

The Emerson School

Student & Family Handbook 2023-2024

We may make changes as a community to the policies and procedures in the book as the school year progresses. Those, and any new policies, will be communicated on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

The Emerson School Staff
Phone: 503-525-6124
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MISSION AND PRINCIPLES OF THE EMERSON SCHOOL

The mission of The Emerson School is to provide a developmentally appropriate, meaningful, and challenging education for a diverse group of children in an environment that recognizes, values, and responds to their individual abilities and needs. We will nurture compassionate, capable, and life-long learners who see themselves as being engaged members of their communities whose actions can make a positive difference.

Equity Policy

In alignment with our mission, The Emerson School is committed to the success of every student; to achieving equal educational and employment opportunity, and equitable outcomes regardless of address, income, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation, language, nationality, race or ethnicity.

The staff and board of The Emerson School have an ongoing commitment to racial equity, diversity and inclusion, and are committed to eliminating institutional bias that serves to predict outcomes based on race and poverty. We value a multi-dimensional school community with diversity among staff, students, and families that includes race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical ability, religion, family composition and socioeconomic status. We strive to approach our commitment to equity with cultural humility in our interpersonal interactions, our educational approach, and our community engagement. We are committed to supporting historically underserved and underrepresented populations and creating a community that is welcoming and supportive of all people.

The Emerson School is committed to the following **principles**, which complement the mission and values of the Portland Public School District.

We will:

- Maintain the highest level of academic and non-academic expectations for all students
- Provide students with a strong grasp of fundamental concepts and skills in an environment that fosters curiosity, debate, and excitement for learning
- Value each child as a truly unique learner by providing support on her or his own developmental timetable
- Create a school environment in which children are active partners with their teachers
- Provide children with on-going opportunities to construct meaning about the world and time to process this meaning for deeper understanding
- Provide an environment that incorporates stimulating and challenging materials and activities, that foster children's creativity, involvement, and intrinsic motivation for learning
- Provide an integrated curriculum, which continuously builds on students' previous learning and experiences in a strong, supportive community
- Be an integral part of the neighboring community and its natural environment. We will maintain a bridge between The Emerson School, the community, and the natural environment, which will serve as resources and extensions of the classroom
- Create an environment in which students are contributing members of the school and larger community
- Integrate, honor, and celebrate individual, family, and community diversity
- Create an environment in which all members of the school and community have the capacity to be both teachers and learners

- Provide parents the opportunity to play a key role in the school community
- Implement a variety of authentic assessment tools as a vital component of both the learning and accountability processes
- Recruit students from all quadrants of the Portland Public School District

The Emerson School Policy Regarding Harassment

All employees, volunteers, parents, guardians, families and students of The Emerson School are entitled to work and learn in an environment free of harassment by fellow employees, supervisors, teachers, students, parents, volunteers and other members of the public.

Harassment is any verbal, physical, or visual conduct in regards to an individual's race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, or other type which impairs an individual's ability to learn, to do his or her job and/or which creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive school environment.

Any employee, volunteer, parent, guardian, or student found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, termination of volunteer privileges, or expulsion from school.

The Emerson School Nondiscrimination Policy

The Board and employees of The Emerson School represent a diverse group of people who have a common commitment to the equality of opportunity for all. The Emerson School is an equal opportunity organization that does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, national origin, or mental or physical disability.

School Staff:

Sunita Sandoz, School Administrator
sunita@emersonschool.org

Jenn Richardson, Office Manager
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Jo Sigmund, Instructional Coach
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Joanie Sveinbjornsson, K/1 Teacher
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Kim Finn, K/1 Teacher
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Daylen Russell, 2/3 Teacher
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Rachel Howard, Instructional Support Teacher
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Ariel Matasar, Music Teacher
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Ashley Gundel, Supervising Educational Assistant
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Kaden Sanchez, Educational Assistant
kaden@emersonschool.org

Appointments with teachers may be arranged by email with the teacher. At the beginning of the school year, each teacher will let parents know the best way to reach her/him/them (phone, email, etc.).

School Contact Information:

School Office: Phone - 503-525-6124

Fax 503-223-4875

Email: info@emersonschool.org

Office Hours: 8:30am-4:00pm

School Hours:

M,T,W,Th 8:45am-3:15pm (classrooms open at 8:30am and close at 3:30pm)

Friday 8:45am-1:15pm (early dismissal **every** Friday)

Student and Building Security

To maintain optimum student safety, The Emerson School entry door is to remain locked at all times except during pick-up and drop-off times. During the school day, family and community members will ring the doorbell/buzzer to gain access to the building. Upon entering the building, all visitors must stop in the office to sign in and may be required to obtain a Visitor's badge before proceeding through the building. No sign-in is required to pick up or drop off students.

Students are not permitted to leave the building at the end of the school day without an adult escort unless prior arrangements have been made with the school office, and a signed permission slip is in the student's file. Students will not be permitted, under any circumstances, to wait outside, un-chaperoned for an adult to pick them up.

Building security requires visitors to ring the doorbell to gain access to the building except during pick up and drop off. When someone rings the doorbell, we greet them, ask them to state their business, and only allow them access to the school building once we understand their purpose. During the school's pick-up times, there is at least one administrative staff person at each door to ensure that no student leaves without an associated adult. If a student is leaving with an adult other than his/her/their parent, or regular carpool ride home, we need to know that in the office. We keep a list every day of exceptions at pick up, and appreciate short, concise information from you when there are exceptions (via email or phone).

Students who are not here at the start of the day are counted as absent on the classroom attendance sheet by 8:46am. **It is very important for parents to leave a message in the office as soon as they know a student will be absent**, so we can notify the classroom teacher and document attendance accordingly. If a student is absent without an explanation, it will be counted as an unexcused absence and the PPS auto-dialer will contact the home number to report the student as absent.

Parents or responsible adults must sign students in and out at the front office anytime students leave or arrive outside standard pick up or drop off times. Only adults who are listed on student paperwork may sign out a child. If we do not know the adult, we may ask for ID even if they are listed on the paperwork. You can help prevent confusion and delays by emailing (info@emersonschool.org) or calling the school ahead to let us know of any non-standard pick-up arrangements.

School Safety—Weapons (Portland Public Schools Policy)

Weapons and weapons-related activities are prohibited in the schools, on school grounds, at school activities, and during school hours and school-sponsored activities.

School District Policy (BP 3.40.014): No person shall have on school district property any weapon, explosive or incendiary device.

Oregon State Law (ORS 166.370): It is a felony to possess a firearm or other weapon on school property. All violations of state weapons laws will be reported to School Police.

U.S. Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 (an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) (PL 103-382): Any student who brings a weapon to school must be expelled for not less than one (1) calendar year. (Section 14601) A weapon is a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

School Safety—Threats of Violence or Harm (Portland Public Schools Policy)

Words and actions, including email, that threaten other people at school are inappropriate, even in jest or among friends. Threats will be taken seriously and are a discipline issue. Oregon law (ORS 339.325) requires that school districts notify staff and parents of students whose names appear on a targeted list (“hit list”) or when threats of violence or harm are made by a student. An attempt to notify by phone or in person will be made within 12 hours of discovery of the threat; written notification will be sent within 24 hours.

Discipline Approach

The Emerson School uses Positive Discipline, a school-wide social/emotional program, as the basis for our discipline policies. Positive Discipline is a program that teaches important social and life skills, in a manner that is respectful to both the adults and the children in the situation—raising young people to be responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of their community. It is based on the theory that children who have a sense of connection to their community (home and school) and whose input is regarded as meaningful are less likely to engage in misbehavior. To be successful members of the community children need to be taught the necessary social and life skills. Positive Discipline is based on the understanding that discipline must be taught and that discipline teaches.

Jane Nelsen, developer of the Positive Discipline model, gives the following criteria for effective discipline that teaches:

Effective Discipline...

1. Helps children feel a sense of connection. (Belonging and significance)
2. Is mutually respectful and encouraging. (Kind and firm at the same time.)
3. Is effective long-term. (Considers what the child is thinking, feeling, learning, and deciding, about himself and his world—and what to do in the future to survive and thrive.)
4. Teaches important social and life skills. (Respect, concern for others, problem solving, and cooperation as well as the skills to contribute to the home, school or larger community.)

The Positive Discipline model is based on creating mutually respectful relationships. The methods use both kindness and firmness and are neither punitive nor permissive. The tools and concepts of Positive Discipline include:

- Mutual respect. Adults can be firm by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kind by respecting the needs of the child.
- Recognizing the reasons kids do what they do. Identifying the belief behind the behavior.
- Teaching problem solving and communication skills.
- A focus on discipline that teaches (and is neither permissive nor punitive).
- Focusing on solutions instead of punishment.
- Encouragement (instead of praise)

(For more information about Positive Discipline, please see Jane Nelsen's website and literature, available at <http://www.positivediscipline.com/>)

A safe and enjoyable environment is essential at The Emerson School. We expect students to be self-disciplined and cooperate with each other, the staff, and other adults who volunteer or otherwise support The Emerson School program. Students are expected to act with respect for self, others, and the environment, and actively promote safety, integrity, tolerance, inclusiveness, and a sense of community.

Every member of The Emerson School community participates in making the school:

- A place for safety of our bodies, feelings, and opinions
- A place for kindness and respect
- A place for learning

Our goal is to make the school a safe place for learning and teaching. Inappropriate student behavior is seen in the first instance as a learning opportunity rather than a punishable offense. In any situation involving conflict, emphasis will be placed on repairing the situation and teaching skills for positive interactions in the future. Staff, students and parents will work together to mend feelings, rebuild damaged relationships, or restore damaged property.

We believe a strong school-home connection is integral to teaching and learning and will inform you of and involve you in any situation that requires continual intervention.

The Emerson School is a safe and inclusive community. Any action that threatens the physical or emotional safety of students or staff is unacceptable. Harassment in any form is not tolerated. If a student acts in an unsafe way or in a manner that disrupts student learning and/or school activities, they may be separated from the immediate classroom community, and with repeated misbehaviors may be separated from the whole school community, either short term or indefinitely. A parent or guardian may be called and asked to pick the student up immediately if the child's actions require it. Behaviors and actions that could warrant immediate removal from the classroom or school community include (but are not limited to):

- Physical violence
- Verbal abuse
- Use of profanity
- Harassment of any kind
- Refusal to comply with teacher or adult in charge (includes refusal to stay with class when outside, refusal to line up, and refusal to walk with line)
- Possession of controlled substances or weapons
- Leaving the school grounds without permission or supervision

If a student is sent home, a meeting may be held with parents, the classroom teacher, and an administrator. All parties will work together to decide how to handle the situation and continue to support the student and others. A behavior plan may be created. If such a meeting is convened, the student's return to school is contingent upon this meeting.

The Emerson School is committed to providing a successful, positive school experience for all students. If a student is separated from the school community on multiple occasions, school staff and parents will meet to determine how the school can move forward to best meet that child's needs.

Social Issues, Relational Aggression, and Bullying

As your child becomes older, they will face new challenges and opportunities. As academics become more complex, so do social situations and friendships. Children grow more discriminating in their friendships, and begin to experience friendships in more nuanced ways. Children become more aware of the complexities of relationships, feelings, and the power of inclusion and exclusion. With this deeper experience of social life can come a certain amount of struggle as children navigate relationships. Forming particular friendships, while still being kind and inclusive to everyone, can be challenging.

Teachers and recess staff alike are committed to helping children find that balance, both in and out of the classroom. In following the Positive Discipline model, teachers have frequent class meetings which address all kinds of social issues; children are encouraged to add their particular item of concern to the agenda, so it can be safely and anonymously discussed by the class. The class works together to find a solution to help address the issue, which often turns out to be a whole-class issue. Teachers and recess staff also strongly encourage children to come to them with a problem, so that the appropriate adult can help them brainstorm ways to solve their problem. During recess, staff will often facilitate discussion between children in order to support problem-solving while at the same time, encouraging children to solve their problems as independently as possible.

When your child comes to you, their adult, and reports that they are having some social difficulty, it is a great opportunity to show your child that you have confidence in them as problem-solvers. Ask them: **What did you do to make the situation better?** If they have trouble remembering what solutions are available to them, you might suggest...

- Telling the adult in charge when they are having a problem, either in the classroom or at recess. Children often forget that they can come to any adult in the building and ask for help. Remind your child that asking for help is not the same as tattling.
- Walking away and cooling down, and then talking to the child in question later, when things are calmer. Asking an adult for help in facilitating the conversation is always an option.
- Talking to a staff person privately at a different time.
- Putting their problem on the class meeting agenda.
- Exploring all kinds of friendships; situations can cool down and change rapidly between children, and sometimes a small break can be helpful.
- Role-play is often very helpful; have your child act out the situation with you, and trade parts. Have your child be him or herself in the situation, then trade and have him or her act as the other child. Discuss afterwards how it felt, what solutions you came up with, and practice what might work next time.
- Ask your child if they can think of another solution that might work.

It can be hard to remain calm when your child brings social concerns to you. Please be aware that there is a great range of social issues between students. Typically, situations that arise between children are not simply “bully-victim” scenarios, but are more complex, with behavior that warrants addressing on both sides. Remaining focused on how your child can solve the problem independently will greatly help the situation. Nearly all children experience a certain amount of struggle with social issues at some point during their elementary school years; please know that giving them the support to work through them will teach them important life skills.

You are **welcome** to bring concerns to staff at any time. All staff work hard to help children build problem-solving skills, be kind and inclusive, and think of the feelings of others. If staff and parents work together to give children the message that they are capable of navigating these issues, children feel confident in their own abilities, and problems get solved much more quickly.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyber bullying are prohibited at The Emerson School as required by HB 2599. The 2009 Legislature enacted House Bill 2599 which first applied to the 2009-2010 school year. All Oregon school districts and charter schools must update their harassment, intimidation, and bullying policies and procedures to be in compliance with this new law. Specifically, harassment, intimidation and bullying may include acts based on the protected class status of a person. We are required to add to our existing policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying, which is listed in our handbook, in order to include specific requirements in the policy.

Definition of “harassment, intimidation and bullying” (in accordance with ORS 339.351) :

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any act that:

- (a) Substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance;
- (b) Takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop;
- (c) Has the effect of:
 - (A) Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property;
 - (B) Knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or damage to the student’s property; or
 - (C) Creating a hostile educational environment, including interfering with the psychological well-being of a student; and
 - (D) May be based on, but not be limited to, the protected class status of a person.

“Cyber bullying” means the use of any electronic communication device to harass, intimidate, or bully.

Definition of “protected class” (in accordance with ORS 174.100 and 339.351)

“Protected class” means a group of persons distinguished, or perceived to be distinguished, by race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, familial status, source of income or disability.

Students are expected to behave in a safe, appropriate, and respectful manner towards all individuals at all times during school hours, including while on school grounds, while on transportation with a school group, while out in the community on a school-sponsored trip, and at school-sponsored bus stops.

Complaints of intimidation, harassment, bullying, and cyber bullying may be made to any staff person at The Emerson School, who will direct such concerns to the School Administrator. Complaints may be made directly to the School Administrator in person, via phone (503) 525-6124, or by email.

All complaints of intimidation, harassment, bullying, and cyber bullying will be investigated promptly by the School Administrator, with assistance from other staff members and involved persons as appropriate and needed. Persons wishing to review the actions of school personnel

in responding to or investigating a report of an act of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber bullying may contact the School Administrator directly to request such information.

Consequences for students found, after thorough investigation, to be engaged in harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyber bullying will vary according to the severity of the event, and may include:

- Reparation plan made between parties, with help from parent/guardian and staff
- Creation of behavior plan/contract between student, staff, and parent/guardians
- Parent or guardian called to immediately remove student from school grounds
- Separation from school community, either short-term or indefinitely
- Official suspension/expulsion from The Emerson School

Reprisal and/or retaliation against persons who report incidents of harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber bullying is strictly prohibited, and may result in the same consequences listed above.

The Emerson School Communication Policy

We at The Emerson School are committed to open communication between staff, parents, and children, in order to create the best possible learning team for our students. We rely on parents to communicate their expertise about their children so we can be as effective as possible.

On rare occasion, parents and teachers may find themselves in a situation that requires additional discussion about their child/student. All of the Emerson staff welcome this communication, and are grateful for information that helps us to best educate your children.

As a staff, we have pledged to use direct communication with one another as issues arise. Using our commitment to Participatory Management as a guiding framework (we all participate in the active management of the school), we rely on one another to communicate directly and honestly and to help one another find positive solutions. When needed, we are encouraged to find a neutral third party on our staff to be there to help us with potentially difficult or uncomfortable conversations.

We strive to bring this model to our interactions with all members of the Emerson community, and invite our parent partners to do the same. If child- or classroom-related concerns arise between parents and staff, we ask both parties to first go directly to the staff member or parent closest to the issue, and ask to have a meeting to discuss the issue. Let the person know what the request for a meeting is in regards to, and set a time when both parties have time to talk. Assume the best intent from the other party, and move into discussion with the focus on creating the best learning environment for Emerson's students.

If the first discussion does not resolve the matter satisfactorily, we encourage each party to try again, and at that point either party can ask for another staff member to be a third party to be present and to act as an objective listener.

If after several meetings the concern hasn't been addressed satisfactorily, and there does not appear to be forward progress, then the School Administrator can help facilitate dialogue until all parties reach understanding, if not agreement. If resolution is not achieved, the School Administrator will recommend mediation from an outside organization.

Our goal is for staff, parents, and children to come together to make the strongest and most effective educational team possible. We believe this can be achieved through frequent and direct communication at every level. We truly value parental contribution and input, and recognize parents as the foremost experts on their children.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Emerson community.

Parent Participation

Parents/guardians and extended family are encouraged to participate in making The Emerson School community successful. There are many opportunities to volunteer, both during and after the school day. At the start of the school year, some teachers may request a short "no visitors" period for students to build community and define internal classroom expectations before parent participation is expected. After that initial period, volunteers are welcomed and appreciated in the classroom. In addition to classroom activities, our school families help with general building maintenance, cleaning, school errands, recess, organizing books and supplies, and many other miscellaneous tasks. Please contact your child's classroom teacher or the School Office if you have a few free hours!

Our PTO, **The Friends of The Emerson School** ("FES"), is a parent/community support organization. The group's mission is to "work to enrich The Emerson School by supporting student and staff needs, building community connections and raising money to do both." FES sponsors numerous fundraising activities throughout the school year, hosts community events, and helps ensure that classrooms have the materials and supplies they require.

Gifts to Staff

School staff members are public employees, and as such, are subject to the Oregon state ethics rules. Oregon ethics law (Chapter 244) states that public employees may not accept gifts with a value greater than \$50.00. This limit applies to groups of people with a common interest. Therefore, families in the same classroom (or with any other similar interest applied to a staff member) may not combine their resources to purchase or make a gift valued at more than \$50.00. This law was enacted to ensure that members of the public (our families and students) are treated equally and that no one has or might be perceived to have special advantages or influence.

As a staff, we look forward to and are grateful for our community's generosity. Token gifts, cards and appreciations are valued and welcomed. While the ethics law exists to prevent real or perceived unequal treatment of the public (students and families), it also serves to lessen disparities in gift giving between classrooms and alleviate pressure on families to participate. With this policy, we seek to ensure equity and to assuage any feelings of obligation.

Those looking to support the school in a more substantial monetary way may donate directly to The Emerson School's Annual Fund or to FES. Such donations are very much needed and appreciated.

Weekly Schedule

M, T, W, Th the school day is 8:45-3:15. Fridays we dismiss early, at 1:15, to allow teacher planning time and appointments for parent meetings if needed.

Wednesday afternoons at 3:45 we have staff meeting, no other meetings or staff commitments are planned at that time.

Pick-up and Drop-off Procedures

We are an urban school. With all the great benefits our location provides come some challenges, and parking is one of them! While it can be frustrating to wait for a parking space and have to pay to park, it is essential for the school's relationship with city agencies that we follow all parking regulations while dropping off and picking up students at The Emerson School. Your patience and understanding of our position is greatly appreciated!

Please model responsible pedestrian etiquette and cross only at the corner. We are in a busy neighborhood, and NEVER want students to cross from the middle of the block.

Students may be dropped off at school beginning at **8:30am**. You may walk your child into school or drop them off in the horseshoe driveway on NW Flanders St. between NW 19th and NW 20th where they will be met by an Emerson staff member. Prior to that time, students must be enrolled in Early Care through Champions, or be supervised by an adult dropping them off to be allowed entry to the building. Student pick-up is at 3:15pm (1:15pm on Friday). Teachers and staff often have meetings and appointments directly after the school day, and cannot remain with a child who hasn't been picked up. Please call the school office if you are in an emergency situation and will be unavoidably detained, as we will start making calls to emergency contacts by 3:30.

Please refrain from double parking and idling while dropping off or waiting for your child after school. Not only is it a safety hazard for other drivers and pedestrians, it increases pollutants near the school exits. If you wish for your child to exit the building independently, parents must fill out a permission slip and return to the office. **Children will not be allowed to leave school grounds without an adult unless we have prior written parental permission on file in the school office.** Children who have permission to leave school grounds independently will not be permitted to re-enter the school building except in case of emergency.

Student Dress

Students should arrive at school every day prepared for going outside, no matter what the weather conditions are like. Clothing should be weather appropriate, and not inhibit student learning and involvement. Students will be physically active throughout the day, and clothes will get dirty. Students go outside at least twice a day for exercise (Morning Movement and Recess). Footwear should be comfortable and safe for walking and running every day. If your child makes a footwear choice that does not seem conducive to movement activities, please ensure they have another pair of shoes available at school that is appropriate for walking, running, and playing outside.

Student usage of personal phones and smart devices

The policy of The Emerson School is that student cell phones and smart devices (including watches) must be turned off and either given to the classroom teacher for the entirety of the school day or placed securely in a backpack for the entirety of the school day. Students who need to contact their parents during school hours must do so through the office. Students who violate this policy will have their cell phones taken and placed in the office for pick-up at the end of the day.

The Emerson School is not responsible for any loss, theft or damage that may occur to a phone or personal listening device while it is at school. Staff members will not spend time looking for lost phones or personal listening devices, no matter what the value of the item. It is highly recommended that parents review rules for safety and security of these items before allowing students to bring them to school.

Field Study Policy

Field studies are an integral part of the curriculum at The Emerson School. It is expected that all students will participate in field studies related to their project work. Some field studies will be planned well in advance, and others will be spontaneous explorations. We are active members of our urban community, and you can expect your child to be a part of that vibrant, noisy, messy, exciting, learning environment. If your child is too ill to participate in outdoor or field study activities on a particular day, it is in their (and other students') best interest to stay at

home. Please remember that we have no provisions for supervising students left behind in the school while a class is outside on a field study.

Please make sure your child has comfortable, sturdy, weather-appropriate clothing and shoes for walking and working outdoors throughout the school year. In addition, please send a spare set of old clothes to keep at school in case your child gets wet while outside.

Toy and Fidget Policy

At The Emerson School, we have always had a “no toys from home” policy. Having toys at school can be a significant distraction for students. Besides the children wanting to play with their own toys during school time, they can often be lost, broken, or even given away (with the giver often being upset later when the receiver doesn’t want to return it). All of these impact our classroom communities in negative ways, which is why it is so important for children to leave their toys at home. Please reiterate this with your children, prior to the first day of school. **Please note that if a child brings a toy to school, the teacher will hold it for the day, to be returned at dismissal. If it is a reoccurring issue, the teacher will work with the student and parents to determine an appropriate solution.**

Although the use of “fidgets” can be beneficial for a small number of students, these items frequently become much more of a distraction (for both the individual student and the class, as a whole) than a help. In addition, when children bring these items from home, they are often used more as toys than as useful devices (see note above). After discussing this issue with our Disability Specialist, the Emerson staff has decided on a new policy. For the coming year, **students will not be permitted to bring/use fidgets from home.** Instead, each teacher will have a number of items in their classroom that can be “checked out” on a daily, as-needed basis by students. They will also be given specific guidelines and expectations for use of these items, and these will be explicitly explained and taught to the students prior to use. We firmly believe that this policy will help support *all* of our students in their learning needs.

Celebrations

Out of respect for the religious and cultural diversity represented at the school, religious-based holidays are not celebrated in the classrooms. This includes Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day and Easter. Instead, the school staff and students choose other days to celebrate to honor our own unique school culture such as: International Peace Day, MLK Day, and Earth Day. Student birthday celebration guidelines vary by classroom and are communicated by individual teachers.

Communication from Teachers and Staff

For families with access to the internet, the school communicates important information through **email via School Messenger**, our internal school-to-home communication platform. You will also receive emails from your teacher via email and possibly on teacher websites.

The staff at The Emerson School values the contributions and input of students’ families, and will provide ample opportunities for parents to participate in the school community. All staff members can be reached via email. General questions or concerns can be addressed to info@emersonschool.org, and phone messages can be left for teachers to receive on a break or after the school day.

To encourage a healthy work-life balance with our staff, we ask that you not expect replies to emails sent in the evening or on weekends until the teacher's next work day. **If you contact the classroom teacher via email on an evening or weekend, do not expect it to be read until regular work hours.** If you have an emergency, you can both email and leave a voice mail at the school and the message will get to your child's teacher at the beginning of the next work day.

Appointments with the School Administrator

If you would like to meet with the School Administrator, please schedule an appointment with her via email at sunita@emersonschool.org and **be sure to include times you can meet and the reason you would like to meet.** Our Administrator's time is often scheduled tightly, so making an appointment will guarantee you will have her full attention for the duration of your meeting.

Inclement Weather / Late Opening Policy

The Emerson School follows the Portland Public Schools "Inclement Weather" practices. There may be times when school needs to be closed, or dismissed early because of ice, snow, power failure or some other emergency. As a K-5 public school drawing students from all areas of Portland, we need to be prepared for unexpected closures. **Parents/guardians are advised to listen to the radio, check the Portland Public Schools Inclement Weather Notification/Emergency website or watch TV on days of unusually bad weather for possible school closures. Please do not call the school office for this information.** The Emerson School will send emails to family members in the event of an emergency or school closure. Please contact Jenn (jenn@emersonschool.org) if you are not receiving emails from The Emerson School.

If school must close early due to inclement weather or other emergencies, an announcement will be made for Portland Public Schools via radio, TV, and website. **We follow Portland Public School District's closure schedule. *If only some west side schools are closed, we do what MLC (Metropolitan Learning Center) does.***

In the event of early closure once school has started, we will contact those people listed on your Emergency/Early Closure Family Plan form on file in the office for student pick-up. **If your emergency plan changes, it is extremely important that you inform the school of the change in writing.**

Snack Policy

Each child will be asked to bring their own snack from home every day. Your child's teacher will inform you of the classroom's snack policy at the start of school. **If your child has diet-related health concerns or food allergies, it is strongly advised that you provide snacks from home and provide your child's teacher and the office with clear documentation of the food-related concerns (see "Medical Conditions" below). Medical or special diets cannot be accommodated without clear instructions in writing for both the teacher and the school office.**

The Emerson School community will be meeting together throughout the school year for various events. Food will be a part of some of these events. The staff and/or classroom teachers must be consulted before bringing in any food meant to be shared with the whole school or individual classrooms. **Due to Multnomah County and state health regulations, only pre-packaged, store-bought food items may be shared at school. Food prepared at home is not**

permitted for sharing with the whole school or any classroom. This is non-negotiable as it is state law.

We encourage families to bring lunch and snacks in re-usable containers to minimize waste.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy that is life threatening or requires emergency care, the school office and your child's teacher must be notified prior to the child's first day of attending school. If an Epi-Pen is required for a treatment of allergic reaction, your child may not attend school until it is provided.

Emergency Information

The school MUST have a way to reach you in an emergency. Tell the school immediately about changes in work and home addresses and phone numbers for both you and emergency contact persons.

Medical Conditions

If your child has an acute or ongoing medical condition that requires any special care during school hours (such as dietary restrictions, regular medication requirements, physical activity limitations, etc.), we must have a doctor's note on file in the office clearly stating the condition and any associated restrictions. If your child has a medical condition which requires emergency medication to be stored at school, that medication must be on school grounds for your child to attend school.

To provide for your child's special medical or mental health needs (for example; diabetes, seizures or school anxiety) it is important to promptly tell the school:

- About new and changing health problems that can cause learning or safety problems at school
- If your child is undergoing treatments that affect the immune system
- When your child has a chronic health need that requires specialized care at school.

Before and After School Programs

If your child is enrolled in a before or after school program and needs medication /health assistance during these times, a separate supply of medication and a separate permission form from parent and/or doctor is needed. Consult with the program director regarding specific health and safety needs for your child in these programs.

Immunizations/Health Forms

As required by Oregon State law, all students must have a record of a complete series of the required immunizations or medical or religious exemption on file. Students born in countries where tuberculosis (TB) is prevalent must provide at their first Oregon enrollment proof of being free from TB. Non-compliance with immunization and TB requirements will result in exclusion from school. In addition, each child's family must fill out The Emerson School Student Medical Form to be kept on file in the school office.

Students not in compliance with immunization requirements may not attend school and will be excluded on state mandated exclusion days (typically the third Wednesday in February).

Updating of Health Forms

Please remember to complete all medical and emergency forms sent home and return them to the office as soon as possible. If any changes occur in any of these forms, please call us with the new information. This information is confidential, seen by administrators and appropriate teachers only.

Contagious Conditions

In regard to helping prevent the transmission of COVID-19 at The Emerson School, please see our “Communicable Disease Management Plan” on our website.

In regard to all other contagious conditions, please see below:

To decrease the spread of contagious conditions in school:

- Tell the school if your child has a contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep or pertussis (whooping cough)
- Do not send your child to school with a rash, fever, diarrhea or vomiting
- To protect the health of students or other persons, certain diseases are reportable to the health department per law (OAR 333-18-000). At such times, records and information may be disclosed to public health officials.

If your child is running a fever or shows obvious signs of illness, please keep him/her at home. If your child becomes ill during the school day, you or your emergency contact must arrive at school **in a timely manner** to take the sick child home. The school will send a child home if there is a fever of 100 degrees or higher, if the child has vomited or had diarrhea, if he or she is lethargic and unable to participate in classroom activities, or if he or she is in obvious pain without prior information from a parent/guardian regarding the cause. **Do not send a child to school who has had a fever of 100 degrees or higher, or who has vomited or had diarrhea in the previous 24 hours.** If a child is sent home with a fever or vomiting, they will not be admitted back to school the following day (until 24hrs has passed since the last incident of fever or vomiting).

Children with bacterial infections (i.e., strep throat, impetigo) must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

In the case of a pandemic outbreak, we will follow the Health Department, State Board of Education and CDC’s recommendations about school closures and other preventative measures. As always, we follow general Health Department guidelines about hand washing and good hygiene measures, and provide instruction to our students.

Lice Information

The PPS lice policy reflects recommendations from national experts such as Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Current research describes that classroom or school-wide screening and parent notifications about known cases of lice are not good use of resources—academic or staff time. Neither activity diminishes the

incidence of lice and can give parents a false sense of security if they are not receiving notification. **Parents should assume there are always lice around, and perform regular checks on their child(ren).**

Medication Administration at School

Only medication that is necessary to be given during the school day will be kept at school. Remember to **ask your medical provider if your child's medication can be given outside school hours.** This is safer for your child and easier for you.

Parents must fill out a Medication Permission Form prior to our administering any medication. Vitamins, homeopathic remedies, and over-the-counter-drugs are all considered medicine, and may not be sent with children in back packs or lunch boxes. Forms are in the school office, and office staff will administer medication as outlined on the form. **Do not ask teachers to store or administer medications.** In order to minimize the danger of accidents associated with the administering of medicine, parents should ask the school to give prescription or non-prescription medication only when absolutely necessary, and only when accompanied by their written instructions. **All medicine must be in the original bottle, with original label and directions, must be prescribed for that child, and accompanied by a signed note from the doctor listing possible side effects.** Please let the teacher(s) know whenever your child is on medication, as it may affect alertness and participation. **All medication not picked up by the end of the school year will be destroyed.**

Attendance Policy

Attendance is one of the many benchmarks by which schools are measured. Students who miss too much school not only miss important instructional time, but also become less and less engaged in the classroom community, resulting in an impact on the entire class. Unfortunately, it is also the one thing the students themselves rarely have control over. We rely on you, the adults, to make timeliness and regular attendance an easy skill for your children to master. The Emerson School focuses on **responsible attendance** as our policy. Illness and family emergencies are always allowable absences, and sick children must stay home. However, absences that are not due to illness or emergency should be limited to as few as possible.

Vacations should be scheduled during regular school breaks and school attendance should be a family priority that you reinforce consistently and enthusiastically for your child.

In the event of a pending unexcused absence (i.e., a vacation scheduled during school days), the procedure is as follows: parents can request an **Attendance Disruption Form** from the school office to share with the classroom teacher to list any work that the student can do while absent. Both the parent & teacher will sign the form, then the parent will return the form to the office. Religious holidays are excused and therefore will not require an Attendance Disruption Form, however extended vacation days either before or after religious holidays are not excused. Contact the school office if you have any questions.

Fire and Life Safety

The Emerson School schedules fire drills monthly, earthquake drills twice a year, and emergency drills twice a year. Prior to the first of each kind of drill, students will be educated about the procedures and walked through what the drill entails. Drills are expected to truly prepare students and staff alike for unexpected emergencies, and we often make them more challenging by posing potential additional obstacles (ie, fire drill with front door “blocked” by a picture of flames, or while some students are still outside at recess). In this way, we ensure that students are ready to respond and act appropriately when the teacher gives them instructions during a real emergency.

Under no circumstances should a child be removed from the school community during a drill or real emergency without signing out with the teacher or other adult in charge.

In the event of a true emergency, all staff will be performing their assigned tasks related to student safety and there will be no one answering incoming phone calls from parents. Please do not tie up the school's limited phone capacity by calling. If the nature of the emergency requires students to be sent home, families will be contacted as soon as the emergency situation has been safely resolved. If the area around the school building is not safely accessible by car, parents will be instructed to assemble at our secondary emergency pick-up site (Couch Park on NW Glisan St. adjacent to MLC) and students will be brought to the secondary pick-up site to be signed out by parents.

If an emergency situation has occurred and resolved itself within the course of a single school day, a letter summarizing the incident will be emailed to families before the end of the work day.