

Oak Park and River Forest High School

Family **SURVIVAL** Guide



2014-2015

WELCOME TO OPRF HIGH SCHOOL

Dear OPRF Families,

This is a big, busy place, and we know that learning the ins and outs of OPRF can be daunting—not only for new families but also for many who’ve been here awhile. We hope that this guide will make navigating the high school a little bit easier.

Throughout the year, we tend to get the same questions over and over. Some of the answers can be found by looking at the student handbook or website, some by swapping tips with other families, and some...well, we have to admit, some answers can be pretty hard to track down.

To find out what families most want to know, we conducted a parent/guardian survey, quizzed faculty, staff, and parent-group leaders, and reflected on experiences with our own children who are OPRF students and graduates. Our goal with this guide is to give you the practical, hands-on info you need the most.

The first few pages contain information you likely will need frequently. Beginning on page 5, topics are listed alphabetically.

This is a work in progress, and we likely have overlooked some things. What haven’t we answered for you? What tips have you learned that would help other families? Please send them to me so we can address them in next year’s edition.

Best wishes for a great year!

Karin Sullivan
Director of Communications & Community Relations
ksullivan@oprfs.org
708-434-3691

August 2014

Updated Aug. 20, 2014

CONTACT US

Attendance Office: 708-434-3104 (report an absence), 708-434-3923 (speak to someone)

Welcome Center 708-434-3125

Hours:

- School year: Mon. – Fri.,
7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- Summer: Mon. – Fri.,
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Bookstore 708-434-3940

Hours:

- School year: 7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.
- Summer: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Superintendent Dr. Steven Isoye: 708-434-3511, sisoye@oprfs.org

Principal Nate Rouse: 708-434-3205, nrouse@oprfs.org

Assistant Principal for Instruction Chala Holland: 708-434-3225, cholland@oprfs.org

Assistant Principal for Student Services Jennifer Hoffmann: 708-434-3208, jhoffmann@oprfs.org

Athletic Director John Stelzer: 708-434-3000, jstelzer@oprfs.org

Student Activities Director Cindy Milojevic: 708-434-3174, cmilojevic@oprfs.org

Division Heads:

- **English:** Dan Cohen, 708-434-3378, dcohen@oprfs.org
- **Fine and Applied Arts:** Sarah Roodhouse, 708-434-3297, sroodhouse@oprfs.org
- **History:** Josh Seldess, 708-434-3379, jseldess@oprfs.org
- **Math:** Julie Frey, 708-434-3296, jfrey@oprfs.org
- **Physical and Driver Education:** Clay Reagan, 708-434-3250, creagan@oprfs.org
- **Science and Technology:** Matt Kirkpatrick, 708-434-3298, mkirkpatrick@oprfs.org
- **Special Education:** Gwen Walker-Qualls (interim), 708-434-3106, gwalker-qualls@oprfs.org
- **World Languages:** Claudia Sahagun, 708-434-3884, csahagun@oprfs.org

Library Circulation Desk: 708-434-3696

Main Switchboard: 708-383-0700

Tutoring Center: 708-434-3493

Pupil Support Services Teams

Email address format: First initial plus last name @oprfs.org

E.g., Alisa Walton: *awalton@oprfs.org*

Phone prefix: 708-434-XXXX

	TEAM 1	TEAM 2	TEAM 3	TEAM 4
Student Intervention Director (SID)	Alisa Walton x3727	Jonathan Silver x3725	Janel Bishop x3726	Brian Beyers x3724
Counselors	Julie Fuentes x3709 Esteban Medina x3718 Kris Johnson x3714	Meghan Cahill x3716 Joe Herbst x3707 Sarah VenHorst x3710	Heidi Lynch x3715 Darek Radziszewski x3708 Scott Sponsler x3711	Jacqueline Hanson x3705 Pete Nixen x3712 Carolyn Ojikutu x3713
Youth Therapist	Lonnie Chambers x3850	Annie Hostetter x3847	Laura Snow x3848	Lisa Makely x3849
Team Secretary	Carin Lucas x3510	Sharon Martinek x3508	Sally Caicedo x3507	Kim Asbury x3509

2014-2015 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Thursday, August 14.....	Institute Day.....	No School for Students
Friday, August 15.....	Staff Development Day.....	No School for Students
Monday, August 18.....	Freshman Attendance Day.....	Only Freshmen Attend
Tuesday, August 19.....	First Day of All-Student Attendance/ First Semester Begins	
Monday, September 1.....	Labor Day.....	No School
Thursday, September 4.....	Back-to-School Night	
Friday, September 5.....		1:00 p.m. Dismissal for Students
Wednesday, October 8.....	Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	Students in Attendance
Thursday, October 9.....	Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	No School for Students
Friday, October 10.....	Staff Development Day.....	No School for Students
Monday, October 13.....	Columbus Day.....	No School
Tuesday, November 11.....	Veterans Day.....	No School
Wednesday, November 26.....	Staff Development Day.....	No School for Students
Thursday, November 27, and.....	Thanksgiving Break.....	No School
Friday, November 28		
Wednesday, December 17 –		
Friday, December 19.....	First Semester Final Exams	
Monday, December 22 –	Winter Break.....	No School
Friday, January 2		
Monday, January 5.....	Institute Day.....	No School for Students
Tuesday, January 6.....	First Day of Student Attendance/ Second Semester Begins	
Monday, January 19.....	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday.....	No School
Monday, February 16	Presidents’ Day.....	No School
Monday, March 2.....	Casimir Pulaski’s Birthday.....	No School
Monday, March 30 –		
Friday, April 3.....	Spring Break.....	No School
Monday, May 25.....	Memorial Day.....	No School
Tuesday, May 26 –		
Thursday, May 28.....	Second Semester Final Exams	
Thursday, May 28.....	Last Day of Student Attendance*	
Friday, May 29.....	Staff Development Day.....	No School for Students
Sunday, May 31.....	Commencement	
Monday, June 1 – Friday, June 5.....	Emergency Days	

**If no Emergency Days used. Please note that the first and last school days of the year are full days.*

Revised 5/23/14

HIGH SCHOOL, YEAR BY YEAR

Here are some of the key things to know about each of your student's four years with us. For further details, visit oprfs.org > *Student Services* > *College & Career Information* > *College Planning Timeline*.

FRESHMAN YEAR FOCUS:

- Make a successful transition from middle school.
- Create a four-year plan for high school.
- Continue/develop excellent study habits.
- Get involved in at least one activity, club, or athletic.

KEY EVENTS:

- **Freshman transition meetings:** From mid-September to mid-October, counselors meet with each of their freshmen one-on-one to establish rapport and connection, to get a sense of the student's strengths and interests, and to identify an activity or club the student is interested in trying.
- **Progress monitoring:** Once mid-quarter reports are mailed home, five weeks into the school year, counselors meet with students who are failing any classes.
- **Four-Year Plan meetings:** Counselors meet with students individually to look at first-semester grades and build a plan for the remaining three years' worth of courses. This is a working document and can change as a student's goals change.
- **Introduction to Naviance:** This software tool enables students to build a profile that helps identify college and career options that are a good fit for them. Naviance is the best one-stop place to search for college and majors suited to a particular student.

SOPHOMORE YEAR FOCUS:

- Deepen involvement in extra-curriculars. The level of involvement and accomplishment is more important than the number of activities.
- Become familiar with Naviance, the school's online tool for matching students' strengths and interests to particular careers and colleges.
- Build your student portfolio.

KEY EVENTS:

- **Individual conferences:** Held with counselor if student is not performing well.
- **Group lesson on noncognitive skills:** These are skills that contribute to success, such as grit and resilience.
- **Adjustments to Four-Year Plan:** In the winter, students meet one-on-one with their counselors to review and, if needed, update their plan.
- **Sophomore College Night:** Counselors present to parents about Naviance.
- **Sophomore meetings:** In early spring, students meet by counselor groups to learn about Naviance and ACT and SAT college entrance exams.
- **Group lesson:** Discussion of taking practice ACT during junior year, to identify strengths and weaknesses and where a student needs to shore up skills.

JUNIOR YEAR FOCUS:

- Take the PSAT if desired (required qualifier for National Merit Scholarship consideration).
- Earn excellent grades. Grades are important throughout high school, but junior year grades are particularly key. They indicate to colleges how well a student does in advanced courses, and they are used to determine scholarship and grant eligibility.
- Identify college major and/or post-secondary career options.
- Begin the college selection process. Attend college fairs, visit College Callers (see below), tour prospective colleges/universities.
- Prepare to apply for college. Draft application essays, collect writing samples, assemble portfolio or audition tapes.

KEY EVENTS:

- **College Callers:** Representatives from various colleges are available at specific times during the school day to share information with students. You can find the schedule of College Callers at *oprfs.org > Student Services > College & Career Information > College Callers*.
- **College visits:** This is the semester students typically begin making visits with their families to prospective colleges.
- **Junior/Senior Financial Aid Meeting:** Counselors give a thorough presentation on the process of applying to colleges for financial aid.
- **Junior Parent College Night:** Counselors detail the college-search process.
- **Small-Group College Meetings:** Counselors discuss with students how to conduct a thorough college search to find a good match.
- **College-Planning “Booster Shots”:** Individual meetings as needed to discuss the college-search process, ACT/SAT prep, etc.
- **ACT:** OPRF administers free ACT for juniors in March.

SENIOR YEAR FOCUS:

- Apply to college.
- Apply for financial aid.
- Prepare for post-secondary career choice.
- Stay on track for graduation.
- Graduate!

KEY EVENTS

- **Senior College Parent Night:** Learn the nuts and bolts of the college-application process.
- **Individual meetings:** One-on-one meetings with counselors to discuss each student’s post-secondary plans, whether applying to college or preparing for other options.
- **Junior/Senior Financial Aid Meeting:** Counselors give a thorough presentation on the process of applying to colleges for financial aid.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

What kinds of academic support do you offer for struggling students?

Students who need extra help in a particular subject can visit the Tutoring Center before and after school and during study hall or lunch (see *Tutoring Center*).

We also offer the programs listed below. More detailed information is available at oprfs.org > *Academics* > *Academic Catalog* > *Academic Support and Intervention*.

- **Special Education courses:** Math, English, writing, health, recreation and leisure, study and organizational skills, social and basic life skills.
- **Reading and Literacy Programs:** Classes for recommended freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.
- **Academic Learning Program:** Includes the Academic Enrichment class, where students receive support in developing and applying positive academic behaviors, and In-School Credit Recovery, which provides students who need to make up credits with hands-on support in completing online courses.

ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

How do we find out about the different clubs that are available?

The Student Activities office (Room 174), across from the big curving staircase in the main lobby, has a printed list of activities and clubs, along with the sponsors' names and meeting times. You also can find the listing online at oprfs.org > *Activities* > *Clubs & Activities*. This page also has a link to descriptions of the clubs and activities.

How can my student find out about the first meeting of a particular activity or club?

Almost all activities that require a tryout are announced during second period (see *Daily Bulletin*). Others may or may not be announced. The list described above includes the meeting times, or a student can check with the Student Activities office (Room 174). The official kickoff for our activities and clubs is the lunchtime Activities Fair that takes place annually in mid-September. During their lunch period, students can visit tables for various activities and hear from other students what they're all about.

If my student didn't join a club in the fall or first semester, is it too late?

Not at all. Most clubs and activities are open to students all year.

Words of Wisdom

I wish I'd been pressed harder to be in a club or sport freshman year. Sophomore year was much more fun because I was able to bond with the players on the golf team. Parents also need to know that we're not as mature freshman year and need to be watched more closely when it comes to schoolwork. The worst thing you can do is put yourself in a hole in terms of grades right off the bat.

—Michael Duwe

Class of 2014

ACTs/SATs

When do students take ACTs? Should they take SATs too?

Typically, students take these college-admissions tests in the spring of junior year. Most colleges accept either test, and some don't require either. Juniors have a chance to take the ACT at no cost in March, during the regular school day. ACTs and SATs taken at other times require preregistration and a fee.

How do I register my student?

On the ACT (actstudent.org) and SAT (sat.collegeboard.org) websites. Keep in mind that registration deadlines are as many as five weeks before the test date.

ATHLETICS

How do I get my child signed up for a sports team?

Registration for all teams must be done *in person* in the Athletic Office.

When do I register my child for a fall sport?

Earlier than you might think. Registration for fall sports opens in early July (check our website for the current year's date).

When are tryouts for fall sports?

Mid-August, the week before classes begin.

What if we are on vacation that week?

We generally do not accommodate late tryouts, particularly at the varsity level.

Is there a fee to try out?

No. All student athletes must pay a \$55 athletic participation fee for each sport in which they participate, but it is due only after tryouts are complete and the student has made the team.

My incoming freshman had a physical in April. Can that count for the physical she has to have for her sports team?

Yes. However, for student athletes, the best date for a physical is after May 1. The physical exam is good for 395 days, so you want to avoid it expiring and then having to schedule a second physical during the next school year. If the physical for your freshman is after May 1, it can be used both for school enrollment and the athletic physical.

Can I mail in the Athletic Participation Form and the annual physical?

No. These must be hand-delivered to the Athletic Office during the appropriate registration dates for each sport, which begin on the following schedule:

- **Fall sports** (football, cheerleading, cross country, drill, field hockey, golf, soccer, girls swimming/diving, tennis, volleyball): First week of July
- **Winter sports** (basketball, girls gymnastics, boys swimming/diving, track, wrestling): First week of October, except track, which is first week of December.
- **Spring sports** (badminton, baseball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, boys volleyball, water polo): First week of February.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

How will the school let me know if my child shows up late or doesn't arrive for first period?

You will receive an automated phone call that evening. Skyward is updated in real time, so you can log into Family Access anytime for up-to-the-minute information.

The student handbook says I have to call Attendance by 9:00 p.m. for my child's absence to be excused. Don't you mean 9:00 a.m.?

No, we really do mean you have until 9:00 at night on the day of the absence. You can leave a voicemail 24 hours a day.

What's the "10-minute rule"?

During the first 10 minutes of a class period, a student who is late must get a tardy slip from one of the Safety and Support Team members stationed throughout the building. Beyond the first 10 minutes, a student who is late will have an unexcused absence.

If I call in to say my student will be late, can the tardy be excused?

No. To avoid missing class time, we encourage families to schedule appointments outside school hours whenever possible. The Attendance Office will not accept parent call-ins to excuse the first, second, third, or fourth tardies, even for a legitimate reason, such as a doctor's appointment.

So what happens with the fifth tardy?

For tardies five through 11, a student must serve a one-hour detention per tardy. However, if one of these tardies is for a legitimate reason, the student may avoid detention by bringing in documentation to have the tardy excused. Acceptable documentation includes a doctor's note, a court appearance notice, an obituary, etc. A parent/guardian note is *not* acceptable.

But what if the fifth tardy is because the PACE bus was late? How am I supposed to document that?

When a PACE bus is late, we have a whole cluster of students who are late and can easily confirm that is the reason.

My child texted me she's sick and needs to come home. Why does she have to see the nurse before being excused? Why can't I just call Attendance to say I'm picking her up?

We are still responsible for the student and need to be sure a student doesn't require more serious care. Also, we track the reasons students leave school sick. We need to be aware of any trends, particularly with communicable illnesses.

Why can't a person listed as an Emergency contact call my student in?

A parent or guardian is the party responsible for a student, so only one of these family contacts may call in a student as absent.

My student needs to leave in the middle of the class period for an appointment. Can he just get a pass from the teacher?

No. Teachers may write hall passes but not dismissal passes. If a student is planning to leave the building during a class, he should go to the Attendance Office before that class to get a dismissal pass. This shows the teacher he is excused to leave and saves time so your student can leave quickly.

My student is 18. Why can't she call herself in late or absent?

Unless a student is emancipated and living on her own, we consider the parent or guardian still to be responsible for the student.

BILLS, SURPRISE

My kids couldn't get their schedules because they had obligations I didn't know about. How did that happen?

Typically, this is due to students replacing lost IDs (\$5 each) or locks (\$5 each) for which they forgot the combination—sometimes multiple times. You can check your current obligations by clicking *Fee Management* in your Family Access account.

BOOKSTORE

Which of my student's books can I get at the Bookstore?

All textbooks. Novels, workbooks, and initial art kits covered by the Instructional Material Fee are handed out by classroom teachers.

Can I buy a parking permit at the Bookstore?

No. Optional purchases, such as theater tickets, band uniforms, parking permits, etc., can be purchased via our online store. Go to oprfs.org > *Web Store (Revtrak)*.

What else does the Bookstore sell?

The TI Nspire calculator, PE uniforms, replacement copies of novels and workbooks, Ventra student cards, miscellaneous school and art supplies.

Is it true I can pay fees in the Bookstore?

Yes. The Bookstore is our bursar, which means the Bookstore staff:

- Accepts payment for any obligations billed through Skyward.
- Determines eligibility for fee waivers.
- Sets up payment plans for the Instructional Materials Fee and TI Nspire graphing calculator.
- Sends out monthly statements with all fees due.

Can I add money to my SNAP account in the Bookstore?

No.

BUILDING HOURS

When is the high school open?

During the school year, our Welcome Center, just inside the Main Entrance, is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. During the summer, the Welcome Center is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

BUS SERVICE

Can students take a bus to school?

The district does not offer bus service, other than for some students in special education. Several PACE buses provide service near OPRF, including the 309 (Lake Street), 313 (Lake Street), and 315 (Ridgeland Avenue).

Do you offer any kind of discount bus pass?

Yes. The Bookstore sells student Ventra cards for \$5. There is no money loaded on the card; you need to load it with money just as you would a regular Ventra card. The advantage is that when students use this card, they pay a discounted rate from 5:30 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. on weekdays during the school year. Be sure to visit the Ventra site (ventrachicago.com) to register your card, so that if it's lost or stolen you can block it from being used.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

See *Activities and Clubs*.

COLLEGE, ALTERNATIVES TO

Not every student is interested in going to college. What options do you offer for these students?

We have a variety of vocational classes that can enhance opportunities for students who prefer to get into the workforce after high school, such as automotive technology, nurse assistant, and restaurant management. In addition, we have a partnership with Triton College that allows students to earn both high school and college credit for a single class. Ask your student's counselor for more information.

COMPUTER LABS

My children have to share a computer, and it's hard to get their work done. Do you have computers they can use?

Yes, in the Tutoring Center (Mon. – Thurs., 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., including Late-Arrival Wednesdays; Fri., 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) and in both the Huskie Hub computer lab and Library (Mon. – Fri., 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).

Words of Wisdom

Do not to underestimate the weirdly productive atmosphere of the Oak Park Public Library. Seriously, if you have to study or write a paper, go over there with your laptop, go to the quiet zones, pop in your earbuds, and prepare to be amazed by how much you get done. I also recommend the SelfControl app, which blocks specific sites that you might use to procrastinate, and mynoise.net, which provides free, customizable background noise to help focus you.

—Fiona Fimmel
Class of 2014

COUNSELORS

The high school is so huge that I'm never sure where to go with my concerns.

Your student's counselor is your go-to person. If counselors don't have the answer, they at least know whom to ask. Encourage your student to develop a relationship with his or her counselor, who will be the same person all four years of high school. In addition to providing guidance about academics and college/post-secondary options, counselors do a lot of personal counseling and problem-solving. Having a relationship with the counselor can make a big difference in student success, and counselors welcome students to stop by to chat or ask questions, even if they aren't having any big issues to address.

My student's counselor hasn't returned my phone messages. What should I do?

Send an email. With caseloads of around 300 students, counselors are meeting with students or Pupil Support Services teams much of the day. If it's an emergency situation and you want to leave a voicemail, also send an email saying that you have an emergency and need to speak with the counselor ASAP; counselors sometimes can respond to an email during a meeting. You also can call the counselor's secretary or contact your student's Student Intervention Director (SID). Here is the contact info for each Pupil Support Services Team:

Note: Email address format is first initial plus last name @oprfs.org
E.g., Alisa Walton: *awalton@oprfs.org*

	TEAM 1	TEAM 2	TEAM 3	TEAM 4
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Team Secretary	Carin Lucas x3510	Sharon Martinek x3508	Sally Caicedo x3507	Kim Asbury x3509

COURSE REGISTRATION

How can I get a copy of the classes for which my student has been recommended?

Incoming freshmen receive their recommendations at the Incoming Freshman Course Selection Night, which takes place in February. If you can't attend, please contact the principal's assistant, Deloris Collins (708-434-3505, *dacollins@oprfs.org*), to make arrangements to pick up your packet. After your student has submitted course selections, you will receive a list of his or her requested courses via regular mail. The courses will be listed in no particular order, and this is *not* the student's schedule. The schedule becomes available during Schedule Pickup Week in August.

For sophomores, juniors, and seniors, log into your Family Access account, where you will find their recommendations. You also can see your freshman's recommendations here once you have received your login and password during the summer before school starts.

Why don't you have a printed course catalog?

To save resources and taxpayer dollars, we provide as much information as possible in electronic form only, including the academic catalog. To download a PDF of the catalog, go to oprfs.org > *Academics* > *Academic Catalog*. You can print the PDF yourself or request that a printed copy be mailed to you by clicking "Request a printed copy."

My friends say their children have registered for next year's classes, but mine haven't. Did we miss a deadline?!

Each grade level registers for next year's courses over a period of several weeks. With a caseload of around 300 students per counselor, this takes some time. Sophomores and juniors meet with their counselors in groups in mid-November, then in one-on-one meetings from November through March, to finalize their selections. Freshmen meet with counselors one-on-one in January and February.

How can I find out what classes my student registered for?

The counselors will mail the list of courses a student has selected to your home. Keep in mind this is *not* the student's final schedule, which is not available until Schedule Pickup Week in mid-August.

My child should have been placed in a higher-level course. What do I do?

Course recommendations are not written in stone, and parents have the right to override them. Before doing so though, you'd be wise to have a conversation about the reasons for the recommendation, as well as the pros and cons of moving up. For incoming-freshman parents, contact your student's counselor. Other parents should contact the student's current teacher. Keep in mind that if a student moves up a level and the work proves too difficult, the student generally can move down if space is available—but know that if the student is getting at least a C, the first suggestion likely will be to put in more effort. Also, moving down may necessitate changing the student's entire schedule, which can be problem if the student is happy with the rest of his or her classes.

Can a student withdraw from a class?

Yes, but only within a certain time frame. When a student withdraws during the first six weeks of a

Words of Wisdom

Freshmen: Relax and try not to be nervous! Try out every activity that sounds like it might be fun. Test what you can and cannot handle, from sports to class placement, clubs, volunteering, Student Council, etc. Get involved in your school.

Sophomores: Create and stick to a steady routine. Use your planners consistently. Stay on track, and prepare for the stress of junior year. Stay on a steady pace, continuing to excel. Just stay on track.

Juniors: Prioritize your agenda, and reward yourself. You'll be preparing for college, taking the ACT! Study and stick to your planners and personal agenda. Prioritize your studies, and stay focused. Senior year and college are just around the corner. Prioritize to end your high school career well.

—Sjharee Calhoun

Class of 2014

semester, the transcript will not include the course at all. If a student withdraws after the sixth week but before the end of the ninth week of a semester, this is noted on the transcript, though it is not computed in the grade point average (GPA). Withdrawing during the final nine weeks of a semester results in a mark of “WF,” or zero points, which *is* computed in the GPA.

DEAN’S LIST

See *Honor Roll*.

DETENTION

Tip for students: Your Plasco pass has the date of your detention. If you lose or throw away the pass, and you haven’t looked at or committed the date to memory, you can end up with a “failure to serve” and a more lengthy consequence (Saturday detention or in-school suspension).

DRIVER ED

Can I get a refund if my child takes driver education someplace else?

Yes. The sophomore district fees include driver education, and you may qualify for a refund of \$175. Contact Driver Education Department Chair Dan Kleinfeldt (708-434-3253, dkleinfeldt@oprfs.org) for information on required documentation.

DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Is dropping off students at the Main Entrance really as bad as I hear?

Yes. Do everything you can to avoid Scoville Avenue between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. Otherwise, plan to spend a good half-hour tied up in traffic around school. Unless your child is injured, save yourself time and aggravation by dropping off your student a couple of blocks away.

FAMILY ACCESS/SKYWARD

Tip: There is a Skyward app you can download on your smartphone.

What is Family Access?

Similar to the PowerSchool portal used at the Oak Park and River Forest middle schools, this is our online parent/guardian tool for:

- Updating your contact information.
- Checking your student’s grades, attendance, and discipline information.
- Paying school fees.
- Adding money to your child’s lunch/SNAP (School Nutrition Accountability Program) account.
- Receiving messages from your student’s teachers.

What is Skyward?

Just another name for Family Access. You can download a mobile app by searching the app store for *Skyward*.

How do I update my information in Family Access?

Log in to your account and click the *Student Info* tab on the left side of the screen. Then click *Request Changes* in the upper right. If you have any problems contact familyaccess@oprfs.org or 708-434-3270.

What can students see in Family Access?

They have their own login and can see their grades and attendance and discipline information. To avoid having contact information changed without your knowledge, do not give your student your login.

How often should I log in to my Family Access account?

The more supervision your student needs, the more often you should check. But we suggest sitting down with your student and checking grades at least once a week. Pick a standing time to check in so your student expects that you'll be monitoring his or her work.

FOOD SERVICE ACCOUNT

How do I add money to my student's lunch account?

Log into your Family Access account, click *Fee Management* on the left side, then click *Make a Payment*. Choose *Food Service Payment*, then use a credit card to add money to your student's SNAP (School Nutrition Accountability Program) account. The money is available immediately. Students just choose their food, run their ID card through the card reader near the cafeteria cashier, and the cost is deducted from their account.

Are there a la carte lunch options?

Yes. In addition to the varying meals on the school lunch menu, we have a list of items available every day. Students can choose either individual items or a combo meal, which consists of a main dish (protein), bread/grain, fruit, vegetable, and half-pint of milk. Students can choose any three, four, five, or six parts of a combo lunch. The price ranges from \$2.50 to \$4.50.

A lot of parents are surprised by how quickly their students deplete their SNAP accounts. To see what your child has been buying with the money (pizza? cookies? sushi?), go to *Family Access > Food Service*.

GRADES

I was surprised when my student got a D on his report card. Why didn't I know earlier?

Your student likely was receiving at least a C early in the quarter, or you would have received a Mid-Quarter Failure Warning, which is mailed to the home of any student whom the teacher reports as receiving a D or F by the midpoint of the nine-week grading period. With five classes to teach each day, teachers typically contact parents personally only if a student is failing a class. So regularly sitting down with your student to check his or her grades in Family Access is essential. Teachers have been asked to update their grade books at least every two weeks. If you find that grades are not being updated

regularly, the first step is to contact the teacher directly. If you have done this and infrequent updates continue to be an issue, contact the division head.

I don't understand how my child could have gotten an F. I know the class isn't that difficult for her.

Understandably, for most parents, an F is ominous and means failure—their student tried but just was not able succeed. However, much of the time it is not a question of ability but rather that a student simply has not turned in assignments. In addition, some teachers give zeros for quizzes that a student missed due to an unexcused absence. Before contacting a teacher about an F, you may want to check your student's grades in Family Access and have a conversation with your child about the importance of doing assignments.

Is it true that students don't get credit for taking all honors-level classes?

Students earn extra points toward their grade point average by earning an A or B in certain honors and AP courses (see the *Academic Catalog*). There is no limit to the number of honors level courses a student may take. However, there *is* a limit to the number of honors-level points that a student may receive per semester. A student may receive points for up to three honors/AP courses in any one semester. "Extra" points from one semester may be carried forward to subsequent semesters. A maximum of 24 honors level points will be included in the calculation of the weighted grade point average.

How do I find out my student's class rank?

OPRF does not publish students' class rank.

For more information, go to oprfs.org > Academics > Class Rank FAQ.

Words of Wisdom

- Make your kid attend summer school the summer after 8th grade. Take health and something else. A MUST DO!!!
- Put your counselor and Student Intervention Director (SID) on speed dial. Get to know them.
- Don't write the principal. If you don't like what is going on in the class, call the teacher. Don't like the answer? Call the division head.
- Make sure your kid knows his password to Skyward. Make him show you his grades. There's a Skyward app for smartphones.
- Make your kid join a club, sport, publication, something...her freshman year.
- Use Driver Ed as leverage.
- Start talking to your kid about college NOW!!! It is expensive, and kids don't get it. Be honest about your means and their desires.
- Keep your child physically active, perhaps by modeling that yourself. Join a gym. Talk about working out. Encourage him to join you.
- Last and not least...READ IN FRONT OF YOUR CHILD! Discuss the news, or the novel you are reading. Vary your reading. Read some nonfiction. You have to show your child that life is one long reading and writing experience.

—Jim Hunter

English teacher

HOMEWORK

I think some of my student's teachers give too/much not enough homework. How much are they supposed to have?

There's no hard and fast rule, but you should expect a jump in the amount compared to middle school. At a minimum, students typically should be spending at least an hour or two doing homework and preparing for tests and quizzes each day. In honors and AP classes, you should expect more. If your student is regularly telling you he or she did his homework during school, you should probably verify this with the teacher. If you're concerned about the amount of homework, contact the teacher with your concerns.

How does an Inbox/Outbox work?

This is the electronic system many teachers (especially business education, English, and history teachers) use to post and receive homework assignments. Outbox is where assignments are posted, and Inbox is where students post their completed work. Students can access the boxes by logging in on a school computer or remotely from home by clicking the blue tab labeled "Inbox/Outbox" on our homepage (oprfs.org).

HONOR ROLL

How do I find out if my child made the honor roll?

The first time your student makes the Honor Roll, you'll receive a letter and bumper sticker from the superintendent and principal. We don't send notification for subsequent times. Students make the honor role by earning at least a 3.0 unweighted grade point average in a minimum of four full-credit courses. (Grades in physical education, driver education, and academic support programs are excluded in honor roll determination.) Students who earn a superior unweighted grade point average of 3.5 or higher will have their names placed on the Dean's List.

LATE-ARRIVAL WEDNESDAYS

What are Late-Arrival Wednesdays?

On these days from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m., faculty members meet for ongoing professional development. First period begins at 9:45 a.m., and all class periods are shortened by ten minutes.

2014-2015 Late-Arrival Wednesdays	
Arrival time: 9:35 a.m. First period begins: 9:45 a.m.	
1st Semester	2nd Semester
Aug. 27	Jan. 14
Sept. 10	Jan. 28
Sept. 24	Feb. 11
Oct. 8 (Parent-Teacher Conferences) On this Wednesday only, first period begins at 10:00 a.m.	Feb. 25
Oct. 22	March 11
Nov. 5	March 25
Nov. 19	April 8
Dec. 10	April 29
	May 6—tentative
	May 13—tentative

Do you provide any reminders about late arrival?

Yes. On the Monday evening prior to each Late-Arrival Wednesday, you will receive an email and robo-call reminder.

The robo-calls are annoying. Can I opt out?

No. If your phone number is removed from our Family Access database, you will not receive *any* calls from the school. We make the robo-calls to ensure that our families who do not have email receive the reminders.

LIBRARY

How can I prepare my child to be ready for research at the high school?

Make sure your student has a public library card and visit the branches in Oak Park and River Forest. Also, be sure your child knows about the resources at the OPRF Library.

Which of your resources can my student access from home?

The online catalog, our eBook collection, a variety of databases, and many other tools. Visit the OPRF Library homepage (oprfs.org/library) to learn more.

What hours is the Library open?

Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., including Late-Arrival Wednesdays.

When can students visit the Library?

Before and after school and, with a hall pass, during study hall or lunch.

LOCKS

See *Bills, Surprise*.

LOST AND FOUND

My student lost his jacket/keys/cell phone/wallet....Where’s the lost and found?

For books and backpacks, the Bookstore. For all other items, Security Room 264 (second floor, next to the big curving staircase in the main lobby).

MAP OF SCHOOL

Why can’t I find a map online? I want to look at it before I come for Back-to-School night and parent-teacher conferences.

For security, we don’t have a page with floor maps on our website. But you can find them in the Student Handbook.

NAVIANCE

What is Naviance?

Students use Naviance to build a profile and see what majors and what colleges might be a good fit. The program provides a wealth of information and feedback. For instance, a scattergram showing where OPRF students with a particular GPA have gone to college can be helpful in shaping goals and expectations about where an individual student may go. Freshmen receive an introduction to Naviance second semester. Parents are formally introduced to the program sophomore year, but it’s a good idea to become familiar with it even earlier if possible; ask your student to show you.

NEWSCENE

I heard there’s a student news show. How can I watch it?

Newscene is OPRF’s bi-weekly television show highlighting activities, sports, and other happenings

Words of Wisdom

I wish I had known more about all the activities and clubs sooner so I could have gotten involved sooner. It took me a while to figure out how everything works, but that meant I lost time to explore all the opportunities that were available. My advice to new OPRF students would be to work hard and enjoy their time in high school. It's fun but it doesn't last for long, and it can still make a big difference in what direction your life takes as you grow older.

—*Caroline Cronin*
Class of 2014

around the school. Students in the television department produce the show, which airs on Comcast Channel 6 and AT&T Channel 99 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:00 and 11:00 p.m. Newscene, our bi-weekly video announcements, and other video programs also can be viewed online at oprftv.com.

PARENT GROUPS

What are your parent groups, and when do they meet?

These monthly meeting dates generally hold true, but check the school calendar to be sure of any date you wish to attend.

- APPLAUSE: Booster group for music, dance, and theater. Second Monday in Sept., Nov., Feb., May.
- A.P.P.L.E.: African American Parents for Purposeful Leadership in Education. First Tuesday.
- Citizens' Council: Advisory group to the administration and Board of Education. Third Thursday.
- Huskie Booster Club: Booster group for academics, activities, arts, and athletics. First Wednesday.
- Parents 4 Student Success (P4SS): OPRF's PTO. Third Monday.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Why do you email only one parent with information about signing up for parent-teacher conferences? My spouse got the email and forgot to tell me.

Our conference signup takes place online, and each family receives an email with your signup password. We email this only to the first parent/guardian listed in your Family Access account to avoid families inadvertently signing up for more than one conference slot per class.

I missed the second set of conferences—how do you notify parents?

Unlike middle school, we hold only one round of parent-teacher conferences, in the fall.

PARENT VISITATION DAY

Can I visit any classes I choose on Parent Visitation Day?

No. During this annual event, held in early fall, parents may follow the schedule of their students' current classes only.

PARKING AT SCHOOL

The signage on Scoville Avenue is confusing. Where can I park during the school day?

During the school year, the only place daytime visitors are permitted to park on Scoville Avenue is the handful of one-hour spaces north of the Main Entrance, on the west side of the street. However, even here parking is *not* permitted during drop-off and pickup times, when our buses need to park there. From June 16 – August 14, visitors may park on the east side of Scoville on both blocks of the school. There is additional one-hour street parking on the south side of Ontario between Scoville and Ridgeland.

Do I have to pay to park in the garage during the school day?

Yes.

What are the parking option for nighttime events?

When we have major evening events, our security department contacts the police department to request that parking tickets not be written on the blocks of Scoville, Erie, Linden, and Lake ***that border the school.*** Paid parking in the garage is an option as well.

PE MAKEUPS

What are gym makeups?

Missed PE classes can be made up within two weeks of the absence; a student may fail PE by accumulating 12 excused or four unexcused absences. PE makeups are offered during the following times:

- Mon. – Thurs.: 3:15 p.m. in the Weight Room. Requires a pass from the PE Office.
- Tues. and Wed.: 3:15 pm in the Adapted PE Gym. Sign in with ID.
- Fri.: During periods 4, 5, and 6 in the Adapted PE Gym. Sign in with ID.

ROOM NUMBERING SYSTEM

What is the deal with the room-numbering system? It's completely confusing.

There actually is a logic to it. Sort of. Start at the southeast corner of the building, by the Athletic entrance. Then begin walking north, toward the Main Entrance. The room numbers begin with 1 and go up from there. When you hit the 20s, take a left down the hallway and walk west to the other side of the building. When you reach the other side, you'll see the numbers pick up with the 20s again. Head south down this hallway, in the direction of the big crisscross staircase, and the numbers continue to go up into the 40s.

Then if you start up the middle of the building from the south, you'll find five "islands"—the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part the system holds on every floor. For example 108, 208, 308, and 408 are all in the same place on each floor.

Sounds confusing, but trust us. If you walk the building with this explanation it actually does make some sense.

SCHEDULES

How do we get a copy of my student's schedule?

Schedules are finalized over the summer and become available for students to pick up in person during Schedule Pickup Week in mid-August, the week before classes begin. They are not mailed to your home. This is to ensure that all fees and obligations have been paid before schedules are released.

SCHOOL PICTURES

When do you take school pictures?

During Schedule Pickup Week, the week before classes start. The photo taken for the student's ID is the one that will appear in the yearbook.

SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

Where can I find the school supply list?

Unlike middle school, we do not have such a list. Individual teachers will inform students about any supplies they need.

SKYWARD/FAMILY ACCESS

See *Family Access/Skyward*.

SNAP

See *Food Service Account*.

STAYING INFORMED

How do I keep up with what's going on at school?

Your two best sources are HuskiEmail and the Daily Bulletin. HuskiEmail is the school's e-newsletter, which automatically goes to all families every Friday classes are in session; you don't need to subscribe. The Daily Bulletin contains the daily announcements that students hear. We're working toward making that subscription automatic for all families, but right now you need to subscribe by going to oprfs.org > *Student Activities* > *Student Bulletin*. The bulletin also is posted on this Student Bulletin page each day.

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING INTO COLLEGE

What can a student do to get into college?

The best thing students can do is be strategic about taking the most challenging courses they can handle **and** do well in them. Everything counts on the academic transcript, which is the passport to the next thing a student wants to do, and having a direction and a plan for life after OPRF is essential. Like it or not, grades and test scores are what matter most to colleges, so if you have concerns about them, talk to your counselor.

Creating a family expectation that your child will go to college is important. Encourage your student to research colleges online. Make formal college visits with your child, not just a quick drive-by if you happen to be passing through town. Attend all college-related parent meetings, and ask counselors any and all questions you may have.

Finally, engaging in extra-curricular activities in a meaningful way is key. Colleges would rather see deep involvement in one activity than shallow involvement in a bunch of things.

STRUGGLING STUDENT

My child is struggling. What should I do?

Contact the teacher. While the goal is for students to become increasingly independent during their four years, parents—especially freshman parents—should not be afraid to express concerns and ask for guidance from the teacher.

You also can contact the counselor, who can set up a meeting with the teacher, student, and counselor. The counselor can model what kinds of questions to ask, which can help a student advocate for himself in the future. Keep in mind that the more information a counselor has, the more helpful he or she can be. Sharing what may feel like private information with counselors can give them a better idea of what is contributing to the student's struggles and how to address the situation. Counselors are bound to confidentiality and do not release information to teachers unless the parents, and sometimes also the students, have given permission.

The Tutoring Center is a place to get extra help or study in a quiet setting. It's staffed by our teachers during every period of the day, and we recently hired additional certified teachers just to provide tutoring in

math, the most requested subject. The Tutoring Center opens every day before school at 7:00 a.m.,

Support Groups

Topics vary slightly every year due to student interest and need, but all are led by trained therapists. Please speak to your student's counselor if you believe a group would be beneficial.

- **Anger Management:** Teaches skills such as identifying triggers and coping strategies.
- **Anxiety:** Helps identify negative patterns of behavior and teaches coping skills.
- **Boys:** Addresses the challenges of being a boy at OPRF for students with risk factors that interfere with their success at school.
- **Divorce:** Provides a safe place for students to talk about issues of concern with their peers.
- **Freshman 8-9:** Assists freshmen who participate in the summer 8 to 9 Connection successfully transition to high school.
- **Girls:** Addresses the challenges of being a girl at OPRF for students with risk factors that interfere with their success at school.
- **Grief and Loss:** Helps students cope with a significant loss.
- **Latino:** Provides a sense of belonging and unity.
- **Moms:** Supports students experiencing teen pregnancy and motherhood.
- **Organizational:** Assists students struggling with academics due to deficits in organization and study skills.
- **Self-Esteem:** Develops and self-image.
- **Substance Abuse:** Provides support, with the goal of cessation.
- **Survivor:** Addresses issues of sexual abuse.

including Late-Arrival Wednesdays. Mon. through Thurs. it remains open until 5:00 p.m., and on Fri. until 4:30 p.m.

STUDENT DIRECTORY

How can I get a student directory?

Two ways: Buy it in the Bookstore for \$10, or become a member of the Huskie Booster Club, which includes a copy as part of your \$20 membership.

STUDENT EMAIL

How can my student log in to her student email account?

For instructions go to oprfs.org > *Student Email*. On a mobile device, go to our homepage and click *Student Email on Your Phone*.

STUDENT WORKERS

Do any of your departments hire student workers?

Yes. The Bookstore, Educational Technology, Buildings and Grounds, Athletics, and the TV teacher all have hired student workers at varying times of the year. Contact the individual areas to learn more.

SUMMER MATH PACKET ASSIGNMENTS

Which students have to complete math packets over the summer?

All incoming freshmen as well as all sophomores, juniors, and seniors in honors math. Math packets are due first day of classes. You can download math packets here: oprfs.org > *Academics* > *Mathematics* > *Summer Math Packet*. For students who need help completing the packet, math tutors are available in the Tutoring Center during the Monday and Wednesday of Schedule Pickup Week, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS

Which students are required to do summer reading?

All of them. Books should be completed by the first day of classes. To learn more, visit oprfs.org > *Academics* > *English* > *Summer Reading Information*.

SUMMER SCHOOL

I've heard some Summer School classes fill up within minutes of registration opening. Is this true? Which ones?

Yes, this year the Art Foundations classes were full within 15 minutes of registration opening. We keep a

waiting list, and due to the level of demand, an additional class was added. Health classes also tend to be popular.

SWIMSUITS

Can my student wear her own swimsuit for PE?

No. Students must wear a school-provided swimsuit. Suits are laundered every day.

TARDIES

See *Attendance and Tardies*.

TEACHERS, CONTACTING

What's the best way to reach a teacher?

In general, email is the quickest, easiest way to reach a teacher. Even if you prefer to have a phone conversation, you likely will find that sending a brief email with your request to schedule a conversation will ensure the quickest response.

Where do I find a teacher's email address?

Go to oprfs.org > *Faculty/Staff Directory*. Our email format is first initial plus last name @oprfs.org. So to contact math teacher Sheila Hardin, for instance, you would email shardin@oprfs.org.

A tip: When teachers hear from parents, often it's because of a concern or complaint. Don't forget to give teachers compliments and thanks as well! They like to hear their efforts are appreciated.

THEFT

I've heard that phones and calculators tend to go "missing." Is that true?

Unfortunately, yes—but mainly because a student has left a school or PE locker unlocked. Remind students to always lock their lockers, never leave valuables unattended, zip up backpacks, stash backpacks between their feet, for instance, in the cafeteria.

"TRACKING"

What are the different tracks?

Although a lot of parents refer to our course-level system as "tracking," that really is a misnomer. "Tracking" implies inflexibility and lack of movement. In reality, an individual student may take a mix of course levels at the same time, and students have the opportunity to grow into taking more difficult course levels.

Different course levels are available in some English, fine and applied arts, history, math, science, technology, and world languages classes. There are four different levels:

- Transition: For students whose past performance indicates a need for greater instructional support or a varied pace of instruction.
- College prep: More drills, examples, and descriptive materials when compared to the honors/AP level.
- Honors: Increased emphasis on concepts, abstract relationships, critical thinking, and creative thinking.
- Advanced Placement: Our most challenging classes, these offer the opportunity to earn college credit by examination during the spring semester.

Can students take a mix of course levels?

Yes. For instance, a student with excellent performance in math and science and average performance in other subjects would be placed in honors math and science classes, and in college-prep English, history, and world languages.

How do you decide which level a student should take?

Recommendations are based on these factors:

- Teacher and counselor profiles and recommendations
- Past academic achievement in the relevant subject areas
- Placement and standardized test results
- Reading ability
- Personal factors: study habits, motivation, attendance record

Is the college-prep level challenging enough? What difference does it make when applying to college?

One of our PTO leaders says this is the question she hears most often. Students who earn As and Bs in college-prep classes should be college-ready. They typically have many choices of four-year schools as well as smaller liberal-arts colleges where students maintain a B average. Think ISU, Western, DePaul. Students who receive Cs and Ds in college prep are less likely to be college ready. And students aiming for more elite schools—U of I, Grinnell, the Ivies—should be taking the honors/AP level.

Keep in mind that students who begin with college-prep classes their freshman year can grow into honors-level work, even into their junior year. The goal is to appropriately challenge students. A student who is easily earning As and Bs in college prep should consider moving up a level.

I think my student should be taking a different level class. What should I do?

Course recommendations are not written in stone, and parents have the right to override them. Before doing so though, you'd be wise to have a conversation about the reasons for the recommendation, as well as the pros and cons of changing levels. For incoming-freshman parents, contact your student's counselor. Other parents should contact the student's current teacher.

TRAPEZE

Can I subscribe to the student newspaper?

Yes, for \$15 per year. Contact Trapeze sponsor Liz Fox at 708-434-3306 or ekaufman@oprfs.org. Or you can order and pay on Back-to-School Night; look for the Trapeze table, staffed by students.

TRITON COLLEGE, OPRF-PAID CLASSES AT

Does OPRF really pay for students to take classes at Triton?

Yes—a total of one per student. While enrolled at OPRF, the high school will pay for a student to take one class from a predetermined list of courses. This can be especially helpful for students who want to earn dual credit from both OPRF and Triton, as well as some colleges. For the list of courses, contact the Office of Curriculum and Instruction at mbancroft@oprfs.org or 708-434-3515.

TUTORING CENTER

How can my student access the Tutoring Center?

Students can visit the Tutoring Center before and after school and, with a hall pass, during study hall or lunch. It's staffed by our teachers during every period of the day. (After receiving feedback from Student Council, we hired extra teachers to provide tutoring in math, the most requested subject.) The Tutoring Center opens every day before school at 7:00 a.m., including Late-Arrival Wednesdays. Mon. through Thurs. it remains open until 5:00 p.m., and on Fri. until 4:30 p.m.

Does my student have to be getting tutoring to visit the Tutoring Center?

No. It's also a quiet, supervised space for studying on one's own or for accessing a computer.

TUTORS

How can I find a tutor who will come to our home?

The high school does not keep a referral list of tutors. Asking friends or your child's teacher for a recommendation may be helpful.

YEARBOOK

How do I order the yearbook?

Go to oprfs.org > Web Store > Tabula.

WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

The school year starts so early. Do we really need to be around the week before too?

In absolute terms, no, you aren't required to be. But the week before classes begin is Schedule Pickup Week, and attending it will save your student—especially freshmen—a lot of hassle and stress. Each

class of students comes to the high school on a designated day to pick up schedules (which are not mailed home), get textbooks, and have ID/yearbook photos taken. Counselors and staff are readily available during this time to address issues. If students don't attend their pickup day, know that they will begin their first day of classes waiting in line with dozens of other students who are trying to take care of business at the same time.

Also, if your student is an athlete, keep in mind that tryouts for fall sports take place the week before classes begin.

YOU MADE IT!

We hope that after reading all the tips here, you are more prepared to navigate the ins and outs of the high school. May you have a great experience at OPRF.