EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Thank you for choosing Old Town Academy for your child's education. It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to **welcome** you. We are extremely proud of the programs we offer our students, and we encourage you to make the most of your time with us by being completely involved in all activities including class work, projects, electives, social events, field trips, and parent/family volunteer opportunities.

SCHOOL MISSION

> *The mission of **Old Town Academy** K-8 Charter School is to graduate students with world-class core learning skills* and *active learning habits-of-mind: the tools they will need to survive— and thrive—in high school and in 21st Century society.*

OLD TOWN ACADEMY is committed to:

EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY FOR ALL STUDENTS: We promise to keep expectations high for all students *and* to give them the learning tools and coaching they need to reach meet those expectations.

Teaching a BALANCED CURRICULUM that recognizes the many ways to be smart (the eight OTA CORE LEARNING STRANDS are: History & Geography, Language Arts, Seminar, Mathematics, Science, Studio Art History, Music, and Outdoor Education).

A special emphasis on STEM preparation (Science Technology Engineering and Math).

Using the CORE KNOWLEDGE CURRICULUM for the humanities and fine arts.

Taking advantage of EARLY LEARNING ADVANTAGE WINDOWS with courses that give young children a lifelong headstart, e.g., *Music to Mathematics: K-3 Piano* and *The Math & Science Olympics! K-5 Robotics, Programming, and Problem Solving.*

Setting CLEAR LEARNING GOALS in every grade and in every Learning Strand and sharing those goals with students, parents, and the community.

Measuring our own progress toward helping students meet those Learning Goals with an in-house QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM: the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress).

Creating ACTIVE LEARNING ZONE classrooms where students drive the learning process.

Maximizing Students Hands-on Learning Time

QUALITY FIRST! ASSESSMENT: Achievement-Based Pass/Try Again Grading.

Maximizing Teachers' One-on-One and Small Group Coaching Time

Giving students CHOICES (more than one path to excellence).

Giving students REAL-TIME FEEDBACK & COACHING as they work and complete projects.

Giving students MEANINGFUL WORK (Learn→Create→Share Learning Paths; Projects that build on earlier work; Projects that give the students the power to change their environment).

Creating LEARNING ACCELERATION LABS for grades K-3 and 4-8: we put the computers at the service of classroom teachers to help them help their students master core learning skills & knowledge: *math, vocabulary-guided reading, geography, timelines, science, etc.*

Providing a SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (where it's "cool to be smart").

Maintaining a STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO of 28:1 or less.

Developing students who are SELF-MOTIVATED, SELF-DISCIPLINED, AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE.

Promoting COMMUNITY SERVICE both within the school and through outside projects.

* * *

This mission statement reflects the vision developed by the OTA founders and approved by the San Diego Unified School District Board in a 4-0 vote in December, 2010.

We have done everything in our power to create the perfect small school campus; hire an excellent staff of experienced, creative teachers; and provide the best learning tools to realize this vision for you and your children.

For further information on our school plan, please download the Old Town Academy Charter Petition on our school website: OldTownAcademy.org.

Old Town Academy 2011-2012 Calendar

The Calendar for 2011-2012 is posted online under Frequently Asked Questions on the school website: OldTownAcademy.org.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily schedules will vary from grade to grade but all grades will follow a block schedule format which gives students uninterrupted learning time (enough time to complete complex, quality work) and gives students variety (days off from certain subjects). The entire school starts off each day with mathematics to take advantage of that prime learning time and to emphasize how important mathematics is for keeping a child's options open and for their future success in high school, college, and work.

We have attached **Two Sample Schedules** here:
One Schedule for a typical classroom, Kindergarten, showing Learning Blocks:

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival 8:10-8:30	***Morning Calendar***				
1st 8:30-9:30 (60 min)	MATH • SAXON AM LESSON FREE WORK TIME: • PROBLEM SOLVING [1] • COMPUTER TARGETS: 4 CLASSROOM IMACS: IXL OR THATQUIZ TARGETSCORES!	MATH • SAXON AM LESSON FREE WORK TIME: • PROBLEM SOLVING • COMPUTER TARGETS: 4 CLASSROOM IMACS: IXL OR THATQUIZ TARGETSCORES!	MATH • SAXON AM LESSON FREE WORK TIME: • COMPUTER TARGETS: IPADS: IXL OR THATQUIZ TARGETSCORES!	MATH • SAXON AM LESSON FREE WORK TIME: • PROBLEM SOLVING • COMPUTER TARGETS: 4 CLASSROOM IMACS: IXL OR THATQUIZ TARGETSCORES!	MATH • CORE LEARNING COMPUTER LAB • COMPUTER TARGETS: 8:30-9:00 Group A (14) 9:00-9:30 Group B (14) 30 LAB IMACS: IXL OR THATQUIZ TARGETSCORES!
2nd 9:30-10:30 (60 min)	Language Arts • PHONICS • PROJECT TREES	Language Arts • PHONICS • PROJECT TREES	Language Arts • PHONICS • PROJECT TREES	Language Arts • PHONICS • PROJECT TREES	Math/Science Olympics 9:30-10:00 Group A 10:00-10:30 Group B
10:30-10:50	***Recess***				
3rd 10:50-11:50 (60 min)	Centers • READING	Music Lab 10:50-11:20 Group A 11:20-11:50 Group B	Centers • READING	Music Lab 10:50-11:20 Group A 11:20-11:50 Group B	Language Arts • PHONICS • PROJECT TREES
4th 11:50-12:35 (45 min)	Art	Science CLASS LESSON: PROJECTS	Art	Science CLASS LESSON: PROJECTS	Centers • READING • SEMINAR?
12:35-1:25		***Lunch - Recess***		*End lunch early at 1*	
5th 1:25-2:25 (60 min)	History-Geography • FREE WORK TIME • PROJECT TREES	Outdoor Ed NATURE TREKS, SPORTS, STRENGTH & CONDITIONING, NUTRITION	History-Geography • FREE WORK TIME • PROJECT TREES	Outdoor Ed *1-2* NATURE TREKS, SPORTS, STRENGTH & CONDITIONING, NUTRITION	WORK ON PROJECTS • END OF MONTH • B-DAY CELEBRATIONS • CLASS PARTIES
Clean Up/Dismissal 2:25-3:00	STORY TIME, REST	STORY TIME, REST	STORY TIME, REST	STORY TIME, REST *2-3*	STORY TIME, REST

One Schedule for the K-3 Learning Lab (to give you an idea of how we often the students will be in the Computer Labs or on the iPads in their home classroom):

K-3 Lab Instructor Teaching Schedule *(plus Outdoor Ed)*
"Early Learning Advantage" Courses: Mathematics → Music; Math & Science Olympics!

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival 8:10-8:20	Lab Setup: Computers; TargetScores Clipboards, Scratch Paper Clipboards w/ 4-Color Pens, TAPS manipulatives + iPad Carts Ready to Roll to Classrooms.				
1st 8:20-9:20 Notes: • 14 kids in classroom doing Saxon AM lesson & written work.• If Lab kids come at 8:10 even better	K-3 Math Lab • Coaching & TargetScores! (ThatQuiz: replaces Saxon Skills; IXL Learning Goals) • Problem Solving : TAPS! Dry Erase iPad cart to 2nd Grade 8:20-8:50 3rd Grade A: 14 kids 8:50-9:20 3rd Grade B: 15 kids	K-3 Math Lab • Coaching & TargetScores! (ThatQuiz: replaces Saxon Skills; IXL Learning Goals) • Problem Solving : TAPS Dry Erase iPad cart to 1st Grade 8:20-8:50 2nd Grade A: 14 kids 8:50-9:20 2nd Grade B: 14 kids	K-3 Math Lab • Coaching & TargetScores! (ThatQuiz: replaces Saxon Skills; IXL Learning Goals) • Problem Solving : TAPS Dry Erase iPad cart to Kindergarten 8:20-8:50 3rd Grade B: 15 kids 8:50-9:20 3rd Grade A: 14 kids	K-3 Math Lab • Coaching & TargetScores! (ThatQuiz: replaces Saxon Skills; IXL Learning Goals) • Problem Solving : TAPS Dry Erase iPad cart to 3rd Grade 8:20-8:50 1st Grade A: 14 kids 8:50-9:20 1st Grade B: 14 kids	K-3 Math Lab • Coaching & TargetScores! (ThatQuiz: replaces Saxon Skills; IXL Learning Goals) • Problem Solving : TAPS Dry Erase iPad cart to 2nd Grade 8:20-8:50 Kinder A: 14 kids 8:50-9:20 Kinder B: 14 kids
9:20-9:35	Break *(move to 10:30?)*				
2nd 9:35-10:45 In Class when students are finished other work they go 4 at a time to Classroom Computers to work on Math,Vocab, Geog, etc. TargetScores!	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 9:35-10:10 3rd Grade A: 14 kids 10:10-10:45 3rd Grade B: 15 kids Free Work Time: When kids finish they can work on Vocab, Geography, Math, etc. TargetScores! iPads→K	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 9:35-10:10 1st Grade A: 14 kids 10:10-10:45 1st Grade B: 14 kids Free Work Time: When kids finish they can work on Vocab, Geography, Math, etc. TargetScores! iPads→3rd	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 9:35-10:10 3rd Grade A: 14 kids 10:10-10:45 3rd Grade B: 15 kids Free Work Time: When kids finish they can work on Vocab, Geography, Math, etc. TargetScores! iPads→1st	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 9:35-10:10 1st Grade A: 14 kids 10:10-10:45 1st Grade B: 14 kids Free Work Time: When kids finish they can work on Vocab, Geography, Math, etc. TargetScores! iPads→2nd	Math & Science Olympics 9:35-10:10 Kinder A: 14 kids 10:10-10:45 Kinder B: 14 kids iPads→3rd
3rd 10:45-11:55 In class students might be listening to CK music CDs	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 10:45-11:25 2nd Grade A: 14 kids 11:25-11:55 2nd Grade B: 14 kids Free Work Time:Other TargetScores!	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 10:45-11:25 Kinder A: 14 kids 11:25-11:55 Kinder B: 14 kids Free Work Time:Other TargetScores!	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 10:45-11:25 2nd Grade A: 14 kids 11:25-11:55 2nd Grade B: 14 kids Free Work Time:Other TargetScores!	Music Lab Learn→Create→Share (Piano-GarageBand-Blog) 10:45-11:25 Kinder A: 14 kids 11:25-11:55 Kinder B: 14 kids Free Work Time:Other TargetScores!	Math & Science Olympics 10:45-11:25 3rd Grade A:14 kids 10:10-11:55 3rd Grade B: 14 kids
11:55-12:15	Lunch …				
12:15-12:35	… Recess *(or do we cut this and add the play minutes to recess?)*				
4th 12:35-1:45	Planning Time Seminar The Lost Arts of: *Active Reading, Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Thinking!* iPads→Sign Up	Math & Science Olympics 12:35-1:15 2nd Grade A: 14 kids 1:15-1:45 2nd Grade B: 14 kids iPads→Sign Up	Math & Science Olympics 12:35-1:15 1st Grade A: 14 kids 1:15-1:45 1st Grade B: 14 kids iPads→Sign Up	Outdoor Ed K-1st All 28 Together? (Nature Treks, Sports, Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition) Sports Clubs: Soccer, Kickball, Obstacle Course?	Outdoor Ed 2nd-3rd All 29 Together? (Nature Treks, Sports, Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition) Sports Clubs: Soccer, Kickball, Football, B-Ball, Baseball Obstacle Course?
5th 1:45-2:45	*Clean UP—Leave at 2*	*Clean UP—Leave at 2*	*Clean UP—Leave at 2*	*Clean UP—Leave at 2*	*Clean UP—Leave at 2*
Clean Up • Dismissal 2:45-3:00					

* * *

SCHOOL COLORS, MASCOT, & MOTTO

Our school colors are purple and silver and our mascot is the Osprey. Our motto is *Equity and Excellence for All Students.*

STUDENT PROJECT NOTEBOOKS

Every student will receive a tabbed Progress Tracker Notebook which will serve as their Goal Setter, Planner, and Project Checklist. The notebook, depending on the age and grade, will have Project Trees for most of the OTA Core Learning Strands.

Teachers will create this curriculum and with be tracking student progress but with time the students will make the teacher's Learning Goals their own and will use the Project Tracker notebooks to develop organization, time management, and study skills. Families can use the Project Tracker notebooks to follow along as their child masters the projects for each Core Learning Strand for a given grading quarter. These notebooks cost $8 and if lost we ask that families replace them.

PARKING LOT RULES

No car is to be parked within the fenced off area (which will be open only during pick-up and drop-off). OTA parents may not park in the northern end of the parking lot (outside the fence) as this is reserved for office tenants. across the street. There will be a limited

number of visitor parking spaces in the southern garage for parents or guardians with appointment only. All other visitors and parents are asked to park on the street.

STUDENT PICK-UP & DROP-OFF AREA

Student pick-up and drop-off will be at the north end of the parking lot. Please pull forward to where staff and student safety patrol guide you, so you do not block cars entering parking lot. Parents will not be allowed to walk their children into school. **Please do not park and walk your child into the playground**. This creates a traffic and safety hazard and since teachers will be leading children up to their classrooms parents will not be able to accompany them. Students must be dropped off **no earlier than 7:45 AM and must be picked up by 3:15 PM**. Bussing is not available at Old Town Academy.

ACHIEVEMENT-BASED ASSESSMENT & COACHING

Our goal is not to grade students performance but to improve it. We do not use letter grades on individual projects therefore (At OTA instead of a "C+" on a given assignment, you get a "Try Again" from your teacher); but we do use them to add up achievement (total projects passed) at the end of each grading quarter. INSERT GRADING LADDER

Students at Old Town Academy are expected to complete all assignments on time and are expected to do their work to the best of their ability. They are expected to follow all guidelines for projects and they need to realize that all projects must achieve a passing grade to be considered completed. Unsatisfactory grades on tests or major projects/reports require a resubmission until it has met passing criteria. Students may not be promoted to the next grade level until all projects have been satisfactorily completed.

Students may ask any staff member for support or assistance when working on a project. Students must carefully study the instructions or guidelines provided by the assigning teacher and other staff members when working on projects. Visual Goal Setting, Planning, & Progress Tracking devices (Called Project Trees at OTA) and rubrics (called **Project Checklists** at OTA) will be used for scoring. Staff will be involved in the scoring of projects. Parents should review the Project Trees and Project Checklists with their student and monitor how the student is proceeding.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students who continually fail to meet their assignment requirements or fail to work satisfactorily on projects will be referred to the Academic Director for academic probation. A contract will be written with the student, teachers, and parents and the student will be monitored for a designated period of time. Reports are sent home weekly to let parents know if progress is noticed. If progress is not noticed, the student will be recommended for non-continuation at Old Town Academy as the program at OTA Charter may not be the correct placement to ensure the highest academic success for this particular student.

STUDENT SAFETY

Our primary concern is for student safety. Staff members and/or Parent Volunteers monitor all breaks and activities. Guidelines are in place for student safety. Students are to report any sexual harassment, physical harassment, or psychological harassment concerns to a staff member. Board policy clearly defines the steps to be taken to address

these concerns. The San Diego Unified School District and OTA have a zero tolerance policy for weapons, drugs, and violence.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Old Town Academy is a school with high expectations and an accelerated curriculum. Attendance is a privilege, not a right. All students are expected to be kind, thoughtful, and respectful of fellow students, all staff, student teachers, and parent volunteers.

Positive, appropriate behavior will be rewarded through the natural consequences of social success and strong academic achievement, along with extra privileges at school. Quarterly awards assemblies and school-wide or classroom celebrations will honor students who based on their achievements in the OTA CORE LEARNING STRANDS. Some awards (e.g., the Kiwanis Music Award) will be named for sponsors who have helped us provide our students with world-class learning resources.

Behavioral Expectations

Students are expected to be responsible for doing their "personal best" on all school work, in social relationships, and contributing to a caring, positive school community with a clean, orderly environment. Behavioral expectations for specific areas and events are listed to assist students in developing the responsibility needed to help themselves and the school reach their full potential.

Walkways, Restrooms, Athletic Field

1. Students are to walk and not run on the balcony walkways.
2. Students are to use quiet voices near other classrooms. Yelling or disruptive behavior prevents others from learning.
3. Students are to go directly to the dismissal area when leaving the classroom. Stay in the designated area, in clear view of the supervisor until dismissed.
4. Students are not to be in any rooms unsupervised.
5. Students are to eat in designated areas only. Please bring healthy foods and a water bottle to school every day.
6. Gum and soda (or energy drinks) are not permitted on campus. Candy and other treats should be minimal.
7. Students are expected to follow rules for all games and sports at recess and in Outdoor Education. OTA students use good sportsmanship.
8. Students are expected to resolve their differences in a fair and positive manner.
9. When a whistle blows, stop, look at the supervisor, and follow the directions given.
10. Students must be visible to supervisors at all times (except quick trips to the restroom or when asked to run an errand.)
11. Sports equipment is to be returned to racks or rooms designated when the whistle blows. Carry the ball to the area, no more throwing, or bouncing the ball after the signal.

Classroom

*****Water bottles are encouraged in the classroom, especially in hot weather!

1. Show respect for your classmates and teacher by using appropriate language, speaking politely, waiting your turn, being prepared (homework and supplies), including everyone, and fully participating in class activities.

2. To learn you must attend. Attendance must be consistent and while in class you attention must be on the teacher, student, or group presenting. Fully participate! Awards are given each week for **perfect attendance**.
3. All assignments (Projects) will have suggested starting dates, due dates, and clear expectations (Project Checklists). Use your Progress Tracker notebooks to help you be ready in advance of due dates.
4. Since all Projects are graded Pass/Try Again, students will be expected to revise their work until they meet Project Checklist standards. Every student has a chance to achieve great things if they put in the effort and take advantage of the coaching from our fantastic staff and the many Learning Lab.

Online Learning with Computer TargetScores!

Computer learning goals TARGETSCORES! will be established for all core subjects. Students will have opportunities to work on these TargetScores in Lab, on classroom iMacs, on the iPads, and at home. Programs like ThatQuiz.org, IXL math (for K-3), and Activated Reader (for grades 2-8) allow students to work at their own level, get instant feedback on progress as they work, get many more repetitions at the right level-of-difficulty) than a paper and pencil homework, and provide extra learning time "outside the box" of our daily 8-3 schedule. We encourage all families to help their students take advantage of this extra online learning time and will help families that do not have access to computers (Please contact the Office for help with this).

Internet Ethics Policy (No Cyberbullying Please!)

We would like to agree as a school community that it is a good policy to put nothing in an email and to post nothing online that we would not tell or show another person face-to-face. Children as young as middle school are now being charged with felonies for harassing or abusing other children online (through email, texting, Facebook, and other electronic media) and the school believes it is our responsibility—in order both to protect children from the consequences of unknowingly breaking increasingly harsh laws *and* in order to promote an emotionally secure learning environment free from fear and harassment— to educate our students in internet ethics and then to hold them responsible to certain standards.

The School believes this is the responsibility of both teachers and parents and guardians. We therefore will ask every family and student (over 4th grade) to read and agree to the following "Internet Student Code of Ethics" agreement:

Internet Student Code of Ethics

The following actions are a violation of the OTA Online Student Code of Ethics:

1. Sending or accessing offensive messages or pictures.
2. Using obscene language in online communications or web pages.
3. Harassing, insulting, or attacking others.
4. Damaging computers or computer networks.
5. Violating copyright laws.
6. Plagiarizing content and calling it your own.
7. Unauthorized use of a password.
8. Trespassing in another person's folder, work, or files.
9. Intentionally wasting resources.
10. Employing the school network or computer resources for commercial uses.
11. Searching for inappropriate material.

Sanctions:

1. Violations will result in a loss of online access privileges (and the resulting academic penalty)
2. Additional disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with existing rules governing inappropriate language and behavior.
3. When applicable, law enforcement agencies may become involved.

Student/Parent Consent

We understand Old Town Academy Online Student Code of Ethics governing use of computers and access to the internet both at home and in school and agree to abide by the terms of the Code.

Student Name (print) _____ Grade in 2011/2012 School Year: ___

Student Signature: _____ Date; _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date; _____

Accessing Internet Research Material

During school, teachers will guide students in accessing appropriate materials. Outside of school, families must bear responsibility for such guidance, as they do with TV and other media. Please note that by the company's own rules, children under 13 may not have Facebook accounts. If it is important to you for your underage child to have a facebook account then OTA may not be the right school for you.

Off Campus or After School Events

For school sponsored activities of any kind students are expected to adhere to the same dress and behavioral expectations as during the school day. Student ID cards will be needed.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Consequences for inappropriate behavior will fit the individual and the infraction. Parents will be notified if the inappropriate behavior becomes a pattern of behavior, or if the behavior was serious and deliberate. We wish to remind parents and students that attending Old Town Academy K-8 Charter School is a choice and with choice comes responsibility. The school was not created to throw children out but to help them succeed and our message to them will always be:

- *Follow the few simple rules we've created to help everyone do their best, and we promise we'll do everything we can to help you do your best—and reach your goals in life.*
- *If you can't follow those few simple rules, if you're stopping other students from learning, then we won't give up on you—but we will have to ask you to come after school to learn.*
- *When you think you can follow the rules again, we'll bring you back. We're glad you're at OTA and we care about you your success—that's why we are willing to stay after school so you can keep learning.*

If a child persistently refuses to follow our few classroom rules, our message will be:

- *We're sorry you decided to leave OTA. Please remember that is was your decision to leave, not ours.*

Students exhibiting unacceptable behavior will be referred to the office where a conference with the director and/or parents will be held. Three office referrals in one quarter will result in a one day suspension. Minor offenses will cause students to receive a lunch detention. Two detentions are considered an office referral. Immediate suspension will be required if the situation warrants, such as in the case of fighting or serious offenses prescribed by law. Any student, who has been suspended, has 2 office referrals, or 4 lunch detentions will be placed on the Loss of Privileges List and is not eligible to attend school activities.

If behavior does not improve, the student will be asked to return to his/her school of residence. To create the atmosphere and learning environment described in our charter, expectations for behavior must be very high. Families are asked to carefully go over information mailed, or given at orientation and back-to-school-night. Be proactive in

prevention of discipline problems. If warnings are given, or conferences held regarding student behavior, know the intent is to provide a safe, respectful learning environment for your child as well as all other charter school students. It is wise to take any warnings very seriously.

PERSONAL ITEMS AT SCHOOL

□ Cell phones or other electronic communication devices must be left in backpacks and turned off. Students may turn them on and check messages only at break times.

□ Only school equipment and athletic gear are allowed on campus. Personal items such as CD players or electronic games are to be left at home.

□ Students should not bring their own computers, iPads, iTouch, Ipod, or notebooks to school. Old Town Academy is fortunate to have abundant resources and students will have access to computers in all parts of the day. *Students are encouraged*, however, to bring flash drives and their own headphones.

Consequences: Hats worn indoors, cell phones or electronic devices used during class, or other "distracters" will be taken to the school office. They may be picked up on the day they are confiscated only by a parent. Students may pick up their "distracters" on Fridays after school (if an item is confiscated on a Friday, a student may be pick it up the following Friday).

UNIFORM POLICY

Please keep in mind that for school to function best as a place of learning, students need to dress appropriately. Casual attire should be saved for weekends or free dress days. The following guidelines will be used to determine appropriate attire:

Old Town Academy Uniform Choices

- Old Town Academy Students may wear a plain-front polo shirt in any of the following colors: Regal Purple, White, Heather Gray, Royal Blue, or Light Blue. Polo shirts in these colors are available at stores like Target or Old Navy and online at www.otacademystore.com.
- To help them stay warm in colder weather, students may also wear light blue long-sleeve oxford uniform shirts (or long sleeve versions of the polo shirts).
- Students may wear navy blue or khaki uniform-style pants (no cargo pants), shorts (uniform-style, no cargo), or skorts. Excessively baggy or tight pants are not acceptable. K, 1, and 2 students may also wear navy blue jumpers. All grades may add white or blue tights under skorts or jumpers. Jeans are not allowed.
- Families also have the option to order polo shirts with the OTA logo embroidered at no extra charge in all the above colors plus the Purple that OTA athletes will wear as part of their uniforms — available online at www.otacademystore.com. Revenues from

the OTA Store support academic programs and help OTA provide scholarships for field trips, free and reduced lunch, and home computers.

Polo Shirt Logo:	Athletic Team Logo:
OLD TOWN OTA ACADEMY	Old Town Academy

- Students must wear athletic shoes (off the rack please, no custom logos) or comfortable closed-toed sandals since they have Outdoor Ed (nature hikes, sports, or recess) every day.
- Outerwear: in school students may wear dark blue sweater vests, sweaters, or sweatshirts imprinted with College or University logo. They will also have the option to buy OTA sweatshirts embroidered with the school logo.
- Students may bring hats to wear during Outdoor Ed activities but hats may not be worn in the building.
- Students who do not come to school in the proper uniform will be sent to the office or asked to go home to change. Please email us with questions at: uniforms@oldtownacademy.org.

Visit the school web page OldTownAcademy.org for more information and photos on OTA uniform choices (colors, styles, and so on).

Further Clarification and Guidance for Free Dress Days

Tops

- Shirts and blouses may be either short or long-sleeved, but shoulders must be covered at all times. Exposed midsections are not acceptable.
- Sweaters and jackets of an appropriate size and length may be worn over, but not in place of, an appropriate shirt.
- Hooded sweatshirts are not a substitute for an appropriate shirt.

Bottoms

- Appropriate FREE DRESS DAYS attire includes long pants, shorts or skirts worn with the waistband at the waist. Excessively baggy or tight pants are not acceptable. (This includes "skinny" jeans.)
- ON FREE DRESS DAYS: Jeans in good repair are acceptable.
- Skirts and shorts worn on FREE DRESS DAYS must be of acceptable length. (They must reach to the longest part of the student's hand when arms are held straight at the side.)

Footwear

- Shoes should be comfortable, supportive and allow the student to actively participate in is/her physical education classes.
- Flip flops and slippers are never allowed.

Jewelry

- Simple studs in the ears are allowed. Jewelry in piercings other than ears shall not be worn at school.
- Students should avoid dangling jewelry, especially earrings and other jewelry that could cause injury (including gauges in the ears.)

Other

- Students are expected to demonstrate respect for themselves and others. With this in mind: there should be no writing on one's own body or anyone else's body.

Clothing Never Appropriate for School (on Free Dress Days or School Overnight Trips)

Tops

Tops that expose shoulders, backs, bellies and/or undergarments should be avoided. This includes:

- tank tops and shirts with spaghetti straps.
- see-through clothing.
- low-cut tops exposing cleavage.
- strapless, backless or halter tops.

Generally Inappropriate Clothing

Clothing or accessories which advertise or denote profanity, sexual topics or innuendo are not permitted.
Clothing which promotes:

- gang affiliation
- alcohol, drugs or tobacco
- violence

is also not permitted.

Headgear

- Limited headgear is permitted with the understanding that it is worn when and where it is appropriate.
- To protect students from long exposure to the sun during outside PE activities, students may wear brimmed hats during PE classes. This includes baseball caps/hats, visors, and/or other brimmed (athletic) hats. This DOES NOT include beanies, scarves, decorative hats, or bandanas.

Headgear that may be worn to school, but may not be worn indoors includes:

- hoods
- sunglasses
- hats

Dangerous Items

Items that could present a danger to other students should be left at home. This includes things like:

- chains (including chains connected to wallets)
- spikes and safety pins.
- rubber bands and any other items which would be considered unsafe.

The general principle is that a students' clothing and appearance should not be of such an extreme nature that it draws undue attention to the student. If a student's clothing or

appearance detracts or interferes with the teaching and learning in the classroom and on campus then students may be sent to the office parents asked to take the student home.

LUNCH TIME RESPONSIBILITIES

Different Classroom teams will be responsible, on a rotating basis, for assisting with the serving and clean up of lunch. Students will help serve, clean tables and floors, and recycle. Student leaders (6^{th}, 7^{th}, or 8^{th} graders) will be assigned to monitor the work done. We believe that to be a true community, students should not only learn together, but also assist one another with the routines often taken for granted at school. Students are to behave in the lunch area as they would at the dinner table using good manners and helping with clean up afterward.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The first way for a student to be successful at school is to **attend each day**. Students who are absent will receive make up work that must be completed in a timely manner. Students with frequent absences are at risk of falling behind, as nothing replaces the classroom interaction within each lesson**. Parents are encouraged to schedule medical or dental appointments during non-school hours (or at least in the afternoon after the crucial morning Math and Language Arts blocks)**.

Vacations during the school year are very costly to schools, for that reason we ask that students request and complete an independent study form if missing 5 days or more. The request should be made as far in advance as possible to give the teacher time to prepare work. When completed, an Independent Study allows the school to collect ADA (school financing) for the missed days. If missing less than five days (especially a problem with Fridays and/or Mondays attached to holiday weekends) we ask that parents plan to donate $40 per student per missed day to the school as we cannot collect any ADA (school financing) for less than 5 day absences. A charter school can lose tens of thousands of dollars every year by unexcused absences alone.

We expect the parents to **call the school when a child is not going to be present**. The call may be made at any time during the night. If you call **619-574-6225**, an answering machine is available to take your message. When you report an absence you must state the day, the reason, and your relationship to the student.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Students should bring a lunch from home (free and reduced lunches are available; please check at the Office for information). If a student forgets lunch, we will serve them a snack and they can reimburse the Office. Two to four times a month the school will offer a hot lunch (pizza at first, other choices may follow). Families MUST prepay for each child's lunch as they will be ordered in advance.

Regardless of whether a student buys lunch or brings it from home a healthy nutritious lunch is very important to optimal learning. Sodas (including caffeine "energy drinks"), gum, and candy should not be part of any lunch. Please support our efforts to teach and model good nutrition.

DAILY SNACKS

Snacks are an individual choice. Students may bring a **nutritious snack** to be eaten during their morning break. Small nutritional snacks may be available in the student's classroom. A designated snack area will be set aside. If you child has a **food allergy** it must be disclosed in the **enrollment form** so that all teachers and staff are aware and can help protect your child!

LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

Students are not to leave campus during the school day unless permission is obtained from the charter school office. Parents or legal guardians who pick up the children other than at dismissal time must sign them out of the charter school office. Parents are not to go directly to the classrooms. Complete attendance is important! If a student must leave early, please check for the best possible time within the student's schedule.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING

There will be many volunteer opportunities (posted on both the school blog and each classroom blog). Helping coach piano in the Kiwanis Music Lab, helping to coach math in the Core Learning Lab, helping teachers record and upload student Projects into the online Learning Journals (Wordpress), helping to coach our debate and mock trial program or after-school sports—these are just some of the many volunteer opportunities that will be posted soon.

Parent volunteers will be a crucial part of the success of our classroom programs.. Parents who volunteer on a short-term basis and under teacher supervision do not need a background check. Parents or Guardians who become "Key Volunteers" (anyone who supervises children outside the classroom) will need to complete the same FBI background check we require for all teaching staff and after-school providers. The Office will provide a school number and the address of a local firm that does the "Livescan" reports.

From time to time the school will promote the formation of special parent committees to advise the Director and Board on new programs and existing programs that are under review. In addition, a group called *Families That Can* works to empower charter school parents and keep charter school law strong by contacting legislatures and is always welcomes new members. Attending the governance board meetings (Board meetings will be held on campus in the Seminar room; a schedule of Board Meetings will be posted in September on the school website: OldTownAcademy.org) and actively participating in fundraising by working with the OTA Foundation Board are more formal means of volunteering. There will also be a Saturday "work party" each quarter.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in at the charter school Office. No one is to walk on campus, visit rooms etc. without **first signing in at the charter school office and receiving a visitor badge**. When visitors are leaving, they must also check out at the charter school office. Students may not invite a relative or friend who is visiting to spend time at the school with them.

Afterschool programs are open only to registered students. Parents and guardians or other visitors must pick students up outside and should not enter the school after hours without an appointment.

EMERGENCY & MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is extremely important that our school has up-to-date emergency information regarding your child. Please see to it that the following information is kept current: ❐ Home phone number; ❐ Work phone number ❐ Cell phone numbers ❐ Emergency contact numbers ❐ Student medical status

MEDICATION

All medication, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, must follow the California State Health and Safety Codes. School personnel will give your child medication at school if the following guidelines are followed:

- Parent (over the counter meds) and/or physician (prescription) complete the administering medication form available in the office. This form must be updated each year.
- The prescription medication is brought in a pharmacy labeled container that includes the student name, medication name, prescribing doctor, dosage and the time to be given.
- Over-the-counter medication must be in the original container, marked with the student's name.
- A SDUSD nurse will visit the school to conduct vision and hearing screening

PARENT INFORMATION

The school will provide announcements and documents by way of the school **website: OldTownAcademy.org**. Individual classroom teachers will provide grade-specific announcements via their classroom website (those links will be provided via the school website).

A **phone tree** will be used for urgent information and emergency situations only. Please be responsible for your part of the phone tree so that this important information reaches every family quickly.

Student progress will be continuously assessed.

Report cards will be sent home with students four times per year (Nov., Feb, April, and June). Please sign and return the envelope indicating that you received the card. Reports are a complete assessment of student work and progress in each area of the school curriculum.

MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) reports will be sent home at least twice a year (and up to four times as needed). The MAP test is designed to measure how much a child learns in Math, Reading, Language Arts, and Science over periods as short as 10-weeks and as long as a school year.

Parents will be asked to attend a **parent/teacher/student conference** as needed. They may request one as well. Please be respectful of the teachers' time by calling the school in advance to schedule appointments.

STUDENT ONLINE LEARNING JOURNALS and VIDEO RELEASE FORMS

Implementing the **Learn→Create→ Share Learning Path i**s made possible by the fact that every Old Town Academy student, from Kindergarten to Eighth Grade, has a their own **Online Learning Journal (aka blog**). This journal will collect and organize your child's work into categories matching the eight OTA CORE LEARNING STRANDS: 1. Music, 2. Math, 3. Science, 4. Language Arts, 5. History-Geog, 6. Art, 7. Seminar, and 8. Outdoor Education.

Parents will be kept informed of student progress through emailed progress reports and on each child's Online Learning Journal. To access the Online Learning Journals you must provide the teacher with your e-mail address to register with Wordpress. Online Learning Journals are intended to keep a record or portfolio of each child's work. They are also the ideal place to publish and share quality work (a report, a song, a speech recorded on video, or a painting) once a child has passed a project. The Online Learning Journals are intended for immediate family only and will be keep hidden from search engines like Google (only those who know the url will be able to access them). Parents who want even more privacy may request a password-protected blog so only those family members with the code can log-in.

All parents or guardians will be asked to sign a **video release form** allowing OTA staff and volunteers to post their student's work (text, photos, videos and recordings) in electronic form to these private online Learning Journals. Since the Journals are so integral to our Learn→Create→Share learning paths and to creating portfolios of each students Quality Work, we recommend that parents or guardians who do not feel comfortable signing this release reconsider other options for their children.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS

From time to time concerns arise. Parents should contact their child's teacher as soon as possible and inform the teacher of the concern so that a resolution may be reached. If the problem cannot be resolved at the classroom level, the parent or teacher can ask for a meeting with the Academic Director (appointments may be made by calling 619-574-6225).

Old Town Academy teachers were hired based on a track-record of successful classroom leadership and demonstrated dedication to their students. We ask you to start but trusting and supporting your child's teacher as your default position. *If you hear something you can't believe we suggest you don't believe it until you have a chance to ask the teacher!* Please resist the temptation to spread unsubstantiated rumors via email (see our **Internet Ethics Policy** for Students: the least we can do is model the policy as adults). We welcome your feedback and believe that face-to-face meetings will get better results for all concerned.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Old Town Academy students will be expected to demonstrate concern and respect for classmates, teachers, and visitors. Students will also be encouraged to spread the habit of concern and respect beyond their classroom walls through community service. The students can serve the community in a variety of ways. Within the school, these include: mentoring other students, serving and cleaning up after lunch, and helping to housekeep classrooms. It is important that students realize that Old Town Academy is their school, created for only one reason--to help them grow up to be strong, smart, healthy, and happy-- and that they are contributing members of the school.

Outside the school: students will also be involved in a variety of activities to enhance their understanding of how a community functions. Emphasis will be placed on students being connected to their community and becoming contributing members of society. Sample off-campus projects include getting certified as an assistant coach or referee in AYSO youth soccer; volunteering at a soup kitchen; helping to clean up local rivers or canyons, etc. The school welcomes suggestions from parents and friends of OTA for other community service projects.

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an integral part of Old Town Academy's curriculum. **Daytrips** allow our students to learn from experts in the "real world" outside the classroom. They also allow OTA to follow two themes we have promised to teach across the K-8 curriculum:

- *Know Your Community* (Starting from Old Town Academy itself and moving out to Old Town, San Diego, and California itself, students should get out in their community and learn how things works: from the plumbing, to the streets, to the museums, malls, sky scrapers, courts, businesses, the city council, and so on, up to the flag over city hall!
- *Know Your Watershed* (from the mountains in the east county, down through the San Diego River Valley, to the estuaries, bays, beaches, and the ocean, students should be able to describe each eco-terrain: what lives there and how does it stay alive?)

Confidence Courses and **Overnight field trips** (which OTA students in grades 4-8 will take to such places as Catalina Island, the Laguna Mountains, the Star of India tall ship, and more) will build class camaraderie and provide adventure and life-long memories.

Old Town believes strongly in the value of field trips to our educational mission. The school will therefore work to keep the costs low (through fundraising and other means) and will also assist, if needed, with the cost of all field trips. Simply submit a written request (which will remain confidential) to the Office. Students must always have a signed permission slip to leave campus.

Parent volunteers are a crucial part of making our field trips possible and successful. Parents who drive children on trips must bring in proof of insurance and a current drivers license and must complete the same background check we ask all our staff and Key volunteers (anyone who supervises children outside the classroom) to complete.

PLANNED ABSENCES

Old Town Academy received state money to fund its programs based on our average daily attendance. As you plan family vacations or doctors/dentist appointments please keep in mind that when you miss a day your child's school loses money. If you have an appointment try to schedule it later in the day so your child can complete crucial morning study blocks (their attendance in the morning will count as 'present' on our enrollment forms). If you have a family vacation that absolutely must overlap with planned OTA teaching days we will provide an independent study packet for your child to take on the trip. Completion of this packet will help your child keep up with our fast-paced curriculum and allow the school to collect the average daily attendance money for the missed days.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students will participate in OTA's **Outdoor Education Program** consisting of Nature Treks, Sports, Strength and Conditioning, and Nutrition. Nature Treks will combine the study of nature and community with hiking, biking, kayaking, and snorkeling. The emphasis in Sports will be on developing individual and team skills. Strength and Conditioning will involve running and other fun exercises designed to help students prepare for the CA Physical Fitness test (taken in grades 5 and 7). All students will need to bring/wear athletic shoes and the OTA gym shirt and shorts on scheduled Outdoor Ed days. Active participation is expected with rare exceptions requiring a note from home or a doctor.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY and TECHNOLOGY

Students are of course responsible for proper care and use of school property and supplies. Destroying or damaging school property is an offense for which students are suspended. Replacement or repair of property will be the family's financial responsibility.

Students will have access to expensive iMac computers and iPad tablets. These devices come with e-mail, wireless internet access, programs for recording and editing music, editing movies, creating documents and mindmaps, and creating spread sheets and presentations. Students must use these hardware devices and the installed software as a tool for learning.

Technology and the Internet are integral components of our curriculum supplementing the use of textbooks. Willful damage to the technology that allows us is a serious issue and we will ask parents to take responsibility for replacing the loss or damaged computers or peripherals. While we are aware that some things break from use, we are able to recognize damage due to abuse or neglect. This is a serious responsibility for students.

Old Town Academy is a school of choice; and our goal is be to help every child see Old Town Academy as their school—a place to take care of and pass on to the next class in the same condition you received it.

FIRE DRILLS

Students practice fire drills each month. All teachers instruct students in fire safety practices and exiting routes. Students will exit in single file, silent lines to facilitate safety and further instructions if they should become necessary. Earthquake/emergency preparedness is also a part of our safety routine.

LOST AND FOUND

A container will be located by the Office. Students may check there daily for any lost articles. Parents are encouraged to check when on campus as well. If you lose an article of clothing or other valuables please check often as these articles will not be accumulated, but donated at the end of every month. Storage space is limited. Thank you.

* * *

When you have finished reading this Student-Parent Handbook, we would be happy to answer any questions at the mandatory Orientation. If you feel you can commit to the school policies and this statement:

> "We agree to support the policies outlined in the 2011-2012 OTA Student-Parent Handbook . We realize OTA is a charter school of choice and that our child's success depends largely on parental support for teachers in the classroom and school-wide policies. We look forward to a great year at OTA!"

For each child you wish to enroll, then please detach, sign, and turn in the next page and we will say Welcome to OTA!

Parent-Guardian Commitment to Old Town Academy Student-Handbook Policies, including, but not limited to:

- Internet Ethics Code;
- Video Release Form for Learning Journals;
- Uniform Policies and Dress Code; and
- Discipline Policies:

"We agree to support the policies outlined in the 2011-2012 OTA Student-Parent Handbook. We realize OTA is a charter school of choice and that our child's success depends largely on parental support for teachers in the classroom and school-wide policies. We look forward to a great year at OTA!"

Signed by:

_____ Parent of: _____ Grade: ___

Print Name of Parent or Guardian Print Student Name and Grade

Welcome to Old Town Academy!