



THE COTTONWOOD SCHOOL
— OF CIVICS AND SCIENCE —

FAMILY HANDBOOK AND CALENDAR

2026-2027

Cottonwood School Plant Teachings

September: **Cottonwood**

Cottonwood represents **Wellspring**, which includes self-awareness, trueness to self, knowing who we are, where we come from, where we are: our identity

October: **Hawthorn**

Hawthorn teaches us **Courage**, which includes self-awareness, listening to and identifying our emotions, willingness to open our hearts and be vulnerable

November: **Douglas Fir**

Douglas Fir teaches us the ability to **Adapt**, which includes resilience, learning how to adapt to challenging situations, tenacity, grit

December: **Cedar**

Cedar teaches us **Kindness and Generosity**, which includes learning how to give and receive graciously and cultivate strong relationships

January: **Alder**

Alders teaches us **Community building**, which includes working across differences, collaboration, and honoring diversity

February: **Willow**

Willow teaches us **Flexibility**, which includes how we can be flexible in our mind, not getting stuck in emotions or rational thinking “rock brain,” finding balance

March: **Dandelion**

Dandelion’s teaching is **problem-solving**, which includes responding creatively to life’s challenges

April: **Salmonberry**

Salmonberry’s teaching is **Interconnectedness**, which includes interdependence, collaboration, honoring relationships

May: **Camas**

Camas teaches us **Reciprocity**, which includes stewardship, caregiving, and activism

June: **Wild Strawberry**

Strawberry teaches us to **Embrace the gifts of the moment**, which includes gathering joy, celebrating, cultivating optimism, and reflecting on the work of the year.

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- ★ The Cottonwood School recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups and their roles in society. It is the policy of the Cottonwood School Board that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups on the grounds of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in any educational programs, activities or employment

OUR MISSION & VISION

Our mission is to provide a creative learning environment where students develop a sense of place and become stewards of the natural world and active citizens within our community.

Our vision is to look beyond classroom walls. We believe that healthy communities are created by engaged, informed and compassionate citizens, and that children learn best when participating in authentic, hands-on learning experiences that are closely tied to the community. Through service, integrated curriculum and experiential learning, we provide opportunities for our students to actively build relationships locally, inspiring them to become catalysts of change in a global community.

OUR CORE VALUES

Commitment to Place-based Education

We believe that children learn better when they can connect broad concepts to the place where they live. Place-based education creates and sustains healthy communities by fostering deep relationships between students and our natural and human environment. We build lasting relationships with community partners. We merge student learning goals with the goals of our partners as students work with local organizations and agencies to do real work and practice authentic civic engagement.

Deep, Authentic Learning

We foster student curiosity through authentic, inquiry-based projects in our community. Students learn to think critically and practice collaboration throughout their educational career at Cottonwood. We value the place-based learning approach, which is thematic, experiential, and multi-disciplinary, and incorporates many elements of both project-based and problem-based learning. We prioritize depth of learning over breadth. We dedicate ourselves to the professional growth of our educators and to moving from teacher-directed instruction to student-centered learning.

Educating the Whole Child

The Cottonwood School is an inclusive community that strives to foster a sense of belonging and significance in each individual. We nurture resilient human beings who are confident and capable problem solvers. Our community members take responsibility for themselves and each other through empathy and compassionate action. We partner with families to better serve the needs of the whole child.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Cottonwood School believes that the full education of a student depends and relies upon a diverse, equitable and inclusive school environment. We value different lived experiences and integrate the voices of our school-community members, while also inviting insight from our larger community. We apply a culturally responsive approach to our teaching and our

decision-making. We incorporate the histories, perspectives, and experiences of different groups of people who are traditionally left out of school curricula.

Environmental Sustainability

The aim of place-based education is to sustain and improve the health of our environment, which includes both the natural world and the human community. Sustainability is a holistic and interdependent concept that is considered across the curriculum. We educate ourselves about the impact of humans on the earth and develop skills for tackling present and future challenges including climate change. We “walk our talk” by adopting and modeling sustainability practices in our classrooms, building, and habits.

DAILY SCHEDULE

	Start	Dismissal
Monday-Thursday	8:20 am	3:00 pm
Friday	8:20 am	12:30 pm

Office Hours are from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

School Address: 2510 SW 1ST Ave, Portland, OR 97201
School Phone: 503-244-1697
School Website: www.thecottonwoodschool.org

Staff

Amanda McAdoo	Executive Director	amandamcadoo@thecottonwoodschool.org
Sara Miller	Principal	saramiller@thecottonwoodschool.org
Jillian Vento-Feldman	Office & Administration Manager	jillian@thecottonwoodschool.org
Laura Bracke	Administrative Assistant	laurabracke@thecottonwoodschool.org
Kristin Krem	School Counselor	kristinkrem@thecottonwoodschool.org
Paola Witt	Place Based Education and Community Partnerships	paolawitt@thecottonwoodschool.org
Cayla Stillman	K Teacher	caylastillman@thecottonwoodschool.org
Kimberley Bonder	1-2 Teacher	kimberleybonder@thecottonwoodschool.org
Kaileah Hawk-Lowenstein	3 Teacher	kaileah hawk-lowenstein@thecottonwoodschool.org
Jeff Winograd	4-5 Teacher	jeffwinograd@thecottonwoodschool.org
Aidan Hanley	6 Homeroom and MS Science	aidanhanley@thecottonwoodschool.org
Daniel McArthur	7 Homeroom and MS Humanities	danielmcarthur@thecottonwoodschool.org
Gail Baker	8 HR and MS Fieldwork Coordinator	gailbaker@thecottonwoodschool.org
Sam Lloyd	MS Math and interventionist	samlloyd@thecottonwoodschool.org
McLean Cannon	PE, Music & Educational Assistant	mcleancannon@thecottonwoodschool.org
Vinh Pham	Art and Educational Assistant	vinhpham@thecottonwoodschool.org
Joe Bryan	1-3 Educational Assistant and Aftercare Program Director	joebryan@thecottonwoodschool.org
Jen Tittlefitz	Kindergarten Educational Assistant	jentittlefitz@thecottonwoodschool.org
Dillon Smith	Upper Grades Educational Assistant	dillonsmith@thecottonwoodschool.org

INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism is a cornerstone of our home/school partnership at Cottonwood School. Family and community members extend and enhance classroom learning. Most of our fieldwork and hands-on learning couldn't happen without you. We thank families for striving to provide at least 24 hours of service towards the school per student attending.

As a small school, parental involvement is the key to our success. Even more, community involvement and civic responsibility is something we actively teach. We believe that every family has a way to contribute to our community. Some parents may have the ability to help in the classroom; others may have experience in fundraising or writing newsletters. Children feel a stronger connection to their school and community when they know that their parents are involved. Please make your talents and experience known to the staff!

School Board: The Cottonwood School is a public charter school, and our Board of Directors is the governing body of the school. The Board helps ensure that Cottonwood remains true to its mission, serves students well, uses its resources responsibly, and meets its legal and financial responsibilities.

The Board focuses on the big picture and long-term health of the school rather than the day-to-day operation of the school. Board members provide oversight, establish policies, approve the annual budget, monitor the school's academic and financial progress, and help guide the school's long-term direction.

The Board works closely with the Executive Director, who is responsible for the day-to-day leadership and operation of the school.

Board meetings are held monthly to conduct the business of the school. They are open to all community members. Please contact the school or visit the school website for an up-to-date schedule of Board meetings, or contact board@thecottonwoodschool.org.

Friends of Cottonwood: Friends of Cottonwood is the parent-educator organization, with a mission of supporting family and school efforts. Joining Friends is one way in which you get involved with events, leadership, and communication for our school. Please join us for monthly coffee hour meetings with Friends of Cottonwood School. focscs+managers@googlegroups.com

Classroom Volunteers and Chaperones:

Background checks are required for every volunteer. Criminal Background Check forms are available in the school office or can be [filled out online](#), downloaded and sent to the school secretary. These forms must have a wet signature to be accepted. Background checks are currently taking longer than usual so be sure to fill one out if you are planning on volunteering.

Drivers need to submit proof of car insurance and their driver's license to the school office before being cleared to drive or fieldwork.

When you come into the school to volunteer please sign in and out on the computer in the office so that we know you are here. When you sign in on the computer a name badge will be printed to wear while volunteering

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Student Dress: Our students are outdoors rain or shine. Please have them wear comfortable clothes that are appropriate for the weather (boots, rain gear, sun hats, etc.) and be especially attentive to the footwear your children wear to school. Our students run, engage in PE classes, walk long distances and

on uneven terrain while at school. Please ensure their feet will be comfortable and dry in the shoes they wear. Students not wearing appropriate footwear may be asked to not participate in fieldwork, recess and/or PE.

Each student should arrive at school each day with a full water bottle and all utensils/materials needed for their snack and lunch unless participating in the school lunch program. Please let your class teacher know if you do not have access to these and we will provide them for the year. We are striving to eliminate single use plastics.

Arrival of Students

School doors open and school starts at 8:20 am daily. Unless your child is enrolled in the Before School Enrichment Program, there is no adult supervision of children before 8:20am. Please do not arrive earlier than 8:15.

There is no parking in the school lot during drop off or pick up!

DROP-OFF & PARKING OPTIONS

To ensure safe and efficient drop-off for students each morning, please review the following options and guidelines:

1. Priority Drop-Off Location with parking from 8am-9am

- **NUMN Building Lot – 2220 SW 1st Ave**
 - This lot is 1 block from the school building.
 - The circle is available to drop off for 4th–8th grade students who can walk to school without an adult.
 - Parking is available here from 8:00–9:00 AM for those who wish to walk their child into the school building. **DO NOT PARK IN DRIVEWAY OR SPOTS IN THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING.** Park on the south side or underneath the building only.
 - Cars must be moved from the NUMN lot by 9:00 AM
 - There is a crossing guard at Sheridan and 1st Avenue
 - Please be polite to the NUNM security. We do not want to lose this privilege.

2. Street Parking

- Paid street parking is available on SW 1st Ave, across from the NUMN building.
- Free 2-hour street parking is available SOUTH OF SW ARTHUR on 1st Ave, for families needing longer stays without paying.
- DO NOT park in our neighboring businesses' lots.

3. Additional Paid Parking

- OHSU Paid Lot (free for the first 15 minutes - keep your ticket!)
 - Located across the street from the school building.
 - Available for those who prefer a nearby paid option.

4. Drop-and-Go at the School Building

- Procedures for direct drop-off at the building are outlined below (please refer to the next section).

PICK-UP OPTIONS

End of Day Pick-up for Children

At the end of the school day, dismissal is supervised by the classroom teachers. Students in grades 4-8 are released to meet parents off campus or to walk, bike or bus home. Students in grades K-2 must be picked-up from the teacher by an authorized adult. Older students may also accompany younger students or siblings if pre-arranged with the teacher. Parents meeting students for pick-up should wait outside of the building in the parking lot.

When it is necessary to enter your child's classroom after school, meet your child in the designated area first and then accompany your child to the classroom once the teacher has returned.

Students cannot attend before or aftercare unless pre-enrolled: enrichment@thecottonwoodschool.org

Student Check-out

After students arrive on the school grounds, they must have parental permission and be checked-out of school through the office when leaving any time prior to dismissal. Inform teachers & office by email when it will be necessary for you to check-out your child. When picking up your child early, please report to the office to sign-out your child. **Whenever possible, please arrange your schedule so your child will not miss school.** Written parental permission is required whenever families would like someone who is not listed on the enrollment form to check out their child. Please be aware that students are frequently engaged in fieldwork and may not be on site for pick-up if you have not made prior arrangements with the teacher.

Attendance, Tardiness, & Medical/Dental Excuses

Physically being present in school is one of the most basic conditions for a student's success – if students are not in school, they are not learning.

At least 90% attendance is expected for all students so that we are able to engage learners and reach academic success. At yearly milestones, families may receive a reminder letter when attendance drops below 90%. Classroom teachers record attendance daily. If a child has a chronic attendance or tardiness problem, we encourage you to connect with our school counselor at kristinkrem@thecottonwoodschool.org.

The tone of the day is set during the first half-hour of school when directions are given and opening activities are held. It is most important that each child be at school on time at 8:20 to participate in grounding for the day ahead. Please reach out to your classroom teacher if you would like to learn more about how to arrive at school on time and ready to learn!

If your child is going to be absent for the day or is late, please call the school office (503-244-1697) as early as possible or email at attendance@thecottonwoodschool.org. You may, as a courtesy, also inform the teacher via email, but it is critical that you **call in** the absent or tardy students. We will call or email home before the end of the school day if the school office has not received a phone call or email explanation of an absence. Whenever possible, advance notice of planned absences is appreciated. If your child must have a medical or dental appointment during school hours, send an email to attendance and the teacher.

According to state law, any child absent for 10 consecutive days for any reason will be automatically withdrawn from CSCS. That child's space in the class will be offered to students on the waiting list. If the child who was absent wishes to re-enroll, they will have to first apply to CSCS and join the waiting list (if one exists).

The following is a list of acceptable excused absences if notice is received by the school office:

Medical or counseling appointment

- Take Your Child to Work Day
- Family emergency
- Funeral
- Immunizations incomplete
- Head lice treatment
- Student hospitalization
- Student or family member illness
- Religious holiday or instruction
- In school or out-of-school suspension
- Student illness
- Illness of an immediate family member when the student's presence at home is necessary
- An emergency, such as death, accident, medical or injury
- Dentist, doctor, or court appointment. (Please try to schedule these outside school hours.)
- Other reasons where satisfactory arrangements have been made in advance (See Pre-Arranged Absence section)
- Teacher/Administrator Arrangements, Field Trips, and school-approved activities. A student may be excused on a limited basis from a preplanned classroom activity or from selected portions of the established curriculum on the basis of a disability or from a personal, religious, or ethnic consideration.

Transportation

Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children who attend Cottonwood School. Due to the fact that parking is limited around the school, as well as environmental concerns, we encourage carpooling whenever possible.

Arrangements for going home with friends after school must be made in advance of the planned activity. As much as we would like to accommodate students making last minute arrangements, we are unable to do so. The school is not responsible for supervision of children playing on the school grounds before or after school hours.

Students who are not picked up within 15 minutes after their class ends will have to wait in the office. The office closes at 4:00.

Transporting Children Other Than Your Own

Written parent permission is required for a student to leave or ride with someone other than persons listed on the enrollment form or to go to someone else's home after school. The school telephone may not be used to make after school arrangements.

Inclement Weather/Late Openings

When bad weather arrives, CSCS follows the Portland Public Schools' plan for closure or delay. If PPS schools are closed or delayed, we will be closed or delayed. If PPS calls for a closure or delay for all Westside schools (not just those in the West Hills), we will be closed or delayed accordingly.

On late opening days, there will be a two-hour delay in school opening. We will start school at 10:20am. Please do not send your children to school before this time. There is no Before School Care on these days. Early dismissal may also be called. It is imperative that your child knows what to do in case of an early dismissal and that emergency contact information is kept current at the school.

Additionally, please ensure you have downloaded the Remind App, where we will post any delay, closure, or late arrival from fieldwork.

Lost & Found

The Lost and Found is located in the front lobby. To avoid losing items, we suggest that your child's name be placed on items that can be misplaced including coats, jackets, hats, backpacks, water bottles & lunch gear. Please check it often. Because our space is limited, we will donate lost items to charity at the end of each month.

Photos of Students

Students at CSCS are photographed regularly to document work & activities. Some of these photos are used in promotional materials, presentations, social media and on our website. If you do not want your child included in photos or other media, please opt out via your [ParentVUE portal](#).

Equal Education Opportunities

Cottonwood School strives to provide an equitable education environment and to be an environment free from discrimination or harassment based on an individual's race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, age, income level, proficiency in the English language or disability. For any civil rights questions, please contact Amanda McAdoo, our Title IX Coordinator at (503)244-1697, or amandamcadoo@thecottonwoodschool.org.

Education Records

Education records for all students are maintained at Cottonwood School according to state law. Records are forwarded to other educational agencies or institutions in which students seek to enroll or receive services, including special education services. Parents have the right to:

- Inspect and review student records
- Request an amendment of the student's educational records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights
- Consent to the disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records (except directory information – see below)
- Obtain a copy of the student's records (a fee may be charged)
- File a complaint with the US Department of Education if CSCS fails to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Student Information

Cottonwood School can release the following information if requested by another school:

- Student name
- Student address
- Student photograph
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities
- Dates of attendance
- Awards received
- Most recent previous school or program attended

This information will only be released with administrative direction and not over the phone except in health/safety emergencies. If you wish this information not to be released, please make your request in writing to the business office, businessoffice@thecottonwoodschool.org within 15 days of the start of the school year.

School Directory

Each year Cottonwood creates a school directory by class with parent phone numbers and emails included. This document is only shared with staff and families of Cottonwood. If you wish this information not to be released, please opt out via your [ParentVUE portal](#).

Grievance Process

Whenever possible, please connect with your class teacher and our school principal to find ways to resolve any concerns. Complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials should begin with our teachers, next move to the principal, then executive director and finally, the Board. If you wish to file an incident report based on bias, please refer to our policy [HERE](#).

IN THE CLASSROOM: Please find our 26.27 Curriculum Map [HERE](#)

Student Fees

Each year, we ask each family to contribute for supplies and field work expenses. We also will ask for additional fees to cover the cost of overnight trips for older students, 4-8th grades. The overnight fees vary annually and will be announced at Back-to-School-Night. Fieldwork fees directly pay for students to participate in this curriculum, costs of entry fees, speaker honorariums, visitor permits, transportation, and tour leader expenses. We pool our resources so that every one of our students may participate in CSCS's important field study experiences.

You can pay your sliding scale fieldwork/supply fees online as a one time payment or you can set up a payment plan. If your family experiences abundance, you might also consider contributing additional funds. <http://www.thecottonwoodschool.org/supply-fieldwork-fees/>

Field Work Permission Slips

An electronic permission slip will be sent home for school sponsored fieldwork. We must have a signed permission slip by a parent/guardian to allow a child to leave school for fieldwork. We cannot accept handwritten notes or phone calls in place of the fieldwork permission form. A Walking Field Work permission slip must be signed for your student to partake in this part of the curriculum. This permission slip is sent home electronically at the start of the school year.

Field Work and Volunteering Participation

There are plentiful opportunities to volunteer during fieldwork throughout the year. We value parent participation in fieldwork and hope that all parents can join in the learning with their students, while also making our type of education possible. We will support fieldwork chaperoning with a short training for volunteers. We ask that students and chaperones demonstrate safe and respectful behavior at all times. Students or chaperones failing to act safely or respectfully at school or during fieldwork may lose the privilege of participation in future field work.

Fieldwork Student Behavior

Students are expected to stay with the group and follow adult directions during fieldwork. If students are not meeting expectations at school or during fieldwork then parents and teachers will develop a plan of action before the student can attend fieldwork again.

Middle School Electives Program

The electives program is part of what makes Middle School at CSCS a unique learning environment.

Every year, parents and community members help to keep our programs strong by volunteering to lead a 9 week long workshop. Some examples of activities include: robotics, recycled art, yoga, guitar, scrapbooking, dance, and emergency preparedness. Please email gailbaker@thecottonwoodschool.org to get involved!

Communication with Staff

The staff at Cottonwood School welcomes the chance to communicate with parents via email and Remind, which is an app allowing emergency notifications. Families can typically expect a response to most inquiries within 48 hours. Staff work hours are between 8am-4pm Monday - Friday. Any staff responding to emails and phone calls outside of this time is entirely voluntary.

When your child or family is experiencing a challenge or concern at school, please start by reaching out to your classroom teacher. We ask families to bring concerns directly to the person involved whenever possible before reaching out to administration or the Board. If the concern is not resolved, please reach out to the Executive Director. If additional support is needed after that, the concern may be brought to the School Board.

Support Services

Students who qualify for special education assistance are eligible to receive services from our staff and Learning Center teachers from Portland Public Schools. An individualized education plan (IEP) is provided to students which is coordinated with the family, class teachers and other support staff. For information about how to contact special education staff, please contact your child's teacher.

Classroom Celebrations

Classrooms may choose to have a few celebrations during the year, unrelated to holidays or birthdays. These celebrations are usually related to community building or a unit of study and may include food.

Any classroom celebrations must first be approved by your child's teacher. It is a caregiver responsibility to communicate all allergies with CSCS.

While birthday parties and other social events outside of school are not the school's responsibility, a reminder seems appropriate. Usually these special events are talked about at school. Students not included can have hurt feelings. Please be sensitive to this issue when planning parties and encourage children to try to keep these events out of their school discussions. **Party invitations are not to be handed out at school.**

Homework

Homework expectations change for each grade level at CSCS. Teachers attempt to make most homework relate to on-going projects which might include assignments that cannot be done at school e.g. interviewing a family member, tracking the phases of the moon, etc.

We encourage all students to play outdoors daily after school, practice math skills and to read (or be read to) a minimum of one hour per school week.

Cottonwood teachers do not explicitly assign homework. Please see guidance below:

- Grades K-5- Students should be reading or read to for 20 minutes per day and can practice math fluency or other skills at home. I
- Grades 6/8 – Students will be expected to read 20 minutes at least 5 times per week. This year in middle school we are implementing a Wednesday study hall. If students are missing 4 or more assignments across their classes, they will attend study hall during the Wednesday elective time.

Teachers in all grades may also assign students homework when they have not completed their schoolwork during class time or when they have been late or absent from class.

Helping Your Child Succeed

Parents often ask what they can do at home to help their children be successful at school. Here are a few suggestions:

- Make school attendance a priority.
- Read to and with your child every day.
- Follow and discuss news and current events.
- Practice basic, age-appropriate math facts daily and show your student how you use math in daily life.
- Pay attention to your child's nutritional needs.
- Ensure that your child gets sufficient sleep (8-10 hours for school age children).
- Help your child learn to cope with emotions.
- Listen to your child, and seek to know them as a unique individual.
- Encourage your child to talk about activities, feelings, and concerns.
- Let them know that you believe they can succeed.
- Acknowledge and affirm efforts, as well as successes- small and large.
- Discipline lovingly and consistently.
- Show a strong interest in school.
- Attend school activities and find ways to participate in community service at school.
- Give your child responsibilities at home.
- Help your child set realistic goals.
- All children develop differently – avoid comparisons.
- Read books, go to the library, and play educational games together.
- Be selective in the type and amount of TV and other media your child watches.
- Enjoy and treasure each and every moment of these precious childhood years!

Conferences

At CSCS, we have conferences twice each year in fall and spring. Teachers, parents and students will set academic and social goals, share samples of the student's portfolio work and discuss academic progress. Conferences for the 2026/27 school year are set for October 29 & 30, and March 11 & 12. There will be no school on these days. Sign-ups will go out two weeks prior to the events. Our teachers try to accommodate all schedules by offering both day and evening slots, therefore not all teachers will be in the building at all times during these days.

We encourage all families to take part in the conferences! They are an important time to touch base with your child's teacher, to learn and share about your child, and ask questions.

Before & After School Enrichment

Before and After School Enrichment is offered on site by The Cottonwood School. Enrichment provides a welcoming space for students to work on school projects or homework, participate in enriching activities, relax, and have fun with school friends.

Enrichment is fee-based and requires advance enrollment. For more information or to enroll, please email enrichment@thecottonwoodschool.org.

Night Light Affinity Group is designed to serve students identifying as BIPOC (POC or People of the Global Majority). This group, facilitated by Cottonwood staff, brings together K-8 students and families throughout the year for culturally specific events and programs

HEALTH & SAFETY

School Safety

The safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us. If unsafe practices or events are observed by parents, please contact the school office immediately so the concern can be addressed in a timely manner. There are safety drills throughout the year.

All visitors are asked to check-in in the office upon entering the building, wear a Volunteer or Visitor

badge, and check-out when leaving. This identifies you as a “safe person” for students in our building, and allows us to account for who is in the building at all times. This procedure is not used for K-2 parents who enter the building at the end of the day to pick-up children from ASE or for evening events.

Nutrition at School

Hot Lunch & School Lunches

Cottonwood partners with Greater Good Northwest to provide warm lunches on site. Meals are \$5 and include a main dish, with vegetarian, vegan, halal, and gluten-free options available as needed. Students should bring any desired sides or snacks from home.

Menus are shared in advance, and families order through our online lunch ordering system. **Students who qualify for SNAP receive lunch at no cost.**

Families who do not order a school lunch should send a daily, nutritious lunch, snack and water bottle with their K–8 student. Good nutrition supports students’ mental, behavioral, and academic performance throughout the school day.

Greater Good Northwest also offers additional food and family support resources, including a Friday backpack program and holiday meal assistance for eligible families. If your family could benefit from additional food or family support, please reach out to our school counselor, Kristin Krem, at kristinkrem@thecottonwoodschool.org.

For more information or to order lunch, please visit our [lunch ordering page](#).

We have students with severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. To protect these students, we ask parents to avoid sending nuts, nut butters or other foods containing nuts. If it is brought in, we will have students observe special clean-up procedures to keep allergic students safe. Because of food restrictions and allergies, we ask that you do not bring any food into the classroom for general consumption without the teacher’s permission. Please discuss plans with your child’s teacher in advance of bringing food into the classroom. Teachers may include food in their lessons from time to time. Whenever food is prepared for broad consumption, we ask teachers and parents to follow basic guidelines for producing food safely.

Gum, candy, energy drinks and soda are not to be consumed by students in the classroom unless gum is listed as an accommodation on a child’s 504 plan or IEP (one or two small pieces of candy are allowed during lunch). Candy or gum is not allowed to be distributed or sold to other students on school grounds.

Health Emergencies

If your child is injured or becomes ill at school, we are only permitted to administer emergency treatment. Please be sure the emergency phone numbers on the registration form are properly listed and updated when necessary. When parents or the emergency contact person cannot be reached and the nature of the accident or illness is serious, we will call 911 for paramedic treatment, transportation to a medical facility, and/or further recommended treatment.

Please use your [ParentVUE portal](#) to make any changes in emergency contact numbers, home address, email and telephone number of parent’s home or work.

If a student becomes ill during school hours, the student must be signed out at the front desk or office before going home.

Our office will contact parents or other designated persons before sending sick youngsters home. A child may not be sent home unless someone is contacted. We must have alternate phone numbers for places

to call. Unfortunately, the school does not have the resources to take care of sick children except on a very short-term basis. Please keep your child at home until they are free of fever 100.4 degrees F or higher and vomiting and diarrhea has ceased for 48 hours.

Medication at School

Oregon law requires that all medication administered at school, prescription as well as over-the-counter medications, be dispensed from an original, labeled container, be accompanied by written consent from the parent or guardian, and written instructions from your physician. School personnel are not authorized to dispense any medication at school unless these requirements are met. Aspirin, acetaminophen, throat lozenges, cough drops, etc. are not available from school personnel. The school office cannot dispense naturopathic medication at school. Students may not keep medication with them unless they have been designated as a self-manager, authorized by a health professional, and cleared by the principal to do so.

All medicine, including inhalers for asthma, must be secured in the office and distributed by the certified staff member. Please contact the office before requesting that medicine be administered at school. The required medication form is available in the school office.

Pets

Pets from home are not allowed at school except on special, pre-arranged occasions. An adult family member must remain with the animal at all times if not caged. Students must have permission from their teacher prior to bringing pets to the classroom.

Head Lice

Because head lice are highly communicable, anyone can become affected. Be alert to this condition in your own children by watching for signs such as severe scratching of the scalp. It is a good practice to check your child's hair regularly for lice.

Children with head lice will have tiny bugs and/or grayish white dandruff-like particles that seem glued to the hair shaft. If you detect this:

- Keep your child at home until treatment is begun and hair is thoroughly combed. Continue combing daily for two weeks to remove nits and live lice.
- Notify the school so we can alert the teacher to look for other cases.
- Contact the school office or your health care provider for information about treatment.

If we find lice on your child's head, we will inform you before the end of the school day. Students may return to school following proper treatment of the environment and the use of a special shampoo. A statement is required from a parent that treatment has been given. Removing all nits from the child's head has proven very effective in preventing the spread and/or reoccurrence of the condition and should be your goal. We will check your child's head upon return to school. If we find nits, we will inform you so that treatment can be repeated. While head lice are certainly inconvenient, head lice do not transmit any diseases and are most easily transmitted by head- to-head contact.

If a lice outbreak is severe, we may require students to leave school or remain at home until nit-free.

Child Abuse

Cottonwood School staff and Board members are obliged by law to report any cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to Oregon's Department of Human Services. If any other community member suspects child abuse or neglect, please contact the principal. We suggest all families take the time to watch [this training](#) on child abuse identification and intervention which our staff & board also reviews yearly.

Immunizations

For attendance in Oregon schools, the law requires that students must be fully immunized, in the process of receiving immunization, or having a signed statement of exemption on file at school. Since March 1, 2014, Oregon state law requires that parents wishing to exempt their child from immunizations must show proof of having watched an educational video or a health care provider's signature. Students enrolling in school for the first time or enrolling from another country must present evidence of at least one dose of each vaccine. Students transferring from other schools have 30 days for records to be received. Children born in countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis must present a certificate of clearance before attending school.

Any students lacking up-to-date immunizations, or having incomplete records, will not be allowed to attend school. CSCS will notify parents directly of needed immunizations and when children will be excluded if shots are not updated. If a child has not been immunized by choice, parents will be required to keep your child home if there is a disease outbreak.

Immunization Schedule

This flyer summarized the 2026-27 [School Immunization requirements](#) for the State of Oregon. If for any reason these requirements are modified during the school year we will inform you of any changes.

Communicable Disease Control Measures - [Guidelines for Exclusion](#)

Students should be kept home from school if they exhibit:

- Fever greater than 100.4;
Stay at home until fever is below 100.4 for 24 hours WITHOUT use of fever-reducing medicine AND per guidance for primary COVID-19 symptoms.
- New cough illness;
Symptoms improving for 24 hours (no cough or cough is well-controlled).
- New difficulty breathing;
Symptoms improving for 24 hours (breathing comfortably). Urgent medical care may be needed.
- Vomiting (at least one episode that is unexplained);
Symptom-free for 48 hours OR with written orders from doctor.
- Diarrhea: 3 loose or watery stools in a day OR not able to control bowel movements;
Symptom-free for 48 hours OR with written orders from doctor.
- Stiff neck or headache with fever;
Symptom-free OR with written orders from doctor. Follow fever instructions above. Urgent medical care may be needed.
- Any rash with or without fever;
Symptom free, which means rash is gone OR sores are dry or can be completely covered by a bandage OR with written orders from doctor.
- Acting differently without a reason: unusually sleepy, grumpy, or confused;
Symptom-free, which means return to normal behavior OR with written orders from doctor.
- Jaundice (yellow color of skin or eyes)
- Red eyes with colored drainage;
Symptom-free, which means redness and drainage are gone OR with written orders from doctor.

- Major health event, like an illness lasting 2 or more weeks OR a hospital stay, OR health condition requires more care than school staff can safely provide;
After the school has written orders from doctor AND after measures are in place for the student's safety. Please work with school staff to address special health-care needs so the student may attend safely.

It is the policy of the County Health Department that children with undiagnosed skin conditions must remain out of school until the condition is completely cleared up or until a statement is presented from a physician or the Health Department that the condition is non-communicable.

See [this document](#) for more details on what symptoms must result in students being excluded from school.

Safe Handling of Body Fluids

Cottonwood School has adopted procedures for the safe handling of body fluids in a school setting for the prevention of spread of disease. Every person's body fluid is treated as though it is potentially infectious. You may observe school personnel in some of these practices as you visit school or hear your child discuss them:

- Disposable gloves are worn whenever there is contact with any body fluid.
- All staff and students are encouraged to care for their own bleeding or draining injuries or lesions, if possible.
- Good hand washing practices are encouraged and reinforced.
- Body fluid spills are properly cleaned and disinfected.
- If garments are bloodstained, we will request clean clothing from home or attempt to provide clean shirt/pants.
- If your child has any toilet training issues, please notify the teacher and provide a change of clothing including underwear.

STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Students attending Cottonwood School have both rights and responsibilities. Among the rights and responsibilities are the following:

- The right to equal education opportunity and freedom from discrimination and the responsibility not to discriminate against others
- The responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school
- The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion and decisions which the student believes injure their rights
- The right to free inquiry and expression and the responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights
- The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to a student's educational records
- The right to know the behavior standards expected of them as well as to know the consequences of not meeting those behavior standards..

COMMUNITY PLAN

Our community plan ([linked here](#)) is a tool we utilize to provide interventions and supports for student behavioral needs. This 3-tiered plan supports students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. We strive to provide students with learning opportunities, encouragement, and positive discipline that helps them develop behaviors which support academic success, positive social

interactions, and safety. Students are also taught to recognize behaviors that interrupt the instructional process, hurt others, and/or are not in their own best interest.

We believe that when parents, staff and students work together, we build skills that increase our children's ability to:

- Solve problems successfully
- Develop positive relationships with others
- Become productive, involved citizens
- Recognize when their actions are interfering with the rights of others
- Recognize and exercise their rights within the limits of society
- Understand and appreciate other cultures, ethnic groups, and belief systems
- Take responsibility for their and accept the consequences of their behaviors
- Succeed in school and develop a life-long love of learning

RESTORATIVE and POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Restorative and Positive Discipline practices are non-punitive interventions and support that we provide to students to improve their behavior and resolve harm. They are based on five principles: relationship, respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration. Some examples of restorative and positive discipline practices include:

- Restorative circles
- Affective statements
- Community-building circles
- Small impromptu conferencing
- Classroom agreements or norms

Our discipline philosophy teaches important social and life skills in a manner that is respectful to both the adults and the children in the situation. It is a philosophy that raises young people to be responsible, respectful, and resourceful members of their community.

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

- Mutual respect -- Adults model firmness by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kindness by respecting the needs of the child.
- Identifying the belief behind the behavior. Effective discipline recognizes the reasons kids do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than merely attempting to change behavior.
- Teaching problem solving and communication skills
- A focus on discipline that teaches and is neither permissive nor punitive
- Focusing on solutions instead of punishment
- Encouragement instead of praise -- Encouragement notices effort and improvement, not just success, and builds long-term self-esteem and empowerment

Teachers and staff teach these guidelines and techniques throughout the year. Reinforcement, review, and practice are provided regularly. Students are acknowledged for following the school guidelines and acting in a responsible, kind, and respectful manner in accordance with their classroom agreements.

Problem Solving Skills

Students are given the opportunity to learn and practice problem-solving strategies for small problems involving other students and/or their own behavior. We would like to teach students how to resolve conflicts between each other, on their own through communication. Learning to deal with conflict in a

positive manner is a lifelong skill. Students should try first to work out conflicts on their own. If this is not possible, they should go to a teacher or staff member for help in resolving the conflict. If students use the ideas in this problem solving section, they can help find solutions to solve most problems.

We encourage students to try at least 2 of these ideas when they have a conflict:

- Choose another activity
- Share and take turns
- Use an “I” statement
- Ignore it
- Walk away
- Make a deal
- Talk it out
- Apologize
- Tell them to stop
- Wait and cool off

Personal Electronic Devices:

Per our school tech policy:

- Students are not allowed to have personal electronic devices (phones, e- readers, ipads, laptops, smart watches, etc.) on campus (including parking lot) or on fieldwork, unless it is being used as adaptive technology and is specifically named in an IEP or 504 (students must be using their device as outlined in their plan)
- Phones/ipods can not be out at school, during before care and after care, or at any school sponsored activity. Devices must be turned off and given to a teacher upon arrival not brought out at dismissal until fully exited through the front gates.
- If a student has violated the technology agreement, their device will be turned into the administration for safe keeping. Occasionally, a whole class will need to practice turning phones in before school.
- Using technology equipment other than in the manner directed by school staff can be a violation of internet security. As a result, personal electronic devices are not allowed to be used at school.
- If you need to reach your child during the day, please use the school number (503-244-1697), and we will get the message to your child. If it is urgent, we will have them come to the office to speak with you.

Bullying

Please let us know if you think your child is experiencing bullying. Also familiarize yourself with what bullying is and is not. This term is not something to be used lightly. Not all unwanted behavior is bullying. We are here to support and help mediate in either situation.. See this [handout](#) we give to the older grades about bullying.

The definition of bullying:

- 1) behavior intended to cause harm (can be physical, relational, or cyber).
- 2) repeated
- 3) power imbalance where bully has more power

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying which is carried out through an online service such as email, chat room, discussion group or instant messaging, or through mobile phone technologies such as short message services (SMS). Any form of cyber bullying happening on school grounds will result in a tier 3 behavior referral. If a student accidentally accessed inappropriate content, they should move on without drawing unnecessary attention, and inform their teacher quietly if needed. Students should not access chat rooms or social networking sites, and should never give out any personal details over the Internet. If Cyberbullying is happening while your child is not at school, we encourage families to connect with one another to resolve. You may reach out to teachers and administrators if the incident impacts the ability to fully and safely participate at school.

Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

Cottonwood School is a tobacco- and drug-free environment. Students may not abuse, possess, use, distribute or sell tobacco, alcohol, unlawful drugs or drug paraphernalia or any substance purported to be an unlawful drug on our campus or at any time that the student is under the jurisdiction of Cottonwood School. Students violating this policy will face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. A referral to law enforcement may also be made. All others, including staff, parents, and other volunteers may not use, distribute or sell tobacco, alcohol, unlawful drugs or drug paraphernalia or any substance purported to be an unlawful drug on or near our campus or at CSCS-sponsored activities. Each classroom, K-8, will receive drug, alcohol and tobacco prevention instruction as part of our educational program.

Drug- or Alcohol-Related Activity: Students will not use, possess, or sell/transfer alcohol and illegal drugs in the schools, on school grounds, at school activities, or during school hours.

Tobacco: The use of tobacco products is prohibited at all times in the school building, on school grounds, or at any CSCS- sponsored activity.

Physical Displays of Affection: Students are expected to maintain an appropriate learning environment. Physical displays of affection between students romantically involved are not appropriate for school in classrooms, on campus or at other CSCS sponsored activities.

Other Personal Items/Toys: Students are not allowed to bring any valuables or toys from home. They create a distraction in the classroom and can be lost, stolen or damaged. If your child would like to bring something of value for sharing with the classroom, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. Teachers will explain their classroom sharing guidelines at the beginning of the school year. [Expanded info on fidgets can be found here.](#)

Profanity & Slurs: Speech of a profane nature or slurs that are based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income level or disability are disrespectful and inappropriate for school and considered to be harassment based on a protected class. Hate speech harms us all and how we dismantle this together makes a strong and healthy community.

Protection of Physical Safety and Mental Well-Being: Students are expected to respect the educational climate, the physical safety, and emotional well-being of other students and staff. Students are expected to resolve conflicts by discussion, problem solving techniques, and when needed, with assistance of staff members.

Protection of Property: Students are expected to recognize the property rights of staff members, other students, and the public by:

- Using property & equipment only for its intended purpose without damage to property or equipment
- Obtaining permission to use property or equipment belonging to others

- Reporting to school staff situations which may result in damage to, loss of, or misuse of property.

Lost or Damaged Property: Students damaging or defacing school property or any property they visit in their fieldwork are responsible to repair or replace such property. Any textbook damaged or lost by a student will be the student's responsibility to replace. Invoices for the repair or replacement cost of anything damaged or destroyed will be sent to the student's home.

STUDENT EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE: [Suspension Policy](#)

If violations of school behavioral agreements persist after several interventions have been provided, students will conference with the Administrators, teacher, and parents. Students can be suspended for one or more of the following reasons:

- Willful violation of school rules or policies
- Willful conduct which endangers the student, other students or staff
- Willful conduct which endangers public charter school property

Students who are suspended may not attend after-school activities or events, be present on campus or at CSCS- sponsored events without a parent or participate in any other CSCS-sponsored activities.

Some of the serious behaviors which warrant immediate parent contact and director/ principal referral. For a list of these behaviors, please refer to "Stage 3" in the Community Plan.

In severe cases or for certain offenses required by law, Cottonwood School may need to make that separation permanent (expulsion). Contact the Executive Director for more information on the expulsion process.

Communication between staff, teachers and parents is essential. If you have any concerns regarding behavior of your child or another child, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. All staff members' email addresses are included on page 3 to facilitate communication.

If staff requests to meet with parents regarding a student's behavior issue, we expect parents to make every attempt to meet in a timely manner. Failure to do so may result in the student's removal from the community until a meeting with the parents can occur.

STUDENT SUPPORT

School Counselor- Our school counselor supports the wellness of all students at Cottonwood through whole class lessons, small groups, and individual student and family meetings. The school counselor works closely with teachers and families to help students thrive. This can be through teaching social skills, emotional regulation, coping strategies, mindfulness, consent, mediation, 504 plans, self awareness, self love, and more.

Contact: kristinkrem@thecottonwoodschool.org

The Cottonwood School 2026-2027 Calendar

Event	Date(s)
CSCS Office Reopens & Teachers Return	Monday, August 17, 2026
School Clean-up Day	Saturday, August 22, 2026
School Starts for Grades 1-8	Monday, August 31, 2026
Kindergarten Starts	Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Labor Day - Holiday - School Closed	Monday, September 7, 2026
Back to School Night	Thursday, September 17, 2026
Early Out (12:30)	Thursday, October 8, 2026
Statewide In-Service Day - no school for students	Friday, October 9, 2026
Goal Setting Conferences - no school for students	Thursday & Friday, Oct. 29 & 30, 2025
Plant Night	Thursday, November 5, 2026
Veterans Day - Holiday - school closed	Wednesday, November 11, 2025
Fall Break for students	Monday, November 23 - Friday, November 27, '26
1st Trimester Ends	Friday, December 18, 2026
Winter Break for Students	Monday, December 21- Monday, January 4, 2027
Teacher Planning Day - no school for students	Monday, January 4, 2027
Students' First Day Back After Break	Tuesday, January 5, 2027
1st Trimester grades posted	Tuesday, January 12, 2027
Plant Night	Thursday , February 11, 2027
President's Day - Holiday - school closed	Monday, February 15, 2027
Open House, 6:30-8:00	Wednesday, March 3, 2027
Conferences - no school for students	Thursday & Friday, March 11 & 12, 2027
2nd Trimester ends	Friday, March 19, 2027
Spring Break	Monday, March 22 - Monday March 29, 2027
Teacher Planning Day - no school for students	Monday, March 29, 2027
First Day Back after Break	Tuesday, March 30, 2027
Professional Development - no school for students	Friday, April 30, 2027
Plant Night	Thursday, May 27, 2027

Memorial Day - Holiday - school closed	Monday, May 31, 2027
Last Day of School for Students, 12:30 Dismissal	Tuesday, June 8, 2027
3rd Trimester Grades Posted	Tuesday, June 15, 2027
Juneteenth - Holiday - office closed	Friday, June 18, 2027 (recognized)
CSCS Office Closes	Tuesday, June 22, 2027

Major Religious Holidays and Cultural Events 2026-27

Cottonwood works to avoid scheduling special school events on major religious holidays and cultural events to be inclusive of all students. This includes the scheduling of fieldwork, back-to-school night, outdoor school, assemblies, major tests, Friends & board meetings, student performances, etc. This list of holidays/events does not include all students' traditions and there may be other dates to avoid scheduling conflicts for students.

Rosh Hashanah*	September 11-13	Ash Wednesday	February 10
Yom Kippur*	September 20-21	Ramadan*	February 8 -March 9
Indigenous Peoples' Day	October 12	Eid Al-Fitr*	March 9-10
Diwali	November 8	Purim*	March 22-23
Native American Heritage Day	November 27	Good Friday	March 26
Hanukkah*	December 4 -12	Easter	March 28
Christmas	December 25	Passover*	April 21-29
Kwanzaa	December 26 -Jan. 1	Eid al-Adha*	May 16 & 17
Lunar New Year	February 6	Juneteenth	June 19

*Observance of Jewish and Muslim holidays begin at sundown on the first day listed and end at nightfall on the last date specified.

CSCS -Designated National Heritage Months

October	National Hispanic Latino Heritage Month
November	National American Indian Heritage Month
December	Jewish American Heritage Month
February	Black History Month
March	National Women's History Month

April	Arab American Heritage / Earth Month
May	Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
June	LGBTQ Pride Month

The Cottonwood School

2026 - 2027 School Calendar

August '26						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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30	31					

September '26						
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October '26						
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November '26						
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29	30					

December '26						
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27	28	29	30	31		

January '27						
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31						

February '27						
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28						

March '27						
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April '27						
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May '27						
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June '27						
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July '27						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31



First & Last Day of School



First Day for Kindergarten



Holiday/Planning, No School



Early Dismissal Day (12:30pm)



No School OR Make-up Day



Conferences - No School