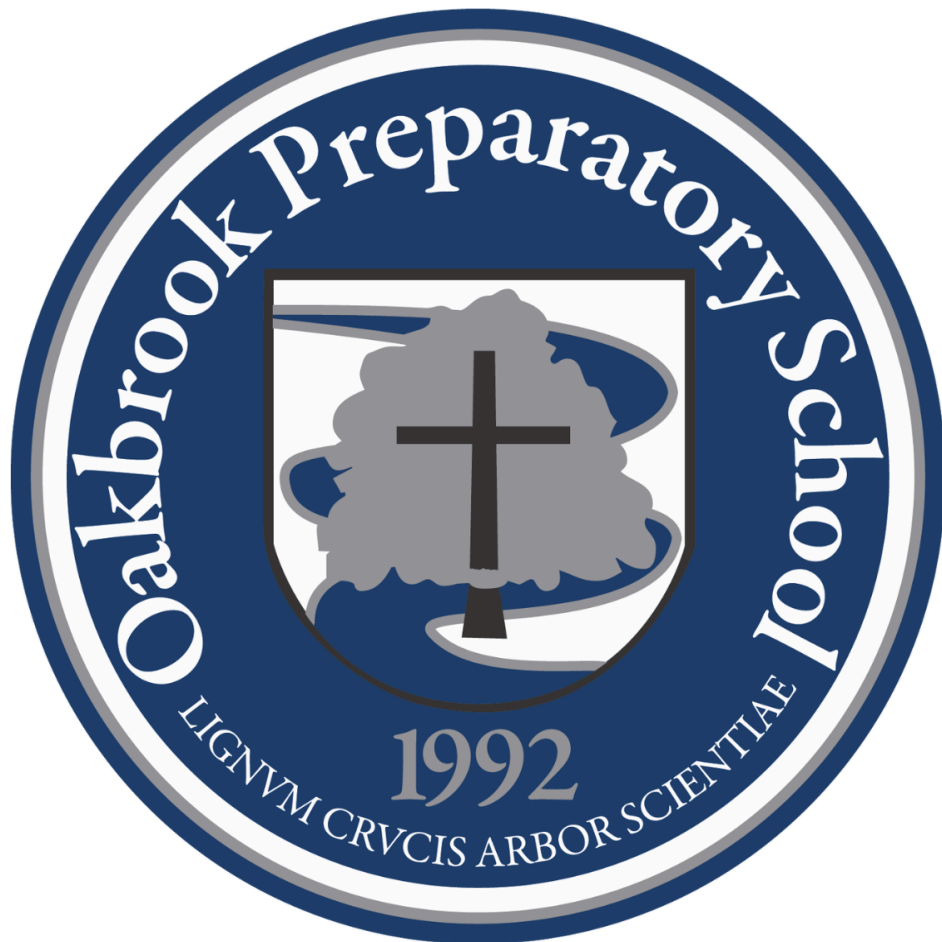


# **The Bridges Program**

## **Oakbrook Preparatory School**



## **Bridges Program Admission Requirements:**

**Oakbrook understands that learning differences, processing issues, and mental health diagnoses such as anxiety and depression can impact how some students learn. Students who have been diagnosed by an appropriate psychological or medical professional will be considered for the Bridges Program. Students in the program have the potential to be successful in an OPS college preparatory classroom, but may need specialized instruction, one-on-one or group academic support and/or classroom accommodations to reach their academic goals.**

### **Admissions Considerations for Students:**

- There will be a limit of no more than 10% per grade requiring accommodations/academic support.
- Students in grades 4th-12th considering admissions to the Bridges program must have qualified, diagnostic documentation supporting learning or processing differences. Documentation can include, but is not limited to, a physician's diagnosis for ADHD, a mental health diagnosis by a physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, or licensed professional counselor, and/or a full psychoeducational evaluation for specific learning differences and processing disorders by a licensed educational psychologist. Diagnostic documentation must be within the last three years.
- Consideration for students below 4th grade\* will be based on referral from the parent, teacher(s), or the Director of Lower School. Admission will be based on teacher documentation, sample of academic work, director observation, and achievement testing by a certified testing administrator. Bridges can only offer Orton Gillinham tutoring at this time for students who have been diagnosed with a language-based learning difference (such as, but not limited to, dyslexia/dysgraphia), are suspected of having an SLD, or the student is not making significant progress with traditional reading interventions.
- Students considering admission must score with a 5th or higher stanine on recent standardized tests. Candidates with a score in the 4th stanine or below for reading or math will need to receive Woodcock-Johnson achievement testing by a certified test administrator before being considered for admission. Candidates for admission are no more than 1 grade level below according to standardized test scores. Oakbrook contracts with Smart Testing for on-campus testing at a discounted rate to parents.
- OPS may request the student's educational, standardized testing, and discipline records from their previous schools.
- Since the two pillars of the Bridges Program are accommodation management and academic support, admission candidates must not have significant behavioral issues.
- Student's cognitive ability based on testing must be in the average range. The impact of the student's learning difference will be considered by the admissions team.
- Other factors for admission include, but are not limited to: the student's character, attitude, and behavior; the level of support from the family; classroom observations by the Bridges director; teacher feedback concerning the student, and the likelihood that the student will be successful at OPS if academic support and/or accommodations are provided.

- Once the aforementioned are considered, the Bridges Admissions Team will meet to determine admission for students who meet the criteria for admission to OPS and the Bridges Program.

### **Bridges Admission Protocol:**

- See the Bridges Program description on the OPS website  
[www.oakbrookprep.org/academics/academic-support-bridges-program](http://www.oakbrookprep.org/academics/academic-support-bridges-program)
- Contact the Director of Bridges
- Choose the tiered program that you are interested in for your child:  
Level 1 is accommodation management only\*\*  
Level 2 is accommodation management plus 1 session of academic support  
Level 3 is accommodation management plus 2 sessions of academic support  
Level 4 is accommodation management plus 3 sessions of academic support  
\*Specify Lower School Bridges Program for tiered program options  
\*\* If the student requires four or more accommodations with Bridges support, parents may be contacted to utilize academic support sessions.

## **Bridges Program Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **What services does Bridges provide?**

The two pillars of the Bridges Program are **academic support** and **accommodation management**. Although individual direct intervention of Orton Gillingham tutoring is available to students with language based learning disabilities at parent's request, the majority of what we provide is academic support in an individual or small group setting through direct assistance for classroom support (which can include instruction and informal intervention through a multi-sensory approach), executive function support, as well as accommodations through providing an alternative environment for testing, oral administration of exams, and other direct accommodations per the student's accommodation plan. Bridges does not provide an individualized service plan with goals and objectives; however, specific goals and objectives can be discussed with the Bridges Director and every effort will be made to support those needs.

### **What about Accommodation Plans?**

Accommodation plans will be written based on recommendations from the agency which diagnosed the student or previous accommodation plans. Accommodations can be added based on input from teachers pursuant to the student's needs in the classroom related to his/her learning difference, neurodiversity, and/or mental health diagnosis. Although OPS is not obligated by law to provide an accommodation plan, we seek to serve the unique needs of the students so they can have every opportunity to succeed in our educational environment. An accommodation allows the student with a diagnosed disability to participate fully in the program, in this case a college preparatory education. Generally speaking, an accommodation

is considered unreasonable if it modifies the curriculum or is an undue burden for the provider. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate students, including but not limited to Bridges staff communicating often with faculty and supporting their efforts to accommodate. For any questions regarding an accommodation plan being created, please contact the Bridges Director. If you are concerned that an accommodation plan is not being followed, please first communicate with the teacher directly to clarify any misunderstanding or unintended infidelity. If you do not receive a satisfactory response, see the **Bridges Communications Protocol**. Teachers and parents will receive a copy of the student's accommodation plan. If more than four accommodations require Bridges support, parents may be contacted for academic support.\*\*

### **When does Bridges start?**

To allow time for students to get acclimated to the new school year, as well as give time for scheduling to be finalized, Bridges sessions will begin two weeks after school begins. Parents, students, and the teacher whose period the child will be missing will be notified with the days/times for the Bridges session(s).

### **What if my child misses a Bridges session?**

Since we understand that executive functioning can have a major impact on students served by Bridges, we know that students sometimes forget to come to Bridges. If a student forgets, we will remind the student through email, as well as the teacher of that period so that they can remind the student, and we will make every effort to make the session up. If students have repeated misses due to forgetting, the parent will be contacted as an extra accountability. However, if the student is absent or there is a student holiday/teacher work day on the day of the scheduled lesson, these lessons will not be made up since they are a part of the school calendar year. Any sessions missed due to the tutor/academic support coach needing to cancel will be made up.

### **What are the most common accommodations?**

Due to an already reduced class size, the OPS faculty will naturally accommodate students with preferential seating, as well as cueing for attention and behavior management. Other common accommodations include copies of notes/slides/presentations and chunking of large assignments into smaller (more easily readable) sections for students with visual/language/processing/attention diagnoses. If oral testing is needed, teachers/students may utilize Bridges for this accommodation.

The most often used, yet most questioned accommodations, are the extended time and assignment extension accommodations. Regarding the **extended time accommodation**, which is time and a half (the time allowed for the rest of the students in class, plus half of that class time), students are expected to take as much of the test as possible in class during class time. Extended time for a test can be carried out in Bridges\* based on student/staff schedule availability or arrangements may be made for the test to be finished with the teacher as proctor. If they receive the extended time accommodation, they are allowed to

turn in the unfinished test to the teacher, who will then forward the test to Bridges where the student can complete the test in a timely manner. This accommodation protocol for OPS does not apply to extended time for College Board and/or standardized testing—students will take those tests in a small group setting per the approved accommodation by the College Board or standardized testing organization. The **assignment extension accommodation** is for large assignments such as essays and projects only; it is for up to 3 days from the time the assignment is due. Students are expected to email the teacher requesting an extension of no more than 3 days, and it is preferred that the student request the accommodation when the due date is assigned. It is imperative that the student not wait to request the accommodation until the assignment is due or the day before it is due—requesting the extension on the day that the assignment due date is given will help build communication and executive functioning skills. Once granted, assignments turned in beyond the 3 day extension will receive late deductions per the teacher’s classroom policy.

\*Other accommodations such as oral testing or rewording/simplification of instructions may determine the location of the extended time accommodation.

### **What Bridges services are offered to Lower School students?**

Orton-Gillingham tutoring is a specialized intervention approach for increasing reading fluency and spelling. Although it was designed specifically for students with dyslexia, this phonics-based, explicit, systematic, and multi-sensory approach is also beneficial for any struggling reader/speller who may have a language processing disorder (as well as an auditory processing or attention disorder) that impacts reading, writing, spelling, or comprehension. Bridges has trained OG tutors to provide one or two 30 minute OG sessions per week during the school day. This service is available to any student in the lower, middle, or upper school who qualifies for Bridges. Given the limited time for lower school sessions, two sessions of OG is highly recommended in order to benefit from this specialized intervention.

Since accommodating students and differentiating instruction occurs naturally in Oakbrook’s smaller classroom setting, formal accommodation plans are offered once a student reaches 3rd grade. Academic support can begin in 4th grade. If accommodations or support are needed before 3rd grade, please reach out to the Lower School Director, who will contact the Director of Bridges for further discussion with the parent and teacher. Please see the Bridges Admissions Requirements for eligibility and eligibility assessment options.

## **Communication Protocol for Bridges:**

**As a private Christian school, Oakbrook has different legal obligations compared to public schools. Oakbrook Preparatory School is committed to supporting students through reasonable accommodations and academic support whenever possible. Oakbrook fosters an inclusive and supportive environment for all students while acknowledging the school's unique position as a private Christian institution.**

Parents with questions about their child's special needs or educational concerns should follow these steps and contact the following individuals within the school:

### **Step 1. Contact the teacher:**

Since Oakbrook prides itself in differentiating instruction, accommodations are naturally built into the classroom. However, if a parent needs to discuss additional accommodations or the adherence to accommodations, it is important to begin communication with the teacher(s). If the concern is academic, the parent can provide insights into the child's educational experience and any support services being received outside of school. If the concern is behavioral or emotional, the teacher or parent may choose to also communicate these concerns with the School Counselor or Administration.

### **Step 2. Directors of Lower/Middle/High School:**

If a parent has a question or concern regarding their child's performance, instruction, or accommodations in a classroom, and the question/concern has not been resolved or responded to in a reasonable amount of time, the parent would then contact the directors of the lower, middle, or upper school depending on the grade of their child.

### **Step 3. Bridges Department:**

After the parent has contacted the teacher and department director, if the child is enrolled in Bridges and the parent still needs to discuss questions/concerns or provide additional insight, contact the Director of Bridges, who can offer parents a deeper understanding of available resources, as well as communicate with the department directors and/or teacher(s) to offer insights and resources in order to resolve the question/concern.

### **Step 4. Administration:**

If a parent has reached out to the teacher, director, and Bridges, but does not have the issue resolved satisfactorily, the parent would then contact the Dean of Academics for further information and possible involvement to resolve the concern.

### **Step 5. Head of School:**

If the above protocol for resolving issues related to students with disabilities that impact learning or academic performance has been followed, yet not resolved satisfactorily, parents would contact the Head of School of Oakbrook.

If your child is not currently enrolled in Bridges, but has a diagnosis (or suspected diagnosis) which may impact learning and academic performance, please contact the Director of Bridges after discussing concerns with the teacher(s) and director to gain more information about the Bridges Program and consideration for enrollment into the program for possible accommodation management and academic support.

