



UPPER CAMPUS
STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK
2024-2025

OJAI VALLEY SCHOOL
723 El Paseo Road
Ojai, California 93023
(805) 646-5593

February 2024

Dear OVS Families,

The *Student & Parent Handbook* is intended as a guide to help you navigate daily life at Ojai Valley School. We believe it is important to partner with our families and communicate clearly the expectations for all students, whether day or boarding, as it pertains to student conduct, academic responsibility, integrity, and respect for individuals and personal property.

Each student is asked to abide by the guidelines outlined in this handbook. Please take the time to read it carefully with your student, then sign and return the Pledge of Responsibility through our School Forms Online portal. The rules and policies in the handbook are reviewed annually by the administration, approved by the Board of Trustees, and may be revised during the year if necessary. If changes occur, students and parents will be notified.

Beyond the rules and policies, you will find answers to common questions ranging from dress code, cell phone use, campus hours, weekend activities, outdoor equipment, and much more. While no publication can reliably describe every situation that may arise during a student's life at OVS, we hope the handbook addresses the most frequent questions and concerns.

Please reach out to the Head of Campus, dorm parents, advisors, teachers and nurses if you have questions or need help during the year ahead. We are all here to help, and look forward to the school year ahead!

Warmly,

Lars Kuelling
Head of School
Ojai Valley School
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STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK
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I. BUSINESS & CONTACTS

Providing tools and useful information to help families navigate the Ojai Valley School community.

COMMUNICATION

The main school phone number is (805) 646-5593. Office hours are generally 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We also have a Voice Mail system. Please refer to our website, www.ovs.org, for a full list of email addresses for teachers, staff, and resident counselors.

Most students use their cell phones to stay in touch with parents, guardians, and friends. Since students are not allowed to use their phones during academic times, please do not expect routine communication during these times. In an emergency or if you need to speak to your child urgently during the academic day, please call the Ojai Valley School main number (805) 646-5593. If your child's phone needs a U.S. sim card to function while at school, please supply one before arrival. Feel free to call the office and leave a message for your student to call home.

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Business Office has a separate telephone line, (805) 640-2575, and fax line, (805) 640-2593, for all accounts and billing information. This number is to be used exclusively for business matters.

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION:

OVS E-mail:	ovs@ovs.org
OVS Website:	http://www.ovs.org
Business Office	(805) 640-2575
Fax Line, Business Office	(805) 640-2593
Upper Campus	(805) 646-5593
Fax Line Upper Campus	(805) 933-1096
Lower Campus	(805) 646-1423
Fax Line, Lower Campus	(805) 640-2588
Fax Line Admission Office	(805) 646-0362
Health Center	(805) 646-1423 ext. 1238
OVS Transportation	(805) 640-2591 ext. 3030

Note: All staff may be reached using their first initial and last name @ovs.org. Craig Floyd is cfloyd@ovs.org, for example.

PERMISSION FORMS

The school requires written permission on file from parents or guardians for the following:

- Pledge of Responsibility
- Visitation Rights Form
- Student Emergency Contact Information and Medical Release
- Medical Questionnaire
- Medical Insurance and Credit Card Information
- Medication Form
- Over-the-Counter Medication Consent Form
- Physical Exam Form
- Activity Release Form
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Pledge
- Concussion Information
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information

SUNDRY ACCOUNTS

The sundry account is set up for the convenience of the student and his/her parents or guardians. It is to be used by students to purchase materials sold in the student store and for other school-related charges such as miscellaneous transportation, camping, etc. The Business Office mails statements monthly. **The balance due must be paid within 30 days or a student's charging privileges may be suspended.**

Funds for other than school-related items should not be requested from the sundry account. Students may deposit funds in a personal account and then make withdrawals when funds are needed. A \$50.00 per week limit is set unless authorized by the Head of Campus.

We suggest that a checking/debit account or weekly allowance be established at the beginning of the school year. Because spending habits vary, this matter should be discussed with your student. A recommended amount on a trial basis would be \$30.00 to \$50.00 per week.

STUDENT STORE

School supplies and sundry items are available for sale at the student store and may be charged to the student's sundry account.

II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY & PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

MISSION

By the time Ojai Valley School students are ready to graduate they will have developed the academic strength, the character, and the self-confidence to meet life's future challenges in an ever-changing world.

PHILOSOPHY

Ojai Valley School's philosophy is contained in the words *Integer Vitae*, meaning wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore, poise and strength of life. To accommodate the school philosophy, every effort is made to create an atmosphere for students and staff that is conducive to learning and growing through the framework of a warm family environment.

Guided by this stated philosophy, Ojai Valley School has as its goals and objectives the development of each student's character through the advantageous use of Ojai's natural surroundings, diverse educational community and a strong, professional staff. More specifically, the goals and objectives for each student are outlined in the school philosophy as follows:

- Wholeness of life – Ojai Valley School students are presented with a wide variety of experiences through college preparatory studies, campus life, educational field trips, student activities, athletic programs, and outdoor education. These activities allow students to explore the extent of their interests and abilities, to know themselves, and to develop an appreciation and respect for other people on a global scale.
- Symmetry of life – Ojai Valley School students are exposed to a well-balanced program, both academic and social, with consistent standards set for each discipline and activity.
- Soundness of life – Towards the development of character, Ojai Valley School students are given responsibilities, which relate to their personal lives and to school affairs. Students have an opportunity to learn, perhaps to fail and to try again. With staff support and guidance, students begin to develop the knowledge and strength needed to make sound judgments.

OVS PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE

Ojai Valley School students are encouraged to explore their interests, know themselves, and develop an appreciation and respect for others on a global scale. By the time they graduate, they will have developed the academic strength, the character, and the self-confidence to meet life's future challenges in an ever-changing world.

The school's philosophy, **Integer Vitae**, means the wholeness of life, symmetry of life, soundness of life, and, therefore, poise and strength of life. To accommodate this, OVS creates an atmosphere for students and staff that is conducive to learning and growing through the framework of a warm family environment.

Soundness of Life

Toward the development of character, OVS students are given responsibilities, both in their personal lives & school affairs. They have an opportunity to learn, perhaps to fail & to try again. With staff support & guidance, students develop the knowledge & strength needed to make sound judgments.

An OVS student:

Exercises Resilience

- Pursues a healthy & balanced lifestyle
- Confidently meets life's future challenges
- Adapts to evolving learning environments to maintain a lifelong investment in education

Thinks Critically

- Resourcefully & creatively solves problems
- Explores interests, develops deep core knowledge, and succeeds academically
- Appreciates & understands multiple perspectives

Wholeness of life

OVS students are presented with a wide variety of experiences through college preparatory studies, campus life, educational field trips, student activities, athletic programs, & outdoor education.

An OVS student:

Embraces Community

- Acts with kindness, empathy & inclusiveness
- Honors & advocates for cultural & global diversity
- Collaborates in ways that contribute to the greater good

Champions the Environment

- Develops a deep appreciation for the outdoors
- Works to protect, preserve & restore the natural environment
- Applies eco-conscious practices, including "leave no trace" habits

Symmetry of Life

OVS students are exposed to a well-balanced program, both academic & social, with consistent standards set for each discipline & activity.

An OVS student:

Acts with Integrity

- Appreciates & respects others
- Values honesty & acts ethically
- Takes responsibility & accountability for actions

Contributes With Sincerity

- Powerfully & effectively communicates
- Serves the community through leadership & shares a joy for learning
- Exhibits independent thinking & a commitment to active, constructive citizenship.

III. STUDENT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

All members of the Ojai Valley School community are expected to take an active role in creating a supportive and inclusive community that is expressive of Ojai Valley School's values. In their interactions, communication, and public and private statements our expectation is that students, faculty, and staff will honor each other's dignity, comfort, privacy, and differences. Creating and maintaining this healthy and safe environment depends on all community members **feeling supported and heard**. To this end students have access to and should avail themselves of the multi-faceted support network that is built into the Ojai Valley School community. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Student Leaders
- Student sponsored groups such as GSA
- Advisors
- Teachers
- School Counselor
- Assistant Heads and Head of Campus

Most importantly, students should recognize that if they have voiced a concern that they believe has not been properly addressed through one of the resources listed above, they should utilize another resource until they feel their issue or concern has received an appropriate response. In the event that a student does not feel comfortable discussing a problem with any on-campus resources, the student should notify the Assistant Head or Head of Campus who will put the student in contact with an off-campus resource that is not affiliated with Ojai Valley School.

Additional Resources:

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, & Incest Nation Network
HOTLINE: 1 (800) 656-HOPE

Suicide Prevention Hotline
HOTLINE: 1 (800) 273-8255

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
HOTLINE: 1 (800) 662-HELP

National Eating Disorders Association
HOTLINE: 1 (800) 931-2237
TEXT: 1 (800) 931-2237

Ventura County Mental Health Information
HOTLINE: 2-1-1

Standing Together to End Sexual Assault
HOTLINE: (805) 564-3696

School Counseling: Solution-Focused Social-Emotional Support and Service

Overview:

Ojai Valley School is committed to a holistic education so students can meet life's future challenges. In the school's effort to provide support to each student as they reach their goals parents/legal guardians or school faculty refer students, or students may self-refer, for counseling related services. School Counseling is considered a regular service and part of the educational experience at the Ojai Valley School. The focus of the service is to educate students on their social and emotional skills while enhancing their well-being and improving their coping skills. The counseling support and services provided to the students to education on social-emotional skills and topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Teacher and/or parent consultation
- Classroom instruction
- Classroom observations
- Individual and group counseling meetings
- Crisis Support and Intervention
- Interventions consisting of understanding, processing, educating, and responding to conflict, academic, social, and/or personal challenges impacting the student or learning environment
- Advisory programming
- Recommendations and referrals

Confidentiality

The School Counselor may share information with parents/legal guardians, school faculty, or personnel who work with your child on a need-to-know basis in order to provide better support for the student. The School Counselor by law must share information with various personnel in certain circumstances:

- Presenting a serious danger to self or others
- Suspicion, evidence, or disclosure of abuse or neglect, past or present
- Threat to school security

Additionally, Cal.Ed. Code 49602 indicates that personal information shared by pupils age 12 or older is confidential, even from parents, except in exceptional circumstances such as an emergency wellness situation. The Student and Counselor continually collaborate on how to share information, new skills, themes, etc. as the aim of the service is to empower students to communicate, advocate, and invite people in to provide more support.

Should you have any questions regarding the services provided, please reach out to the School Counselor.

SUBSTANCE USE REPORTING

Students who are concerned about their own or a peer's substance use may seek confidential help from OVS' counselor or health center staff. The counselor and health center staff do not report violations of school rules to parents or school administrators unless a student's safety or well-being, or the well-being of other students, is in question. The counselor and/or health center staff

will help students understand what kind of support and intervention is available to them, as well as making sure that students are aware of the school's disciplinary consequences for substance use. OVS' counselor and health center staff can play an important role in helping ensure students are safe, healthy and aware of resources for their education and well-being.

Additionally, students can proactively seek support by reaching out to a Dean or Head of Residential Life, an Assistant Head of Campus, or Head of Campus who may connect them with counseling and support resources without risking expulsion. If engagement with a counselor or support resources leads to a treatment plan requiring the student to leave campus, the student may be granted a medical leave of absence.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Ojai Valley School operates as a family, and as in all families, disagreement, misperception and conflict may arise. These guidelines are intended to facilitate resolution and personal growth. They are founded on direct, compassionate communication, accountability, and understanding. These essential life skills promote well- functioning relationships in school, family, and work.

We expect students to develop maturity by taking ownership of their feelings and perceptions and engaging in direct conversation when possible.

- Student Leaders and prefects can provide assistance and offer an objective perspective on issues. Leaders/Prefects will also help students differentiate between problems that can be solved interpersonally and those that need staff assistance.
- If students are uncomfortable sharing their grievance with another student, they should go directly to a resident staff, faculty members, advisors, or an administrator. These adults will help assess the issue and develop a strategy for resolving the problem.
- In disagreements or misunderstandings with staff, addressing the issue right away is essential to facilitating good relationships and honoring the feelings of all involved. Students should
- speak to the staff member directly so both can hear each other's perceptions respectfully. If necessary, an advisor or administrator may be present for mediation and support.

These suggestions are intended to guide community members through the process of healing ordinary disagreements, conflicts, and/or misperceptions. If any student feels endangered or at risk, they should immediately contact an available staff member who will notify administration.

IV. STUDENT CONDUCT

Ojai Valley School students are expected to behave in a manner as to reflect favorably on themselves and the school. **Above all else Ojai Valley School expects its students' decisions, actions, and words to reflect a respect for the dignity of fellow students, staff, and campus visitors. It is the responsibility of each member of our community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit toward others, regardless of their differences.**

In accordance with our mission to educate the "whole child" we ask our parents/guardians and students to understand that Ojai Valley school expects a positive and responsible attitude toward academic, social, athletic, and community service obligations as well as responsible individual behavior as it relates to school rules and our code of conduct. Study hours, homework, crew jobs, cafeteria clean-up, stable maintenance, grounds and classroom upkeep, and planning and participation in social and athletic functions are all part of the student's enthusiastic involvement with the school.

Our commitment to upholding, invigorating, embodying, and assessing our collective values gives us the strength to overcome challenges and to support each other with compassion even when we hold different perspectives. To this end Ojai Valley School welcomes diversity in its constituents and their opinions.

Ojai Valley School wishes to maintain the policy of trust and, in giving as much freedom as good sense dictates, the school expects that students will live up to our high expectations.

Students and parents must recognize that there are instances in which the Ojai Valley School community extends into the larger community and accept that students are held to the same expectations for conduct there as they are on the campus itself. Some examples of these are off-campus activities--both supervised and unsupervised, camp trips, field trips, and sporting competitions. Student conduct is subject to OVS scrutiny and potential discipline if they engage in activities that put the school or its members at risk.

V. DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM

MAJOR OFFENSES

"Towards the development of character, Ojai Valley School students are given responsibilities which relate to their personal lives and to school affairs. Students have an opportunity to learn, perhaps to fail, and to try again. With staff support and guidance, students begin to develop the knowledge and strength needed to make sound judgments."

In recognition of the school's responsibilities to the law and the school's responsibilities to other members of the community, certain types of behavior are unacceptable to the school. These types of behavior are classified as "Major Offenses" and include the following:

- 1. Violations that create a hostile environment for community members, which may include repeated teasing, taunting, intimidating, belittling, or other forms of harassment.**
- 2. Harm or threats to do harm to oneself or another**
- 3. Endangerment of or threats to the Ojai Valley School Community**
- 4. Sexual misconduct including, but not limited to, non-consensual activity, harassment, and stalking **see note below**
- 5. Violations of honesty, integrity, and consideration for other members of the school community, which include:**
 - lying,
 - cheating (including misuse of AI technology),
 - plagiarism (including misuse of AI technology),
 - stealing/theft (including use of credit card/personal codes),
 - willful property damage,
 - absence from school without official permission,
 - disrespectful behavior
- 6. Violations involving drugs and alcohol, which include:**
 - Use and/or possession of any harmful drugs or chemicals/paraphernalia
 - Use and/or possession of alcohol/paraphernalia
 - Use and/or possession of marijuana/paraphernalia
- 7. Possession of firearms or other weapons**
- 8. Violations involving explicit sexual activity.**
- 9. Violations involving unauthorized dorm room visitation: students living in the girl's dormitory may not enter rooms of a student living in the boys dormitory, and students living in the boys dormitory may not enter rooms of a student living in the girls dormitory.**
- 10. Violations involving trespassing, entering or accessing locked rooms, or areas students are unauthorized to use.**
- 11. Violations of the Technology Acceptable Use Policy, including, but not limited to:**
 - Misuse of computer equipment
 - Introduction of computer viruses
 - Downloading or use of any software without prior school approval
 - Unauthorized access of "on-line" services
 - Inappropriate use of electronic mailing services and/or social media
 - Use of the Internet, computer software, or video games involving acts of violence, racial hatred, drugs, alcohol, or explicit sex
 - Posting statements or photos in any print or online publication including but not limited to social media sites, of Ojai Valley School students or staff for the purpose of humiliation, harassment, bullying, degradation, or insult.

12. Violations involving use or possession of any form of tobacco or nicotine.

****Note on sexual misconduct and reporting.** While intimate sexual activity is not deemed appropriate within the OVS community either on campus or as part of school sponsored activities, we recognize that intimate relationships between students may develop and we want to emphasize that sexual misconduct is both a violation of school policy and against the law. As mandated reporters, school staff may be obligated to immediately report certain categories of misconduct to the Child Protective Services unit and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. Students are advised to have a strong grasp of the concept of "consent" and are encouraged to seek additional information if they have questions. Students who experience sexual misconduct during or after drug/alcohol consumption, are advised that Ojai Valley School's central concern is to support and protect the student who has been the subject of sexual misconduct. Therefore, students may report sexual misconduct allegations without fear of alcohol/drug related discipline that may normally be associated with the incident.

DISCIPLINARY ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Ojai Valley School officials are aware of each student's individual rights and, therefore, when a student does commit a major offense or is suspected of committing a major offense, the following occurs:

- When possible, the parents/guardian are called by the child and either the Head of Campus's or his designated representative. They are informed of the problem as it exists at the moment.
- The student is informed by the Head of Campus as to what procedure will follow.
- The Assistant Head of Campus will appoint faculty and students as members of the Disciplinary Advisory Committee, which will collect information regarding the major offense, including a full and complete hearing from the student involved. Members of the Committee will develop written recommendations for the Head of Campus's final review.
- The Head of Campus will then meet with the student to discuss the final action, which will be taken. The student's parents or guardians will be notified at this time of the results of the DAC.

Ojai Valley School has sole discretion to act on information relating to major offenses.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any student or group of students involved with a major offense **WILL MOST LIKELY BE DISMISSED** from the Ojai Valley School or face other disciplinary action. **In the event of dismissal, the parents or guardians will not be refunded any portion of their tuition expenses after the opening day of school.** In order to avoid any possible misunderstanding between school officials and parents/guardians and students regarding major offenses and disciplinary action which may result, procedures exist:

- Prospective parents/guardians and students are informed during the admission process as to what constitutes a major offense.

- As a condition of enrolling at Ojai Valley School, parents/guardians and students must sign the Student Handbook, which outlines major offenses.
- Students are reminded as to what constitutes a major offense at the beginning and throughout the school year.

LAPS (DEMERITS)

When a student fails to meet commitments, laps may be given as a consequence. The tradition of running laps has long since passed ~ they now stand for a unit of time and are worked off by students participating in community jobs on Saturday morning.

- Laps will be posted and removed weekly.
- Resident students with more than four posted laps may not leave the campus until they are worked off. Day students with laps may not participate in off campus school recreational activities.
- Laps must be worked off on Saturday mornings. Carry over laps not worked off on Saturday may be worked off during the following week. **Day students with laps must be present at the Saturday work period.**
- If a student receives in excess of 75 laps during a quarter, he/she may expect to be placed on probation. An excess of 150 laps for a semester or 200 laps for the year will result in a Disciplinary Advisory Committee (DAC) with the likelihood of dismissal.

PROBATION AND SOCIAL/ACADEMIC CONTRACTS

Probationary terms and contracts involve written limitations placed upon a student's academic and/or social behavior. The terms of probation or a contract are set by the Head of Campus and failure to meet the terms may result in a Disciplinary Advisory Committee meeting and possibly in the student's dismissal from school.

COLLEGE AND SCHOOL NOTIFICATION

Most colleges and schools ask about a student's disciplinary history as part of the application process. Ojai Valley School must honestly supply this information. Therefore, it is essential for students to understand our expectation for conduct and the potential for far-reaching negative consequences if they become involved in activities that violate major school rules.

VI. ACADEMICS

CLASS SIGNUPS

Returning students choose their classes in the second semester working with the Assistant Head of Campus, Academics and the College Counselor. New students work with the Assistant Head of Campus, Academics after their admittance and over the summer.

CLASS ADD/DROP POLICY AND WITHDRAWALS

Students are informed at several “all school” meetings in the first month of school that the final date to add or drop a class, or make a change to the schedule, is the last day in September. This is the official Add/Drop deadline. Once the first quarter report card has been published, any student wishing to withdraw from a class will receive a W for “withdrawal” on the student’s transcript.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES

Any student wishing to withdraw from an AP course after the last day of the Add/Drop period, must seek teacher approval AND approval from the Assistant Head of Campus, Academic Affairs. Authorization to withdraw after the Add/Drop period shall be granted for only the most serious and compelling reasons, e.g. a documented physical, medical, emotional or other condition which has the effect of limiting the student’s full participation in the class. Poor academic performance, e.g. a low grade, lack of effort or poor attendance, is not evidence of a serious reason for withdrawal.

A withdrawal from a class (W) listed on the transcript is GPA-neutral. Instead of a grade, the student will receive a W notation on the transcript which does not affect the student’s GPA; the student will not earn credit for the course. The W remains on the transcript.

ONLINE CLASSES

Students may enroll in an online course for a class that OVS does not offer for in person learning or to remediate a previous course where a student earned *below a C-* on the transcript. For any other online course, the student must petition in writing to the Head of Upper Campus for a “request to take the online course.” OVS does not pay for online courses. Financial responsibility for online courses is upon the student and family.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR & ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Students who attend Ojai Valley School are expected to meet each of their classes on time and be prepared with books and other necessary supplies. Students are expected to afford their instructors and peers the respect necessary for the completion of a successful class period. If for some reason a student is not able to attend class, it is the student’s responsibility to request material covered in class as well as homework.

Absence: A student is allowed a maximum of seven (7) excused absences per course per semester. If he/she exceeds that number of absences, grades may be lowered or credit may be withheld in the courses involved.

STUDENT EXCUSED ABSENCES

Student excused absences from school include medical appointments, illness, or pre-approved absences. At certain times a student or parent may request that a student take a short absence from classes. In that circumstance, and in accordance with parental permission and only with the Head of Upper Campus’ approval, the student may be excused from attending scheduled classes for a short period of time. Examples of excusable absences are family emergency, special seminar or training, or events of academic significance. The student and parent/guardian must inform the school (Head of

Upper Campus) in writing, and the student should email all class teachers and the academic advisor of the dates of the approved absence.

A student must gather all of his or her academic assignments before the student leaves school, and teacher and the student should arrange for a deadline of completion of those assignments. If a teacher is planning to excuse students from a class or classes, he or she must first check to see if the student has followed the correct protocol.

LATE HOMEWORK

If a student turns in a homework assignment late, teachers will lower the students' academic credit/grade for the assignment.

MISSING HOMEWORK

If a student fails to complete the assignment altogether after the teacher has given a deadline for the work (even with lower credit/grade), the will put a 0 in the grade book for that assignment.

CONSEQUENCES FOR MISSING WORK

If a student has missing work on more than one occasion, the teacher will report the missing work to the student's advisor, and include the student in the email. The advisor will report to parents/guardians on the second missing assignment. If a failure to complete missing work happens a third time in any academic quarter, then the teacher will report to the advisor and to the Assistant Head of Upper Campus, Academic Affairs. They will meet with the student, and place an academic warning letter in the student's file and parents will be notified that the grade will be lowered due to the late/missing work, and that a warning has been issued.

This missing work policy does not apply to excused absences due to illness. For example, if a student is ill on the day the assignment is due, that student will have the same number of excused absence days to complete the assignment. Once that new deadline passes, the work will be considered late/missing and the grade should reflect that it is late/missing. Extended illness or absences from school, will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the teacher, advisor, and Assistant Head of Upper Campus, Academic Affairs.

GRADES AND HONORS DISTINCTIONS

No grade of "A+", or "D-" exists for any of our graded material or records.

AP and honor course grades are weighted with (1) one extra grade point.

A minimum of C- is required in sequential courses in order to continue. Grades below C- are not college recommended grades.

HONORS LIST: GPA of 3.50 and above;

HEADMASTER'S LIST: GPA of 3.50 and above and an EPA of 4.50 and above;

EFFORT HONOR ROLL: EPA of 4.50 and above

ACADEMIC PROBATION: GPA below 1.67 results in an academic probationary contract;

AP AND HONORS COURSES

ENROLLMENT IN AP OR HONORS COURSES

Students requesting enrollment in an AP or Honors level course must complete a recommendation form and receive teacher, advisor, and department approval. Any student wishing to enroll in more than 4 AP courses in one year, must have written permission from the parent/guardian.

PREREQUISITES

Many AP courses have prerequisites that a student must fulfill in order to be enrolled in an AP course. The academic prerequisites for AP courses are determined by the College Board.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR AP OR HONORS COURSES

A minimum of "3" in effort must be earned in order to receive the "extra grade point" in "Honors" and "AP" classes. Students receiving a grade less than B- or an effort grade less than 3 in "Honors" or "AP" classes may be questioned as to appropriate placement.

THE AP EXAMINATION

Students enrolled in an AP course are expected to take the AP exam when it is administered. Only the AP teacher or the Assistant Head of Upper Campus, Academic Affairs, can grant a student permission to abstain from taking an AP exam. Written permission from the parent/guardian permission will also be required.

Students not currently enrolled in an AP course can, however, sign up to take an AP exam in any subject matter they choose. A student will need to coordinate sign up with the AP Coordinator.

ASSIGNED DAYTIME STUDY HALL

All students in grades 9 and 10 will be assigned to a daytime proctored study hall for the entirety of the first semester. Thereafter, a student who earns "honor roll" letter grades of 3.5 or higher and "effort honor roll" grades of 4.0 or higher may elect to come out of the assigned daytime study hall.

Any 11th or 12th grade student earning below a 3.0 letter grade average or below a 3.0 effort grade average will be placed into a daytime proctored study hall until the following grading period. If the student earns the appropriate letter and effort grade point average, that student can come out of the assigned daytime proctored study hall.

The Head of Upper Campus or the Assistant Head of Upper Campus, Academic Affairs may make exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS WITH REGARD TO THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

All students are expected to participate in the Outdoor Education Program of the Ojai Valley School. Each student will be out of the academic classroom for up to a week. During this time a student will not be required to produce daily assignments, but should know what has been covered in class and what assignments were given with regard to long term papers and any tests. Teachers will establish reasonable timelines to complete the work.

DISMISSED STUDENT CREDIT/ACADEMICS

On a limited and individual case-by-case basis, OVS will consider allowing a student dismissed from school with 6 weeks or less left in the academic year, to petition to earn credit in one or more classes. The decision to allow additional coursework to be completed will be at the sole discretion of the Head of Upper Campus, and the Head of Upper Campus will have the discretion based on the following:

- the offense or violation that resulted in the student being dismissed from school (for example, integrity, violence, or repeated use of nicotine)
- the academic grade level in which the student is currently enrolled
- the necessity of the credit needed to matriculate to the next grade level or graduate
- whether or not the student may be re-applying to Ojai Valley School
- the overall contributions of the student to the community such as leadership, athletics, performance
- overall length of attendance at Ojai Valley School

TERMS OF THE CREDIT AWARDED POST DISMISSAL:

If a dismissed student is granted the petition to earn credit post dismissal from school with less than 6 weeks remaining in the school year, then the student will be assigned an online or take-home projects to be completed with a specific deadline. The assignment or project created will be at the sole discretion of the academic teacher.

The student will earn a transcript grade only. No comment(s), effort grade(s), and report card(s) will be generated. If the student is a senior at the time of dismissal, then a transcript will be generated. The student will not earn a diploma from the Ojai Valley School, nor will that student be allowed to attend the graduation ceremony.

VII. COMMUNITY LIFE

OVS students learn to strive for excellence in their daily lives in the classroom and in their co-curricular activities.

CLOTHING AND GROOMING

While attire may be directed by individual style and taste, it must be appropriate to context. Students are expected to wear clothing that is consistent with the accepted purpose of academic pursuits. This principle governs any question about an item of dress deemed inappropriate but not specifically addressed in this code.

Students may wear:

- Jeans and pants; severely torn or ragged jeans or pants are not allowed, which includes ones that have holes by design. However, students can wear jeans and pants that do not have a hemmed seam, as long as the fraying is minimal.
- Shorts; severely torn or ragged shorts are not allowed, which includes ones that have holes by design. However, students can wear shorts that do not have a hemmed seam, as long as the fraying is minimal.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses of mid-thigh or longer in length.
- Shirts, blouses, T-shirts that are long enough to cover the midriff
- Shoes that are appropriate to the season and to traveling on OVS' rural campus
- For Dress Dinner and special occasions when formal dress is required, pants, coats, shirts and ties, dress shoes and dress socks, dresses, skirts, and blouses are appropriate.

Restrictions: To respect the privacy of all students and staff the following restrictions are in place:

- No undergarments may show
- Pants and shirts must fit appropriately to the student's body type
- Students may not wear beachwear during the academic day.

Additionally, to respect the school's values and to be inclusive of multiple perspectives:

- Clothing may not advertise alcohol or drugs or display sexually suggestive, graphically violent, or offensive statements.
- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses may not be worn indoors

Resident students who are out of dress code may be informed discreetly by a faculty member or administrator that they are out of dress code and asked to return to their rooms and change. Day students who are out of dress code may be informed discreetly by a faculty member or administrator that they are out of dress code and asked to subsequently arrive at school in appropriate clothing.

Weekend Dress Code:

During the weekend, when it is no longer the academic day, the dress code should be more lenient. However, if there is a scheduled weekend event, where a student will be representing the school off of campus, the regular dress code should apply.

On campus during the weekend students may wear:

- Any item mentioned in the above dress code list
- Loungewear, athleisure, sweatpants, tank tops, and tube tops may be worn in the dorm areas, as long as they stay appropriate and are worn in a context that is reflective of what one would wear in their own home. Students must wear regularly approved dress code garments to meals in the dining hall and for weekend school activities.

Athletic Dress Code:

During athletics, when it is no longer the academic day, the dress code should be more lenient. Student athletes may opt to wear clothing that is comfortable while running or engaging in athletic activities, as long as they remain appropriate to the situation. Appropriate swimwear may be worn at the pool or beach. While running or engaged in athletic practices/endeavors, students may remove their shirts; however, shirts should be worn going to/from practice. However, if there is a scheduled athletic event, where a student will be representing the School, team uniforms or appropriate required clothing will be worn.

GROOMING

Ojai Valley School recognizes that fashion and trends are important to students; however, at school, we encourage students to adopt a measured approach to appearance--avoiding extremes and focusing their creative impulses on building community and reaching their academic goals. With this in mind, we offer students the following guidelines:

- Hair should be clean, one natural color, and neatly trimmed or styled. Extreme hairstyles such as mohawks or completely shaved heads are not permitted.
- Students may not have any visible piercings other than in the ear or a small stud in their nose
- No jewelry may be excessively large or distracting, such as 12 gauge (over 2 mm) earrings, or dangling chains
- Students may not have visible tattoos.

PHYSICAL DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Students need to be aware that there is a time and a place for most things. To respect the privacy and sensitivity of

all students and staff, physical displays of affection are inappropriate at OVS or any place school activities occur. To avoid any ambiguity, the following are considered acceptable physical expressions of affection:

- Hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm while walking or sitting side by side
- Quick hug “hello” or “good bye”

A more complete reference to behaviors related to physical affection will be provided during student life meetings at the opening of school. Students should address their questions about acceptability to resident staff or administrators.

REQUIRED OUTDOOR GEAR

Each student must arrive at the opening of school with the Required Outdoor Education Equipment. This list can also be found on our website, under the Parent Resource Page. Every student must participate in the Outdoor Education program and will spend multiple nights away from campus. This equipment is necessary for a student's comfortable and safe participation in our outdoor program and is an essential component of our emergency preparedness on campus. Please contact the Director of Outdoor Education, Mr. Zach Byars, zbyars@ovs.org, if you have any questions regarding necessary camping equipment or need assistance procuring it.

USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: *Our goal is to help our second-language learners gain the fluency necessary for academic success and to create a unified, supportive community that promotes learning, service, adventure, and friendships that will last a lifetime.*

While OVS embraces the diversity of its students, it is essential to the educational aims of our students individually and to promote an inclusive community that OVS Upper Campus has English as its primary language. With the exception of second language classes, all instruction is in English and during the academic day students are expected to speak English only, including during the lunch meal. This expectation applies to the dorm, the sports field/court, and the dining hall. Second-language students have opportunities to speak their native tongues after the academic day, in their rooms, and at all other meals except formal dinners.

Language acquisition is our focus, which is best served through inclusion and immersion.

ATHLETIC RESPONSIBILITY AND ELIGIBILITY

Because of our school size, the commitment of each of our students is necessary for us to participate in the Omega League athletic programs.

Early in the year the Athletic Director and Head of Campus will determine in which sports the students will participate and how many teams to field. It is important then that a student determine his or her interests and be willing to participate either as an athlete or support person throughout the season. Students not participating in an interscholastic team may be asked to manage equipment. These duties may require students to remain on campus during a weekend until contests are concluded. Students in poor academic standing may be placed in a proctored study hall and not be allowed to participate in the sports program until their academic standing is improved. Coaches will inform students of required clothing.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are used as part of our emergency contact network and provide for campus security and safety. Students are allowed to use cell phones only under the following conditions and as

directed by staff: On campus, students may only use cell phones during non-academic times. Weekend use is at the discretion of the weekend supervisor. Cell phones must be registered with the Front Office. Cell phones used improperly (not in accordance with the spirit of the above guidelines) will be confiscated. Students may only have one active cell phone.

AUTOMOBILES

Only day students are allowed to have automobiles on campus subject to the Head of Campus' approval. No boarding student may keep or use a car on or off campus while under school jurisdiction. A boarding student under school jurisdiction may not be a passenger in a car driven by another boarding student.

To be a passenger in another student's car, an individual student must have parental/guardian permission on file. Unless otherwise indicated on the vehicle permission form, your child will be restricted to riding in school vehicles or vehicles driven by authorized school personnel.

Day students' cars are to be parked in designated areas upon arrival on campus in the morning and are not to be used until the end of the athletic commitment. Car keys must be left in the front office during the academic day. Day student drivers must be cognizant of their speed while driving on sections of Reeves Road, as well as on the school road between the mailboxes and campus.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The student council consists of representatives from each class, the ASB officers, the faculty, and administration. ASB officers are elected in the spring of the prior year and class representatives are elected in the fall. They meet regularly to plan activities and discuss student business.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Students in all grades may apply, interview, and be appointed to this tiered leadership program where they assist staff in promoting a healthy community, organizing activities, mentoring, and supporting their fellow students.

CYCLING, SKATEBOARDING, ROLLERBLADING

Any student participating in the above activities needs to wear proper protective equipment (helmets, knee pads, elbow pads, and wrist guards) for that activity. These activities may only be done in areas approved by the faculty.

WEAPONS

Use or possession of any weapon is against school rules. This includes guns (real or play), knives, slingshots, and any other implement designed for or used to harm or threaten others.

VIII. RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Ojai Valley School residential program is an opportunity for students to live independently while integrating in a supportive, cohesive community.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

For a complete list of items to bring to school, please refer to the Resident Supply List found on the school website under “Resources.”

The only electrical appliances allowed in rooms are lamps, radios, fans, electrical clocks, blow dryers, stereos and computers. Other appliances require the permission of the Head of Campus. Seniors and prefects, **with permission**, may have small refrigerators in their rooms. **Appliances kept in the rooms without permission may be confiscated. Misuse of appliances may also result in their confiscation.**

Fire department regulations restrict the use of extension cords and only allow for the use of power bars with built-in circuit breakers. In order to be in compliance with fire, safety, and school policy, halogen lights are prohibited and all electrical appliances must be UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed.

The Ojai Valley School’s discretion will prevail regarding room decoration, use of sound equipment and of electrical appliances. Alcoholic beverages, tobacco containers and drug paraphernalia are not considered appropriate room decorations and are prohibited (see “Major Offenses”). In addition, posters extolling the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, as well as those containing nudity or sexually explicit imagery are not permitted. Candles, incense or other combustibles are not allowed in rooms at any time. Pornographic material is expressly prohibited.

Student rooms should remain locked when their occupants are not present. Students are not allowed in another student’s room without a resident of that room being present or having permission from both residents of that room. Students should provide their own lock box or their own trunks in which to keep valuables. **The school will not be responsible for lost or damaged student property.** Students are financially responsible for any damage done to school property. A statement of charges will be included on the sundry account.

ELECTRONICS

Electronic devices (i.e., computers, game systems, handheld games, cell phones and other similar devices) can be a distraction from academic study and disruptive to sleep patterns. Therefore, the use of electronics is governed by the following policy and may be restricted at the discretion of the resident counselor or administration. Having electronics in a dorm room is an earned privilege that can be revoked.

- Students in good academic standing may responsibly game during non-academic times. This permission may be modified based on student behavior and academic standing. New

students to Upper Campus will have their academic standing determined after their first quarter in school.

- Students are not allowed to play games or watch movies after lights out.
- When using cell phones or computers for video-based communication, students should respect their own privacy and that of their roommates by being appropriately attired and by not discussing intimate or overly personal subjects.
- Use of phones or any other electronic device or computer games is not allowed during the academic day or during designated study hours. Age-appropriate gaming activities are only allowed during designated times.

TYPICAL WEEKDAY SCHEDULE:

7:30 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Breakfast and Crew Jobs (morning check-in)

8:10 a.m.-5:15 p.m. Academic Day (including tutoring, classes, Sports, and Activities)

6:00 p.m.-6:45 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Study Hall

9:45 p.m. Evening check-in

10:00 p.m. Lights Out

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

10:00am Morning check-in

9:45 p.m. Evening check-in

10:00 p.m. Lights Out

HEALTH CENTER

Resident students who are ill may only be excused from class or sports attendance by the school nurse and should check with a resident counselor directly before or at breakfast. If a student should not or is unable to contact the resident staff member directly, they may send a message via text or through another student. Students should not consider themselves excused from classes until they are assessed by resident staff, health center staff or Head of Campus.

Parents of students taking prescription medications are expected to notify the Health Center. All medications need to remain in their original packaging, with prescription information written in English, and must be dropped off at the Health Center prior to the start of school. If an international student is prescribed medication in their country of origin, please plan to establish care at the beginning of the school year with an appropriate local specialist. The Health Center may assist with referrals and setting up care. Medications are not to be kept in student rooms, lockers, or in their personal possession without the approval of the Health Center. Resident students' prescription medications will remain in the Health Center to be dispensed by resident staff and Health Center staff according to prescription medication protocol, with the following exceptions, after review by nurses:

- Asthma rescue inhalers

- EpiPen
- Birth control

Students who do not attend classes due to poor health must adhere to medical restrictions and may not participate in athletic or co-curricular activities without approval from the Health Center and the Head of Campus.

DORM BOUNDARIES

Students living in the boy's dormitory are not allowed to enter rooms in the girl's dormitory, nor are students living in the girl's dormitory allowed to enter rooms in the boy's dormitory. Violation of this policy will be treated as a major offense.

RESPONSIBILITIES/CREW JOBS/LAPS

Students are expected to leave their rooms neat, clean, and presentable (bed made, clothing put away, desks in order) by 8:00 a.m. on weekdays, 10:00 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition, they perform an assigned crew job each day. These jobs are determined by the resident counselor and checked each morning by a student leader or staff member. It is the responsibility of the student to see that his/her job is covered when away on weekends and on camping trips. Students who do not meet these obligations will receive laps or other consequence(s).

STUDENT LEADERS/PREFECTS

Student Leaders and prefects are chosen by the Head of Campus to take on responsibilities and to act as aides to the faculty and the resident counselors. Their responsibilities, above and beyond normal everyday duties, include overseeing dorm wings and proctoring study halls. They have authority over other students and are expected to uphold and enforce school rules.

FIRE REGULATIONS

Fire regulations must be observed by all students in accordance with policies set forth by the school administration under guidance of the Ventura County Fire Department.

OFF CAMPUS FOOD ORDERS

Students are normally permitted to order food delivery to campus on Wednesday from 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., Friday 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Students are financially responsible for all food ordered and appropriate gratuities for the delivering party. All food deliveries to campus must be delivered to the Front Office, and students should be present at the time of delivery so as not to delay the driver.

WEEKENDS

Students have an opportunity to become active participants in resident life by initiating and joining weekend events.

A weekend is that period of time from the end of the last commitment on Friday or Saturday (including sports) until Sunday at 7:00 p.m. Day students are encouraged, and at times required, to participate in weekend events. Seniors are assigned weekend duty on a rotating basis to help plan and execute the activities.

- All arrangements for weekend departures should be made with the Assistant to the Head of School by email upper@ovs.org, phone (805) 646-5593 or by fax at (805) 933-1096.
- Weekend plans must be entered on the appropriate form in the Front Office, **before** Thursday noon.
- Unless the student is being picked up by a member of their family, the parent or guardian should verify by Thursday noon through email or phone that their student is coming home.
- Students visiting other families must have a written or electronic invitation from the host parents on file in the office before Friday noon.
- Students must check the front office by noon on Friday to see if their plans have been APPROVED by the Head of Campus or a designated representative.
- In addition to making weekend plans by Thursday, the student must sign out in the weekend sign-out book for ANY departure from campus on weekends and sign-in upon their return to campus.
- Certain weekends are closed; students, parents and guardians should check the school calendar.
- Seniors serve on one of the weekend teams and are expected on campus for their duties.
- A student must be in good academic standing and have NO OUTSTANDING LAPS in order to go home for weekends or leave campus for non-school functions. Students on the MISSING HOMEWORK list or “supper club,” may not leave for the weekend until this commitment has been met.

HOSTING GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Ojai Valley School celebrates its community, and we welcome our families of both resident and day students to open their homes to each other’s children during the weekends and vacations. This section provides information that will help facilitate the process of hosting an OVS student and promote safe and positive experiences in host homes.

PERMISSIONS

While we encourage students to spend off-campus time together, we do need written permissions from the parents/guardians of visiting students and host families. These should be submitted to the Assistant to the Head of Campus by email at upper@ovs.org no later than 12 pm on Thursday afternoon. Since we sometimes need to ask follow-up questions, please indicate the best method and time for contact. Weekend plans cannot be approved until these permissions are in place.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

When hosting, please consider this continued “residential” status of hosted students and help them behave in ways consistent with OVS standards. Therefore, parents should be present when hosting Ojai Valley School students and be aware of the activities of their student guests. If you have questions about appropriate activities and/or behavior for hosted OVS students, please contact the Head of Campus or Assistant Head of Campus, Student Life for guidance.

COMMUNICATION

When hosting or allowing your student to stay in another’s home, it is prudent to communicate with parents/guardians beforehand to establish what your expectations are for the visit regarding transportation, activities, supervision, and conduct. Parents often have different degrees of comfort regarding student autonomy, and it is best to discuss these at the outset.

In the event of a problem, parents should be prepared to immediately follow up with students under their supervision and be willing to notify directly the school and the parents of students who are not able to meet their family expectations.

GUESTS ON CAMPUS

In the case of visits from friends other than relatives, the student must obtain permission from the Head of Campus or his designated representative for any proposed visit. Arrangements for overnight guests must be made with the Front Office. Because of various athletic, recreational and academic field trips, it is advisable to have parents/guardians/guest call in advance before scheduling a guest visit. Any overnight guest is subject to the rules for resident students. Weekday visits are not encouraged.

MAIL

Letters and Packages for students should be sent in care of the school as addressed below. Note, there is no weekend mail delivery on campus.

Ojai Valley School

510 Country Club Drive, Ojai CA 93023

Attn: Upper Campus with your student’s name and assigned mailbox number

KEYS

Students will be issued a dorm room key on opening day. Should the key be lost, the second key issued will require a \$30.00 charge for re-keying the lock. **Unauthorized duplication of school keys is a serious violation of school policy.**

PETS

Students are not permitted to have or keep pets on campus. Numerous domestic pets reside on campus with faculty and are available to students to play with and care for.

TRAVEL

Parents or guardians must make airline reservations and ticket purchases. **Please refer to the school calendar for beginning and returning times for breaks. Any departure from this schedule may be construed as being absent without permission.**

A student who departs early or returns late to school for vacations and misses academic classes may have his or her grade lowered according to the teacher's published policy.

No school transportation is provided for home weekends. It is the responsibility of the student for the following:

- Return to campus on Sunday **by 7:00 p.m.**
- Engage and pay for private local transportation (taxis and buses); these fees **may not** be charged to the student's sundry account.

IX. DAY STUDENTS

SCHOOL LIFE

Day students are expected to take part in all aspects of school life, including camping trips, sports, and field trips. While most of these activities take place during the academic day, attendance may be required for some evening and/or weekend activities. Day students are encouraged to stay for dinner and through the evening study hall. Before leaving campus during the academic day, day students must obtain special permission from the Head of Campus or his designated representative and must check out with the front office.

CREW JOBS

Day students are responsible for cleaning the cafeteria, Student Lounge and various other jobs after lunch. This duty is assigned on a rotating basis.

LOCKERS

Lockers are provided for the day students to store their books, supplies and daypacks. Day students must supply their own locks if they wish to lock their locker.

ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE

Parents or guardians must call the school between 8:00 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. to let the Assistant to the Head of Campus know that their child will be absent. The assistant may be reached by calling (805) 646-5593 or by email at upper@ovs.org. It is the student's responsibility to request and make up assignments.

STUDENT LEADERS

Day student leaders and prefects will be appointed by the Head of Campus and will be responsible for organizing and monitoring day student responsibilities and activities.

OVERNIGHT/WEEKENDS

Day students are also welcome to stay overnight in the dorms as space allows and to eat meals in the cafeteria, provided they make arrangements by 6:00 p.m. with the resident counselor on duty. Additionally, day students are encouraged to attend weekend programs and are required to participate in a minimum number of OVS weekend enrichment and services activities. Parents/Guardians must notify upper@ovs.org in the front office of plans for any overnight stay.

It is understood that when day students remain on campus after the end of the school day, they are then subject to the rules that apply to resident students. Thus, if they are on campus for the weekend, they must sign out in the weekend book for town and trips.

X. PLEDGE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Each student and parent or guardian must sign a pledge of responsibility, which acknowledges reading, understanding, and acceptance of the handbook policies and terms, especially the sections on behavior and discipline.

This pledge, as stated below, is a required form that must be signed by the student and parent, and submitted during the registration process prior to the start of school:

We, the undersigned student and the parent/guardian of the student, have thoroughly read the applicable Ojai Valley School (“OVS”) Student Handbook. We understand each section contained therein, and where there was a question, we contacted the OVS Head of School for clarification. We paid particular attention to the sections on *Student Conduct, Disciplinary System, and Responsible Behavior and Attitude*. We will take full responsibility for our actions and note that in the event of absence, withdrawal or dismissal from OVS, no portion of the paid or outstanding “Charges,” as that term is defined in the Enrollment Contract, will be refunded, waived or canceled, except as provided for in Section 1 of the Enrollment Contract.