has the ability to show mastery for the majority of the required concepts taught in that subject. Additional practice may still be needed for certain skills to be retained.
C- to C+	75-79	The student has the ability to show mastery for at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the required concepts taught in that subject. Re-teaching of multiple skills is most likely still needed.
D- to D+	70-74	The student is still struggling with a significant amount of concepts. Re-teaching of multiple skills is still needed.
F	Below 70	The student is unable to master required concepts taught in that subject. Student is need of targeted intervention to support learning of these skills.

Progress Reports - Progress reports are sent home the fifth week of each nine weeks reporting period. Please utilize these reports to discuss your child's academic strengths and weaknesses with them and create learning goals for areas that need remediation.

### Homework

#### Purpose of Homework:

- ❖ Develop initiative, responsibility, and organizational skills.
- ❖ Extend learning and provide practice in applying concepts that teachers have presented in the classroom.
- ❖ Strengthen concept attainment and skill development. Research has shown that there are benefits for nightly practice of spelling words and math facts for brief periods, especially before bedtime when some studies show the brain repeats patterns and facts during sleep.
- ❖ Support reading outside of the regular school day which has shown to have many benefits for children.

#### Time Allotments:

Below are the times, on average, that students should spend on homework each night:

- ❖ Grades K-1: up to 20 minutes/night + independent reading
- ❖ Grades 2-3: up to 30 minutes/night + independent reading
- ❖ Grades 3-5: up to 50 minutes/night + independent reading

\*If a student has worked constructively for the suggested time frames, but the assignment is not complete or the child is frustrated, parents are encouraged to write a note to the teacher stating this to address his/her needs.

#### Guidelines:

- ❖ In all grades, homework may be given Monday through Thursday.
- ❖ Students may make up assignments missed due to excused absences.
- ❖ Teachers are not expected to provide assignments in advance for absences of any type.

- ❖ **Required homework** will not be assigned the night before a standardized test, over the weekends or during breaks and holidays.
- ❖ Homework is used as a communication tool of what is being learned in the classroom. Toward that end, teachers will communicate with parents through websites, email, newsletters, or home folders.

Homework will not be a significant factor in determining academic grades. In most cases, homework completion will be included on the learning skills section of the report card and as a small percentage of grading.

### **The Teachers' Role**

- ❖ Communicate classroom policies and procedures to students and parents in September.
- ❖ Communicate due dates and directions for completing each homework assignment to students.
- ❖ Provide homework assignments that are directly related to instructional objectives and take into account the differences among students so that it can be completed independently.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for students to ask questions and receive clarification of expectations when the assignment is given.
- ❖ Review and provide feedback to students. This feedback may include self-evaluation and/or tracking of progress, peer feedback, or teacher comments.

### **The Students' Role**

- ❖ Make sure you understand the homework when the teacher assigns it.
- ❖ Ask for help when needed.
- ❖ Complete the assigned homework neatly and hand in assignments on time.
- ❖ Review homework with parents.

### **The Parents' Role**

To help children be successful with work at home, parents should:

- ❖ Create a place that supports studying. Most children do best in quiet, well-lit environments.
- ❖ Set aside a specific time to do homework each day. Family routines, including set homework times, have been linked to higher achievement.
- ❖ Make sure children have the supplies they need to complete assignments.
- ❖ Be available if children have questions. Parents can support their children by looking over homework and giving suggestions, but should not do the homework for them.
- ❖ Let teachers know if homework assignments are too difficult or unclear.
- ❖ Monitor assignment completion through the use of student planners or Grade Speed.

We believe that family time is an important time that needs to be protected. As teachers, our family time allows us to explore our interests, continue our learning, and spend time with our loved ones. Enjoy the time you have as your children's first teachers.

(References: *Getting the Most out of Homework*, North West Regional Educational Laboratory; *A Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works*, Robert Marzano)

The Oak Forest Student/Parent Handbook has been written to help your child gain the greatest possible benefit from his or her school experience.

It is important that every student understands the Student/Parent Handbook guidelines. **Please read and discuss the Handbook with your child.** Signatures of parents and the student acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Oak Forest Student Parent Handbook and certify that they have read and discussed the Handbook.

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Student Signature

Date

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Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom \_\_\_\_\_