



Complaint Procedures

Purpose

The Emerson School is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where every student is treated with dignity and respect. We encourage students, families, volunteers, staff, and community members to report concerns as soon as possible so they can be addressed promptly, fairly, and respectfully.

Retaliation against anyone who reports a concern or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Part 1: Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, Cyberbullying & Bias Incidents

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying, and bias incidents are prohibited at The Emerson School.

Anyone who believes a student has experienced one of these behaviors should report the concern to any Emerson staff member or directly to the Executive Director.

Reports may be made:

- In person
- By phone
- By email
- In writing

Reports may be made by students, parents or guardians, staff, volunteers, or community members.

What Happens After a Report?

When a report is received, Emerson will promptly:

1. Acknowledge the report.
2. Prioritize the safety and well-being of those impacted.
3. Review the concern and gather relevant information.
4. Speak with individuals involved and any witnesses.
5. Determine what occurred.
6. Take appropriate action to stop the behavior, repair harm, and prevent recurrence.

Whenever appropriate, Emerson will use restorative practices, Positive Discipline strategies, educational interventions, and behavior supports to help students repair relationships, understand the impact of their actions, and learn from mistakes. Responses may include:

- Educational opportunities addressing bias, inclusion, and the impact of harmful behavior
- Increased supervision or support
- Restorative conversations or conferences

- Counseling or social-emotional supports
- Accountability measures consistent with the Emerson Discipline Policy

When appropriate, disciplinary action may also be taken in accordance with the Emerson Discipline Policy.

If a reported incident may also involve discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under state or federal civil rights laws, Emerson will also investigate under the Civil Rights Complaint Procedures.

Whenever permitted by student privacy laws, affected parties will receive information regarding:

- when an investigation has begun;
- when it has been completed;
- the findings and determination; and
- actions taken to address the behavior and prevent recurrence as permitted by law.

Emerson strives to complete investigations promptly. Bias incident investigations will generally be completed within **10 school days**, while more complex investigations may require additional time. Any timeline extensions will be communicated in writing.

Part 2: Civil Rights, Discrimination & Retaliation

The Emerson School prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on any protected class under Oregon or federal law, including:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Disability
- Marital status
- Age
- Any other protected status protected by law

Students, families, staff, or community members who believe they have experienced discrimination may file a complaint with the school's Civil Rights Coordinator. Complaints related to disability discrimination, accommodations, or Section 504 may also be submitted to the school's Section 504 Coordinator.

Civil Rights Coordinator

Jenny Thompson, Executive Director
jenny@emersonschool.org
 503-525-6124

Section 504 Coordinator

Jo Sigmund, Instructional Coach
jo@emersonschool.org
 503-525-6124

Filing a Complaint

Complaints may be made:

- Verbally
- In writing
- By email
- Using the school's complaint form

A complaint does not need to reference a specific law or use legal terminology. If someone reports conduct they believe is discriminatory and seeks assistance resolving the concern, Emerson will treat it as a civil rights complaint.

Complaint Process

After receiving a complaint, Emerson will generally:

1. Acknowledge receipt within one business day.
2. Review the complaint and determine whether additional information is needed.
3. Consider any immediate supportive measures needed to ensure continued access to school.
4. Conduct a prompt, impartial investigation.
5. Interview relevant individuals and review available evidence.
6. Issue a written determination explaining the findings and any actions the school will take.

Whenever possible, investigations will be completed within **30 business days**. If additional time is necessary, Emerson will notify the parties and provide an updated timeline.

Supportive Measures

Supportive measures are available during an investigation regardless of whether a policy violation is ultimately found and may include:

- Increased adult support or supervision
- Schedule adjustments
- Classroom accommodations
- Other reasonable measures based on the circumstances

These measures are intended to preserve student safety and continued access to educational programs and are not disciplinary.

Appeals

If a complainant disagrees with Emerson's determination regarding a bias incident or civil rights complaint, they may submit a written appeal to the Board of Directors within five school days of receiving the decision.

The Board will review the appeal and issue a written decision within **10 days of its review**. The Board's decision constitutes Emerson's final decision.

If Emerson does not issue a written decision within the timelines required by law, or after local complaint procedures have been exhausted, complainants may appeal to the Oregon Department

of Education in accordance with Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR 581-002-0001 through 581-002-0023).

Complaints alleging violations of federal civil rights laws may also be filed directly with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Our Commitment

Every complaint will be taken seriously. Emerson will respond promptly, fairly, and respectfully while protecting student privacy to the fullest extent permitted by law. Our goal is always to stop harmful behavior, restore a safe learning environment, repair harm whenever possible, and ensure every student has equal access to educational opportunities.