

FAQ about The Emerson School

School Basics

How many children attend your school, and in what grades?

We currently have 144 students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade.

What are your hours?

School is in session from 8:30-3:00 every day except for Wednesday when school is from 8:30-1:00. Students may be dropped off as early as 8:15am when classrooms open.

How many students are there per class?

For 2010-2011 we are planning for class size of 24.

How many different classes are in your school?

There are two blended K/1 classes, two blended 2/3 classes and two blended 4/5 classes.

Do I have to pay tuition?

There is no tuition; however fees for full day kindergarten do apply. There is a small field study fee at the beginning of the year. Other than that, there are no financial requirements to attend the school.

Is there before and after school care?

Yes. It is provided on site by a separate program called Art4Life (www.art4life.net).

What are the hours of before and after school care?

Before school care is from 7:00-8:30. After school care is from 3:00 (1:00 on Wednesdays) until 6:30 pm.

What is a charter school, and how does that differ from my neighborhood school or a Focus Option school?

Charter schools are independent public schools contracted by their sponsoring district to provide a specific program under the conditions of their contract. They often have a greater degree of flexibility in programming, and also a greater level of accountability in that they may be shut down by their sponsoring district if performance benchmarks are not met. Students enrolled in a charter school must meet all state benchmarks and district testing requirements, as well as any additional requirements determined by the district in the charter contract. Enrollment in a charter school is completely based on lottery, and there is no preference for neighborhood residents. Charter schools are independent organizations, operating under their own administrative and financial policies, with oversight provided by the organization's board of directors.

More detail about the school.

What is the focus of your school?

Our school is a Project Approach school. You can find out more about Project Approach learning at www.projectapproach.org

What is the discipline policy?

We are a Positive Discipline demonstration school, and use that as our discipline policy. You can find out more about Positive Discipline by visiting www.positivediscipline.com

Do you have PE?

We do. Each day every child participates in Morning Movement, where they take part in a variety of large motor movement physical education taught by our teachers. Also, one time per week they participate in a 30 minute martial arts class. Often there are additional movement opportunities such as ballroom and African dance classes.

Do you teach foreign languages?

We do not offer foreign languages at The Emerson School.

What are the demographics of The Emerson School?

The Emerson School's demographics fluctuate from year to year due to our small size. On average we reflect the demographics of the city of Portland in race and income level.

Can parents volunteer in the classrooms, and is it required?

The school would not be as successful as it is without our parent volunteers. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at The Emerson School, though there is no requirement for volunteering. Volunteer opportunities may include small group reading leaders, math group helpers, one-on-one readers, field study chaperones, and lunch servers. We also have many opportunities for parents to help with fundraising and special events outside of school time.

Do you have Special Education services?

Special Education services are provided by Portland Public Schools.

Do students receive art instruction?

We are pleased to offer instruction and exposure to the arts in all grades with funding from our yearly Run for the Arts event, as well as additional community support. Arts education includes long-term residencies teaching fundamental art skills, attendance at arts performances throughout the city, and school-wide arts events. Additionally, classes also include extra arts instruction as it pertains to their current educational project, and weave arts as a fundamental component into the overall curriculum when at all possible.

What kind of music education is there?

In the K/1 classrooms, students have daily music time, led by their classroom teachers. They are joined by the 2/3 classes weekly. The 4/5 classes participate in Chorus, with weekly practices and performances throughout the school year.

Is lunch available for purchase?

We currently have a lunch service delivered to the school that families can purchase by ordering ahead on a bi-weekly or monthly schedule. This lunch is also available to families that qualify for the Free/Reduced Lunch program. Lunches are vegetarian, served hot and include organic fruit and vegetable sides.

Enrollment Information

Can I have a tour of the school?

We give group tours of the school on specific days in March. You will have the opportunity to sign up for a tour when you attend one of the Informational Meetings. We do not offer individually scheduled tours.

Do I have to take a tour during February and March?

You do not have to take a tour to apply, however, tours are only offered during February and March. If you do not take a tour during our tour times, you may have to make a decision whether to attend The Emerson School without having had a tour. We will not schedule individual tours after group tours have been offered.

Can I observe a classroom?

Due to the number of inquiries and the logistics of coordination, we do not schedule classroom visits.

How do I enroll my child?

We're glad you are interested. To begin with fill out the application for the upcoming school year. The current application is posted on the web site by January. After submitting your application, sit back and wait for the results of the lottery.

What lottery?

When we have more applications than spaces, state law requires us to hold a lottery to fill our available spaces. The lottery is completely blind, with the only preference given to younger siblings of students who already attend The Emerson School.

When is the lottery drawn?

The lottery is drawn after spring break at the end of March.

How do I know if I got in?

We will notify you by email in mid-April. Your letter will either welcome you to the school or inform you what number you are on the waiting list.

How many spaces do you have each year?

It varies from year to year and by grade level. Generally speaking there are the most spaces available in kindergarten; the specific number varies depending on how many younger siblings are entering the incoming kindergarten class. First through fifth grades may or may not have openings, depending if students from the previous year relocate.

What happens if my child doesn't get one of the openings?

All students who do not get a space are placed on a waiting list in the order assigned from the lottery. We use that waiting list to fill spaces that may become available throughout the summer and through the school year.

What if my child doesn't get in at all? Am I automatically entered into the lottery next year?

No. You must turn in a new application each year you wish your child to be considered for the lottery.

What if I live in the neighborhood? Is there a preference for my child to attend The Emerson School?

Because we are a charter school, state law prohibits us from giving enrollment preference to children who live in the neighborhood.

If my child is next on the waiting list, will you contact me if there is a space?

We will. In the case of the Kindergarten waiting list, which tends to change more than the other grades, we usually also inform the family that is second on the waiting list.

How do I know if my child has moved up on the waiting list?

You can contact us to find out if your child's position on the waiting list has changed. Due to the large volume of inquiries, we prefer you email us at: patricia@emersonschool.org.

My child moved down on the waiting list. How is that possible?

Children can move either up or down on the waiting list. If a child fills an open space and the child has siblings, all siblings move to the top of the waiting list in their grade. This causes students at the top of the list to move down.

If one of my children gets into The Emerson School, does that mean her elementary aged brothers and sisters automatically get in too?

If one of your children gets into the school, her siblings will move to the first slot on the waiting list in their grade. If there are already siblings of other students waiting at the top of the waiting list, your children will be on the waiting list after them. If a space becomes available in that grade then that sibling will also get in the school.

My Kindergarten aged child has younger brothers and sisters. If my child attends the school, will his brothers and sisters have to go through the lottery process when it is time for them to go to Kindergarten?

No. Younger siblings who are old enough to attend Kindergarten do not have to go through the lottery process.

How many people are usually on the waiting list?

This changes from year to year and from grade to grade. Generally, Kindergarten has the longest waiting list, with over 150 people. First grade has less, usually around 50. As the students get older, the waiting lists get shorter.

How long do I have to accept a spot at The Emerson School?

If your student is chosen in the lottery, we hope that you will accept right away. However, you have a few weeks to make your decision. After that, we begin calling people on the waiting list. If you are called during April, May, June or July, you will have a few days to make your decision. During August, we ask that you make your decision more quickly, usually within 24 hours.

Do spaces ever become available during the school year?

On occasion spaces do become available during the school year. When this occurs, we call the first person on the waiting list.

Will you accept students who are not yet five years old by September first? What if they have already been accepted for Early Entrance through the district TAG testing program?

The Emerson School's policy is that students must be five years old by September first to enter kindergarten that year. There are no exceptions to this policy.