

# Parent/Student Handbook



**2020-2021**

**Gervais Elementary School  
Parent/Student Handbook  
2020-2021 School Year  
503-792-3803 Ext. 1030**

Dear Parents and Students,

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with some basic information about our schools, staff, and programs. **We kindly request that you will spend time going through this handbook with your child.** Please know that although this handbook is thorough, it is not all-inclusive, nor does it serve as binding policy on procedures and decisions made by the administrative staff at Gervais Elementary School. If you would like additional information, please do not hesitate to call the front office.

We believe that the most effective education occurs when the school, parents, community, and student are working together. Clear communication between the school and home is actively encouraged. Please feel welcome to visit the school or arrange for a conference with your child's teacher. There are also opportunities for parents to participate in various school activities or serve as volunteers in the classroom. Our school office staff will be happy to assist in finding you an opportunity to serve. For more information call the front office.

We are looking forward to a full and challenging year, and hope that you will join with us to make this the most productive yet for your child.

Best,

Dr. Creighton C. Helms  
Principal, Gervais Elementary School

## 1. Expectations Regarding Student Behavior

An outline of student behavior expectations is the first section of this handbook for two reasons: (1) we have high standards and expectations for student behavior; and (2) we want to be confident that all parents and students fully understand those standards and expectations.

**1. When and Where.** It is important to know that when student conduct is discussed in this section, it is referring to:

- action that occurs while a student is on the school premises and areas adjacent to the school during or immediately before-and-after school hours;
- action on the school premises at any other time when a school-sponsored group is using the school;
- action off the school grounds during any school-sponsored activity;
- action during non-school hours and/or away from school property that has a detrimental impact, as determined by the building principal, on the delivery of an effective education in a safe environment for any student, at any time. This is chiefly important, but is not limited to, matters of the misuse of social media (i.e. cyberbullying), and is fully supported by the Oregon Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations, Oregon Department of Education.

**2. Expected Behavior:** It is expected that students will follow the “Three Be’s” at all times: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe. Although it is impossible to list every single expected behavior, and conversely every possible example of misbehavior within this parent/student handbook, the spirit of these “Three Be’s” captures student behavior expectations. Again, this is not an inclusive list; all determinations of potential misbehavior are ultimately made by the building principal:

- **Be Respectful**
  - Use kind words and kind actions in all circumstances (which includes the internet and social media)
  - Use appropriate voice level, as directed by GES staff members and signs posted in various spaces.
  - Ask permission to go anywhere or do anything that is beyond the current directions/expectations given to students by a GES staff member.
  - Listen and follow directions given to you by GES staff member.
- **Be Responsible**
  - Be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there.
  - Take care of your personal belongings, and do not touch the personal belongings of others without permission.
  - Take care of school property; if you damage school property (accidentally or purposefully), or you discover damaged school property, report it to a GES staff member immediately.
  - Turn in completed assignments on time.
  - Be accountable for the choices you make, and accept the consequences of your actions.
- **Be Safe**
  - Unless directed otherwise, walk at all times when on GES property (in and outside of the buildings).
  - Maintain your personal space, and respect the personal space of others.
  - Work and play safely. If something seems unsafe, report it to a GES staff member immediately.

### 3. Defining the term ‘Discipline:’

- Henceforth, the term ‘discipline’ is defined as the use of corrective action on half of a Gervais School District/Gervais Elementary School staff member (adult) to correct a violation of the school’s code of behavior, both as explicitly defined in this handbook and as determined by the building principal (or his direct representatives).
- Discipline typically comes in one of two forms:
  - Level I: discipline that corrects misbehavior that is minor in nature, non-systemic, and can be corrected on-the-spot by the witnessing adult. This includes, but is not limited to, low intensity levels of disrespect, defiance, disruption, and inappropriate language. In these cases, the witnessing adult may contact home (parent/guardian), but the witnessing adult does not have to contact home. It is the expectation, however, that the witnessing adult inform the building principal (or his direct representatives) of this infraction. It is important for parents/guardians to know that they will not be contacted in the case of every Level I discipline infraction; parents/guardians are encouraged to maintain regular communication with their student’s teacher and regularly ask if there are any concerns with their student’s behavior at school.
    - It is the intent of the building principal to give latitude to the school staff to deal with and solve offenses of this type. In the event that in-school solutions have proved unsuccessful, a referral will be made to the front office, the school counselor, or designee for further action.
  - Level II: discipline that is more serious in nature, may be systemic (repeated infractions of the same expectation over time), and is only addressed at the level of the building principal (or his direct representative). This includes, but is not limited to, repeated instances of disrespect, defiance, disruption, and inappropriate language. It is the expectation of the building principal that all instances of Level II discipline will be communicated home to parents/guardians within 24-hours of the incident becoming known to the front office.
    - In the case of pending suspension, the parent or guardian shall be notified by telephone or home visit of the suspension and the reasons for the action. If that person cannot be contacted, the decision to send the student home, to allow the student to remain on the school premises or to refer the student to the proper authorities must be made with consideration to the student's age, maturity and nature of the misconduct causing the suspension.

**4. Bullying/Harassment:** With the desire to keep a positive environment, and to help ensure student and staff safety, Gervais Elementary School adopts a “zero-tolerance” policy towards harassment and bullying. Harassing and bullying behaviors often include, but is not limited to, physically hurting or threatening to hurt someone; purposeful social exclusion; insults; name calling; mean gossip and rumors (in-person and online); and unwanted intimate behavior\*. Bullying is intentional, one-sided, and intended to cause harm to another (physical, emotional, social, etc.). It happens when someone keeps hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.

At GES, we agree that it is everyone’s responsibility to stop bullying. It is up to each of us to make sure that bullying does not take place. We:

- treat others with fairness and respect
- find ways to help others join games and other activities
- speak out against bullying
- refuse to let other be bullied
- report bullying to an adult
- refuse to bully others
- be responsible bystanders who are part of the solution
- help others feel safe and comfortable at our school

\*Although there is a difference between mutual and unwanted intimate behavior, for the sake of defining harassment and bullying, any intimate behavior between students (holding hands, kissing, etc.) is strictly forbidden at GES. Intimate behavior of any kind is a Level II behavior violation.

**5. Personal Electronics:** All personal electronic devices, to include cell phones, tablets, smartwatches that have internet/WiFi/Bluetooth capabilities, are strictly forbidden to be accessed by students when they are at school. If one of these items is brought to school, students may either (a) keep them in their backpacks until school hours are over; or (b) turn them into the office for safekeeping. The school recommends option (b), given that the school is not responsible for the theft, loss, or destruction of personal electronic devices. If student is in violation of this policy, a GES staff member has full authority given to them by the building principal to confiscate the device, where the parent/guardian of the student who violated the policy must pick it up in person. Multiple offences of this policy will likely result in suspension.

**6. Assault on School Personnel:** A student who assaults (physical and aggressive contact) school personnel will not be returned to the classroom until after a reinstatement conference. At the school's discretion, homework may be provided. Expectations to this may be made by the building principal, based on the student's age, maturity and nature of the assault.

**7. Behavioral Contracts:** Dependent on the age of the student and the seriousness of the offense, the student may be placed on a behavior contract. This contract may specify a course of consequences that are less or more restrictive than the general discipline policy outlined in this handbook.

- **No-Contact Contract:** When two or more students demonstrate an inability to coexist amicably, they may be placed on a no-contact contract, which prevents all contact and communication (at and away from school) with each other. The duration of this contract is set by the building principal.

**8. Transportation Code of Conduct:** Each year the district will issue a code of conduct to all students and parents accompanied by the following form to be acknowledgment of being read and understood. It is the expectation of the building principal that Gervais Elementary School students adhere to the transportation code of conduct as they would the code of conduct that governs their behavior while on school property. If necessary, the building principal will liaise with the district transportation coordinator to discuss and determine discipline, should a violation of the transportation code of conduct occur by a Gervais Elementary School student.

## 2. General Policies

**1. Entrance into Kindergarten:** the child must be five years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> of the start of the school year to be admitted to kindergarten. Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, early entrance requests (children who turn five years of age on or after September 2<sup>nd</sup>) will not be considered and exceptions will not be granted.

**2. School Attendance:** Starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Oregon State Law requires regular student attendance at school. The Gervais Elementary School front office, by way of the building principal, is responsible for enforcing the compulsory school attendance laws of the State of Oregon. Every effort shall be made to keep students in school. The state recognizes the following for excused absences;

- Medical, Dental and Counseling Appointments, student illness, religious holidays, family emergencies that require student presences or a death in family.
- Illness (parents are responsible for contacting the school office as soon as possible).
- For an excused absence, students are required to return with a parental note.
- Absences, family trips, may be excused in advance by school officials.
- Student's homes will be contacted when a pattern of irregular attendance is identified and a meeting will be scheduled with the school and the family.
- Irregular attendance is considered to be 4 unexcused absences in any four week period.
- Parent's knowledge or approval of student's absence does not excuse the absence except as provided under ORS 339.065.

**3. The School Day:** The regular school day at Gervais Elementary is scheduled from:

- 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for grades K-5. Breakfast starts at 7:30 a.m.
- Early Release Wednesdays, students are released at 1:10 p.m.

**4. Leaving School:** The following procedures are used when students leave school during the school day:

- Students must have a note from home and that note must be cleared through the front office.
- Parents/Guardians must sign out the student at the office prior to the student's dismissal.
- If students are changing their usual dismissal routine in any way, the office needs to be notified. If another person is picking up your child, that person's name must be on the registration/emergency information sheet. This is for your child's safety. Please keep us informed.

**5. Campuses are closed** from the time of arrival until classes are dismissed at the end of the school day. No student is to leave at any time, for any reason, unless a specific need is verified by parent and approved by the administrator (discussed above). Students who leave school grounds without authorized permission are considered truant (parents and/or police will be contacted, circumstances depending).

Furthermore, students are not allowed to be contacted during school hours without first clearing it with the office (this includes making contact with personal cell phones, which if used by your student would put them in violation of the personal electronics policy listed above). The use of the school telephone is intended for school business calls only. However, in emergencies, students may use the telephone, subject to the approval of the principal (or his direct representative).

**6. Lost Clothing.** All clothing should be labeled with the student's name. Twice a year (at the start of winter break and summer vacation), lost and found items will be donated to a local charity.

## 7. Classroom Rewards, Parties, Celebrations, etc.:

- Teachers are encouraged not to use food or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, especially candy or other foods of non-nutritional value.
- Foods offered should meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Food for student birthday parties and celebrations is provided through the front office via prepared “Celebration Baskets.” These baskets can include various snacks and drinks that meet dietary and health guidelines, and are sensitive to various allergen concerns. Please call the front office to inquire more about costs and details.
- Foods brought from an outside source (parent/guardian), whether store-bought or home-cooked, are not permitted for class parties and celebrations.

**8. Report Cards.** There will be three grading periods this year. Notices will be sent home in the school newsletter telling parents when to expect Progress Report Cards and teachers will meet with parents in October; however any parent is invited to arrange a conference with a teacher at any time throughout the year, by appointment.

## 9. Food Service Program

- The breakfast program will begin at 7:30 a.m. There will be no charge for students eating breakfast or lunch.
- Parents, grandparents and other significant adults are encouraged to join us for lunch. Adult lunch is \$3.50. Arrangements must be made in advance to enter the cafeteria and eat with the children.
- Students are sent home with a lunch menu every month. It is also available on the district web site.
- **Candy and Gum:** Candy and gum are not allowed on school grounds at any times.

## 10. Volunteerism

- Parents are encouraged to visit/volunteer school and classes. Arrangements must be made with the teacher. Please check in at the office upon entering the building. Volunteer forms need to be filled out and approved before visiting/volunteering at least one month prior to the first date of volunteerism.
- Citizens who voluntarily contribute their time and talents to the improvement and enrichment of public schools’ instructional programs are valuable assets. The Board encourages constructive participation of groups and individuals in the school to perform appropriate tasks during and after school hours under the direction and supervision of the building principal (or his direct representative).
- The administration is responsible for the recruitment, use, coordination, and training of volunteers. These assignments will be carried out as directed or delegated by the principal. Every effort should be made to use volunteer resources in a manner that will ensure maximum contribution to the welfare and educational growth of students.

**11. Special Programs and Services.** In addition to our regular educational programs, the following special programs and services are offered to help meet the needs of students, parents, and the community:

- Lunch Assistance: Free meals are offered for all students, grades K-5.
- Title I: Services provided school-wide to support reading and math.
- Title I Migrant: This program provides services to eligible students and families; accident insurance program for students, and support services for families.
- ELL: English Language Learner program provides language and academic support for second language learners.
- Communications: Services of a specialist are available to screen students for hearing, speech and language problems and to provide services.
- Counseling: Services provided by a full-time K-5 counselor.
- Extended Day Programs:
  - Academic support for math, reading and/or language(participation based on need)

- Latchkey; affordable child care from the end of the school day until 5pm

Requests for services and/or evaluation should be made through the school Family Support Team process or directly to the Director of Special Services, Dr. Creighton Helms ((503) 792-3803 x1020) or the Director of Special Programs, Sylvia Valentine-Garcia at ((503) 792-3803 Ext. 4010).

**12. Dress Code.** The Gervais School Board Policy prohibits the wearing, possessing, or displaying of any objects that are distinguished to be gang apparel or activity. Students are asked to not wear coats and jackets in the classroom. Any shirt that is so large that it could be used as a jacket will fall in this category. (Coats and hats will be allowed at extra-curricular activities, as long as they are not felt to impose a threat or intimidation.) The district prohibits clothing that promotes drugs or alcohol. Furthermore, the following is a list of specific clothing that will not be allowed on school property:

- Oversized, saggy pants and nothing hanging out of the pockets
- Bandannas
- Clothing with any insignia that is gang related
- Extra-long belts
- Gang specific clothing (certain dickies, only top button fasten, pleats)
- Short shorts (shorter than two inches above knee)
- Crop tops (tops where cleavage or stomach shows)
- Cleats
- Hair spray or make-up should be left at home
- Spaghetti strapped tops are not school attire
- Flip-flop shoes
- Too tight jeans
- Hoods, hats, or other head coverings cannot be worn during school hours.

This list is not all-inclusive. This principal (or his direct representatives) reserves the right to address any student who may be dressed inappropriately at school, per his discretion.

**13. Fragrance Free Statement:** *The Gervais School District Administration recognizes that a safe and healthy school environment is important in contributing to the health of students and adults. Clean indoor air is important in creating a healthy learning environment for students to participate in the educational process. Staff and students are encouraged to not bring cleaning products, deodorizers or wear personal care products, including perfumes and colognes, into the classroom unless they are identified as fragrance-free. In addition, cleaning products with strong scents will only be used during off-peak school hours.*

**14. Assignment of Students to Classes.** The building principal is responsible for the assignment of students to individual classrooms, and ultimately, their daily schedules. Assignment of students to the appropriate classroom is to be based upon the educational needs of the student, and the staff and facilities available. Parents may provide information regarding the preferred placement of their child; however, requests are never promised and are always ultimately made by the building principal. Requests are to be made to the front office no later than May 1 of each school year.

## **15. Student Health Information:**

- **Insurance Disclaimer.** Gervais School District does not carry student medical or dental insurance to cover student accidents or illness. This is a parental responsibility and student insurance may be purchased through a district approved insurance company. Gervais School District assumes no insurance liability for student accident or illness.
- **Accident Insurance.** Families may purchase student insurance through the school district. If you are interested in learning more, please contact your school office.
- **Student Health and Protection.** The school shares the concern that parents have for the health of their children. Efforts are made at school to maintain a healthy environment. Children with suspicious rashes, sores, fever, appearance or complaints of illness or pain may be dismissed from school.
- **Accidents and Illness.** In case of serious accident to your child, we shall do our best to contact you or the emergency number you have given us (please make sure your accurate contact phone numbers are in our system). If we are unsuccessful in contacting you, we will call 911 on your behalf. No care beyond First Aid may be given at school.
- **Medications.** In order for school staff to administer medication to any student, the medication must be in its original container, and a signed permission form should be on file. Parents/Guardians are responsible for the transporting of medication to and from school. Students are not to carry their own medication. Once the medication is at school it will be kept in the school office.
- **Immunization Requirements.** Oregon law requires that students be fully immunized against certain diseases. Immunizations required are determined by the state and depend upon the student's grade. For detailed information you may contact the school office.

**16. Lockers, Backpacks, and Electronic Devices.** Students should know that they have no rights of privacy with respect to their lockers, backpacks, or electronic devices when on school property. In the State of Oregon, the standard for schools to search lockers and backpacks is called "reasonable suspicion." Reasonable Suspicion is defined as having grounds to suspect a search will turn up evidence that a student has violated — or is violating — the law or the rules of the school. Reasonable suspicion is determined by the building principal (or his direct representatives). If an electronic device is password protected, the building principal would like to 'search' this device pursuant to reasonable suspicion, and the student refuses to unlock the device, the student will be placed on immediate in-school suspension, the device will be confiscated, and a parent will be contacted to come to school to (a) meet with the principal (or his direct representatives); (b) submit to the request to unlock the device on behalf of the building principal; and (c) assist in the search pursuant to reasonable suspicion. Refusal to comply on behalf of the student and/or the parent may result in further suspension and complete loss of privilege to bring the electronic device to school for the remainder of the school year.

**17. Drug Dog Searches.** During the school year a trained, drug-sniffing dog will periodically be brought into the common area of the school campus by police authorities. Common areas of the school include, but are not limited to: hallways, lockers, locker rooms, the gym, classrooms, the cafeteria, and the parking lots. The visits will be unannounced by school officials. The purpose of the drug dog is to keep Gervais School District free of drugs so that all students are educated in a safe and wholesome school environment.

**18. Playground Safety.** Playground equipment must never be used in a way that endangers the safety of the pupil, other pupils or equipment. All members of the staff will enforce rules of safety everywhere on the school premises regardless of grade or assignment. Playground rules will be reviewed each year by the school staff.

**19. Car Zone Policies.** (A) Students should only exit from or enter cars that are within the first five (5) cars in line. Students are never allowed to run alone to their cars and shall be escorted to or from their cars by a school staff member to ensure their safety and security as they arrive at or leave school for the day. (B) Parents and children should never exit or enter their vehicles on the left (driver's) side. (C) Parents may never pull to the left

to get out of line and pass cars on their right to leave the car zone. Although it is against policy, on occasion we have parents and students who will exit their vehicles on the left side, so having cars driving to the left of the car zone line presents a significant safety hazard.

Your child's safety is our priority. I understand that loading in our car zone requires patience. The layout and design of our school do not currently facilitate a more efficient car zone process (from a physical space perspective). However, if you have any suggestions that would help make this process more efficient for you (as a parent), please do not hesitate to call the office and share your ideas with the principal.

**20. Bicycles/Skateboards.** The following guidelines will be observed: (1) All bicycles are to be parked and locked in the bicycle rack near the map, by the cafeteria; (2) It is the student's responsibility to bring a lock and use it; (3) The bicycle or skateboard will be off limits to students during the school day; (4) Skateboards need to be dropped off at the office at the start of the day, and not taken out during the school day; (5) All bicycles or skateboards are to be walked while on campus; and (6) the staff of Gervais Elementary School does not assume any responsibility for damage or theft.

**21. Care of District Property by Students.** During the course of the year, students may use district property, such as library books and Chromebooks. All students are encouraged to enjoy using district property, as it is intended to be used and with proper permission and to take good care of it. Students are responsible for returning any district property they use; students may be required to pay for damage to the property do to personal negligence or misuse.

### **3. Emergency Closure**

Gervais School District uses School Messenger as an emergency notification system. School Messenger is a tool that enables the district to contact parents and staff nearly simultaneously with emergency or informational messages. Message delivery can be sent to phones (voice or text message) or e-mail.

In case of school closures due to bad weather or building problems, parents can call the district's automated phone system (503-792-3803) for updates on whether schools will have delayed openings or be closed. Follow the voice menu to access emergency closure information. This system can also be used to direct dial a specific phone or check on high school sporting information.

In the event bad weather disrupts school bus traffic in the mornings, emergency information will be announced on local radio channels and television stations at approximately 6:00 a.m.

### **4. Nondiscrimination Notice**

Gervais School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, sex or age in providing or access to benefits of education services, activities and programs in accordance with Title VI, Title VII, Title IX and other civil rights or discrimination issues; Section 504 of the rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the American with Disabilities Act.

The following has been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements and may be contacted at the Gervais School District Office for additional information and/or compliance issues:

Title II Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator:  
Director of Special Programs  
290 First Street

### **5. Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse**

All district employees are required to notify the Oregon Department of Human Services who has reasonable cause or reasonable suspicion to believe that any child has suffered about of neglect as defined by state law.

### **6. Notice Regarding Insufficient Funds**

Gervais School District has established the following policy for accepting checks and collecting bad checks: For a check to be an acceptable form of payment it must include your current, full and accurate name, address and telephone number. When paying by check you authorize the recovery of unpaid checks and the recovery of the state allowed fee (\$30.00) by means of electronic re-presentment. For assistance please contact **Paytek at 866-399-4101**.