



# Odyssey Charter School

OCS Elementary Campus  
1755 Eldron Blvd. S.E. • Palm Bay, Florida 32909 • 321-733-0442

## SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

*"Committed to academic excellence and the education of the whole child"*

### OUR MISSION FOR EVERY CHILD

The mission of Odyssey Charter School is to work in partnership with the family and community, with the aim of helping each child reach their full potential in all areas of life. We seek to educate the whole child with the understanding that each person must achieve a balance of intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and social skills as a foundation for life.

**Founder -**  
Ms. Constance Ortiz

#### SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Principal -**  
Ms. Wendi Nolder

**Assistant Principal -**  
Ms. Deb Berg

**Dean -**  
Dr. Maxine Powell

**Instructional Coaches -**  
Mr. Michael Senick  
Ms. Christina Hutchinson  
Ms. Becky Kolesnik

**Office Manager/Registrar -**  
Ms. Nancy Herasme

**MVG Director -**  
Ms. Alia Hartwick

**MVG Assistant Director -**  
Ms. Nina Lucchini-Memoli

### From the Desk of Principal Nolder:

Our teachers and staff are as excited as our students to be heading into Spring Break and the week to spend with family and friends. We look forward to returning to school relaxed and refreshed on April 1 and finishing the year strong! Our team of educators is committed to educating and preparing our students for success as we wrap up this school year. Our state assessment cycle begins in early May; please check the F.A.S.T./S.T.A.R. article by Ms. Berg, our AP and Testing Coordinator. We ask that families help their children be prepared by making sure they get good sleep, nutritious food, fresh air and sunshine, and that our students are coming to school relaxed and with a positive outlook. Look for some exciting, hands-on projects and activities to round out the school year, as projects are a great way for students to have some choice, use their creativity, and show what they have learned in interesting ways!

As we celebrate our 25th year, we are happy to celebrate April as our Mission/Vision month. During this month we take some time to share the story of Odyssey's Founding by Ms. Constance, read the book Ms. Constance Had a Dream about her dream of starting a school, and to focus on the holistic mission of Odyssey for our children. In addition, we share some of the special aspects of our school with our school community. Did you know that:

- Odyssey classrooms have large, north-facing windows and high clerestory windows to let in lots of natural daylight to enhance student learning and mood?
- Our concrete tilt-up walls were designed so that when the building is chilled (off-peak hours) the walls remain cooler longer saving energy?
- Odyssey exterior has the insulation on the outside of the concrete walls in order to stop the Florida sun from robbing the walls of coolness?
- We play Mozart and Baroque music in our hallways which can help improve health, intelligence, emotions and creativity?

These are just a few of the very special features of Odyssey that students will be learning about throughout the month as we celebrate our school's special mission for children and our 25th anniversary.

Spring Break is a great time to read to your child as part of our school's Read Aloud Program. The Read Aloud Program is a key component of Odyssey and our teachers can see the benefits within the classroom when you read aloud at home. This is also a great way to earn your volunteer hours (18 for one child, 25 for 2 or more children) and is an enjoyable time for your child. Reading aloud to your child helps develop their love of reading and improves their vocabulary and reading fluency. You can find more information on our website at <https://odysseycharterschool.com/read-aloud.html>. Happy reading!



Wendi M. Nolder  
Principal



# CALENDAR

**Every Friday** – Early Release Days – K-5th dismiss at 1:30p.m.

**Casual Dress Days** – last Friday of each month  
April 26, May 24

## MARCH

3/25-3/29 Spring Break – NO SCHOOL

**APRIL** Mission and Vision Month- celebrating 25 years of Odyssey!

4/4/24 Elementary Parent Conference Night

4/5/24 Field Day – 4th grade

4/18/24 VPK to Kindergarten Transition Event

4/19/24 Field Day – 1st grade

4/22/24 TEACHER/STUDENT HOLIDAY – NO SCHOOL

4/23/24 Field Day – 5th grade

4/25/24 Wellness Meeting – 4:30 (zoom)

4/26/24 Field Day - Kindergarten

4/26/24 Early Release – DRESS OUT OF UNIFORM DAY

## MAY

5/6-5/10 Teacher Appreciation Week!

5/3/24 Muffins with Mom (K & 5th grades)

5/10/24 Muffins with Mom (1st & 3rd grades)

5/11/24 Parents as Partners (PasP) At-Home/ Summer Reading / Data Review / Family Input / Survey

5/14/24 Kindergarten Celebration (2 classes)

5/15/24 OCS Inc. Board Meeting - 4:30

5/16/24 Kindergarten Celebration (2 classes)

5/17/24 Muffins with Mom (2nd & 4th grades)

5/21/24 5th Stepping Up Ceremony

5/22-5/24 Exam / Early Release Days

5/23/24 Wellness Meeting – 4:30 (zoom)

5/24/24 Last Day of School

5/24/24 4th Quarter Report Cards Issued

5/27/24 Memorial Day- Holiday for All

5/29/24 Last Day for Teachers

## JUNE

6/3-6/27 Summer School (for select students) M-TH

6/3-6/27 Summer Specialty Camps

6/3-7/19 Summer Enrichment Camp

## AUGUST

8/12/2024 2023-2024 School year begins for 1st-5th grades

8/12-8/14 Kindergarten appointments

8/15/2024 School begins for Kindergarten

## And the Survey Says...

We would like to thank all our parents and students who completed our midyear surveys. Below are some of our results and some proposed actions.

**STUDENT SURVEY:** Our students shared that their teachers make sure they have what they need to learn; their teachers know and do their work well; their teacher make them feel safe; their teacher show that they care about them; and that they complete lessons where they learn about different places and people. Students expressed that they would like their teachers and administrators to ask them about what they think of their lessons; would like lessons changed to meet their needs; and use a variety of resources and different tools, such as digital tools, to help them learn about things they like. Odyssey will be providing training on a variety of resources/tools/digital tools that will help engage students in learning and that will help teachers differentiate for student needs.

**PARENT SURVEY:** Our parent surveys indicate that parents believe that teachers have high expectations for learning; the school thinks about children’s safety when making decisions; the school treats them with respect; their students had their learning progress measured; and that the school cares about children’s well-being. Parents would like their children to have instruction that was changed to meet their needs; have learning experience that were unique to their needs; have opportunities to share opinions about their learning activities; use a variety of resource; and receive support based on their needs. Odyssey will train on improving communication on the ways in which instruction is changed to meet children’s needs and Odyssey will provide the digital tools training that will help ensure children receive support and instruction based on their varied needs.

## Save the Date! Odyssey Math Night at Publix!

Odyssey Charter School Elementary invites you to join us for Math Night at Publix!

**Date: Tuesday, April 9th**

**Time: 5:30-7:00**

**Location: Publix Bayside Lakes**

Get ready for a fun-filled evening of mathematical adventures and grocery store exploration! Bring the whole family for an engaging scavenger hunt while also helping your child practice their math skills in a real-world setting. Mark your calendars now and look for our event flyer coming home after spring break.

**Publix + Odyssey Charter School = Math Night Fun!**

## Title 1 PASP meeting and At-Home Summer Reading Night

Our last Title 1 Parents as Partners (PASP) meeting will be on Thursday May 11 starting at 5:30pm so save the date! At this meeting we will review the results of our surveys from this year, share the data from our state assessments (F.A.S.T. and S.T.A.R.) and ask for family input to help guide our plans for the 2023-2024 school year.

At this meeting we will also share information with families that will help them help their child during the summer months, where learning loss often occurs. Every child will receive an At-Home Summer Reading book before the end of the school year so the information we provide to families will help you guide your child through their new book. Every child will be asked to complete an at-home summer reading project, which we will also review at this meeting. We look forward to seeing all our families come out to share with us.

## Odyssey Board of Directors Meeting

On Wednesday, May 15th, at 4:30 pm, there will be an Odyssey Board of Directors Meeting. The meeting will be available via zoom or in person at the 1900 Building, 1900 S. Harbor City Blvd., Suite 120, Melbourne. Meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. Ms. Constance, our School Founder, and the Odyssey Board of Directors meet regularly throughout the year and support the development of our schools.





## Gardening Education

The first, second, and third graders continue to refine their gardening skills while reaping the benefits of their labor with the freshest of vegetables and fruits. Our students are responsible for planting seeds, watering, weeding, harvesting, and then tasting their crop. This Spring our twenty-four beds have produced broccoli, lettuce, sun gold tomatoes, carrots, beets, and bell peppers. You would be surprised by the number of students who enjoy eating raw beet slices and beet greens! Those who are not partial to the taste of beets are entertained by the purplish pigment left behind on their lips, cheeks, teeth, and tongue (and sometimes shirts, sorry!). Additionally, the second and third graders have grown nasturtium an edible flower that we use to dissect and identify its parts.

The students take a lot of pride in sharing their produce with the school. Over sixty pounds of lettuce and 50 pounds of tomatoes have been organically grown and then served in our healthy café this year! While the students learn about the time and effort it takes to raise a successful crop, they are also becoming familiar with the concept of sustainable farming. Rain barrels, watering cans, compost bins, vermiculture (raising worms), and fish emulsion are materials and concepts the students are using on a regular basis. Please help us foster the next generation of gardeners, farmers, and environmental caretakers by asking your first, second or third grade student what's growing in their garden.

## GATEway News!

Our 3rd- 5th grade GATEway students are currently working on their Passion Projects. They have been so excited to get started on it, as this is a project that allows our gifted and talented students to pursue and investigate a new topic of their own interest. During this project, students are learning to research, take notes, cite their sources, and create a product of their choice where they can show what they have learned. I have some students learning a new language, creating a robot, and making a cookbook. Student's passion projects will be showcased at our annual GATEway night, which will be held on May 1st.

In the primary grades, students are working on learning various science based topics, by utilizing the highly esteemed William and Mary units. First grade is working on Water Works (States of matter, Dissolving, Density, and more), while second grade is focusing on The Earth Beneath our Feet (Rocks, Minerals, plus Weathering and Erosion). In other exciting news, we have just created a Kindergarten Gateway group! We have been getting to know each other, talking about what GATEway is, and will be starting a PLTW unit very soon.

## Enrichment Day Camp is Coming!

Odyssey Charter School is excited to host Enrichment Day Camp June 3rd - July 19th. This year's theme is Movin' & Groovin'! Children will learn to care for themselves and the environment through fun and exciting activities and finish the week off with field trip Fridays. Our 3-5 year-old campers will Leap into Summer with Frogstreet Press and many other fun games and projects. Registration is opening very soon – look for more information to come home!

## Re-Enrollment AND Required Final Registration

OCS Families – As is usual this time of year, re-enrollment is in full swing. Re-enrollment is available and completed through FOCUS parent portal. This process will ensure that our database has the most accurate information on file. Please join us at re-enrollment night on Thursday, April 11, 2023 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm for support with completing your re-enrollment. Our office staff is also available to assist you through the process during regular office hours.

Please mark your calendar and be sure to attend our Required Final Registration on Thursday, July 11, 2023 for both new and returning students. At this event you will need to complete some final documents needed for the start of the school year such as the dismissal form and health forms. We do realize that some families may be out of town on the 11th, therefore beginning July 8, Final Registration paperwork will be available for families to complete ahead of time during summer office hours, 8AM-2PM.

If you have any questions about re-enrollment or final registration, please email our Registrar, Mrs. Herasme at [herasmen@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:herasmen@odysseycharterschool.com).



## Title I Corner

We are excited to share that Odyssey Charter School has been designated a high performing charter school by the Florida Department of Education. Our school is also accredited for Kindergarten -12th grades by COGNIA, the largest accrediting agency for K-12 schools. As a Title I school, we continue to hold the highest academic expectations for your child. Title I documents are available online for your review and are accessible on our website under the "About Us" section under school reports: <http://odysseycharterschool.com/reports.html>. Some of the documents you may want to review would be the School Improvement Plan which is new every year. Also, the Parents and Family Engagement Plan which shares all the great events, staff and activities that we use our Title 1 funds for each year.

## Ms. Berg's F.A.S.T./STAR Assessment update:

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (F.A.S.T.) is a progress monitoring system that is administered three times per year to track your student's progress in learning the Benchmarks of Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards throughout this school year. Your student will participate in the third administration (PM3) of the Grade 3, 4 & 5. Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Reading and Mathematics assessments on the dates listed below:

Grade 5	FAST Writing	April 3
Grade 4	FAST Writing	April 4
Grade 5	FAST Reading	May 1
Grade 3	FAST Reading	May 2
Grade 3	FAST Math	May 3
Grade 5	FAST Mathematics	May 6
Grade 4	FAST Reading	May 7
Grade 5	Science	May 8
Grade 4	FAST Mathematics	May 9
Grade 3	iReady EOY for select students that received Level 1 on FAST	May 14

The students in Grades K, 1 & 2 will be taking their Progress Monitoring Assessment #3 (Renaissance STAR PM3): Star Early Literacy - (Kindergarten); Star Reading (grade 1 or 2); and Star Math (Kindergarten-grade 2) on the dates listed below:

Kindergarten	Early Literacy Reading and Math	Week of April 15-19 in small groups
Grade 1 and Grade 2	STAR Reading	April 16
Grade 1 and Grade 2	STAR Mathematics	April 18

The results from PM3 will show how well your student has mastered the grade level content standards, and you will be provided with information about how to access the results after testing is completed.

Your student's F.A.S.T./STAR assessments along with the 5th grade Science and i-Ready assessments are computer-adaptive tests taken on a computer or tablet. The questions get less or more difficult depending on how a student responds, and each student will see different questions from a common item bank. Each test will present items that cover the entire test "blueprint," meaning students will encounter items representative of the standards within the subject or grade level. For more information on the test design, please visit <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/best/>. If you or your student would like to interact with the online testing platform or review FAST Reading and Mathematics sample items at home, sample test materials are available at <https://ffast.org/families.html>.

## We are growing and hiring!

We are looking for committed, talented and community-minded men and women who care for and value children to join our Odyssey family.

**TEACHERS:** Elementary and Secondary Certified Teachers  
Those interested, please email Ms. Maria Vargas at [VargasM@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:VargasM@odysseycharterschool.com) and/or [employment@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:employment@odysseycharterschool.com)

**SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS:** Elementary & Secondary Substitute Teachers  
Those interested, please email Ms. Wendi Nolder (OCS ELEM) at [NolderW@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:NolderW@odysseycharterschool.com) and Mr. Mike Davis (JrSr) at [DavisM@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:DavisM@odysseycharterschool.com)

Please review the following assessment policies with your student before testing:

- **Electronic Devices**—Students are not permitted to have any electronic devices, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, and smartwatches, at any time during testing or during breaks (e.g., restroom), even if the devices are turned off or students do not use them. If your student is found with an electronic device or is found using Bluetooth/wireless headphones/earbuds during testing, his or her test will be invalidated.

- **Testing Rules Acknowledgment**—All tests include a Testing Rules Acknowledgment that reads: "I understand the testing rules that were just read to me. If I do not follow these rules, my test score may be invalidated." Prior to testing, test administrators read the rules to students, and students acknowledge that they understand the testing rules by clicking the box in the secure browser indicating they understand the testing rules.

- **Discussing Test Content after Testing**—The last portion of the testing rules read to students before they click the box to accept the Testing Rules Acknowledgment states that because the content of all statewide assessments is secure, students may not discuss or reveal details about the test content (including test items and passages) after the test. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, or posting to social media sites. Please make sure your student understands this policy prior to testing and remind them that "discussing" test content includes any kind of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, posting to social media, or sharing online. While students may not share information about secure test content after testing, this policy is not intended to prevent students from discussing their testing experiences with their parents/families.

- **Working Independently**—Students are responsible for doing their own work during the test and for protecting their answers from being seen by others. If students are caught cheating during testing, their tests will be invalidated.

- **Leaving Campus**—If your student leaves campus before completing a test (e.g., for lunch, an appointment), he or she will not be allowed to return to that test. If your student does not feel well on the day of testing, it may be best for him or her to wait and be tested on a make-up day. Please remember not to schedule appointments on testing days.

- **Testing Accommodations**—If your student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Plan, or is an English Language Learner (ELL) or a recently exited ELL, please contact the school to discuss the testing accommodations that will be provided for your student.

If you have any questions related to this test administration, you may contact Deb Berg- [bergd@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:bergd@odysseycharterschool.com). For more information about the FAST program, please visit the portal at [FLFAST.org](https://ffast.org).

Thank you for supporting your student and encouraging him or her to do his or her best during this test administration.

### CAFÉ:

Cashiers, Serving Line, Food Prep, and Line Cooks (Part-time)  
Those interested, please email [ChapmanC@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:ChapmanC@odysseycharterschool.com) or [employment@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:employment@odysseycharterschool.com)

### BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE:

Group leaders (Part-time)  
Those interested, please email [HartwickA@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:HartwickA@odysseycharterschool.com) or [LucchiniN@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:LucchiniN@odysseycharterschool.com) or [employment@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:employment@odysseycharterschool.com)

### TRANSPORTATION:

Bus Drivers (Full-time 37.5 hours a week)  
Those interested, please email Ms. Rosie Greer at [GreerR@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:GreerR@odysseycharterschool.com) and [employment@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:employment@odysseycharterschool.com)



## Positive Discipline / Positive Parenting - Dr. Powell

Positive Discipline is a program that was developed by Dr. Jane Nelsen. It is designed for teaching young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. Positive Discipline helps teach students the vital social and life skills of self-respect, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving. Parenting with Positive Discipline means modeling these character traits with kind yet firm guidance, which has effective long-term implications and helps makes a child feel secure, supported, and valued. If you would like to know more about Positive Discipline/Positive Parenting, you can visit <https://www.positivediscipline.com/parents>. You can also connect with our Dean of Student Discipline, Dr. Powell at [PowellM@Odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:PowellM@Odysseycharterschool.com).

**Procedures/Expectations:** As we approach the end of the school year, Our Discipline/Guidance Advisory team strongly encourage the intentional efforts of our students to follow our schoolwide and classroom procedures and expectations through the end of the school year. We want to thank our parents/guardians for partnering with us to ensure that our Titans are experiencing success and are safe while on campus. Please encourage your child(ren) to adhere to the policies in place which include the following:

**Dress Code:** Students should be dressed in uniform every day, with the exception of dress out of uniform days, which are scheduled for the last Friday of each month. Uniform tops are green or white t-shirts or polo shirts with the Odyssey Logo and black or khaki uniform-style pants, shorts, or skorts. If a student wears a jacket or sweater, the color must be solid blue, gray, or black. Jackets or sweaters with lettering, slogans, avatars, etc. are against school policy. Students may be asked to remove outer wear that does not meet the school dress code.

**Bus:** We are happy to offer bus transportation to our families who qualify for it. Students must have their badge to scan when getting on off the bus; students must refrain from eating/drinking on the bus; students must refrain from vaping on school grounds including school buses. Please review with your child how they can have a safe bus ride to and from school: remain seated; seatbelts buckled; soft voice; aisle cleared; hands to self; and be kind and respectful to the bus drivers. Bus transportation is a privilege not a right. Students who cause disruptions on buses will have a consequence and may have this privilege revoked, either short-term or for the remainder of the school year, depending on the level of the offense.

**Café:** Our café staff works hard to ensure that your student is receiving a healthy breakfast/lunch and breakfast and lunch are an opportunity to socialize and continue developing social skills. Please remind your students of appropriate café behavior: walking in upon entry, waiting patiently in the line, being polite to the café workers and showing respect and appreciation. Additionally, students should only be conversing with nearby peers (seated in front of or next to them). They should remain seated at all times unless they obtain permission to get up. Upon exit, and as classes transition through the building, students are expected to be at a voice level "0" as they pass classrooms and work areas where others are learning. A quick and quiet transition helps ensure safety and minimizes disruptions to learning.



## What is Bullying and What Can You Do?

Bullying is a serious issue that can have lasting effects on individuals. It's important to recognize and address it effectively. Bullying is deliberate, repeated, and power imbalanced. Here are some steps you can take to help:

**Understand Bullying:** Know what constitutes bullying and its different forms, including verbal, social/relational, physical, and cyberbullying. NOTE: Bullying is not the same as teasing, that can be typical in elementary grades.

**Recognize Signs:** Be aware of signs that a child may be experiencing bullying, as they may not always disclose it themselves. Look for changes in behavior, mood, or social interactions.

**Open Communication:** Foster open and clear communication with your child. Encourage them to talk about their experiences and feelings, and listen without judgment.

**Model Positive Behavior:** Lead by example and demonstrate kindness, empathy, and respect in your own interactions. Children learn a lot from observing adults.

**Teach Social Skills:** Help your child develop social skills and resilience. Role-play scenarios with them to practice assertive responses to bullying situations.

**Encourage Seeking Help:** Let your child know it's okay to ask for help. Encourage them to confide in trusted adults, such as teachers, school counselors, or parents, if they're being bullied.

By taking proactive steps and creating a supportive environment, you can help prevent and address bullying effectively. For further information and resources, you can visit [www.crisisprevention.com](http://www.crisisprevention.com) and [www.afine-parent.com/strong-kids/stop-bullying.html](http://www.afine-parent.com/strong-kids/stop-bullying.html).



### Grievance Procedures

- Step 1: Request Teacher conference to clarify issue
- Step 2: Contact Principal if unresolved with the teacher
- Step 3: \*\*Contact Board Designated Parent Representative
- Step 4: Contact the President of the Governing Board
- Step 5: Present issue at the next monthly Board Meeting if unresolved
- Step 6: Seek mediation with the Sponsor

\*\*Mrs. Amber Miller has been designated by the OCS Board of Directors as the Representative to Facilitate Parental Involvement, provide access to information, assist parents and others with questions and concerns, and resolve disputes according to charter requirements. Ms. Miller can be reached at [millera@odysseycharterschool.com](mailto:millera@odysseycharterschool.com) or 321-442-2742.