

The Emerson School

STUDENT & FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-27

(last updated August 2026)

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1 | WELCOME TO THE EMERSON SCHOOL

Dear Emerson Families,

Welcome to another year at The Emerson School! Whether you're joining our community for the first time or returning for another adventure, we're so glad you're here.

At Emerson, we believe learning happens everywhere—inside our classrooms, out in our community, and through the meaningful relationships we build with one another. As Otters, we're curious, collaborative, resilient, and always ready to explore. We celebrate creativity, ask big questions, solve problems together, and support one another along the way.

This handbook is designed to help you understand our school's practices, expectations, and values. More importantly, it's a reflection of who we are as a community. While it can't answer every question, we hope it serves as a helpful resource throughout the year.

One of the things that makes Emerson special is the partnership between school and home. When students, families, and staff work together, incredible things happen. Thank you for trusting us with your child and for being an active part of our community.

Here's to a year filled with curiosity, connection, growth, and plenty of Otter pride!

In Community,

Jenny Thompson
Executive Director | The Emerson School

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. ([All Students Belong Policy – Appendix A](#))

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 high academic and personal expectations for every student.
- Foster curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning while building strong foundational skills.
- Honor each child as a unique learner by providing developmentally appropriate support.
- Create a collaborative learning environment where students actively construct understanding through inquiry, reflection, and hands-on experiences.
- Deliver an integrated curriculum that connects learning to students' experiences, our community, and the natural environment.
- Empower students to be active, responsible contributors to the school and broader community.
- Celebrate diversity and foster a culture where everyone has opportunities to learn, teach, and grow.
- Partner with families as essential members of the Emerson community.
- Use authentic assessment to support learning and measure student growth.
- Welcome students from across the Portland Public School District.

SCHOOL ADDRESS, HOURS, & CONTACT INFORMATION

School Address & Contact Information

The Emerson School
1800 SW 1st Ave. Suite #1
Portland, OR 97201

School Hours

- M, T, W, Th 8:45am-3:15pm (*drop off starts at 8:30am and classrooms close at 3:30pm*)
- Friday 8:45am-1:15pm (early dismissal every Friday)

School Contact Information

School Office Phone: 503-525-6124
Fax: 503-223-4875
Email: info@emersonschool.org
Office Hours: 8:30am-4:00pm (we close at 3pm on Fridays)

SCHOOL STAFF

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL
Jenny Thompson	Executive Director	jenny@emersonschool.org
Chelsea Reich	Office Manager	chelsea@emersonschool.org
Jo Sigmund	Instructional Coach	jo@emersonschool.org
Angie O'Brien	K/1 Teacher	angie@emersonschool.org
Christina Schelske	K/1 Teacher	christina@emersonschool.org
Jamie Gallo	2/3 Teacher	jamie@emersonschool.org
Hilary Conroy	2/3 Teacher	hilary@emersonschool.org
Kelsey Gordon	4/5 Teacher	kelsey@emersonschool.org
Will Mehigan	4/5 Teacher	will@emersonschool.org
Kim Finn	Reading Specialist	kim@emersonschool.org
Meagan Riott	Arts & Music Teacher	meagan@emersonschool.org
Ashley Gundel	Instructional Support Teacher	ashley@emersonschool.org
Grace Young	Education Assistant	grace@emersonschool.org
Krista Rosales	Special Education Teacher	krosales@pps.net

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 them (phone, email, etc.)

2 | BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

THE EMERSON SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

At The Emerson School, we believe that open, respectful communication among staff, families, and students creates the strongest learning environment for every child. We value parents and guardians as their child's first and most important teachers, and we rely on your insights to help us support each student's success.

When questions or concerns arise, we encourage direct communication with the person closest to the situation. If you have a concern about your child's classroom experience, please contact the staff member involved to schedule a time to talk. Enter these conversations with the shared goal of understanding one another and finding solutions that best support the student.

Emerson staff are committed to communicating honestly, respectfully, and collaboratively. When a conversation feels particularly challenging, either party may request that another staff member serve as a neutral third party to help facilitate the discussion.

If a concern remains unresolved after these conversations, the Executive Director will work with those involved to facilitate additional dialogue and seek a mutually acceptable resolution. If resolution cannot be reached, the Executive Director may recommend mediation through an outside organization.

Our goal is to build strong partnerships between families and staff through open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to every child's success.

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

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING

Families and extended family members are encouraged to help make The Emerson School a thriving community. Volunteer opportunities may include supporting school events, organizing books and supplies, helping with campus projects, completing other school needs, and, when appropriate, assisting in classrooms.

Classroom volunteer opportunities are based on the needs and discretion of each individual teacher and may vary by classroom and throughout the school year. Some teachers may request a "no visitors" period at the beginning of the year to allow students to build community and establish routines, while others may have limited or no need for classroom volunteers. Classroom volunteering is therefore not guaranteed and will be coordinated directly with the teacher.

To learn about current volunteer opportunities, please contact your child's teacher or the School Office. We appreciate the many ways families contribute their time and talents to the Emerson community.

FRIENDS OF THE EMERSON SCHOOL (FES)

Our PTO, The Friends of The Emerson School (FES) is our parent and community support organization. Its mission is to enrich The Emerson School by supporting students and staff, strengthening community connections, and raising funds to support both.

FES organizes fundraising events, hosts community-building activities, and helps provide classrooms with needed materials and resources. Families play an important role by volunteering, sharing ideas, and participating in these events.

For a complete list of fundraising activities sponsored by both FES and The Emerson School, please refer to [Appendix G](#).

GIFTS TO STAFF

As public employees, Emerson staff are required to follow Oregon ethics laws (ORS Chapter 244), which limit gifts from individuals or groups with a common interest to \$50. This means that families from the same classroom or other shared group may not combine resources to give a staff member a gift valued at more than \$50.

This law helps ensure that all students and families are treated fairly and that no one is perceived to receive special treatment or influence.

Our staff deeply appreciates the kindness and generosity of our community. Thoughtful notes, handmade items, and other small tokens of appreciation are always meaningful and welcomed. The gift limit also helps promote equity among classrooms and reduces any pressure families may feel to contribute.

Families who wish to make a larger financial contribution are encouraged to donate to The Emerson School's Annual Fund or the Friends of The Emerson School (FES). These gifts directly support our students, staff, and school community and are sincerely appreciated.

3 | STUDENT EXPECTATIONS & SCHOOL CULTURE

DISCIPLINE APPROACH

The Emerson School uses **Positive Discipline** (authored by Jane Nelson) as the foundation of our approach to behavior, relationships, and school culture. Positive Discipline teaches important social and life skills in a way that is respectful to both children and adults, helping students become responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of their community.

At its core, Positive Discipline is built on the belief that children are more likely to make positive choices when they feel a sense of belonging, connection, and significance. Rather than asking, *"How do we punish this behavior?"* we ask, *"What skill does this child need to learn, and how can we teach it?"*

According to **Jane Nelsen**, effective discipline:

- Builds a sense of belonging and connection.
- Is both kind and firm.
- Focuses on long-term learning rather than short-term compliance.
- Teaches important life skills such as respect, empathy, problem-solving, responsibility, and cooperation.

At Emerson, this means we:

- Build relationships based on mutual respect.
- Seek to understand the reasons behind behavior.
- Teach communication and problem-solving skills.
- Focus on solutions rather than punishment.
- Use encouragement to build confidence and responsibility.

Additional information about Positive Discipline can be found on the official [Positive Discipline website](#).

Our Community Expectations

A safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment is essential to learning. Every member of the Emerson community shares responsibility for creating a school where:

- Everyone feels physically and emotionally safe.
- Everyone is treated with kindness and respect.
- Everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow.

Students are expected to act respectfully toward themselves, others, and the environment. They are also expected to follow adult directions and contribute positively to the classroom and school community.

When conflicts or behavior concerns arise, we view them first as opportunities for learning. Staff work alongside students and families to repair relationships, restore trust, solve problems, and

build the skills needed for future success. We believe that strong partnerships between home and school are essential, and families will be involved whenever ongoing support is needed.

Supporting Safe Learning Environments

The Emerson School is committed to maintaining a safe and inclusive learning environment. Behaviors that threaten the physical or emotional safety of students or staff or significantly disrupt learning require immediate intervention.

Students may be temporarily removed from the classroom to restore safety and allow learning to continue. Serious or repeated incidents may result in short- or long-term separation from the school community. (See [Appendix B](#) for the complete Separation Policy.) When appropriate, a parent or guardian may be contacted and asked to pick up their child.

Examples of behaviors that may require immediate intervention include, but are not limited to:

- Physical violence
- Verbal abuse or harassment
- Profanity directed toward others
- Refusal to follow the directions of a supervising adult when safety is involved
- Possession of weapons or controlled substances
- Leaving school grounds without permission or supervision

If a student is sent home, the school may require a reentry meeting with the student's parent or guardian, classroom teacher, and an administrator before the student returns. Together, the team will develop a plan to support the student's successful return while maintaining the safety and well-being of the school community. A behavior support plan may be developed as part of this process.

If a student requires repeated separation from the school community, staff and parents or guardians will meet to determine additional supports and identify the best path forward for the student.

When school-based interventions are not sufficient, The Emerson School will follow applicable Portland Public Schools (PPS) policies, together with Emerson's own policy (see [Appendix C](#)), to determine next steps:

- PPS Policy 4.30.025-AD
- PPS Policy 4.30.062-AD
- PPS Policy 4.30.010-P

SUPPORTING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

As children grow, friendships become more complex. They experience changing social dynamics, disagreements, inclusion, and exclusion. While these situations can be challenging, they also provide valuable opportunities to build empathy, resilience, and problem-solving skills.

At The Emerson School, staff use the Positive Discipline approach to help students develop healthy relationships and resolve conflicts. Through class meetings, guided conversations, and daily interactions, students learn to express their feelings respectfully, consider the perspectives of others, and work together to solve problems. Students are encouraged to seek support from any trusted adult whenever they need help.

How Families Can Help

When your child shares a social concern, encourage them to think through possible solutions before stepping in. Questions such as, *"What have you tried?"* or *"What do you think you could do next?"* help build confidence and independence.

You might encourage your child to:

- Ask a trusted staff member for help.
- Walk away to cool down before talking through the problem.
- Ask an adult to help facilitate a conversation.
- Add the concern to the class meeting agenda.
- Spend time with other friends while emotions settle.
- Practice possible solutions through role-playing or brainstorming with an adult.

Social conflicts are a normal part of childhood and are often more complex than simple "bully-victim" situations. By working together, families and staff can help children develop the skills to resolve conflicts respectfully, build healthy relationships, and grow into confident problem-solvers.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING, & CYBERBULLYING

The Emerson School is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment for every student. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, and cyberbullying are prohibited in accordance with Oregon law (ORS 339.351). Definitions are below:

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any act that:

- Substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance;
- Occurs on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored activities, on school-provided transportation, or at official school bus stops; and
- Has the effect of:
 - Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property;
 - Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or property damage; or
 - Creating a hostile educational environment by interfering with a student's psychological well-being.
 - Such conduct may be based on, but is not limited to, a person's protected class status.

Bullying is repeated, intentional behavior that uses words or actions to hurt, intimidate, or exclude another person who may have difficulty defending themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. While not all conflicts are bullying, all unkind behavior is taken seriously and addressed in ways that help students learn, repair harm, and strengthen our community.

Cyberbullying means the use of electronic communication to harass, intimidate, or bully another person.

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, as defined by Oregon law.

Students are expected to behave safely, respectfully, and responsibly during school hours, while on school grounds, on school transportation, at school-sponsored activities, during field trips, and at school bus stops.

Reporting Concerns

Concerns about harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying may be reported to any Emerson staff member or directly to the Executive Director in person, by phone, or by email.

All reports will be investigated promptly by the Executive Director, with assistance from staff and other involved individuals as appropriate. Anyone wishing to review the school's response to a reported incident may contact the Executive Director. For the complete complaint procedure, please refer to [Appendix D](#).

Possible Responses

Following a thorough investigation, consequences will be based on the severity and circumstances of the incident and may include:

- Restorative conference or reparation plan involving the student, family, and staff
- Behavior support plan or behavior contract
- Parent or guardian pickup from school
- Short- or long-term separation from the school community
- Suspension or expulsion (see [Appendix B](#))

Retaliation against any person who reports harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.

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 utilizes and references [Portland Public Schools' Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy 1.80.020-P](#))

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, color, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, national origin, or mental or physical disability.

Students, families, and staff who believe they have been discriminated against or harassed based on any of the characteristics listed above may file a complaint with our Title VI/IX/ADA Coordinator (Jenny Thompson, the Executive Director, at the school's address, 503-525-6124, jenny@emersonschool.org) who has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy.

Students, families, and staff who are looking for support or wanting to file a complaint regarding Section 504 may contact our 504 Coordinator (Jo Sigmund, Instructional Coach, at the school's address, 503-525-6124, jo@emersonschool.org)

Please see [Appendix D](#) for complaint procedures.

4 | DAILY SCHOOL LIFE

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Monday-Thursday, the school day is 8:45am-3:15pm. Fridays we dismiss early, at 1:15pm, to allow teacher planning time and appointments for parent meetings if needed.

Tuesday afternoons at 3:45pm we have staff meetings; no other meetings or staff commitments are planned at that time.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is essential to your child's academic success, social development, and sense of belonging. At The Emerson School, we strive to be **chronically present, rather than chronically absent**, because every day of learning matters. When students attend school consistently, they build stronger relationships, develop positive routines, and fully participate in our learning community.

We understand that illnesses, family emergencies, and important life events occur, and students should stay home when they are sick. When possible, we ask families to schedule vacations and other planned absences during school breaks so students miss as little instructional time as possible.

If your child will miss school for a planned extended absence (more than two days of school), such as a family vacation, please notify the School Office in advance. Families may request an **Attendance Disruption Form** ([Appendix H](#)) from their teacher, which allows the classroom teacher to identify work that can reasonably be completed during the absence.

Religious holidays are considered excused absences and do not require an Attendance Disruption Form. However, any additional vacation days taken before or after a religious holiday are not considered excused unless they are communicated to the Office Manager in advance.

Tardies

Students who arrive after **8:45 a.m.** will be marked tardy or absent, depending on their arrival time. When a student is tardy, a parent or guardian must sign them in at the front office. Absences and tardies that are not reported by a parent or guardian will be marked unexcused, and the PPS automated notification system will contact families.

Communicating Attendance

Notify the School Office (Chelsea) of any attendance changes so we can accurately update your student's attendance record. Absences will be marked unexcused unless the school is notified

directly by a parent or guardian. Tardies may only be excused for medical appointments or other approved circumstances.

Consecutive Absences

Under Oregon Department of Education requirements, schools must **unenroll any student who misses ten (10) consecutive school days**, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

If your child will be absent for ten or more consecutive school days and you wish to maintain their enrollment at Emerson, you may do so in one of two ways:

1. **Notify the School Office before the absence begins** so we can make the necessary arrangements to maintain your child's enrollment; or
2. If your child is unenrolled after ten consecutive absences, **notify the School Office within seven (7) days** that you would like to retain your child's spot at Emerson and they will be re-enrolled.

If you have questions about attendance or extended absences, please contact the School Office. We are happy to work with you to support your child's continued success.

PICK UP & DROP OFF PROCEDURES

Students may be dropped off at school beginning at 8:30am. Prior to that time, students must be supervised by an adult dropping them off before being 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 3:30pm.

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.

1. If you would like to park and walk your child into school, please park in the underground parking lot (P1 level) accessed from SW Naito Parkway (you will need to be driving South on Naito to turn into this lot). You may also use this parking lot at pick up every day. **PARKING IN THIS LOT IS FREE from 8-9am and 3-4pm EVERY DAY!**
2. If you would like to use the drop and go in the morning, you will need to enter the parking lot (P2 level) on SW 1st Avenue between SW Market and SW Harrison. SW 1st is a ONE-WAY Street heading South. We will have Emerson staff members posted outside to direct

you into the lot and around the horseshoe to the entrance of the building where you will remain in your car and drop your child off.

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

As of January 1, 2026, Governor Tina Kotek's [Executive Order 25-09](#) prohibits student cell phone use during the school day in Oregon K–12 public schools. The Emerson School already follows a no cell phone policy, and we appreciate your continued support.

Student cell phones and smart devices, including smart watches, must be turned off for the entire school day and either given to the Office Manager for safekeeping or kept securely in the student's backpack. Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day must do so through the School Office. Students who do not follow this policy will have their device held in the School Office until the end of the school day.

The Emerson School is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of cell phones, smart devices, or personal listening devices brought to school. Staff are unable to spend instructional time searching for lost personal items. Families are encouraged to discuss appropriate care and responsibility for these devices before allowing students to bring them to school.

SNACK POLICY

Students should bring a snack from home each day. Your child's teacher will share any classroom-specific snack guidelines at the beginning of the school year. Each classroom includes a daily snack time in its schedule.

If your child has a food allergy, dietary restriction, or other nutrition-related medical need, please provide snacks from home and submit written documentation to both your child's teacher and the School Office. Medical or special diets cannot be accommodated without written instructions.

Food is sometimes shared during school and community events. Before bringing food to share with a classroom or the school, families must receive approval from the classroom teacher or school staff. In accordance with state and county health regulations, only commercially packaged, store-bought food may be shared. Homemade food may not be served to groups at school.

To help minimize waste, we encourage families to pack lunches and snacks in reusable containers. The School also keeps a small supply of donated snacks in the office for students who forget to bring one, available while supplies last.

CELEBRATIONS

The Emerson School honors the diverse cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs of our community by not celebrating religious or culturally specific holidays in the classroom, including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter. Instead, we celebrate shared community events such as International Day of Peace, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Earth Day. Birthday recognition is determined by each classroom teacher.

To support an inclusive, healthy learning environment and accommodate food allergies and dietary needs, students may not bring birthday treats or other food items to share with their class. Families are welcome to celebrate birthdays in non-food ways by coordinating with their child's teacher.

HOMEWORK POLICY

At The Emerson School, we believe children learn best through meaningful experiences, family connections, play, and rest. As a result, we have a "very little to no homework" philosophy. On the rare occasion that work is sent home, it will be purposeful, connected to classroom learning, and designed to extend, not replace, the learning that happens at school. Expectations will be clear, and students will have a reasonable amount of time to complete any assignment.

We believe the most valuable learning at home comes from spending time together. Reading with your child, asking and exploring open-ended questions, investigating topics of curiosity, playing, and engaging in meaningful family and community experiences all help foster a lifelong love of learning.

FIELD STUDIES

Field studies are an essential part of learning at The Emerson School and are integrated into our curriculum. Students are expected to participate in both planned and spontaneous field studies that extend classroom learning into our community. In order to participate, parents/guardians must sign the Off-Campus Field Study Approval Form ([Appendix F](#)) at the beginning of EVERY year.

Students are expected to act responsibly, maintain a safe body, follow adult directions, and represent Emerson positively while on field studies. If a student is unable to meet these expectations, logical consequences may result, including the possibility of missing a future field study. Please refer to [Appendix E](#) for complete Field Study Expectations.

Because field studies are a regular part of the school day, students who are too ill to participate should remain at home. We are unable to provide supervision for students who stay behind while their class is on a field study.

Please ensure your child comes to school each day with sturdy, weather-appropriate clothing and shoes suitable for walking and outdoor learning. We also recommend keeping a spare set of clothes at school in case your child gets wet or muddy during outdoor activities.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

After care is provided on-site by YMCA-Columbia Willamette. You may enroll [HERE](#).

If your child is enrolled in the on-site, YMCA-CW, 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 YMCA-CW's program director regarding specific health and safety needs for your child.

5 | COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION FROM TEACHERS & STAFF

The Emerson School communicates important information with families primarily through email using Finalsight and Zeffy, our school-to-home communication platforms. Classroom teachers also communicate directly with families via email.

Urgent updates, such as school closures or field study reminders, may be sent by text message. Communications can also be provided in your preferred home language. If you would like to receive school communications in a language other than English, please notify the School Office.

We value strong partnerships with families and welcome your questions, feedback, and involvement. Staff members can be reached by email, and general questions may be directed to info@emersonschool.org. Phone messages may also be left through the School Office and will be shared with the appropriate staff member.

To support a healthy work-life balance for our staff, please allow until the next school day for responses to emails sent during evenings, weekends, or school holidays. If you have an urgent concern outside of school hours, please contact the School Office by phone and email, and your message will be shared with the appropriate staff member as soon as possible.

APPOINTMENTS WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

6 | HEALTH & WELLNESS

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

To help us respond quickly in an emergency, the school **MUST** always have current contact information for parents or guardians and at least one emergency contact on file. Please notify the School Office immediately of any changes to phone numbers, addresses, work numbers, or emergency contact information.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If your child has an acute or ongoing medical condition that requires special care during the school day (such as dietary restrictions, medication, or physical activity limitations), please clearly describe the condition and any necessary accommodations on the Medical Information Form ([Appendix I](#)).

If your child requires emergency medication (such as an EpiPen or inhaler) while at school, the medication must be provided to the school office, along with all required authorization forms, before your child may 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 (both Office Manager & Classroom Teacher):

- 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.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Whenever possible, medications should be given outside of school hours. Only medications that must be administered during the school day may be kept at school.

Before the school can administer any prescription or over-the-counter medication, vitamin, or homeopathic remedy, a completed **Authorization for Medication Administration Form** must be on file. Medications may not be sent with students and must be in their original container with the original label and any required healthcare provider documentation. Medications are stored and administered by authorized school staff, not classroom teachers. Medication administration is noted by staff on a student medication record kept in the school office.

Please notify your child's teacher if a medication may affect their alertness or participation. Unused medication must be picked up from the school office at the end of school year.

IMMUNIZATION & HEALTH FORMS

As required by Oregon State law, all students must have a record of a complete series of the required immunizations or non-medical 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 Information and Release Form ([Appendix I](#)) to be kept on file in the school office.

Students who are not in compliance with Oregon's immunization requirements will be excluded from school on the state-mandated immunization exclusion day (typically the third Wednesday in February). Students may return to school once they have received the required immunizations or provided documentation of a valid medical or nonmedical exemption.

UPDATING 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 email the Office Manager with the new information. This information is confidential, seen by administrators and appropriate teachers only.

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 you must complete an **Authorization for Medication Administration Form** and provide the Epi-Pen to be kept in the school office. Your child may not attend school until it is provided.

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 and in [Appendix J](#).

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 them 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 flu 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.

Please also communicate with our Office Manager regarding any absences due to illness/contagious conditions to ensure attendance is recorded accurately.

HEAD LICE

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).

7 | SAFETY & SECURITY

STUDENT & BUILDING SECURITY

To ensure student safety, The Emerson School's front entrance remains locked at all times except during drop-off and pick-up. During the school day, visitors must ring the doorbell or use an authorized access badge. All visitors are required to check in at the front office and may be issued a Visitor Badge. Sign-in is not required during standard drop-off and pick-up.

Students may not leave campus without a parent or authorized adult unless prior arrangements have been made with the office. Students are never permitted to wait outside unsupervised for pick-up.

During dismissal, staff are stationed at the front entrance to ensure students leave only with an approved adult. If your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent or regular carpool, please notify the office in advance by email (info@emeronschool.org) or by phone (503-525-6124). We maintain a daily list of pick-up changes to help ensure a safe dismissal.

Students arriving late or leaving early must be signed in or out at the front office by a parent or authorized adult listed on the student's emergency contact record. Identification may be required.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The safety of our students and staff is a top priority. In accordance with Oregon law, The Emerson School provides monthly emergency preparedness instruction and conducts regular emergency drills throughout the school year, including monthly fire drills, at least two earthquake drills, and required safety threat drills (such as lockdown, secure, shelter, and evacuation). Before each type of drill, students receive age-appropriate instruction so they understand what to expect and how to respond safely.

Our drills are designed to prepare students and staff for real emergencies and may occasionally include simulated challenges to help everyone practice responding appropriately. During every drill and emergency, students are expected to remain calm, follow staff directions, and stay with their class.

Students may not be signed out or leave school during a drill or emergency without first checking out with the teacher or supervising staff member.

During a real emergency, staff members will be focused on student safety and may not be able to answer phone calls. Please avoid calling the school unless absolutely necessary. If students need to be reunified with their families, the school will communicate instructions as soon as it is safe to do so. If our campus is inaccessible, families will be directed to our secondary reunification site:

Lovejoy Fountain Park
SW Harrison St. & SW 3rd Ave.
Portland, OR

Whenever possible, families will receive a communication summarizing any significant emergency or safety incident before the end of the school day.

WEAPONS POLICY (PPS 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.

THREATS OF VIOLENCE OF HARM (PPS POLICY)

Threats of violence or harm, including those made verbally, in writing, electronically, or in jest, are taken seriously and are subject to disciplinary action. In accordance with Oregon law (ORS 339.325), The Emerson School will notify affected staff and the parents or guardians of students who are the subject of a threat or whose names appear on a targeted list ("hit list"). Whenever possible, notification will be made by phone or in person within 12 hours of discovering the threat, with written notice provided within 24 hours.

All reported threats will be promptly investigated. If a threat is substantiated, the Executive Director will follow applicable Portland Public Schools policies, notify the appropriate parties, and implement Emerson's Discipline Approach and Procedures.

8 | WEATHER & SCHOOL CLOSURES

INCLEMENT WEATHER / LATE OPENINGS / CLOSURES

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 and text messages to family members in the event of an emergency or school closure. Please contact Chelsea (chelsea@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 will follow the Chapman School closure plans.

If school must close early after the school day has begun, we will first contact parents or guardians. If we are unable to reach them, we will contact the emergency contacts listed for your child. To ensure we can reach you in an emergency, please keep all contact information up to date. Notify Chelsea, our Office Manager, immediately of any changes by emailing chelsea@emersonschool.org.

9 | FINAL WORD & APPENDICES

A FINAL WORD

Thank you for taking the time to review this handbook and for choosing The Emerson School. We are honored to partner with you in your child's educational journey.

A strong school community is built on trust, communication, and a shared commitment to helping every child grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Together, we create a learning environment where students feel safe, challenged, supported, and valued.

We know that questions and unexpected situations will arise throughout the year. When they do, we encourage open communication and partnership. We are committed to working alongside families with respect, empathy, and a shared focus on what is best for each child.

We look forward to learning, growing, and celebrating with your family throughout the school year. Welcome to The Emerson School community!

LIST OF APPENDICES

[Appendix A: All Students Belong](#)

[Appendix B: Suspension & Separation from School Policy](#)

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APPENDIX A: All Students Belong

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.

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.

All students are entitled to a high quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin.

All employees are entitled to work in an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin^{1}.

All visitors are entitled to participate in an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin^{2}.

“Bias incident” means a person’s hostile expression of animus toward another person, relating to the other person’s perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin, of which criminal investigation or prosecution is impossible or inappropriate. Bias incidents may include derogatory language or behavior directed at or about any of the preceding demographic groups.

1 {OAR 581-022-2312 does not include this list of classes for employees (only for students), but it can be added.}

2 {OAR 581-022-2312 does not include this list of classes for visitors (only for students), but it can be added.}

“Symbol of hate” means a symbol, image, or object that expresses animus on the basis of race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin including, the noose, swastika, or confederate flag³, and whose display:

1. Is reasonably likely to cause a substantial disruption of or material interference with school activities; or
2. Is reasonably likely to interfere with the rights of students by denying them full access to the services, activities, and opportunities offered by a school.

The Emerson School prohibits the use or display of any symbols of hate on school grounds or in any school-sponsored program, service, school or activity that is funded in whole or in part by monies appropriated by the Oregon Legislative Assembly, except where used in teaching curriculum that is aligned to the Oregon State Standards.

In responding to the use of any symbols of hate, The Emerson School will use non-disciplinary remedial action whenever appropriate.

The Emerson School prohibits retaliation against an individual because that person has filed a charge, testified, assisted or participated in an investigation, proceeding or hearing; and further prohibits anyone from coercing, intimidating, threatening or interfering with an individual for exercising any rights guaranteed under state and federal law.

Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with the lawful use of The Emerson School’s facilities pursuant to a lease or license.

The Emerson School will use administrative regulation ACB-AR - Bias Incident Complaint Procedure to process reports or complaints of bias incidents.

END OF POLICY

3 {While commonly referred to as the “confederate flag,” the official name of the prohibited flag is the Battle Flag of the Armies of Northern Virginia.}

Legal Reference(s):

ORS 659.850
ORS 659.852

OAR 581-002-0005
OAR 581-022-2312

OAR 581-022-2370

Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist., 393 U.S. 503 (1969).
Dariano v. Morgan Hill Unified Sch. Dist., 767 F.3d 764 (9th Cir. 2014).
State v. Robertson, 293 Or. 402 (1982).

APPENDIX B: Suspension & Separation from School Policy

Purpose

The Emerson School is committed to maintaining a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every student experiences belonging, dignity, and respect. Consistent with our Positive Discipline approach, we believe behavior is a form of communication and that mistakes are opportunities to learn, repair harm, and build lifelong social and emotional skills.

Our first response to challenging behavior is to teach, support, and problem-solve—not to punish. Whenever possible, staff use proactive strategies, restorative conversations, behavior coaching, and family partnership before considering removal from school.

At times, however, a student's behavior may present an immediate safety concern or significantly disrupt the learning environment. In those circumstances, temporary separation from the classroom or school may be necessary to protect the safety and well-being of students and staff while additional supports are developed.

Positive Discipline First

Before considering suspension, Emerson staff will make reasonable efforts to use developmentally appropriate interventions whenever it is safe to do so. These may include:

- Re-teaching expectations
- Redirection and encouragement
- Problem-solving conversations
- Classroom meetings
- Restorative conversations or restorative conferences
- Conflict mediation
- Calm-down or regulation breaks
- Individual behavior supports
- Parent/guardian communication
- Behavior support plans
- Functional behavior supports, when appropriate
- Consultation with special education, Section 504, or other support staff

The goal of every intervention is to help students develop the skills needed to make better choices in the future while preserving their dignity and connection to the school community.

Classroom Removal

A student may be temporarily removed from the classroom when their behavior:

- Creates an immediate safety concern;
- Prevents the teacher from providing instruction; or
- Significantly disrupts the learning of others.

Whenever possible, students will remain under the supervision of Emerson staff while they regulate, reflect, and prepare to successfully return to class.

The classroom teacher and student will work together to repair relationships and identify strategies for future success before returning to normal classroom activities.

Parent Pick-Up

In some situations, the Executive Director or designee may require a parent or guardian to pick up a student before the end of the school day. Parent pick-up is intended to:

- Restore safety;
- Allow the student time to regulate;
- Partner with families to develop next steps; and
- Prepare for a successful return to school.

Whenever possible, school staff will meet with the student and family before the student leaves school.

Parent pick-up is not considered a suspension unless it meets the legal definition of suspension under Oregon law.

Suspension

Suspension is a serious intervention and will only be used when other reasonable interventions have been attempted or when a student's behavior presents an immediate risk that cannot be safely addressed through less restrictive means.

Consistent with Oregon law and Portland Public Schools practices, out-of-school suspension for students in fifth grade and below will be limited whenever possible.

A suspension may be considered when a student:

- Causes or attempts to cause serious physical injury;
- Engages in behavior that presents an immediate threat to the safety of students or staff;
- Possesses a weapon or other item prohibited by law;
- Possesses, distributes, or is under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol;
- Engages in severe harassment, intimidation, bullying, or retaliation;
- Commits serious property destruction or theft; or
- Engages in other conduct for which suspension is required or permitted under Oregon law.

Suspensions will generally not exceed ten (10) consecutive school days unless otherwise permitted by law.

Suspension Procedures

Before a suspension is imposed, the Executive Director or designee will, whenever practical:

- Meet with the student to explain the concerns in language they can understand.
- Give the student an opportunity to share their perspective.
- Consider the student's age, developmental level, disability status, and individual circumstances.
- Review previous interventions and supports.
- Determine whether suspension is appropriate or whether another intervention would better support the student and school community.
- Notify the student's parent or guardian as soon as reasonably possible by phone and provide written notice explaining:
 - the reason for the suspension;
 - the length of the suspension;
 - expectations for returning to school; and
 - any opportunity to respond or appeal, when applicable.

During an emergency involving an immediate threat to health or safety, a student may be removed before these steps occur. The informal meeting and parent notification will take place as soon as practicable.

Reentry Meeting

Whenever a student has been suspended or repeatedly separated from school, Emerson will conduct a reentry meeting before or shortly after the student's return. Participants may include:

- Parent or guardian
- Student (when appropriate)
- Classroom teacher
- Executive Director or designee
- Other support staff, when appropriate

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Welcome the student back;
- Repair relationships;
- Review what happened;
- Identify supports for success;
- Develop or revise a behavior support plan if needed; and
- Ensure the student can return to learning with dignity and belonging.

Students with Disabilities

When a student receiving special education or Section 504 services is suspended or repeatedly removed from school, Emerson will follow all applicable federal and state laws, including procedural safeguards and manifestation determination requirements.

Behavior support plans will be reviewed and revised whenever appropriate.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the most serious disciplinary response available and will only be considered in circumstances permitted under Oregon law and applicable Portland Public Schools policy.

Before recommending expulsion, Emerson will:

- Conduct a thorough investigation;
- Provide written notice to the family;
- Offer the opportunity for a hearing consistent with due process requirements;
- Consider all legally required factors; and
- Follow applicable charter school and Oregon Department of Education procedures.

Restoring Community

At Emerson, every disciplinary response seeks to answer four questions:

- What happened?
- Who was affected?
- How can the harm be repaired?
- What support does the student need to be successful moving forward?

Whenever possible, students will participate in restorative conversations, reflection, restitution, or other developmentally appropriate opportunities to repair relationships and rebuild trust.

We believe that maintaining high expectations while responding with kindness, consistency, and accountability creates the strongest learning community for all students.

APPENDIX C: Discipline Policy

Purpose

The Emerson School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every student feels a sense of belonging and has the opportunity to learn and grow. This policy establishes Emerson's approach to supporting student behavior in a manner that is consistent, respectful, and developmentally appropriate.

Discipline at The Emerson School reflects our mission to nurture compassionate, capable, lifelong learners and is guided by our commitment to belonging, equity, and the healthy development of every child.

Philosophy

The Emerson School uses Positive Discipline as the foundation of its approach to behavior. We believe that children learn best when they feel connected, respected, and supported. Our goal is not to punish students for mistakes, but to teach the social, emotional, and problem-solving skills they need to be successful in school and beyond.

Positive Discipline emphasizes:

- Building positive relationships.
- Teaching expected behaviors.
- Repairing harm when mistakes occur.
- Using logical and natural consequences.
- Partnering with families to support student success.
- Maintaining a safe learning environment for everyone.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Treat themselves and others with kindness and respect.
- Follow the directions of school staff.
- Maintain a safe body and make safe choices.
- Care for school and community property.
- Take responsibility for their actions.
- Contribute positively to the learning environment.

Responding to Behavior

Staff respond to behavior with the goal of teaching, restoring relationships, and maintaining safety.

Whenever appropriate, staff will:

- Redirect and re-teach expectations.
- Help students regulate emotions and solve problems.
- Use restorative conversations and practices.
- Apply logical or natural consequences.

- Communicate with families when additional support is needed.

When behavior is repeated, escalates, significantly disrupts learning, or creates a safety concern, school staff will involve administration to determine appropriate next steps.

Administrative Support

Administrative involvement may include:

- Meeting with the student.
- Communicating with parents or guardians.
- Developing or revising a Behavior Support Plan.
- Coordinating additional supports or interventions.
- Implementing restorative or safety planning.
- Determining whether additional disciplinary action is necessary.

Suspension and Separation

Suspension and separation from school are considered interventions of last resort and are used only when necessary to maintain the safety of students and staff or as otherwise required by law. Procedures related to suspension, separation, and due process are outlined in [Appendix B: Suspension & Separation from School Policy](#).

Students with Disabilities

Students receiving special education services or accommodations under Section 504 will be supported in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Behavioral supports and disciplinary decisions will consider each student's individual needs and legal protections.

Family Partnership

Families are essential partners in helping students succeed. When significant behavior concerns arise, Emerson will work collaboratively with students and families to identify supports, teach new skills, and develop plans that promote long-term success.

Our Commitment

At The Emerson School, we believe mistakes are opportunities to learn, grow, and strengthen our community. Grounded in respect, accountability, and restoration, our approach to discipline helps students develop the skills to repair harm, build healthy relationships, and make positive choices. Together, students, families, and staff create a school where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to become compassionate, capable lifelong learners.

APPENDIX D: 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.

APPENDIX E: Field Study Expectations

Purpose & Introduction

Field studies are an essential part of learning at The Emerson School. They extend classroom learning into our community and provide students with authentic opportunities to explore, investigate, and make meaningful connections. Some field studies are planned in advance, while others occur spontaneously as part of project-based learning. As active members of our urban community, students regularly walk throughout the neighborhood and use public transportation to visit parks, businesses, organizations, and other learning spaces.

To help ensure the safety of everyone involved and represent Emerson positively, students are expected to:

- Follow the directions of teachers and adult chaperones promptly.
- Stay with their assigned group and supervising adults at all times.
- Use a safe body and make safe choices.
- Treat people, businesses, public spaces, and property with respect.
- Use kind and respectful language.
- Demonstrate responsibility while walking in the community and riding public transportation.
- Contribute positively to the learning experience for everyone.

Teachers will prepare students for each field study by reviewing expectations beforehand and providing guidance and support throughout the experience. When concerns arise, staff will use Positive Discipline practices to teach, problem-solve, repair harm, and help students develop the skills needed to make better choices. Families will be informed if a student is repeatedly struggling to meet field study expectations.

Participation in Field Studies

Because field studies are an integral part of Emerson's curriculum, decisions to not have a student participate in a particular field study are made only after other reasonable interventions have been attempted, unless the student's behavior presents an immediate safety risk.

If a student's behavior repeatedly creates safety concerns or demonstrates that they are unable to safely participate, the teacher, in consultation with the Executive Director when appropriate, may determine that the student will not participate in a future field study. This decision is based on safety and the student's readiness to participate successfully, not as punishment.

Examples of behaviors that may result in a student not participating in a future field study include, but are not limited to:

- Leaving the group or an assigned adult without permission.
- Running away from the group or into unsafe areas.
- Refusing to follow directions from teachers or adult chaperones when safety is involved.
- Physical aggression toward students, staff, volunteers, or members of the public.

- Threatening or attempting to harm another person.
- Intentionally damaging public or private property.
- Using language or behavior that harasses, intimidates, or targets others.
- Repeatedly engaging in behavior that prevents the group from safely participating after redirection and support.
- Bringing prohibited or dangerous items on a field study.
- Any other behavior that creates a significant safety risk for the student or others.

Whenever possible, Emerson staff will work with the student and family before a student is excluded from a future field study. The goal is always to identify the supports and strategies needed for the student to safely participate in future learning experiences.

If a student is unable to participate in a field study because of safety concerns, Emerson will work with the family to develop an appropriate educational plan for that day whenever feasible.

Health & Attendance

Since field studies are a regular part of the school day, students who are too ill to participate should remain at home. The Emerson School is unable to provide supervision for students who remain on campus while their class is participating in a field study.

Please ensure your child comes to school each day dressed for outdoor learning and walking. Comfortable shoes and weather-appropriate clothing help students safely participate in the full Emerson experience.

APPENDIX F: Off-Campus Field Study Approval Form



Off-Campus Field Study and Spontaneous Outing Approval Form 2026-2027

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Emerson School's program includes and encourages class activities outside the school building. Because this kind of experiential learning is a valued component of our curriculum, The Emerson School will occasionally offer such opportunities. As part of our off-campus studies, both planned Field Studies and spontaneous outings will take place.

Typical Field Studies may include trips to: naturally, geographically or architecturally significant sites; or any other investigative studies related to the students' project work.

Typical spontaneous outings may include: walking tours to downtown facilities, buildings or parks.

Your signature below provides approval for your child to participate in these routine off-campus activities.

Full Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

Parent Name: _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

(Date Signed)

APPENDIX G: Fundraising Activities



EMERSON

FUNDRAISING 26-27

Below are the fundraising activities led by The Emerson School to support the school as a whole:

MONTHLY

AUG: Parents & families are asked to consider joining the *Otter Rafi*, a monthly giving program to support Emerson.



ANNUAL APPEAL

NOV.-DEC.: Our annual campaign invites general donations to support Emerson. It's also a great opportunity to leverage employer matching gifts, if your workplace offers them.



FIELD STUDIES

TWICE A YEAR: Parents are asked to consider giving \$50/student to support field studies for their project work.



OTTER CHASE

MAY: Is our annual fun run, where kids work together towards a fundraising goal for the school!



ICE CREAM

EVERY OTHER WEEK: We get ice cream from Salt & Straw and donations are optional, but those given go right back to the teachers!



AUCTION

MARCH: We host our annual auction & date night - An Otterly Curious Night Out to benefit Emerson.



BREAD DAY!

Happens on Thursdays and we receive the bread from Ken's Artisan. Donations are optional and support activities like OBOB, 5th Grade Camp Out, etc.



PIE SALES

In the fall FES sells pies to help with events like the Otter Chase after party and to maintain their volunteer software.



RESTAURANT NIGHTS

Occur throughout the year at spots all over the city. Money raised during these events support FES events like Fallapoolza & community socials.





THE EMERSON SCHOOL IS A 501(C)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION (TAX ID #52-2368753) AND FRIENDS OF EMERSON IS ALSO A 501(C)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION (TAX ID #27-3517966). YOUR DONATIONS TO EITHER ORGANIZATION ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE AS PERMITTED BY LAW.

APPENDIX H: Attendance Disruption Form



ATTENDANCE DISRUPTION FORM

Please note: missed school work, such as field studies, guest speakers, group work, and more, cannot be made up outside of school hours. Shared group experiences contribute to your child's deep learning and sense of community.

Complete this form when your child will be absent from school due to a reason other than illness, religious holiday, family emergency or funeral.

Student's Name:	
Date(s) of Absence:	
Reason:	

We appreciate your planning for your child's absence, but please know that work done outside of school does not replace the work the child would have done while attending school.

Please discuss with your child's teacher what supplemental work (if any) your child will do during their absence. Describe the plan below.

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date

***This form must be submitted to the teacher one week prior to the absence.
Please return the completed form to the office after signatures are completed.***

APPENDIX I: Student Medical Information & Release Form



Student Medical Information & Release Form 2026-27

(This form must be completed and on file for your student to participate in any off-campus activities)

Student Name:		Teacher:	
Address:		City:	Zip:
Birthdate (mm/dd/yyyy):		Age (as of Sept. 1st):	
Parent/Guardian Name:			
Email Address:			
Home Phone:		Work Phone:	
Cell Phone:		Other Phone:	
Parent/Guardian Name:			
Email Address:			
Home Phone:		Work Phone:	
Cell Phone:		Other Phone:	
Physician Name:		Phone Number:	
Address:			
Hospital Preference:		Phone Number:	
Insurance Company:		Policy Holder Name:	
Group & Individual #:			

Does the student have any special medical needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify: _____

The state requires that medication forms be completed by parent/guardian and attending physician. These forms are available in the main office.

Is the student allergic to any medications? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify: _____

Is the student allergic to insect bites? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, does the student have an insect bite kit for emergencies? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

As the parent/guardian, I hereby give permission, in case of accident and/or surgical emergency, to the school's travel representative(s) to seek medical attention for my child and give permission to the physician to hospitalize, secure treatment for and to order injection, anesthesia, or surgery for my child, as named above, according to the medical standards and expertise then and there available whether known or unknown. A parent/guardian will be contacted first whenever possible.

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date Signed)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date Signed)

APPENDIX J: Communicable Disease Management Plan

School-Level Communicable Disease Management Plan For School Year 2026-2027

School/District/Program Information

District or Education Service District Name and ID: Portland Public Schools

Institution ID: 3391

School or Program Name: The Emerson School

Contact Name and Title: Jenny Thompson, Executive Director

Contact Phone: 503-525-6124

Contact Email: jenny@emersonschool.org

Table 1. Policies, protocols, procedures and plans already in place

Provide hyperlinks to any documents or other resources currently utilized in your school/district. Consider adding a brief description about how each is used within your school.

Plan Types	Hyperlinks and Descriptions
School District Communicable Disease Management Plan OAR 581-022-2220	The Emerson School Communicable Disease Management Plan (CDMP) is used to help inform health decision making at the school.
Exclusion Measures Exclusion of students and staff who are diagnosed with certain communicable diseases. OAR 333-019-0010	The exclusion measures used by the school are highlighted in CDMP Page 6
Isolation Space Requires a prevention-oriented health services program including a dedicated space to isolate sick students and to provide services for students with special health care needs. OAR 581-022-2220	Students who exhibit symptoms are sent to the office and isolated or reasonably distanced until their parent/guardian can arrive to remove them in keeping with CDMP page 8.
Emergency Plan or Emergency Operations Plan OAR 581-022-2225	The school follows the emergency operations plans and protocols required by OAR 581-022-2225, including maintaining logs of regular safety drills and annual trainings.

Plan Types	Hyperlinks and Descriptions
Mental Health and Wellbeing Plans such as those prepared for Student Investment Account	The Emerson School uses funds provided by The Student Investment Account (SIA) to support the wellbeing and mental health of students at all times including during prevention, response, and recovery from incidents of a communicable disease outbreak.

SECTION 1. Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Identifying roles central to communicable disease management. Clarifying responsibilities related to communicable disease response is a first step in keeping communities healthy and safe. In general, decisions of school health and safety reside with school and district officials. Together with local public health officials, school/district administrators should consult a variety of individuals when making decisions about health and safety in school.

Table 2. Roles and Responsibilities

School planning team members	Responsibilities:	Primary Contact (Name/Title):	Alternative Contact:
Building Lead / Administrator	- Educates staff, families, and students on policies regarding visitors and volunteers, ensuring health and safety are being maintained. - In consultation with district leadership and LPHA staff, determines the level and type of response that is required/necessary. - Acts as key spokesperson to communicate health-related matters within school community members, health partners, and other local partners.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	Chelsea Reich, Office Manager

School planning team members	Responsibilities:	Primary Contact (Name/Title):	Alternative Contact:
School Safety Team Representative (or staff member knowledgeable about risks within a school, emergency response, or operations planning)	- Trains staff at the start of the academic year and at periodic intervals on communicable disease management procedures. - Leads debrief of communicable disease events, informing continuous improvement of the planning, prevention, response, and recovery system.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	N/A
Health Representative (health aid, administrator, school/district nurse, ESD support)	- Supports building lead/administrator in determining the level and type of response that is necessary. - Reports to the LPHA any cluster of illness among staff or students. - Provides requested logs and information to the LPHA in a timely manner.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	Chelsea Reich, Office Manager
School Support Staff as needed (transportation, food service, maintenance/custodial)	Advises on prevention/response procedures that are required to maintain student services.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	Chelsea Reich, Office Manager

School planning team members	Responsibilities:	Primary Contact (Name/Title):	Alternative Contact:
Communications Lead (<i>staff member responsible for ensuring internal/external messaging is completed</i>)	- Ensures accurate, clear, and timely information is communicated including those who may have been exposed, a description of how the school is responding, and action community members can take to protect their health. - Shares communications in all languages relevant to school community.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	Chelsea Reich, Office Manager
District Level Leadership Support (<i>staff member in which to consult surrounding a communicable disease event</i>)	- Has responsibility over communicable disease response during periods of high transmission in the community at large. May act as school level support to Building lead/Administrator activating a scaled response. - Responds to media inquiries during the communicable disease event and ensures that those responsible for communication are designated speakers.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director	N/A

School planning team members	Responsibilities:	Primary Contact (Name/Title):	Alternative Contact:
Main Contact within Local Public Health Authority (LPHA)	- Notifies Building Lead/Administrator of communicable disease outbreak and offers recommendations for appropriate response. - Key spokesperson to communicate on health-related matters with community members, health facility staff, and other local community partners.	Jenny Thompson, Executive Director Starr Ahrens, Multnomah County Health Department Facility Outreach and Outbreaks Communicable Disease Services	N/A
Others as identified by team		Jo Sigmund, Instructional Coach	

Section 2. Equity and Continuity of Education

Preparing a plan that centers equity and supports mental health

Preparing a school to manage a communicable disease case or event requires an inclusive and holistic approach to protect access to in-person learning for all students. In this section suggested resources are offered to help prepare for communicable disease management while centering an equitable and caring response.

Identify existing district or school plans and tools that can be utilized when centering equity in prevention, response, and recovery from incidents of outbreaks (e.g., district or school equity plans/stances/lenses/decision tools, Equity Committee or Team protocols, district or school systems for including student voice, existing agreements or community engagement or consultation models, Tribal Consultation, etc.)

- Staff Input
- Community surveys
- Data dashboards and input from Multnomah County Health Department, ODE, and PPS

Suggested Resources:

1. [Equity Decision Tools](#) for School Leaders
2. [Community Engagement Toolkit](#)
3. [Tribal Consultation Toolkit](#)

Table 3. Centering Educational Equity

OHA/ODE Recommendation(s)	Response:
Describe how you will ensure continuity of instruction for students who may miss school due to illness.	The school tracks absences and in the event that students will miss more than 10 consecutive days of instruction they may seek a medical leave and develop a plan with input from teachers, parents, administrator.
Describe how you identify those in your school setting that are disproportionately impacted by communicable disease and which students and families may need differentiated or additional support.	The school's synergy system tracks students who come from historically underserved communities, such as nonwhite families and families with students experiencing disability. Families also advise the school of specific circumstances.
Describe the process by which the school will implement a differentiated plan for those that are disproportionately impacted, historically underserved or at higher risk of negative impacts or complications related to communicable disease.	The school will aim to go beyond minimum health requirements to ensure that it creates an environment in which the risks are reduced as practicable, recognizing that historically underserved populations are at a higher risk of negative impacts or complications related to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.
Describe what support, training or logistics need to be in place to ensure that the named strategies are understood, implemented, and monitored successfully.	Staff will be trained on health and safety protocols at the start of each school year and at regular intervals throughout the year. Signage will be posted ensuring handwashing and hand-sanitization as practicable. Electronic communications and newsletter mailers throughout the school year will advise families of health protocols, as will the posted Communicable Disease Management Plan.

Section 3. Communicable Disease Outbreak Prevention and Response:
Implementing mitigation activities, responding to periods of increased transmission, resuming baseline level mitigation, and debriefing actions to improve the process

Planning for and implementing proactive health and safety mitigation measures assists schools in reducing communicable disease transmission within the school environment for students, staff, and community members. Communicable disease, including norovirus, flu and COVID-19, will continue to circulate in our communities and our schools. Schools will utilize different mitigation measures based on local data, and observation of what is happening in their schools (e.g., transmission within their facilities and communities.) In the following section, teams will document their school's approach to the CDC, OHA and ODE advised health and safety measures at baseline, during increased transmission.

Suggested Resources:

1. [Communicable Disease Guidance for Schools](#) which includes information regarding:
2. Symptom-Based Exclusion Guidelines (pages 8-12)
3. Transmission Routes (pages 29-32)
4. Prevention or Mitigation Measures (pages 5-6)
5. School Attendance Restrictions and Reporting (page 33)
6. [CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 School](#)
7. [Supports for Continuity of Services](#)

Table 4. Communicable Disease Mitigation Measures

OHA/ODE Recommendation(s) Layered Health and Safety Measures	Describe what mitigating measures the school will implement to reduce and respond to the spread of communicable disease and protect in-person instruction?
Immunizations	<i>CDC, OHA, and ODE recommend COVID-19 vaccination for all eligible individuals. Please include whether your school will offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics or notices about where to access vaccines in your community. Shots are required by law for children in attendance at public and private schools, preschools, child care facilities, and Head Start programs in Oregon. Nearly every place that provides care for a child outside the home requires shots or a medical or nonmedical exemption to stay enrolled.</i>
Face Coverings	The school will have face coverings available and will suggest that individuals who exhibit symptoms wear them, and as otherwise required by law.
Isolation	The school will separate those who exhibit symptoms from the general population and as required by law.
Symptom Screening	Excludable symptoms will be posted in the school's Communicable Disease Management Plan posted on its website. Staff will be trained to observe students for recognizable symptoms and refer students to the office assessment and exclusion where applicable.
COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing	<i>OHA offers schools a diagnostic testing program to all public and private K-12 schools in Oregon. Please indicate whether your school will offer diagnostic testing.</i> The school will offer diagnostic testing in its discretion (such as in times of high community transmission), in compliance with OHA requirements.
Airflow and Circulation	The school will maintain its HVAC system and promote air circulation. Classrooms and gathering places within the school will use HEPA air purifiers and operable windows whenever possible.
Cohorting	The school will comply with any cohorting requirements mandated by ODE, OHA or the LPHA.
Physical Distancing	The school will comply with any physical distancing requirements mandated by ODE, OHA or the LPHA.

OHA/ODE Recommendation(s) Layered Health and Safety Measures	Describe what mitigating measures the school will implement to reduce and respond to the spread of communicable disease and protect in-person instruction?
Hand Washing	The school will encourage frequent hand washing and/or use of hand sanitizer.
Cleaning and Disinfection	The school contracts with a daily janitorial service. The school will routinely clean, focusing on bathrooms and high touch surfaces.
Training and Public Health Education	Administration will participate in ODE-provided health and safety training as feasible, and public health information shared by ODE will be promulgated as reasonable and feasible.

Training exercises are essential to preparedness ensuring individuals understand their role in a communicable disease event. Exercises can also help identify gaps in the planning, thereby building upon and strengthening the plan over time. Schools, districts, and ESDs should schedule to exercise this plan annually and when any revisions are made to update the plan. The plan, or component(s) of the plan, can be tested through conversations, practice exercises, or other activities.

This plan can be viewed publicly on our website at the bottom of the page:

<https://www.emersonschool.org/>

Date Last Updated: August 2026

Date Last Practiced: August 2026