

Pittsburgh Obama 6-12

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Welcome!

MISSION

The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, an International Baccalaureate World School, will be one of America's premier schools, student-focused, well managed, and innovative. We will hold ourselves accountable for preparing all children to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life.

VISION

Excellence for All

The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies is committed to providing a quality education within a safe, caring, and nurturing environment for its diverse adolescent population. The students function as effective problem solvers, critical thinkers and effective communicators in a multicultural, economically interdependent and technologically advanced world. Students value their role and that of others as productive world citizens. Connections are made within and across disciplines. They become aware of the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship, acquire skill in a second language and develop an appreciation of the common ties among cultures. They meet the challenge of high academic standards through rigorous thinking in all content areas. Opportunities are provided to develop talents and express creativity through the arts, sports and other extracurricular activities. Through the cooperative efforts of the family, teachers, counselors, and community, students acquire skills that enable them to take responsibility for their choices. The staff, students, parents and community share the following core beliefs:

- Every learner is unique and is respected for his/her different strengths, abilities and interests.

- A safe, supportive learning environment is the right of all students and imperative for quality performance, creativity, positive self-esteem and good citizenship.
- High expectations in all content areas, underscored by effective communications among staff, students, parents and community, lead to higher achievement and enhanced interpersonal relationships.
- The establishment of inter-disciplinary connections among content areas is key to teaching world interdependency and to having a broad-based knowledge background.
- Support from staff, students, parents and community promotes the school's programming and success experiences.
- There is a shared responsibility among the school, student, parent and community to facilitate learning and to make adaptations, in order for each child to achieve to his/her greatest potential.

MOTTO

"Nothing in life is so complicated that it cannot be achieved by discipline and hard work."

Programs

The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies is a continuation of the elementary magnet (grades 1-5) world language programming.

- World Languages: French, German, Spanish, and Japanese
- Communications: multicultural literature and projects, writing and essay competitions
- Math: hands-on program, advanced math
- Science: inquiry-based program, Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science, Charles Drew, Pittsburgh Regional Science Fair
- Related Arts: instrumental, vocal, general music, piano/music technology, steel band, world drumming, visual arts

- Expanded Physical Education Programming: health and swimming
- Interscholastic Athletics: (Grades 6-8 only): baseball, swimming, basketball, soccer, cross country, volleyball, and wrestling. Students in Grades 9-12 follow the high school offerings for interscholastic athletics. Collaboratives and Partnerships: Omega Psi Phi fraternity, Carnegie Library, Creek Connections, World Affairs Council, Latin American Cultural Union

Agenda book program

Parental involvement: Monthly Parent Conferences, Volunteer Program, PTO, Parent School Community Council (Proper Clearances are required)

Special Program Notes

It is our goal to promote high academic achievement in a safe, orderly and clean learning environment in a renovated facility. Ethnic diversity is appreciated and respected.

Additional programming includes: Ski Club, Student Council, BETA Club (Honor Society), National Honor Society, Youth and Government, support programs, after school tutorials, school newspaper, Project T.H.I.N.K. (boys mentoring group), Community of Caring, Chess Club, Think-A-Thon, Running Club, marching band, cheerleading, pom-poms and drill team.

Community Of Caring

What is a Community of Caring? A character education program that works to encourage five values throughout our school community that will create a caring and respectful school environment at Barack Obama Academy of International Studies. Community of Caring awards are periodically presented to students. Community of Caring core values include:

CARING

- Compassion, Empathy, Tolerance, Concern
- Wanting the Best for Another
- Lacking Indifference and Hate

RESPECT

- Seeing People as Valuable and Worthy of Care
- Including Those Who are Different from You in Some Way
- Being Open to Other Points of View

RESPONSIBILITY

- Being Accountable for One's Actions
- Exercising Self-Discipline
- Seeing Oneself and One's Actions as Having an Effect on the School, on the Community, and on the Larger Society

TRUST

- Believing in Others
- Being Able to Count on Others
- Recognizing Our Interdependence

FAMILY

- The Group in Which You Feel Love, Worth, Belonging, and Responsibility
- Those Who Care Deeply for You, Your Health, and Your Happiness
- The Place Where You Learn Values
- Your Primary Caregivers

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Early Dismissal

Any student requesting an early dismissal should present a written request to the office at the beginning of the school day. The request should include the student's name, homeroom, date, time, reason for early dismissal, a parent or guardian's signature and a telephone number at which the parent may be reached. At the time designated, the parent must report to the main office to complete the sign out process. The student will be expected to report to the office at the requested time. No student will be dismissed to anyone other than his/her legal guardian, unless a written request is submitted by said guardian and approved by the administration.

Attendance

Any student who has more than six absences in a report period will receive a failing grade for the report period. If a student's absences are legally excused and they have received failing grades due to failure to meet the attendance standard, the student shall be entitled to receive a better grade provided that the following requirements are met:

- The student has completed all course requirements and assignments
- The student, at the direction of the teacher, has made up any missed course work, and/or testing within a reasonable period of time.
- The student passes the final yearly or semester examination, if any
- The student has provided appropriate documentation to verify the reason for the absences. i.e. notes from dentists, doctors, courts, etc. Students who have more than six illegal absences will receive a failing grade for the report period and will not be permitted to makeup assignments.

Principals and teachers will continue to consider special, unusual and extenuating circumstances when applying these attendance standards, and

grant exceptions when warranted. For more information, please refer to the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Tardiness

Excessive tardiness to homeroom or any class will result in disciplinary action. Tardiness that results in a student missing a class will be considered an illegal absence when calculating grades. After the second tardy to class, the teacher notifies the parent of the situation. On the fourth tardy to class, the teacher submits a referral which results in a week of lunch detention for the student. In the case where a school bus is late, the student is marked as a “bus tardy,” and this does not count against the student’s accumulation of tardies.

Emergency School Closing

Should any emergency arise or serious weather conditions make roadways impassable, notice of school closings or delays will be broadcast over the radio and television stations starting at 6 a.m.

Emergency Announcements/Calls

Emergency announcements concerning changes in planned activities (due to inclement weather or other unusual circumstances) will be broadcasted to students and staff as necessary. Students will only be given emergency messages from home. Telephones are not available for student use. Daily announcements involving student activities are announced at the beginning and end of each school day.

Leaving the Building

While school is in session (includes after-school activities), students are not permitted to leave the school grounds unless authorized to do so by one of the building administrators. This offense may warrant suspension.

Behavior

As the middle/high school experience is intended as a bridge to adult life, students at Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 are reminded and encouraged to manage their personal activities in a responsible manner. This would include:

- organizing materials for the day before or during homeroom and limiting use of lockers which will be secured with a school lock
- being prepared to learn in every class, bringing pencil, books, agenda book and homework
- arriving to classes on time
- maintaining your agenda book to help with organizational skills

- using the restroom before homeroom, between classes, or during the lunch period
- walking to the right in hallways
- treating yourself and others with respect
- dressing in a manner that is appropriate for school and conforms to the dress code
- showing pride in your school by disposing of trash in appropriate containers, keeping your locker neat and secured with your school lock, and refraining from the use of any graffiti on school/bus property

School Dress Code

At Pittsburgh Obama 6-12, we expect standards of decent dress. A student’s appearance is a source of pride not only to the individual and his/her family, but to the school as well. Inappropriate dress and appearance will be judged in regard to the disruption of the school learning environment, as well as the health, safety, welfare, morals and rights of students and staff. If a student and /or parent/guardian are uncertain as to the appropriateness of clothing for school, they should check with the school principal or assistant principals before the clothing is worn to school. The principal or the assistant principals will be the final judge of the appropriateness of student dress and appearance. The following are dress and footwear items that are prohibited.

- Clothing that is revealing, suggestive, immodest or clothing that depicts obscene, vulgar, disturbing, distracting or inappropriate terminology or images. Examples of such dress include: halter tops, tank tops, mesh clothing, muscle shirts, boxer shorts, gym shorts, bicycle shorts, articles made of spandex, lycra or similar material, see through clothing, any skirt, shirt or other top that exposes undergarments or bare midsection.
- Articles of clothing that are excessively tight.
- Clothes that advertise, promote or display alcohol, illegal drugs or suggest, promote, or imply the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Clothes which depict or suggest sexual content, vulgar images or obscene language.
- Clothes that advertise, promote, display or imply the use of tobacco products.
- Clothes that depict violent acts or weapons.
- Clothes that depict bigotry, hatred and discrimination.
- Clothing that depicts cults, gangs, or membership therein.

- Shorts, skirts and dresses must be no shorter than four inches above the knee when student is standing.
- Mini-skirts, short shorts, and hot pants are not permitted.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, bandana patterned headbands, scarves and do-rags are not to be worn in school.
- Outdoor clothing (coats, jackets, large hooded jackets, gloves, etc.) is not to be worn in school.
- Pants are to be worn around the waist with belts buckled. Underwear should not be visible.
- Pants/sweatpants with words written on backside are not permitted.
- Jewelry, accessories or adornments that pose a potential health/safety hazard or that depict obscene, vulgar, disturbing, distracting or otherwise inappropriate terminology or images are prohibited.
- Proper footwear must be worn in school at all times. The wearing of flip-flops, shower or beach shoes, slippers or other footwear that has no defined heel or heel strap, or that is not securely fastened to the foot is strictly prohibited.
- Hairstyles and cosmetic use which are a distraction to the educational process will not be permitted.
- This prohibition shall be in effect during regular school hours and at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises.

Medication

Any medication to be taken by a student during school hours must be brought to the office immediately upon the student's arrival at school. Medication will be dispensed in accordance with the district guidelines identified below:

- Most medications (prescription and nonprescription) shall be administered in school only on a written order of a family physician and a written request from parent/guardian.
- Rescue medications that have been specifically permitted by School Health Services to be in the possession of the child must be registered in the office. The school nurse practitioner will see to training the child, informing the staff and monitoring the use of these medications.
- All medications will be dispensed under the supervision of the school nurse practitioner.
- All medications must be in the original pharmacy container(s).

Cafeteria Services

As an integral part of the total school program, full cafeteria services are provided to all students. Meals are carefully planned so that students may be served well balanced meals. Observing the following rules will help create a pleasant, orderly and efficient cafeteria:

- Lines at serving areas are to be single file. Each student is provided with a debit account utilizing a five digit code they are asked to key in at the cash register. Money is then withdrawn from their cafeteria account to pay for lunch. Students still do have the option to pay in cash (exact change is best).
- Students may use the lavatories or obtain a drink of water during the lunch period. However, they are expected to be considerate of others who may also wish to use such facilities.
- Students may converse quietly with other students at their table. Visiting from table to table is limited.
- Recess, following lunch, is a privilege, and we expect good behavior at 'free time.'
- All trash from lunches is to be placed in the trash cans provided. Each student should help clean his/her own area. If food is spilled, the student is to clean the spillage.
- Misconduct or abuse of the cafeteria facilities may result in exclusion from cafeteria privileges as outlined below:
- Refusing to follow and obey the direction of the cafeteria supervisors and the general rules of cafeteria operations.
- Throwing food or an object(s) in the cafeteria.
- Leaving the cafeteria without authorization from the person in charge.
- Being in an unauthorized area of the building without permission after being given a verbal warning.
- Inciting a general disturbance in the cafeteria.

Disciplinary action may be taken at the administration's discretion in accordance with our discipline code.

Library

Our library media center is on the second floor. It is a busy place in constant use by students and faculty for many purposes: read or browse, find information, study, utilize the computers, hold special programs, and more.

Property and Appearance

School Property: Students are held responsible for the proper care and use of all books, supplies, combination locks, apparatus or equipment furnished by the school. Students who damage school property will be required to pay for repairs and/or replacement. Personal Property: Students are advised against bringing large sums of money or items of considerable value to school. The school cannot assume the responsibility for the loss or theft of personal property.

Withdrawal of Students

The Guidance Counselor should be notified at least one week in advance of a student's impending withdrawal. The student will receive a withdrawal form and instructions from the Guidance Department. All textbooks, library books, lunch payments, and fines must be cleared before the student secures a transfer record to another school.

Lockers

Student will be assigned a locker near his/her homeroom. Students are permitted to use lockers upon coming into the building in the morning, before and after lunch, other suggested times and at dismissal at the end of the day. All lockers being used must have locks! All lockers used by students on the first, second and third floors have been fitted with combination locks. Each student should memorize his/her locker combination and not share it with anyone else. Students must bring locks from home for their physical education lockers. Lockers should be kept neat and clean; periodic inspections will be scheduled. No valuables are to be left in lockers. If a locker is in need of repair, please notify your homeroom teacher. Each student must use his/her assigned locker only. The school is not responsible for the loss of any item from school lockers. Under the Constitution, all citizens are protected from unreasonable searches and seizures; however, this does not mean that students are legally protected from search and seizure of any material in their lockers. The student is accountable for the contents of his/her assigned locker. Lighters, matches, weapons and drugs are prohibited.

Hallway Passport

When classes are in session, pupils using the corridors must have their agenda book. Students found in the corridor without their agenda book will be sent back to the classroom and subject to action in accordance with the Disciplinary Code.

School Visitors

The administration and faculty cordially invite parents, members of the community and interested educators to visit the school. Appropriate guidelines and procedures have been established to greet and welcome visitors, to foster an understanding of education in our school and to exercise reasonable control over the frequency and number of visitations so that the educational program is not disrupted.

The administration reserves the right to refuse school visitors, to limit their visit and/or have visitors removed from the school. Visitors are required to report to the office and secure a visitors permit that will indicate that the bearer is an approved visitor. The permit should be returned at the conclusion of the visit.

Volunteer Services

We encourage parents to take an active role at Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 by volunteering their services and expertise. All volunteers must receive the Act 34 and 151 clearances. Wide and diverse ranges of opportunities are available for interested parents. We welcome all parents on a regular, as well as occasional basis, to assist in the daily programming.

Emergency Drills

The purpose of evacuation drills is to give practice in quiet, orderly and rapid departure from the building. Knowing the location of the emergency exit for each of your classes will enable you, the student, to make a safe exit in all situations.

- Maintain silence at all times.
- When making your exit, keep in single file unless otherwise directed.
- Everyone must leave the building and be accounted for during roll check.
- Recall will be sounded when conditions are suitable.
- Remain with your class and respond quickly to the direction of your teacher.

School Services

Pupil Personnel Services at Obama 6-12 are designed to help students live rich, full lives: intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally. The plan and purpose of all pupil personnel services is to assist the student and to understand himself/herself; to help in the relief of tension and anxieties; and to remove distractions to learning. Pupil personnel services are developed and implemented by a team of competent professionals. Included are homeroom

teachers, team leaders, guidance counselors, school and district administrators and medical personnel retained by the school district.

ACADEMICS

Homework

Students are responsible for completing all work assigned in a timely manner. This independent practice serves as a strong foundation for academic success. Students are expected to record homework in the agenda book daily and complete it as assigned. Parents and students alike will benefit by reviewing the agenda books and the completed work on an ongoing basis.

Late Work

The purpose of homework is to help the students to learn. Students need to view homework as a study tool that helps them to practice what is learned in the classroom. It serves as a vital supplement to the lesson. Without it, the learning that is done in the classroom is superficial because it is not reinforced or practiced. The effect of homework is most beneficial when it is completed in conjunction with the lesson.

- Teachers expect that all assigned work will be turned in on time.
- Late work will not receive full credit (refer to individual teacher's late work policy for specifics).
- If the student is absent one day, he or she has one day to complete the missing work; if absent two days, two days for make-up, etc. This does not pertain to long-term projects that are due upon a specific due date or date of return to school.
- The students are responsible for listing the homework assignments in the agenda book and for showing written notes to their parents and to the teacher. Teachers often write notes in the agenda book if work is turned in late, so parents should regularly check their child's agenda book. Also, parents may use the agenda book to correspond with their child's teacher.

Long-term Projects

Middle/high school children have reached a level in their academic development where they can accept more responsibility for their learning. Thus, students are assigned long-term projects through which they can demonstrate their creativity and individual knowledge. Students are given detailed instructions by individual teachers and are expected to follow them carefully. It is very important that students do what is expected, and organize their time to include project work along with other assignments. These

projects help guide students toward desired goals of personal responsibility and academic achievement.

High School Magnet Program

All seventh and eighth grade parents should read this information carefully. If you plan to have your child continue in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program in ninth grade at Obama 6-12, please be alerted to the following Board policy and screening criteria for entry. In order to be considered for acceptance, the student must have a final overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher. Please inform your child and keep the above admission policy in mind during your child's seventh grade year at Obama 6-12 so that you can encourage and guide your child to meet the requirements for continuation in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program at Obama 6-12.

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Beta Club: Academic Honor Society for students who have earned three consecutive reports of 3.5 GPA and demonstrate satisfactory citizenship.
- National Honors Society
- Interscholastic Athletics (Grade 6-8 only, Grade 9-11 students follow high school interscholastic athletics offering): Co-Ed Cross Country Team, Boys Baseball, Girls Softball, Boys and Girls Volleyball, Boys and Girls Swim Teams, Boys and Girls Basketball Teams, Boys and Girls Soccer Teams, Wrestling. Athletic physical examinations are required for each student for each different sport season. Parents must complete forms. A limited number of free physicals are provided at school prior to beginning of season. They are announced to all students.
- E.A.P. (Extended Academic Program): Focuses on tutoring in areas of need.
- Student Council: Elections will be held in homeroom for these student government positions.
- P.J.A.S. (PA Junior Academy of Science): Promotes a high level of knowledge and achievement in Science and a number of other science competitions.
- School newspaper.
- Charles Drew Science Competition: Science competition for grades 6, 7, and 8 minority students.
- Ski Club: Students may sign up to ski at Seven Springs with this group.
- Black History Art and Essay Contest: Sponsored by the Federal Executive Board.

- All City Art Competition
- All City Music Festivals
- Teen Forums
- Chess Club
- Instrumental and Choral Performances
- Cheerleading, Pom Pom and Drill Team
- Pittsburgh Regional Science Fair
- PPS City Science Exposition
- PA Junior Academy of Science
- Creek Connections
- Project THINK
- Intramurals
- School Musical

