

PITTSBURGH OBAMA MOTTO

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

WHAT ARE EXCUSES?

**Excuses are symbols of nothingness,
They build bridges to nowhere,
Those who use these tools always,
Are masters of nothing.**

WASTING TIME

**I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it,
Forced upon me, can't refuse it,
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it,
But it's up to me to use it,
I must suffer if I lose it,
Give account if I abuse it,
Just a tiny little minute,
But eternity is in it.**

WHATEVER YOU DO

**Whatever you do in life,
Do it so well,
That no one living, no one dead,
Or no one yet to be born,
Can do it any better.**



BARACK OBAMA ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MISSION STATEMENT

The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies is an International Baccalaureate World School that prepares students to become academically well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate, and confident, in a safe and supportive environment.

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

The Pittsburgh Public Schools will be one of America's premier school districts, student-focused, well-managed, and innovative.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE MISSION STATEMENT

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

In all International Baccalaureate World Schools, the IB Learner profile represents ten values attributes. The International Baccalaureate organization and our staff believe that these attributes can help our students become responsible members of local, national, and global communities. The staff encourages students to become:

**INQUIRERS, KNOWLEDGEABLE, THINKERS, COMMUNICATORS,
PRINCIPLED, OPEN-MINDED, CARING, RISK-TAKERS, BALANCED,
& REFLECTIVE**



The Obama Academy is the Pittsburgh Public Schools International Baccalaureate World School. We offer the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (Grades 11-12).

ATTENDANCE and ABSENCES

Parents or guardians must turn in written explanations for Excused Absences within three (3) calendar days of students' absences. If the school does not receive a written explanation within three (3) calendar days of any absence, the absence will be permanently counted as Unexcused and/or Unlawful.

Excuse notes can be turned in to students' homeroom teachers, or uploaded online at the following address <https://tinyurl.com/boaisabsence>

EARLY DISMISSALS

Any student requesting an early dismissal should present a 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 or guardian may be reached. Requests for early dismissals should be made over the phone only in case of emergency. The school will reach out to the parent or guardian to confirm the students' early dismissals. At the time designated, the student must report to the main office to complete the sign out process.

<https://tinyurl.com/boaisearlydismiss>

Requests for early dismissals can be turned in to the main office by hand at the start of the day or submitted on the following online form.

COVID – 19 PROCEDURES

Students, staff, and guests must abide by the mask requirements set by the Pittsburgh Public School District. These requirements may change depending on the level of community transmission of COVID-19.

Students who were in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID -19, or test positive themselves must inform the Obama Academy Office immediately. Close contact is defined by the district as being less than 3 feet apart from someone for 15 minutes or more, without a mask.

To report a positive test or potential exposure, families should call the Obama Academy office (412) 529-5980 or complete the following online form. <https://tinyurl.com/boaiscovidreport>

GRADE and ATTENDANCE REPORTING

Student grades and attendance information can be viewed any time on the Home Access Center (HAC). Links to access HAC can be found on the Obama and District Homepages. The direct link to log into HAC is

https://hac40.pps.k12.pa.us/HomeAccess4_1/Account/LogOn?ReturnUrl=%2fhomeaccess4_1

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Should an emergency arise, or serious weather conditions make roadways impassable, the District may cancel school for the day, delay the start time, or move instruction to an online platform. Announcements will be made on local radio and TV stations, robo-calls and talking points messages may also be sent and announcements posted on the District homepage

www.pghschools.org/obama

Policy 102 – Non-Discrimination in School and Classroom Practices

Board Policy 102 states in part:

The Board declares that it is the policy of the District to provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or disability.

The District is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent with the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the District and is prohibited at or, in the course of, District-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities.

Discrimination is also prohibited in any remote learning program or activity of the District.

For the full text of Board Policy 102-Non-Discrimination in School and Classroom Practices, please visit: <https://www.pghschools.org/nondiscrimination-policy>

Title IX Procedures

For information about our Title IX procedures, please visit:

<https://www.pghschools.org/titleIX>

Student Code of Conduct

[Code of Conduct / Conduct Homepage \(pghschools.org\)](http://www.pghschools.org/codeofconduct)

OBAMA ACADEMY STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We expect students at Obama to manage their personal activities in a responsible manner. This includes:

- * 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/pen, 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 our 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.

COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Completing and reflecting on service activities is an important part of the life of students at all IB World Schools. At the Obama Academy, 6th-8th grade students are expected to complete at least 10 hours of community service over the course of the school year. 9th and 10th grade students are expected to complete at least 20 hours of service. Students are required to log their service hours on the online form, which can be located at <https://tinyurl.com/boaiservice>

TARDINESS TO CLASS

Tardiness that results in a student missing a class will be considered an illegal absence. 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 to administration for disciplinary action.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are permitted but must be turned off before students enter the building. After metal detector check, all cell phones must also be placed in a Yondr pouch per the school's Yondr school cellphone policy. The school will not be responsible for electronic devices or items lost, damaged or stolen.

Students found to be in violation of this rule will be subject to confiscation of the device and disciplinary action. Confiscated items will be returned to parents/guardians only. Please see Yondr Policy mailed home in August 2023.

LEAVING THE CLASSROOM

Students must have written permission from the teacher to leave the classroom when class is in session. Students in the halls without signed permission from the teacher will be returned to the classroom and subject to consequences based on the student code of conduct.

LEAVING THE BUILDING

While school is in session (which includes after school activities), students are not permitted to leave the school grounds unless authorized to do so by a building administrator. Students cannot go to Sunoco during school hours. Students may not use uber eats or any other delivery service to drop food off during school hours. **Students who leave the premises without permission will be subject to consequences based on the student code of conduct.**

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.

Guidelines:

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

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

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.

Laptops

PPS has provided all students with laptops to use throughout the year. We expect students to take their laptops home and charge them nightly. Students should also bring their laptops, and chargers, with them to every class.

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.

LOCKERS

Each student has been assigned a locker near their 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 (except in gym) used by students have been fitted with combination locks provided by the school. Each student should memorize their locker combination and not share it with anyone else. All students are required to purchase locks for their physical education lockers. This is necessary to ensure the safety of their belongings. The school cannot be responsible for stolen belongings. Lockers should be kept neat and clean; periodic inspections will be scheduled. No valuables are to be left in lockers. If a locker needs repair, please notify your homeroom teacher. Each student must use their assigned locker **only**.

THE SCHOOL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF ANY ITEM FROM SCHOOL LOCKERS.

Locker Searches

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 materials in their lockers. The student is accountable for the contents of their assigned locker (lighters, matches, weapons, and drugs are prohibited).

Locks

All lockers being used must have locks! The school has provided combination locks for lockers used by students. **All students are required to purchase locks for their physical education lockers.** This is necessary to ensure the safety of your belongings. The school cannot be responsible for stolen belongings.

OBAMA ACADEMY DRESS CODE:

We expect Obama Academy students to be dressed appropriately. **If a student and /or parent/guardian are uncertain as to the appropriateness of clothing for school, they should check with the school principal, director or assistant principal before the clothing is worn to school. The principal, director or assistant principal will be the final judge of the appropriateness of student dress and appearance.**

The following are dress and footwear items that are prohibited.

1. Clothing that is revealing, suggestive, immodest or 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, bicycle shorts, see through clothing, any skirt, shirt, or other top that exposes undergarments or bare midsection.
2. Clothes that advertise, promote or display alcohol, illegal drugs or suggest, promote, or imply the use of alcohol or drugs.
3. Clothes which depict or suggest sexual content, vulgar images, or obscene language.
4. Clothes that advertise, promote, display, or imply the use of tobacco products.
5. Clothes that depict violent acts or weapons.
6. Clothes that depict bigotry, hatred, and discrimination.
7. Clothing that depicts cults, gangs, or membership therein.
8. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee when student is standing.
9. Jeans/pants with large holes that reveal the body above the mid-thigh are not permitted. Shorts or leggings must be worn underneath to cover the holes
10. Hats, caps, visors, bandanas, bandana patterned headbands, scarves and do-rags are not to be worn in school.
11. Outdoor clothing (coats, jackets, large, hooded jackets, gloves, etc.) is not to be worn in the classroom.
12. Pants are to be worn around the waist with belts buckled. Underwear should not be visible.
13. 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.
14. 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 prohibited.
15. Sunglasses should not be worn inside the building without a medical note.

This prohibition shall be in effect during regular school hours and at any school-sponsored event whether on or off school premises.

SWIMSUITS

On days when students have swimming classes, they are required to take home wet swimsuits and towels in a plastic swim bag. Swimsuit requirements are one-piece swimsuits with a brief cut or swim trunks. **Speedos and two-piece swimsuits are not permitted.**

SCHOOL MEDICATION POLICY

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 non-prescription) 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:

1. 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.
2. Students may converse quietly with other students at their table. Visiting from table to table is permitted.
3. All trash from lunches is to be placed in the trash cans provided. Each student should help clean their own area. If food is spilled, the student is to clean the spillage.
4. Misconduct or abuse of the cafeteria facilities as outlined below may result in exclusion from cafeteria privileges and could result in suspension:
 - a. Refusing to follow and obey the direction of the cafeteria supervisors and the general rules of cafeteria operations.
 - b. Throwing food or an object(s) in the cafeteria.
 - c. Leaving the cafeteria without authorization from the person in charge.
 - d. Being in an unauthorized area of the building without permission after being given a verbal warning.
 - e. Inciting a general disturbance in the cafeteria

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

Disciplinary action may be taken at the administration's discretion in accordance with our discipline code. [Code of Conduct / Conduct Homepage \(pghschools.org\)](http://pghschools.org)

GRADING SCALE

90% - 100%	= A
80% - 89%	= B
70% - 79%	= C
60% - 69%	= D
50% - 59%	= E

LATE WORK POLICY

Student grades should be an undiluted reflection of what they know, understand, or are able to do. At Pittsburgh Obama, we believe students should receive feedback in the forms of next steps and grades that reflect understanding. We understand that students may turn in assignments of any kind late, we must still assess their knowledge and not their tardiness. That is just one form of dilution of grades. We support both forms of thought and believe that students need to understand the consequences of not meeting deadlines. Student work should first be assessed as if it were turned in on time, then calculated with points deducted. Both scores should be visible on student work. Thus, the Obama late policy is as follows:

- 1-2 days late – no deduction
- 3-5 days late 1% point
- 6 days and beyond – 3% points

It is a must that all three notations be written on the assignment (original score, deduction for tardiness, and the new score). The only exception to this school wide policy is that a teacher has already established a policy of accepting late work that does not exceed a 3%-point deduction. Furthermore, all late work must be submitted to teachers no later than two weeks prior to grades closing for each quarter.

HOMEWORK POLICY

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.

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.

STUDENT SERVICES:

Student Services are designed to help students live rich, full lives: intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally. The plan and purpose of all Student Services is to assist the student and to understand him/herself, to help in the relief of tension and anxieties, and to remove distractions to learning. Student Services are developed and implemented by a team of competent professionals which include homeroom teachers, team leaders, guidance counselors, social worker, school and district administrators and medical personnel retained by the school district.

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. Please note that there are established district guidelines for magnet withdrawals that are time sensitive.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Students who are moving from one address to another within or outside the school district, must report the change to the SDSS in the form of a letter from their parent/guardian within one week for transportation purposes.

PARENT and GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents and guardians to become involved in the life of our school. They can attend our monthly conferences. The first Thursday of every month, beginning in Oct. families can meet with teachers from 2:45 until 3:10 pm. Middle school families should contact the grade level team leader to schedule an appointment and high school families should contact the specific teachers they would like to meet. Families can also take an active role at Pittsburgh Obama by volunteering their services and expertise. All volunteers must receive the Act 34, 151 and fingerprinting clearances. Wide and diverse ranges of opportunities are available for interested parents. We welcome all parents on a regular, as well as an occasional basis, to assist in the daily programming.

EMERGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS/CALLS

Emergency announcements concerning changes in planned activities (due to inclement weather or other unusual circumstances) will be broadcast to students and staff, as necessary. Students will only be given emergency messages from home. Daily announcements involving student activities are announced at the beginning of each school day and during homeroom.

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.

MAGNET POLICY **READ THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY**

All students admitted to a magnet program must agree to comply with any course requirements, procedures and dress codes that are set forth in the school description, and Board approved, when necessary, to begin their program.

Those students applying to Pittsburgh Obama’s program must have had a 2.5 QPA at their time of application.

Remaining in a Magnet

A child accepted into a magnet program or school in **grades 9-12 must maintain a 95% or higher attendance, a 2.0 QPA and receive no more than one 4–10-day suspension, or no more than 6 total days suspended cumulative in order to remain in the program.** Students in grades 6-8 must maintain a **95% or higher attendance, a 2.5 QPA and receive no more than one 4–10-day suspension, or no more than 6 total days suspended cumulative in order to remain in the program.**

Those children who do not meet the outlined requirements to remain in a program will be given notice via certified mail after the semester in which they do not meet the requirements. A contract will then be issued by the school to the family and student. The contract will set forth a plan for improvement for the next semester. If the contract requirements are met at the end of the next semester, the student may remain in the program. If the student has not made significant progress towards their goals, as determined by the principal or their designee then the student's magnet status will be rescinded, and the student will be re-assigned to their school of assignment (student's home school). If the student has made significant progress towards the contract goals, the student will be given one additional semester to meet the requirements. If after the second semester under contract, the student has not made significant progress towards the goals, the student's magnet status will be rescinded, and the student will be re-assigned to their school of assignment (student's home school).

Parents or families wishing to appeal a decision regarding a magnet rescission must submit a written letter to the Student Services offices within 30 days of their initial rescission notification explaining why they believe the rescission is not appropriate and a meeting will be held with the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services (or their designee) within 3 weeks of receipt of this appeal. The student will be permitted to stay in the school during the appeals process—not to exceed 4 weeks total.

BELL SIGNAL

Signals will sound in all classrooms, corridors, cafeteria, and gymnasium at the conclusion of each class period. Classes are dismissed upon direction of the teacher after the signal has sounded.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Philosophy

A clear academic honesty policy is a central component of the Obama Academy's effort to prepare students "to become academically well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate and confident, in a safe and supportive environment," as outlined in our Mission Statement.

The Obama Academy's Academic Honesty Policy helps students to develop several of the characteristics associated with the IB Learner Profile. **Principled** individuals give credit where it is due and do not take the work of others without proper attribution. Effective **Communicators** will include the sources of ideas and information expressed, so that audiences can place the work in its proper context. Those who consider themselves **Inquirers** and **Thinkers** must have a clear record of the development of their information so that they are able to **Reflect** about their work during and after its completion. No one can truly claim to be **Knowledgeable** if they are unable to explain the derivation of their opinions.

Definition of Academic Honesty Terms

To ensure that IB students worldwide are all working towards the same standard of academic honesty, the IBO has defined several terms to be used by all IB Schools.

- Malpractice-** "behavior that results in, or may result in, the student or any other student gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment components" (Academic Honesty 11)
- Plagiarism-** "the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the student's own" (General Regulations: Middle Years Programme 8)
- Collusion-** "supporting malpractice by another student, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another" (General Regulations: Middle Years Programme 8)
- Duplication of Work-** "the presentation of the same work for different assessment components and/or diploma requirements" (Academic Honesty 11)
- Authentic Work-** is work that is based on the student's "individual and original ideas with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged" (Academic Honesty 10)
- Collaboration-** "working together on a common aim with shared information, which is an open and cooperative behavior" that does not result in collusion (Academic Honesty 10)

Rationale for Academic Honesty Policy

Far too often, a school's academic honesty policy is presented as a list of consequences to punish people who cheat on tests and quizzes or try to submit work written by other people as their own when turning in a paper. The true

concept of academic honesty is much broader. It covers every aspect of an IB Learner's academic behavior, both in, and outside of class. By committing to the idea to never do anything that may give them an unfair advantage over others, IB Learners encourage cooperation and an environment that is welcoming to a free exchange of ideas. By acknowledging sources of ideas and information, IB Learners demonstrate that they are willing to have their thought process critiqued by others, able to reflect on how they arrived at their own conclusions, and respect the work done by others. By applying the same standard of malpractice to all assignments, regardless of their weight towards a final grade, IB Learners maintain a consistent set of principles throughout their academic careers.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Review the Academic Honesty Terms above with students and explain how they relate to each specific subject's content and conventions.
- Provide students with the subject specific format for citations
- Inform students about proper behavior during the completion of work and exams.
- Guide students to enable them to tell the difference between Collaboration and Collusion.
- Be familiar with "Academic Honesty; guidance for Schools."
- Explain how students can maintain academic honesty and why it is important.
- Document each episode of malpractice on a referral note.

Student Responsibilities

- Learn the Academic Honesty Terms above.
- Always submit authentic work. All submitted work should be your own original creation. Any words, ideas, pictures, or information that are not your own creation must be acknowledged with the proper citation. Anything found online, even if it is free for public use, must be acknowledged if it is included in your work. Work completed with tutors, parents or study groups must also include these sources to be considered authentic.
- When collaborating, include the names of all collaborators on the assignment. This includes homework and classwork.
- Check all work to make sure that sources have been acknowledged.
- Complete an Academic Honesty Reflection Form if caught in an instance of malpractice.

Consequences of Academic Malpractice on all Assignments (homework, classwork, quizzes, tests, projects)

Although the first goal of our Academic Honesty Policy is not punishment, there must be consequences for students who fail to maintain their academic honesty.

First Offense:

Student completes a reflection form and is given partial credit for making up or redoing the work, if possible. Copy of reflection form is filed with administration along with referral. Parent informed of the infraction.

Second Offense:

Student completes a reflection form to be filed with administration along with a referral. No credit is given for the work. Parent informed of the infraction.

Subsequent Offenses:

Student completes a reflection form filed with administration along with a referral and no credit is given for the work. Parent informed of the infraction.

Referrals for academic malpractice will remain on file over the course of the student's entire career at the Obama Academy. At the start of each academic year, the consequences will be reset, so that if a student commits another infraction in a new academic year, it is treated as a "First Offense" in terms of repercussions, even if there are already incidents of academic malpractice on file from previous years.

Works Referenced

"Academic Honesty." Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2009.

"General Regulations: Middle Years Programme" Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011.

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment Philosophy

Effective assessment plays a central role in supporting the students of the Obama Academy as they progress through the International Baccalaureate Middle Years and Diploma Programmes. Fulfilling the Mission Statements of the Obama Academy, and the IBO, necessitates that student are able to gauge their progress as they "become well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate and confident." Comprehensive assessments provide accurate information about students' increasing skills and knowledge, enabling students, and their families, to address shortcomings, explore strengths, and maintain perspective on their progress. Proper assessments enable teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching, monitor students' development and guide future instruction. The common assessment language and philosophy employed by teachers and students across the subjects aids in the transfer of knowledge across disciplines and helps create interdisciplinary understanding.

Beyond tracking strictly academic progress, assessments, when properly administered, provide a framework for students, teachers, and families to develop many of the skills of the **IB Learner Profile**. Assessments do more than monitor increasing **Knowledge, Thinking and Inquiry** skills. The structure provided by assessments also enables **Communication** between parties about students' progress and learning by providing a common point of reference and language. **Reflection** is encouraged through formalized, contextual feedback about

submitted work. Everyone involved in the process must be **Open-Minded** so that differencing perspectives on assignments and how they were evaluated can be discussed.

For assessments to be able to achieve these goals, students must be presented with multiple, varied assessment opportunities. These opportunities must consist of authentic tasks that enable students to demonstrate conceptual understanding, and not be dependent on mere recall of facts or simple descriptions.

Assessment Practices

Summative Assessments- At the end of each unit of work, all Obama Academy students will have an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by completing a summative assessment. Summative assessments can take many forms. Some possible summative assessments include, but are not limited to presentations, lab reports, research papers, exams, and compositions. These summative assessments will require students to apply what they have been learning in authentic and novel situations.

At the start of each new unit of work, all teachers will inform the students about their requirements for the final summative of the assessment for the unit. To enable students to properly prepare and help them to contextualize their learning throughout the unit, teachers will provide rubrics, examples and discuss the expectations for the assignments.

Both MYP and DP summative assessments are evaluated with the programme appropriate, subject group specific, assessment criteria, using a “best-fit” approach. According to the IB publication *MYP: From Principles to Practice*, in this method of evaluation, teachers “work together to establish common standards against which they evaluate each student’s achievement holistically.” Often referred to as a “criterion-related” approach it represents a philosophy that is neither “norm-referenced” (where students must be compared to each other and to an expected distribution of achievement) nor “criterion-referenced” where students must master all strands of specific criteria at lower achievement levels before they can be considered to have achieved the next level.

Teachers will meet regularly to review summative assessments and ensure that teachers in the building are using a common methodology and philosophy when using IB assessment criteria. These reviews will take place across grade and subject boundaries to ensure continuity in application of the assessment criteria.

Formative Assessments- MYP and DP teachers will engage in formative assessments over the course of each unit. Formative assessments are designed to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for students to address the final summative assessment through a wide variety of different evaluations, both formal and informal. Formative assessments also enable students, teachers, and families to assess the effectiveness of everyone’s efforts and allow for reflection and improvement. To this end, teachers return descriptive feedback, in a timely fashion, to enable everyone to use the formative assessments to guide the process of learning.

Reporting of Results

Over the course of the school year there will be different avenues for reporting on the results of assessments and student progress. District policy requires teachers to assign letter grades A-E for each student at the end of each marking period to provide families with an overview of how each student is progressing in the subject. The grades for each subject are determined by the following scale

90-100%	- A
80-89%	-B
70-79%	-C
60-69%	-D
0-59%	-E

By District Policy, each subject has a predetermined set of categories that must be averaged together to determine the marking period grade. These categories are consistent for each subject across grade levels.

At the midpoint of each marking period, all families will receive a progress report, listing all of the tasks assigned and the student's results as they figure towards each marking period's grade. This is a more detailed listing of the student's achievement on each task assigned in class up to that point, as opposed to the larger scale picture provided by the marking period letter grade.

In addition to the Pittsburgh Public School grading reports in the above-mentioned reporting devices, students will also receive MYP specific reports on their students' progress. At the end of every year, families will receive an MYP report card, showing how well students achieved on each individual MYP criteria evaluated assessments throughout the year and assigning them a final level of achievement on a scale of 1-7, based on their results on the MYP criteria assessed for each subject. The IBMYP report card will be produced through the Managebac system. Students and families will have online access to the district specific grades through an account with Pinnacle, the online gradebook, and will be able to access the results of MYP assessments through Managebac, and online IB organizational program.

Homework

Continuing to study and work outside of the school day is an integral part of learning. Teachers at every grade level will assign homework to assist in student learning. There is no set minimum or maximum amount of homework that is assigned over the course of the year. Homework may consist of short assignments to be completed for the next day, or longer assignments that can take more time to complete. As a general rule, students in the earlier grades will receive more structured support and scaffolding for their homework assignments, with the supports gradually removed as students progress through the grades and increase their skills and knowledge.

Review of the Assessment Policy

At the end of every school year, there will be an opportunity for the Obama community to reflect on and modify the Assessment Policy. Information will be sent out to families and staff informing them of the review, a committee of interested individuals will be organized and proposed changes to the policy will be submitted to the Instructional Cabinet for final approval.

LANGUAGE POLICY

Language Philosophy

The development of our students' language proficiency plays a central role in the culture and life of the Obama Academy. The Mission Statements of the IB Organization and the Obama Academy cannot be realized by students unless they develop strong proficiency in multiple languages. Facility in one's native language is necessary if students are to develop into inquiring, confident, compassionate, and caring people who have a lifelong desire for learning. For students to be globally competitive, well-rounded, and respectful of other people and cultures, they need to be able to communicate with people in a second language.

The Obama Academy believes that the key to academic success is clear, concise communication across all subject areas. Since effective communication is paramount to academic achievement, each instructor has a role to play as a teacher of language.

School Language Profile

English is the language of instruction and academic governance at the Obama Academy, and the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Most Obama Academy students use English as the primary language in their homes. Thus, daily instruction across the subjects supports the development of the majority of students' home culture and language. Students who come to the Obama Academy from other language traditions are encouraged to maintain the development of their home language in addition to their English language studies.

The number of families throughout Pittsburgh speaking a language other than English at home is growing, and the presence of so many internationally recognized colleges and universities within the city limits means that access to native and near native proficient language speakers is quite high. We are committed to including these vital communities into the instruction and culture of our school not only for students who speak those languages at home, but also for those students who desire to improve their facility in second, or third, languages.

Support for Mother Tongue Development

While most students who come to the Obama Academy receive instruction in their mother tongue, English, we are committed to students maintaining other languages that our families may speak at home. To this end, we utilize the language resources of the various university and cultural groups in Pittsburgh, for both in school activities, and to support families. Additionally, we always strive to demonstrate that as global citizens, it is necessary for our students and families to achieve proficiency in more than one language.

Overview of Support for Second Language Development

As a city-wide magnet program, serving students from 6th through 12th grades, we work with students who come from a huge spectrum of second language abilities. We are committed to helping improve students' proficiency in not only their native language, but also additional languages. These efforts are not limited to the classroom but cover after-school and community-based learning experiences. All students, at the minimum, strive to improve their proficiency in English and one of the four other languages taught in the school: Japanese, French and Spanish.

Students have a full period of language study in one of these languages every day (40 minutes for high school and 46 minutes for middle school) to ensure that they have the consistency and continuity necessary for second language acquisition. In further pursuit of language proficiency, students study the same second language throughout their academic career until graduation.

There are several points of entry into the Obama Academy for learners of varying degrees of second language proficiency.

6th Grade Entry

Magnet Feeder Schools- There are 4 elementary language feeder schools that include language instruction in Mandarin, French or Spanish. In their 5th grade year, students from these schools who elect to come to the Obama Academy have automatic acceptance, on the condition that they continue the study of the language they have been learning in elementary school. These students are enrolled in classes designed to take advantage of their previous language experiences.

General Population- Students who have not attended one of the language feeder schools must apply to enter through a lottery. There are no requirements for the lottery beyond living within the Pittsburgh city limits. These students are automatically enrolled in introductory level language courses. Students who have studied Mandarin, Spanish or French can take a proficiency exam to pass into the more advanced 6th grade classes.

9th Grade Entry

Per district policy, all students wishing to enter the Obama Academy in the 9th grade must apply and prove they meet a predetermined set of criteria.

Continuing Obama Academy Students- 8th grade students who meet the entrance criteria to Obama Academy have automatic acceptance if they apply. Their acceptance is conditional their continuing to study language they were learning in 6th-8th grade.

General Population- Students who did not attend the Obama Academy for middle school must also apply to enter a lottery. Students who are selected are automatically enrolled in introductory level language courses. Students who have studied Mandarin, Spanish Japanese or French can take a proficiency exam to pass into the more advanced 9th grade class.

7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, 12th Grade Entry

Because of scheduling and staff limitations, we are not able to provide students introductory language courses in 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grades. Students who apply to come to the Obama Academy in one of these grades must pass a proficiency exam to demonstrate their ability to keep up with the language class in that particular grade level.

ESL Support

All students entering the Pittsburgh Public Schools must complete a Home Language Survey. On the basis of this survey, some students are administered an English language screening test. Students whose score on this test indicates a need for ESL support will have a traveling teacher, assigned by the school district, come to the Obama Academy to support their language development and academic progress as they gain proficiency in the language of instruction.

Interdisciplinary Support of Second Language Development

Because of the commitment to second language learning, teachers from other subjects incorporate the language and culture of the four languages studied in the school, Mandarin, Japanese, French and Spanish whenever possible.

Language Acquisition Diploma Programme Testing

Students may opt to test at the Standard Level or the Higher-Level Language Acquisition Exam.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY

A clear Special Educational needs policy that is easily accessible to students, teachers, parents, and the school community at large is essential to ensure that all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies, in accordance with the International Baccalaureate Organization, recognizes that students have various needs in their academic, physical, and emotional development. The Obama Academy is a full magnet school that aims to admit students of all walks of life who are dedicated to rigorous academics and becoming global citizens. The Obama Academy Mission Statement encourages students to become academically well-rounded, globally competitive, compassionate, and confident, in a safe and supportive environment, this document addresses the needs of our special education students in regard to these goals.

Special education helps children with special needs reach maximum potential. If a student needs a higher level of academic or behavioral support, modifications and adaptations are put into place to allow the student to be successful. Social and behavioral needs are met in a variety of ways which include but are not limited to mentoring, daily progress reports, intervention services, individual and small group environments and if needed school based or outside support from Mental Health service providers.

INCLUSION

All students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that are enrolled at The Barack Obama Academy of International Studies are provided educational or behavioral support services in the Inclusion environment for IB courses from grades 6-12. All Obama Academy classes are IB classes. The Inclusion model in our programme allows all students to access the IB Curriculum. The individual needs of the students can be met in the following ways. Based on the student's IEP, the level of services that are necessary for student success is determined by the school's IEP team. Students are supported with special education teachers throughout the day in their general education classes. The IEP teachers (case managers) collaborate with the general education staff on a regular basis to ensure that all teachers are providing appropriate accommodations.

Examples of services provided to students include:

- Co-teaching
- Consultation
- Modifying and adapting unit plans
- Modifying and adapting assessments
- Scaffolding, Pre-Teaching and Re-Teaching

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

English as a Second Language (ESL) is an instructional program for students whose dominant language is not English. The purpose of the program is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible students so they can be successful.

DIFFERENTIATION

Based on a student's proficiency level, accommodations, modifications, and other differentiation strategies can be implemented by the classroom teacher. Differentiation of assignments is based on student ability levels at Obama Academy. At Obama Academy, data drives our instructional decisions and creates our best practice for all students.

Some examples of differentiated instruction at Obama Academy are:

- Graphic organizers
- Opportunities for meeting with individual teachers (QRT Time)
- Daily sign in sheets
- Adaption of speed in content, process, and product delivery
- Extended time for assignments and assessments
- Modified assignments and assessments
-

ASSESSMENT

Assessments at Obama Academy may be adapted based on the individual needs of our students. It is understood that students at the Obama Academy have different skill and ability levels. The goals of formative and summative assessments are to identify where individual skill levels are and adjust instruction based on the entry and exit points of these students.

Assessment adaptations and modifications are usually provided in the regular classroom setting. Students who need more intensive support can take their assessments in the Obama Academy Resource Room. The Resource Room provides additional support for students with an IEP.

These supports include:

- Tutoring
- Additional time for the assessments
- Re-Teaching
- Taking Notes
- Chunking
- Additional Reinforcement (notes, computer, technology)
- Pre-Teaching vocabulary and background information

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

In order to promote equal access to the IB MYP and DP curriculum for all learners, the IB has identified four principles of good practice that promote equal access for all.

1.) AFFIRMING IDENTITY AND BUILDING SELF ESTEEM:

Affirming the identity of a learner encourages the qualities, attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB learner profile, promoting responsible citizenship and international mindedness. All staff, students, and administration at Obama Academy affirm identity and self-esteem by:

- promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners
- valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to enhance learning
- communicating with parents and guardians to establish understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals.

2.) PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

The Obama Academy recognizes that all of our students do not share the same previous learning and background knowledge.

Teachers and staff understand that it will be necessary to tap into relevant background information and build necessary information for further learning. In accordance with this, teachers should:

- explicitly activate learners' prior understanding
- use their knowledge of learners' prior understanding to differentiate tasks and activities that are necessary for new learning to occur
- record information in learning profiles that will support planning for future differentiation of teacher practice
- consider the time and the strategies necessary for planning a unit of work or lesson

3.) SCAFFOLDING

Scaffolding is an instructional strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task. The use of graphic organizers to develop a piece of written research is an example of scaffolding. Other scaffolding strategies may provide more concrete examples to assist in text understanding. Examples of these strategies are:

- Visual aids
- Demonstrations
- Dramatization
- Learning support assistance
- Small structured collaborative groups
- Approved usage of word banking
- Graphic organizers

4.) EXTENDED LEARNING

Students at Obama Academy extend their learning and meet our high expectations with utilization of available support. The belief of the Obama Academy is that learners who strive to extend their learning outside of the classroom have greater success than those who do not. Obama Academy offers a wide range of subjects, and electives that will pique the interests

of all of our students. School staff provides modification and accommodations so that all students can access these opportunities.

CONCLUSION

At Obama Academy we have an environment that meets the special education needs of every child. Practices exist that ensure that the special needs students are identified, assessed, and provided support and services according to district, state and federal mandates. Our future goals for our special education students include increasing teacher's knowledge of evidence-based practice, improving our methods to analysis and monitor student progress, and providing professional development opportunities all staff.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

Any student wishing to tryout and participate in any sport must have a completed physical by a doctor prior to being permitted to practice. The Board of Education requires a physical for each school year. **If a student participates in multiple athletic activities throughout the school year, each new season will require a physical re-examination.** There are forms that must be completed by parents and physicians and are available on the school's website, in the main office and from a physical education teacher. A limited number of free school physicals will be provided each season on a first come, first served basis.

In addition to the medical requirement, students must have at least a 2.0 grade average (a minimum of 5 academic C's or better) to be considered eligible for sports participation. This is checked at each report period throughout the school year.

NOTES