

EDUCATIONAL SETTING OBSERVATION POLICY

This formalized observation policy ensures a student-centered approach, respecting the privacy and educational experiences of all students while facilitating productive observations and collaborations to best benefit student-learner outcomes.

Open Mind School (OMS) operates as both a PreK-12 private school and a professional training center for the community. Regular observations and service learning activities are integral to our dynamic learning environment. We actively encourage family members of enrolled students to participate and volunteer in classroom activities and school programs.

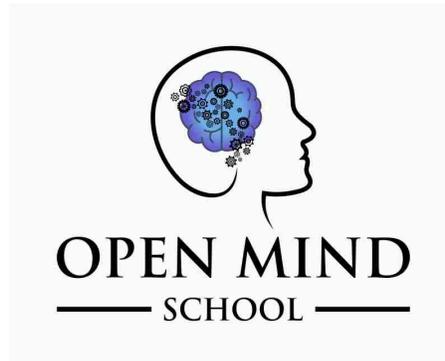
Additionally, OMS invites external professionals such as psychologists, speech-language pathologists (SLPs), and school district representatives to observe our operations, engage in consultations, and collaborate to support our students and their families effectively.

To ensure smooth scheduling and coordination, we recommend scheduling observation blocks in advance—ideally **four weeks ahead**, with a minimum of 10 days' notice when possible—and coordinating so that **all team members who wish to observe attend on the same scheduled day**. This approach allows the team to view the same instructional context, maximizes the efficiency of the observation time, and helps minimize scheduling challenges and disruptions to the classroom environment.

Both in-person and virtual observation options are available and respected, particularly when the presence of an external observer might disrupt the learning environment or trigger adverse reactions. Some students may have anxiety or a negative association with a visiting individual, and we want to be sensitive to their needs.

OMS offers three methods to observe a student:

1. **Joining the Activity/Class:** Observers can join the student's activity or class directly, participating in the educational setting. We ask that no notetaking occur when joining the natural learning environment.
2. **Observation Window:** Observers can use an observation window outside the classroom to watch the class.
3. **Live Feed Observation Room:** Observers can watch a live feed of the classroom from a separate room, allowing them to see and hear the class in real-time without disrupting



the learning environment. This method is preferred by most observers, and is the default format, due to its naturalistic setup, minimizing the impact on students' experiences.

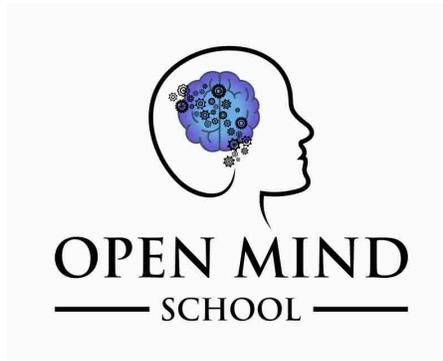
PROCEDURES REGARDING EDUCATIONAL SETTING OBSERVATIONS

To ensure the confidentiality of all students and the smooth operation of classroom environments, the following standards of practice are recommended:

1. **Observation Settings:** To the maximum extent possible, required observational information should be obtained in settings outside the classroom. Observations may take place during a specific academic block (e.g., math, reading, etc) or can include time that is less structured (e.g., transitions, recess, lunch, or other non-classroom settings).
2. **Scheduling and Frequency:** Observations must be scheduled in advance and not occur with such frequency that they create a disruption in the educational setting. Most districts observe 1-2 times annually at 30 minutes each, not to exceed 1 hour in an academic year.
3. **Evaluation Restrictions:** Observations are not to be used as a means to evaluate teachers, specialists, paraeducators, or other staff members. Any concerns regarding staff performance should be directed, in writing, to the site administrator, or designee and not included in any written report by the observer.
4. **Access to Materials:** Parents and parental representatives may review textbooks, consumables, and ancillary texts but should not expect access to teacher curated lesson plans. These materials will be available for review at the time of the observation.
5. **Teacher Briefing:** The teacher will be briefed prior to the observation by the site administrator or designee, including the reason for the observation and a copy of the Observation Request form to assist in scheduling and planning.

Before the Observation

1. **Advance Scheduling:** Observations should be scheduled at least ten (10) school days in advance, or 4 weeks in advance for annual observations coinciding with IEP dates.
2. **Observation Requests:** All observation requests must include the reason for the observation, the name of the affiliated agency (if any), and any standardized observational measures to be used, in addition to the Observation Request form.
3. **Duration:** Observations are generally limited to thirty minutes, with clear start and end times communicated to the parent(s) and/or parental representative prior to the observation.



4. **Written Consent:** If the observer is not the parent(s), the parent(s) must provide written consent via a Release of Information form to allow the school to share information about the student.
5. **Confidentiality Acknowledgement:** Prior to the observation, all observers, including parents, must complete the Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form, outlining confidentiality expectations.

During the Observation

1. **Accompaniment:** The observer will be accompanied by an OMS admin team member at all times.
2. **Influence Awareness:** Observers will be informed that their presence might influence the performance of the observed student and other students in the class.
3. **Location:** Observers will be seated in an unobtrusive location within the classroom or school campus.
4. **Non-Interference:** Observers must conform to OMS policies and procedures and must not interfere with the educational environment. Disruptive observers will be asked to leave.
5. **Confidentiality:** Observers will not have access to confidential information about other students in the classroom.

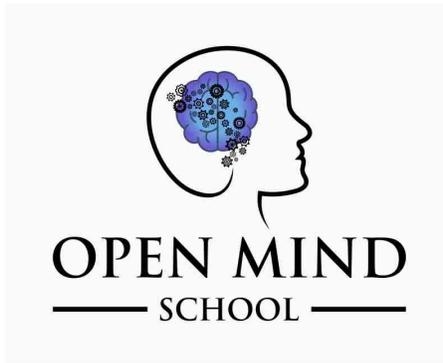
After the Observation

1. **Post-Observation Meeting:** An OMS staff member will meet with the observer immediately following the observation for a brief discussion (up to 15 minutes). Longer discussions can be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.
2. **Sign Out:** The observer will sign out at the school reception desk and obtain a copy of any observation notes taken immediately following the observation.

Classroom Observation Request Form

Date of Request: _____

Name of Individual Making Request: _____



Student Name: _____

Name and Title of Parent(s)/Observer: _____

Purpose of the Observation: _____

Preferred Visit Days and Times: _____

Contact Information: _____

For OMS Use

Date Received: _____

Date Authorization for Exchange of Confidential Information Received:

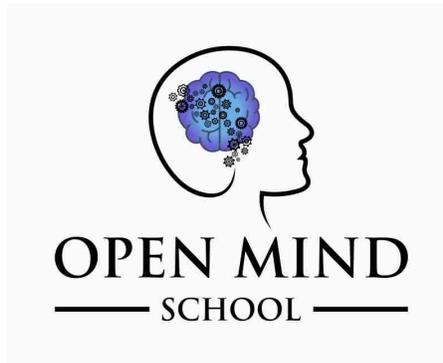
Date of Observation: _____

Accompanied by: _____

Date of Email Notification to Teacher(s): _____

Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement Form

I, _____, request to observe a classroom or program attended by students with disabilities. In exchange for permission to observe, I agree to abide by the following conditions:



1. I will not engage the teacher or support staff, interact with students, or otherwise disrupt the teaching and learning during the observation.
2. I will remain in the location directed by the admin staff to avoid disrupting the educational process.
3. I will not ask questions about students' services, disabilities, or achievements during the observation. I will be given time after the observation.
4. I will not study or look at students' work samples during the observation.
5. I will not take notes in the presence of students. Notes can be taken if using the observation window or private viewing room areas.
6. I will maintain the confidentiality of any student-identifying information observed.
7. I acknowledge that all information related to students' disabilities and individualized education programs is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the California Public Records Act. I will maintain strict confidentiality of any information observed.

Signature of Observer: _____

Date: _____