OMES at-a-Glance

News for Otis A. Mason Families

November 2026

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Building a Culture of Learning: Pre-Kindergarten Rocks!



Hello from Pre-K at Otis A. Mason Elementary School. Pictured above is our amazing team of teachers, paraprofessional, and interpreters. Today's headline from the Guidance Office is:

Engagement is Everything!

Include your child, in an age-appropriate way, in everything you do. Whether it is grocery shopping, going out to dinner, doing dishes, folding laundry, gardening, exercising, or getting the mail, all of these experiences offer valuable opportunities to learn. *There is no replacement for the value of human connection and interaction*. Talk to your child through these tasks. Highlight what is important to you or how to do the task itself. Allow the child to help you as much as they can.

Avoid Screentime

The research on screens is out, and it is affecting our children negatively. *Never use a screen as a pacifier or babysitter.* We know how hard that is, but it prevents your child from learning important coping skills. In addition, it negatively affects imagination and creative play. In fact, boredom is a great learning tool for a child!

Make Reading is Family Time!

The research is consistent, children who read nightly with their family develop skills at a faster pace and find more success in school. Read every night with your child! Need free books? Check out the library (it is ALWAYS fee!): https://sjcpls.org/

Character Highlight: Building Good Citizenship

CITIZENSHIP CITIZENSHIP

What does it mean to be a good citizen? Please join us in demonstrating the importance of citizenship to our students. We here at Otis A. Mason Elementary believe that every parent, student, teacher, and member of our community should **strive to be a good citizen. How can we accomplish that TOGETHER?**

- **Consider good citizenship in your household:** How can every family member contribute to the household? Make a list of age-appropriate chores and responsibilities for every member of the family. Allow your child to see the importance of every role and contribution. Every person has value and something important to contribute to the world!
- **Discuss good citizenship at school:** how can parents and students contribute to our Otis A. Mason community to make the school a better place? You are an important part of our school!
- **Demonstrate what it means to be a good neighbor:** how can we serve those who need us in our neighborhood? What age-appropriate tasks could our Manatees help with? How can we politely acknowledge our neighbors when we see them? Even a smile can be an act of neighborly love!
- **Support students in the decision-making process:** Guide them to make choices that protect the safety and rights of others. Does that choice leave a place better than we found it? Include their voice in appropriate decisions.
- **Lead by example**: protect the environment, get involved, vote, CARE! Talk to your child about what matters to your family.

Teachers will be providing lessons that discuss the importance of citizenship at our school, in our home, and in our community. We are so proud of our students and the work they do every day to nurture their character. Thank you for helping to make the world a better place, Manatees! For more Character Counts! curriculum and ideas, check out the website with curriculum, themes, and activities online at:

https://ccstjohns.com/

Student Government Elections

Get ready for our school-wide election for their Student Council representatives on November 3rd



Please take a moment to connect our local, school elections to the importance of the democratic process in our country! Use the following tips to talk to your children with a character-focused approach:

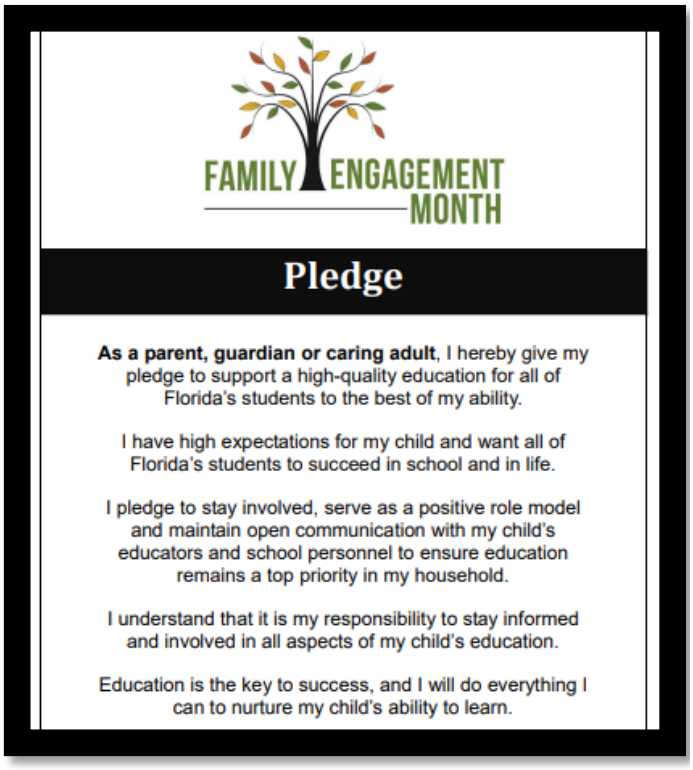
1. **Always model civility and an open mind:** Your children are watching and listening to how you view the election. It is important to model approaching conversations with an open mind, respect, and civility.
2. **Create expectations for respect:** If you are engaging in conversations around any election, set expectations for how everyone will treat one another. Regardless of opinions, your children should still speak respectfully to their peers. Remind them that it's okay to disagree with one another.
3. **Encourage questions:** Lean into your child's questions about issues and elections. They may have questions about the voting process, the electoral college, or other logistics about how an elected official takes office. Help your child find the facts through reputable sources.
4. **Teach the differences between fact and opinion.**
5. **Explain the voting process:** Why is voting an important responsibility?

Leonard's Photography: Retakes 11/10

Order your yearbook here: www.buytheyearbook.com. Retakes are for NEW students and students who were ABSENT for picture day. If you ordered photos and do not like how the originals turned out, let your teacher know AND return the photo package. There is also an opportunity for Spring pictures! Please contact Leonard's with questions.

Leonard's

Building Parent Engagement





We here at Otis A. Mason Elementary School believe that every member of the community has a role to play in education. We invite YOU to join us for events and to fully engage in the educational experience with your child. Please see our calendar of events and attend school events regularly with your child.

Research shows a strong, positive link between family engagement and student achievement. Students with involved families are more likely to have better grades, higher test scores, better attendance, improved social-emotional skills, and better graduation rates.

According to Harvard University, "parent participation is the ***leading predictor*** that supports students' academic success… more than race, socioeceonomic status, ethnicity, or cultural background."

Call us. Email us. Conference with us. Volunteer with us.

You are welcome here.

OMES Receives School of Excellence Recognition from the State of Florida



Otis A. Mason Elementary School continues to cultivate excellence. We are the proud recipients of the 2025-2026 Florida Department of Education School of Excellence recognition! We could not do it without YOU! Thank you for your support and your willingness to engage with us. This recognition joins the list of honors we have received so far:

- 2025-2026 Florida School of Excellence
- 2025-2026 OMES VPK Program awarded Excellent Designation
- 2025-2026 A School Rating (again!)
- 2025-2026 Character Counts Exemplary School (again!)

In addition, our school district is one of 18 designated as an academically high-performing district for the 2025-2026 school year. Being a School of Excellence means that Otis A. Mason Elementary School ranks among the top 20% of Florida schools!



Important Dates for your Calendar:

Nov 3-4: Student Government Elections for all grades

Nov 10: Picture Retake Day

Nov 10: Texas Roadhouse Spirit Night

Nov 11: Veterans Day-**NO SCHOOL**

Nov 12: SAC Meeting at 3:15pm in the Media Center; Interims

Nov 14: Basketball Tournament at SAHS

Nov 18: Educational Support Professionals Appreciation Day; **Holiday Staff Luncheon:**



Donations and Volunteers for Staff Appreciation Luncheon on 11/18: Staff Appreciation Luncheon by clicking here to donate or volunteer!

Nov 19: Spelling Bee; PTO Meeting @3:30pm in the Media Center

Nov 23-27: Thanksgiving Break; No School



https://shop.square1art.com/artwork/Search

Conflict Resolution is Essential for Growth

Conflict is inevitable in life. We come into contact with people from various backgrounds who have vastly different opinions than ourselves. In addition, we oftentimes will have to traverse complicated situations alongside this diversity of people and opinions. Working together to solve common problems and to be successful TOGETHER is so important in our free and democratic society. We want to make sure that we regularly model peaceful conflict resolution in front of our children and that we discuss and guide children through the conflicts that arise in their lives. *If safety is ever in question, find a safe adult!* Here are some tips:

Avoiding conflict doesn't solve the problem. Everyone is adverse to conflict to some degree. Teach your child that even though there is discomfort with conflict, it is okay to have a disagreement and to work through the problem together. Encourage your child to speak directly, but respectfully. If the problem requires an adult, solving the problem may look like telling the closest adult immediately! Think **Stoplight**: RED: Stop, breathe, calm down. YELLOW: Can you handle it safely or do you need an adult? GREEN: Pick a strategy (sharing, trading, taking turns, sharing your feelings).

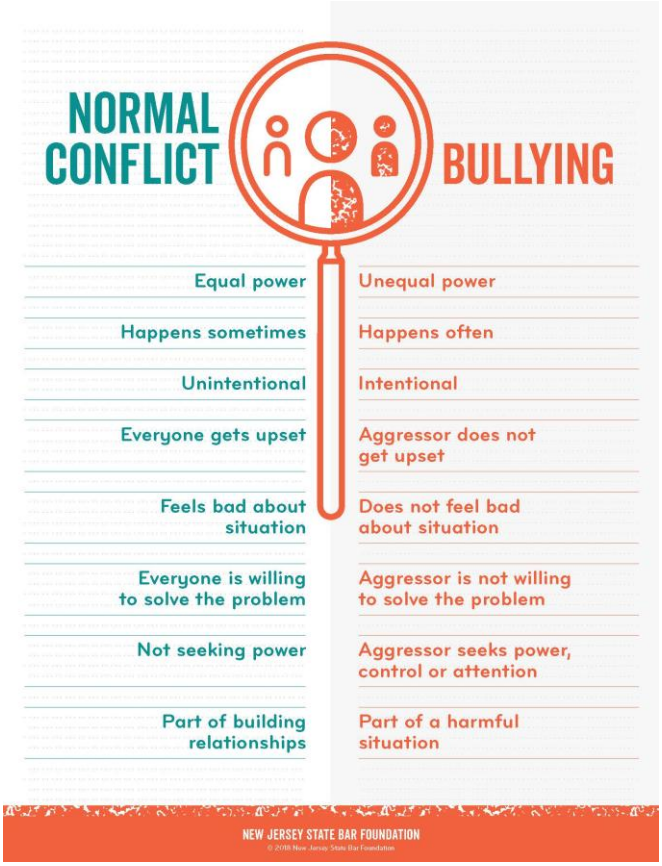
Conflict is a natural part of growing a relationship. Listening to one another is usually the fertilizer. Oftentimes, as we get to know one another, we learn what does and does not hurt someone's feelings. Most conflicts arise from ignorance or a misunderstanding (and usually between friends!). When a conflict arises: 1. have students *intentionally pause* and just *listen to the other person for thirty seconds* 2. have them say something to the person that proves they were listening 3. Respond respectfully with their own point-of-view.

Here is a checklist to help you **T.H.I.N.K. before you speak**:

1. **T**rue: is what your saying true? How do you know? Don't repeat or share if you are not sure.
2. **H**elpful:Even is something is true, does it add value? Is it encouraging? Does it educate?
3. **I**nspiring? Does it uplift and build others up?
4. **N**ecessary? Is this something you should share or is it better left unsaid?
5. **K**ind: Is the tone respectful, gentle, and free of malice, sarcasm, anger?
   *This list applies to online and phone conversations too!

Most communication is nonverbal: Model and discuss tone, inflection, eye contact, and body language for your child. Many children do not realize how their tone, facial expressions, or posture may send different messages.

What is the difference between CONFLICT and BULLYING?



Not everyone needs to be friends, but everyone should be respectful. Children are free to choose their friends, but some people don't help us to be the best that we can be. Not everyone will be friends and that is okay. *It is important that children choose friends that nurture their best characteristics and support them to make good decisions.* We encourage students to take a healthy break from one another to help reset the relationship. Sometimes distance is exactly what is needed to create respect between people. Regardless of friendship status, we must teach children the importance of working with others (especially someone they don't know or are not friends with!).

Teach them that they have the power to set boundaries directly:
Playing that game always hurts my feelings because… let's try a different game today.
It hurts my feelings when you…
I feel like you ignore me in line/in conversation…
I know you are joking, but I don't like when you…
Please ask before you touch/borrow…
You are breaking a rule and I don't want to get in trouble…