

Parent  
Handbook  
2017-18

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**SIGNATURE PAGE** - to be returned to your child's teacher)

## *Mission Statement*

The Madison-Oneida BOCES cooperatively and responsibly provides educationally focused programs and services which enable learners to excel.

## *Standards of Excellence*

### **COLLABORATION**

Madison-Oneida BOCES programs and services are planned, delivered, and evaluated in collaboration with participants.

### **OUTCOMES**

Madison-Oneida BOCES programs and services supply participants with the means, knowledge, or opportunity to achieve their educational goals.

### **RESOURCES**

Madison-Oneida BOCES programs and services use all resources efficiently and effectively.

### **ANTICIPATION**

Madison-Oneida BOCES anticipates emerging educational service needs and develops programs and services to address these needs.

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## MADISON-ONEIDA BOCES

### **What is the purpose of BOCES?**

BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) provides cooperative services to component school districts, (e.g. itinerant, special education services, occupational programs, etc.). School districts may request BOCES to organize specific ideas and meet various needs through shared services.

### **What are component school districts?**

These are school districts which may contract with BOCES for programs and services. The component school districts of the Madison-Oneida BOCES are:

Camden	Madison	Rome
Canastota	Morrisville-Eaton	Stockbridge
Hamilton	Oneida	VVS

BOCES may have a program in any one of the school buildings in the above districts. School districts not mentioned above may cross-contract with BOCES to send students to our programs, e.g., Cazenovia, Oriskany, New Hartford, Westmoreland, etc.

### **What alternative and special education services does BOCES provide?**

Home school districts cannot always provide services appropriate to your child's individual needs. Since BOCES is a cooperative educational service provider, it is able to provide a wide variety of alternative and special education programs and services. The local school district, however, maintains the responsibility for educating your child.

### **Will my child attend a school building outside my school district?**

It may be necessary for your child to travel outside your local school district. Several BOCES classrooms are leased from the local school districts.

Students are entitled to use the facilities including library, cafeteria, gym and nurse's office, as well as, to attend academic courses when deemed appropriate.

The Alternative Middle and High School programs and several Special Education classrooms are located in the Alternative Education building on the main BOCES campus in Verona.

### **May I visit my child's classroom?**

Parents are encouraged to visit. Visits can be arranged through the Director's Office or with a coordinator. Parent involvement with your child's education can be beneficial for students, teachers and parents.

### **Do I have to pay for my child to attend a BOCES special education class or receive special services?**

No. By law if your child is found to have an educational disability, he/she is entitled to free appropriate public education.

### **Who provides the transportation?**

The home school district is responsible for providing transportation to the BOCES program. Your child must adhere to all rules and conduct standards established by the local district.

***Does the home district keep track of my child once he/she is placed in a BOCES program?***

Yes. The district receives information as to the progress your child is making in the program. For Special Education students, the Committee on Special Education (CSE) is responsible for tracking the progress of the students.

***What if I disagree with any of the decisions regarding my child's education?***

Parents of students with disabilities have due process rights to protect the child's rights to a free appropriate public education. Due process is an integral part of the special education decision-making for your child. If you have a question or concern regarding any aspect of your child's program you may contact your child's teacher, the program coordinator, Director or your CSE Chairperson.

***Are my child's records kept confidential?***

When a decision is made to send your child to a BOCES program, the school district forwards your child's records to BOCES. Access to the records can only be provided to individuals directly involved in the education of your child, if appropriate permission has been obtained. Records are secured in a locked filing cabinet. A log must be signed by the person requesting access to your child's records.

***Can I see my child's record at any time?***

You have a right to view your child's records. Requests should be made in advance so someone can be present to answer any questions that you may have. You may also request copies of reports at a reasonable cost.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**

***Medical/Health Services***

Every school year the school nurse will record height and weight, test vision and hearing and check for scoliosis (Curvature of the spine). The school physician will examine your child a minimum of every three years. If a problem arises, you will be notified in writing and advised to have your child tested further.

***Medication in School***

If your child needs medication during school hours the school nurse must have your written permission to administer the medication to your child and a written script from the doctor. This includes all over the counter medications. All medication is kept in the nurse's office. Students are not permitted to carry any prescription or over-the-counter medications while in school. The prescribed medication must indicate:

1. A signed statement from the physician prescribing the medication – what it is, how much to administer, how often and the reason it is being prescribed.
2. Any medication must be transported to school by a parent or a responsible adult and must be in its original container.
3. There is no change in medication or dosage without written permission from the physician.

Possessing, using or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, illegal substances (including paraphernalia), or over-the-counter medications is not permitted in Madison-Oneida BOCES programs. If a student chooses not to follow this expectation, appropriate disciplinary measures will be imposed.

### **Illness During the School Day**

If your child does not feel well enough to remain in school, the nurse will notify you by phone. For the health and safety of all children and staff, sick children cannot remain in school.

### **Keep a Sick Child Home from School**

Your child comes in contact with many other children at school. Watch him or her for disease symptoms. For your child's health and the health of all students keep your child at home and call your physician when he/she shows any of these conditions:

sore throat	discharging ear	coughing
nausea or vomiting	flushed face	diarrhea
red or swollen glands	running nose	fever
enlarged glands	chills	earache
skin rash or sores	strep throat	inflamed/reddened eye
chicken pox (notify teacher immediately)		

**Immunization Requirements** - Due to very recent and ongoing changes in immunizations requirements for school attendance, we strongly recommend that you consult with your child's physician to determine if your child meets the current requirements. The changes involve different ages and grade levels and your physician can advise you on any needs your child may have at this time.

### **Emergencies**

Upon entrance into the program, an Emergency Data Form is sent home to be filled out immediately and returned to the classroom teacher. The form includes parent's name, address, phone number (home and work), emergency phone number (friend or relative), preferred hospital, physician and phone number, allergies and medical information. It is important we have these telephone numbers and emergency numbers on file in case a school or medical emergency occurs and we must contact you.

### **Additional Health Information**

Notify the school nurse of any health problems, e.g., diabetes, hemophilia and allergies. Also inform the nurse if there are any changes related to your child's health status. If your child is examined by an eye doctor, hearing clinic, etc., make arrangements to have reports sent to the school nurse.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parent involvement in all aspects of your child's program is encouraged and expected. During the school year you will be invited to participate in conferences for your child. Please make every effort to attend. You know a great deal about your child which can be shared with the teachers. Working together we can assure that your child is successful in school.

In addition to parent-teacher conferences, there are many other areas for parent involvement including the following:

- \* phone conversation with teachers
- \* parent meetings on various topics
- \* volunteering to help in the class periodically, based on grade level
- \* participating on class field trips
- \* coming in for school activities

- \* borrowing books and materials for home use
- \* donation of store bought snack items or materials
- \* observing the class
- \* attending social functions involving parents
- \* attending awards assemblies
- \* participation in parent support or parent advisory groups
- \* reading the school newspaper

### **General Expectations for Parents**

Please do not allow your child to bring dangerous or distracting items/articles to school. These items would include knives, firearms (including cap guns), water guns, toys, radios, **cell phones and other electronic devices (including electronic cigarettes)**, jewelry, laser pointers etc. Any item that is distracting to the learning environment will be confiscated. This may also include clothing that causes disruption to the educational environment.

If your son/daughter loses an item, please call the school office.

Encourage your son/daughter to get a good night's sleep.

Your son/daughter may not leave school grounds without permission. Please notify the appropriate administrator in writing if this is necessary. Please include a telephone number as all requests are verified by telephone call.

School buildings and grounds are smoke free environments. Cigarettes, electronic cigarettes and lighters will be confiscated and discarded appropriately.

Any opened drink containers need to be discarded upon entering the Alternative Education School. Any unopened containers must be placed in student lockers and may only be consumed in the cafeteria during lunch unless otherwise specified by a physician's note.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Communication is vital in reaching a positive educational outcome for each student. The parent conference is one opportunity for the parent, student and teacher to sit down and discuss a student's progress.

Before the conference, you may want to:

- Write down a list of questions
  - \* Does my child need help in any academic area
  - \* What does he/she enjoy
  - \* What are his/her strengths/weaknesses
  - \* What can I do at home to support my child
  - \* How does his behavior affect his/her learning

At the conference, you may want to:

- Ask about grade level expectations, materials, assignments
- Ask about your child's participation level
- Ask about your child's social acceptance
- Ask the teacher his/her views on needed improvements
- Ask about anything you don't understand
- Summarize your understanding of your child's progress
- Make notes about the discussion
- Follow up on any plan of action that has been agreed to
- Stay in touch

After the conference, you may want to:

- Discuss the conference with your child if he/she did not participate
- Talk about strategies for improvement
- Praise your child for progress up to this point

### **HELPING YOUR CHILD SUCCEED**

You can help your child be a better student in school. As a parent, you will give your child important support at home. Some ways to do this are:

- Show your interest. Check class work sent home daily.
- Communicate. Talk to your children and their teachers. Listen to what they have to say. Talk about what's happening at school. Ask their friends over and find time to see your children's teacher occasionally.
- Help create a study place and time for your children. They might do schoolwork at the kitchen table or at a desk in their rooms. Help your children set a schedule for when work will be done.
- Be consistent with expectations.
- Review your expectations regularly. Talk about the future with your children. What are your plans for them and what they hope to do when they grow up.

### **ATTENDANCE / ABSENCES**

Regular attendance in school is necessary for all students to succeed. Any absence for more than three days is considered excessive. If your child is ill and will be absent for more than three days, please notify the program administrator or teacher. Legal absences include: illness, sickness or death in a family, doctor's appointment, impassable roads due to weather, religious observances, attendance at Family Court, medical appointments, approved college visits.

When your child returns to school after any absences, a written excuse must be brought to the office.

If your child is absent for any reason, New York State Law requires that we notify parents/guardians of their absence. Please telephone the program office as early as possible if you know your child will be absent from school. Each Alternative and Special Education program has a policy on parent notification in regards to student absenteeism. You will be telephoned every day your child is absent.

Letters may be generated to families of students who miss days in increments of 5 beginning with 5 days. An initial response team (IRT) meeting referral may be initiated by administration.

At 10 days of illegal absence, staff may make a referral to counseling services. Administration will conduct a staffing to discuss possible interventions.

At 15 days of absence, all excuses should be provided by a physician. A parent meeting with parent/guardian, service providers, and the district liaison may be set up by appropriate program administrator.

At 20 days of illegal absences, pre-PINS may be generated by the appropriate administrator for the age appropriate students. For students over compulsory age, the district liaison will be notified.

### **TARDINESS**

If your child arrives late to school, please come in with your child and have him/her report immediately to the main office to sign in. Students will be issued a pass to report to the appropriate class. The program secretary will notify the local district transportation department for transportation at the end of the day.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students should bring a note to the program secretary on the specific day of the appointment/early dismissal. A call will be made to verify the date and time of dismissal. The secretary will then notify the appropriate staff. **Please come to the program office to sign out your son/daughter or if over 18 years of age, the student should sign out at the program office.** If the dismissal affects transportation, the local district transportation department will be notified.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation for your child is provided to and from school by your school district. Questions about transportation should be directed to the district transportation supervisor. Any permanent changes which occur regarding pick-up or drop-off locations must be arranged through the bus garage. **BOCES program administrators and teachers do not have the authority to make any bussing changes.** If you have made alternate transportation arrangements for your child, the appropriate program office must be notified **in writing**.

In order to provide safe transportation while riding on school buses, the following must be observed by all students:

1. Obey the driver at all times
2. Enter and exit the bus in an orderly manner
3. Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop
4. Do not throw articles about the bus or out the window
5. Keep head, hands and arms inside the bus at all times
6. Use proper and acceptable language at all times

Transportation is a service provided by the district and it can be denied a student in case of misconduct. When a district suspends a student's transportation privileges, the parents or guardian of the student involved become responsible for seeing that the student gets to and from school.

### ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

If for any reason you must bring your child to school, please make sure he/she does not arrive before the buses. When driving your child to school, walk the child to the main office and sign in.

If you plan to pick-up your child from school or dismissal time, the program office or teacher must receive prior written notification. When picking up your child from school, report to the main office and sign the child out. If you plan to pick your child up at dismissal and do not arrive at the standard dismissal time, we will put your child on the bus.

Students being picked up by adults other than their parents/guardians are required to have written parental permission. The written permission should identify the adult who will be picking up the student and the time during the school day that the child will be picked up. Please include a telephone number where you may be reached in case we need to verify this information. Without prior notification, students will only be released to those individuals listed on the Student Release form.

### SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Your child is to follow the school calendar in place at the building where he/she attends classes. Emergency school closings and snow days in the district where your child attends school will also mean no classes for your child that day. The following radio and television stations will carry any school closings:

- WSYR – Syracuse
- WHEN – Syracuse
- WIBX - Utica
- WRUN - Rome
- WTLB - Utica
- WKAL - Rome
- WMCR - Oneida

### FIRE DRILLS

NYS law mandates yearly fire drills. Evacuation routes are posted in each room. Teachers will review the evacuation procedures during the first day of school. When the alarm sounds:

- The class will proceed quickly and quietly out of the building by single file under staff supervision
- The class will proceed to the established area and remain in single file
- Teachers will take attendance
- Everyone will re-enter the building quietly and in single file when the signal is given.

### LOCKDOWN DRILLS – SCHOOL SAFETY

In compliance with State law, Madison-Oneida BOCES will conduct **four (4) lockdown drills** during the school year. These drills are intended to provide instruction and practice for our students, faculty, and staff so they are prepared to react and properly respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner. We will be scheduling two lockdown drills prior to December 23<sup>rd</sup> and we will follow up with two additional lockdown drills from January 3<sup>rd</sup> through June 9<sup>th</sup>.

The exact dates of the drills will not be publicly announced. However, the date and time of the first drill will be disclosed to school staff. The remaining three drills will be unannounced, as recommended by the New York Safe Schools Center. When a drill is initiated, it will be announced as a **Lockdown DRILL** to avoid undue fear and anxiety among students, staff, and parents/guardians. Drills will involve the clearance of hallways, locking of classrooms and positioning of students and staff in pre-designated “safe areas” within each room.

These drills are part of a comprehensive Safety Plan that has been in place and communicated to our faculty. We want to make sure students, staff, and parents/guardians are aware that these drills are part of our continuing efforts to maintain a safe learning environment.

### **SECURITY SEARCHES USING POLICE-TRAINED DOGS**

Ensuring that the students attending the Madison-Oneida BOCES schools and campus have a safe, drug-free and healthy environment in which to learn is a top priority for all who work in our schools. To this end, the Madison-Oneida BOCES takes proactive steps to prevent illegal drugs from entering our schools and campus, and administers appropriate discipline to students who bring drugs into our schools.

To help us achieve a drug-free learning environment, we partner with the Oneida County Sheriff’s Department, who bring their trained drug-detection canines to the school several times each year. During such a visit, the dogs sniff the air around student lockers, classrooms, student belongings, storage areas, restrooms, and cars parked on school grounds for potential contraband items. Generally, students are removed from the immediate area where the dogs are working. The dogs alert their handlers if they detect the presence of a prohibited substance at a particular locker or site. If, for example, this occurs in front of a student locker, BOCES officials will then conduct a thorough search of the locker(s) targeted by the dog, and all the contents within the targeted locker(s). If illegal drugs and/or other unlawful or unauthorized substances or items are found in a student’s locker, the student to whom the locker is assigned will be held accountable. In addition to being subject to suspension from school, any student who possesses illegal drugs, weapons or other unlawful items in his or her locker may also be subject to potential criminal charges as well.

### **LUNCHES**

As many of you may be aware, starting of July 1, 2012, school food service programs must conform to new requirements in **meal pattern** and **menu standards** set forth through the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This rule, in effect, will result in various restrictive changes to our school menus, along with changes in how the meal food components will fulfill meal requirements.

While we do support USDA’s efforts to encourage healthier school environments and address childhood obesity concerns, it is our concern that the rules may be too restrictive on the varieties and portion sizes that can be offered on our school menus, and therefore have a negative impact on the daily number of students who will participate in our program. In other words, the students and parents in our schools may quite likely be unhappy with the “new look” of school food service.

Please keep in mind we are all in this together and our Food Service Dept is striving to meet all required guidelines, but we want to keep our students happy and satisfied. For more specific information on the new requirements you can visit the USDA Food and Nutrition Service website at [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/).

All students are eligible for the Type A School Lunch Program. Parents must fill out the lunch form from the school district where the child's classroom is located when requesting reduced or free lunches. This form will be provided upon entrance into the program. Per BOCES Policy #5029, at any given time students may have no more than a total of \$5.00 in outstanding charges. The policy is included in the back of the Handbook for review. All food including snack and beverages must be consumed in the cafeteria unless permission is granted by staff.

### REPORT CARDS

Students receive report cards or progress reports throughout the school year. The type of reporting varies depending upon the program your child is enrolled in. Report cards and progress reports are completed according to the schedule established in the school building.

### VANDALISM

Students who vandalize school property will be responsible for the cost of repair and/or replacement.

### TOBACCO POLICY

As per New York State Law, using tobacco products is prohibited in school buildings or on school property. Also, students who ride buses to and from school may not leave school property after arrival in the morning or before departure to use tobacco products. Any student found using tobacco products under any of these circumstances will be subject to school consequences. Please refer to BOCES Policy #0025 included in this handbook.

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use and possession of electronic devices is prohibited during the school day. This would **include pagers, cell phones, CD players, MP3s, iPods, headphones, electronic cigarettes (ecigs) and gaming devices**. Electronic devices are very often stolen. **School personnel are not responsible** for lost or stolen items. A telephone is available in each office for emergency student use. Students will not be called out of class for a message unless there is a serious emergency situation. Students will be notified of any messages at the end of class periods for normal circumstances.

All electronic devices will be collected at the door upon the student's arrival to the building. The devices will be put into an envelope with the individual's name written on it. The devices will be stored in the office (vault) until the end of the school day. At that time, the students may pick up their devices prior to boarding the afternoon bus home.

Should a student use a prohibited electronic device during the school day:

- First infraction: device will be taken by school personnel and student will spend the rest of the day in refocus. Parent will be called. Device will be held for parent pick up.

- Second infraction: device will be taken by school personnel and student will spend the rest of the day in refocus and the following day in refocus. Parent will be called. Device will be held for parent pick up.
- Third infraction: device will be taken by school personnel and student will be suspended for one (1) day. Parent will be called.

If a student refuses to turn over the device, the student will be suspended the following day. Parents will be called for pick up and a parent meeting will be held to discuss expectations to follow when student returns from suspension.

### **STUDENT VEHICLES**

Students will not be allowed to drive to school without the permission of the Assistant Director, home school principal and parent/guardian.

### **WORKING PAPERS**

The school nurse will supervise the issuance of working papers to those students 14 years of age or older. Places of employment must comply with State and Federal regulations with respect to the employment of youth.

### **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE**

Discipline at school must provide consistency and direction to students that will promote an environment conducive to learning. Parents have a responsibility to be visible and supportive of the school in order to insure their child's adjustment to school. Students demonstrating positive behavior will be acknowledged. Students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors will be given verbal warning, parent notification/conferences, detention and/or suspension depending on the severity of the behavior. Effective communication between home and school is essential to curtail discipline problems. A plain language summary of the Student Conduct is enclosed within this handbook. A copy of the complete Code of Conduct may be requested from the program administrator.

Parents are asked to review the policies on student conduct with their child. In addition, students are expected to adhere to policies and procedures in place in the school building they attend. Teachers will review all behavior expectations and school policies at least yearly with all students.

**\*\*Please review the Plain Language Summary of the BOCES Code of Conduct with your son/daughter. Sign and return the form on the last page of this handbook to your son/daughter's homeroom teacher.**

Basic principles of student discipline include:

- Accepting responsibility for actions and exercising self-control
- Developing habits of respect, responsibility and integrity
- Cooperating with and respecting parents, peers, teachers, support staff and administrators
- Developing a positive attitude toward life-long learning

A pattern of inappropriate behaviors may result in the request for additional services for your family, up to, and possibly including a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) request.

## **DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

Outward displays of affection may be embarrassing, disruptive and even offensive to some people. Please keep in mind that such displays are therefore not appropriate in school or at school activities.

## **STUDENT ATTIRE**

A student's appearance is primarily the responsibility of the student and his/her family. A student's attire must not endanger the health and safety of others or his/her own self, school property or be disruptive to the educational process.

Clothing or jewelry that displays expressions or insignia which is obscene or libelous or which advocates racial or religious prejudice is not acceptable. Also, jewelry or clothing that displays expressions or insignia that is in conflict with the Drug Free Schools Act is forbidden.

Hats, head covers, headbands, bandanas, coats and book bags are not to be worn inside school buildings on the BOCES campus. Hats, head covers, headbands, bandanas, coats and book bags are to be placed in a locker upon arrival, or in the case of the first day before lockers are assigned, in the main office for safe keeping.

Students enrolled in programs in components school districts are to follow the policy established by that school district.

General examples of attire and make-up that is viewed as unacceptable include:

- Exposed undergarments
- Exposed backs and/or midriffs
- Shorts/skirts that are shorter than the length of the extended arm and hand down one's body
- Private body parts should not be revealed
- Transparent clothing
- No heavy chains or objects which are deemed as possibly dangerous
- Face painting
- No tank tops (straps/sleeves on clothing must be at least four inches wide)
- Any item that has not been identified above can be subject to school discretion under the Safe Schools Act.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks, if needed, are provided for students in each classroom. If a student loses or damages a book, he/she is responsible for the replacement cost.

## **LOCKERS**

Lockers are school property. Students will be charged for any cost of repair or replacement due to abuse to lockers. Homeroom teachers will periodically conduct locker checks. Lockers assigned to students may not be changed without permission. Only school locks are permitted. Students are instructed to keep their lockers locked and not share or give out their locker combinations.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE - please see Policy 7021**

### **SECURITY CAMERAS**

Surveillance video cameras may be installed on the BOCES campus (and on leased property). Such cameras will record only silent video images. The policy is included in the back of the Handbook for review.

### **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT**

The Madison-Oneida BOCES uses Integrated Pest Management practices to reduce the use of pesticides in the BOCES buildings and on the grounds. It may be necessary, however, to use pesticides periodically during the school session. New York State law requires that schools maintain a list of staff and parents who wish to receive written notice forty-eight (48) hours prior to a pesticide application at their school facility if the school building will be occupied within seventy-two (72) hours of an application. If you wish to be included on this notification list or would like further information on the district's pesticides program, please contact Jack Angrisano – BOCES Risk Management at 361-5573.

### **DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS**

**Please check out website: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/gradreq/revisedgradreq3column.pdf>**