



Middle School Classroom Contribution
Field Study and Supplies Request 2026-2027 School Year

Hello Sunnyside Families,

In 2025-26, our middle school traveled to more than 70 unique locations, investing a total of \$28,600 to provide our students with these fantastic opportunities. Fortunately, \$9,500 was covered by grants. (These figures do not include the 3x marine biology overnights, or 6th grade Outdoor School.) Some trips are entirely free because classes walk to public, outdoor spaces. Other trips require bus rides and admission fees, such as when we visit OMSI, Washington Park, and the coast, or collaborate with partner organizations. All trips are essential to bringing our place-based, thematic core curriculum to life, and wouldn't be possible without your generous support!

Middle School teachers also purchase classroom supplies in a way that saves you time and money and maintains equity for all students. Please do not send physical school supplies with your student. Instead, we will use donations received to purchase necessary classroom supplies.



To kick off the year, we ask all families to contribute between \$75-\$150 sliding scale to contribute to weekly field study costs, including bus fare, and classroom supplies like pencils & notebooks. Please contribute at: bit.ly/SES-MS-SUPPLIES or scan the QR code.

If you prefer to mail a check or money order to Sunnyside, please remember to include your student's name and make payable to:

Sunnyside Environmental School
3421 SE Salmon Street
Portland, OR 97214

*The amount requested here is **separate** from the PTSA's Back-to-School Ask for field study, music, and garden program support. Please give to both as you are able!*

The link to the PTSA ask is: <https://bit.ly/ses-ptsa>: For tax purposes, SES PTSA is a 501c3: 93-1208359.

We are excited to welcome your student to a new and exciting school year.

Middle School Core Teachers,
Becca, Carrie, Christina, JJC, Mary Gage, Michael, and Sarah



Sunnyside Environmental School

**Fostering responsibility, excitement for learning
and respect for all living things.**

A Focus Option Program of Portland Public Schools

3421 SE Salmon St, Portland, Oregon, 97214

SES 2026-27 STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

Parents and Guardians,

This is our Statement of Understanding for Sunnyside Environmental School families. Please read it completely - we ask that all families, regardless of if this is your first year in our community or you've been here for many, take the time to review the various elements of Sunnyside's program and the importance of family involvement at our school.

Sunnyside Environmental School (SES) is a group of students, educators, parents, and community partners working together to create a rich learning environment for all students through pedagogy and beliefs that are rooted in environmental education, environmental justice, culturally responsive teaching, place-based education and service learning.

The K-8 curriculum allows children to make meaning of the world around them by incorporating place-based learning experiences into the conventional school week. Place-based education differs from traditional classroom-based education in that it is founded on the belief that students' local community is one of the most important resources for learning.

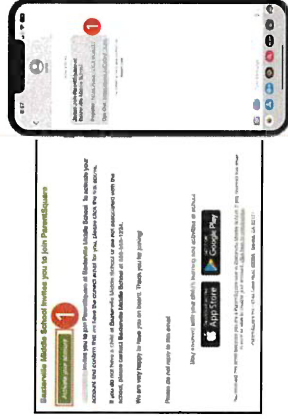
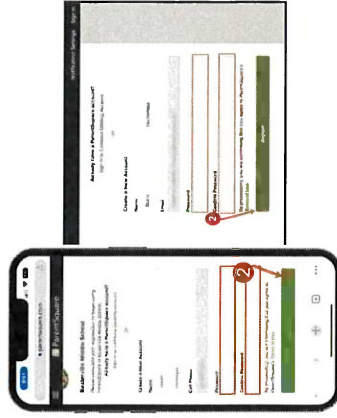
Place-based education at SES means that part of the student learning experience is spent beyond the walls of the actual school building. Natural spaces, local neighborhoods, museums, our own school yard and university campuses are just a few places where our students learn in place. These locations provide a canvas upon which elements of history, environmental education, scientific and biological relationships, culture, mathematics, economy, literature, and art are used to help children authentically make meaning of the world around them.

The city's wild and urban areas become sites for inquiry, exploration and understanding as children are pushed to develop the academic and social-emotional skills that lead them to be critically conscious, curious members of the larger community. In pursuit of this goal, students are involved in service learning efforts throughout their years at the school. In late winter, 8th graders participate in an overnight retreat; in the spring, all middle school students participate in overnight marine biology trips. At some point in the year, 6th graders participate in Oregon's Outdoor School program. Transportation is usually provided for SES students when on field study. (The exception is when guardians drive students.)

Family involvement is an essential component of SES. Your signature indicates your understanding of our expectations for financial and time commitment. All families will be asked to volunteer time for field studies, overnights, and special activities outside normal school hours. Families will also be asked to help fundraise and contribute financially, as they are able. All program activities are paid for by the SES community, but will be open to all students regardless of families' ability to contribute time and or money.

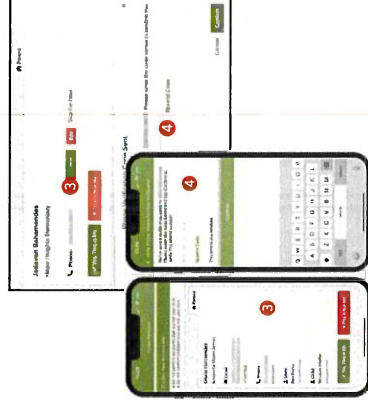
Parents & Guardians Getting Started Guide

1. Open the invitation email or text.
Click **Activate your account** or tap the link to activate your account.



2. Create a Password for your ParentSquare account and click **Register**.

3. Click **Confirm** for your phone number and/or email.
A verification code will be sent to the email or phone number.



4. Enter the verification code to confirm.

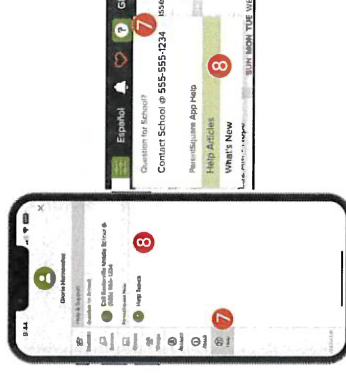


5. Confirm your child(ren) by clicking **Confirm**. Use Not My Child if a child listed is not associated with your account.
6. Select **Yes, This is Me** when you have confirmed your contact information and child(ren) associated with your account.

*Name misspelled?
Wrong email or phone number?
Missing a child on your account?*

Contact your child's school to get this information updated.

Once you are logged in to ParentSquare, you will be able to access self-paced training modules, video resources and help articles to assist you with using ParentSquare.



7. Click ? (Help) for help or your school contact information.
8. Select **Help Articles** to learn how to use ParentSquare.

The ParentSquare apps are free and available in both the Apple iOS and Android stores.



Welcome to Sunnyside Environmental School

Middle School Beginning of the 2026-27 School Year Info

[Link to Climate Handbook for Sunnyside](#)

Statement of Understanding

Parents and Guardians,

This packet is designed to share important information about Middle School at SES. **Please read it completely - we ask that all families, regardless of if this is your first year in our community or you've been here for many, take the time to review the various elements of Sunnyside's program and the importance of family involvement at our school.**

Sunnyside Environmental School (SES) is a K-8 community creating rich, place-based learning environments rooted in justice that empower students to become environmentally, socially, emotionally, racially, and academically literate, and who are collectively inspired to take action for a more just world.

Place-based education differs from traditional classroom-based education in that it is founded on the belief that **students' local community is one of the most important resources for learning**. Part of the student learning experience is spent beyond the walls of the actual school building. Natural spaces, local neighborhoods, museums, our own school yard and university campuses are just a few places where our students learn in place. These locations provide a canvas upon which elements of history, environmental education, scientific and biological relationships, culture, mathematics, economy, literature, and art are used to help children authentically make meaning of the world around them. The city's wild and urban areas become sites for inquiry, exploration and understanding as children are pushed to develop the academic and social-emotional skills that lead them to be critically conscious, curious members of the larger community.

In pursuit of this goal, students are involved in service learning efforts throughout their years at the school. In February, 8th graders participate in an overnight retreat; in the spring, all middle school students might participate in overnight marine biology trips or study marine biology at SES. At some point in the year, 6th graders participate in Oregon's Outdoor School program. Transportation will be provided for SES students when on field study.

Family involvement is an essential component of SES. Your signature indicates your understanding of our expectations for financial and time commitment. All families will be asked to volunteer time for field studies, overnights, and fundraising events outside normal school hours. Families will also be asked to help fundraise and contribute financially, as they are able. All program activities are paid for by the SES community, but will be open to all students regardless of families' ability to contribute time and or money.

Service Learning

Our students engage in service learning in our school building through class projects such as litter pickup after lunch, helping out in the cafeteria to serve food to all grades, and making sack lunches for our unhoused neighbors that are delivered twice a week. We also complete service learning projects at various sites on our weekly field studies with partner organizations, such as beach cleanups in Seaside with Surfrider and native plantings with Friends of Mt. Tabor and more!

Students may have the opportunity later in the year to track service learning hours as part of their tracking sheets, which are required for students to participate in certain activities, like attending marine biology trips and other class travel, dances, and (for 8th grade only) enjoying off-campus lunch later in the year.

Weekly Field Studies

One of the unique aspects of the Sunnyside Environmental School middle school curriculum is the opportunity for students to participate in field studies and optional overnight trips. These place-based learning experiences are an integral part of the SES middle school curriculum.

These days and overnight trips are essential for middle school students learning at Sunnyside. We highly encourage 100% student participation and work closely with families to ensure that every student attends field studies and overnights. Middle school classes travel on field studies on Thursdays weekly in the fall and spring, and then once a month in the winter months. Adult support for these trips are essential. We need chaperones in order to make them happen, and you will receive a link to an online signup so that you can join!

Field Study Financial Info

In 2025-26, our middle school traveled to more than 70 unique locations, investing a total of \$28,500 to provide our students with these fantastic opportunities. Fortunately, \$9,500 was covered by grants. (These figures do not include the 3x marine biology overnights, or 6th grade Outdoor School.) Some trips are entirely free because classes walk to outdoor spaces. Other trips require bus rides and admission fees. All trips are essential to bringing our place-based, thematic core curriculum to life, and wouldn't be possible without your generous support!



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Just SOME of the locations our students visited last year!

Beacon Rock - Bonneville Dam - Buddhist Temple - Bull Run Watershed - Cathedral Park
Colonel Summers Park - Depoe Bay - Downtown City Archives - Eagle Creek - Errol Heights Park - Five
Oaks Museum - Forest Park - Fort Vancouver - Haystack Rock - Hopkins Demonstration Forest - Hoyt
Arboretum - Jamison Fountain - Japanese Gardens - Keller Auditorium - Kindness Farm - Leach
Botanical Garden - Lone Fir Cemetery - Luscher Farm - Metro Waste & REclaim It - Mt. Tabor -
Multnomah County Courthouse - Oaks Bottom - OHSU Areal Tram - Oregon Museum of Science and
Industry - Oregon Maple Project - Oxbow Park - Pittock Mansion & Balch Creek - PLACE Gallery
Portland Art Museum - Portland Center Stage - Peninsula Park - Powell's Books - Ramona Falls
Reed College Cooley & Gallery - RICE Museum - State Capital (Salem) - Salmon Springs Fountain &
Waterfront Park - Sandy River Delta Bird Blind - Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge - The Heights Bike Garden
- Tideman Johnson Natural Area - Tryon Creek - Vedanta Loop - Wapato Farm - Wildwood Recreation
Area - World Forestry Center - The Oregon Zoo -and more!

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Tracking Sheets

Tracking Sheets are completed by students in partnership with core teachers, and sent home once per quarter in order to communicate how students are showing up in our school community, both at school and in the field. Meeting community expectations, as outlined in the tracking sheets, determine student eligibility to participate in our optional overnight trips, off-campus for 8th graders, and dances.

[8th grade tracking](#) [7th grade tracking](#) [6th grade tracking](#)

How To Get To Do Fun Things (Clarity for Students)

Tracking Sheet Example:

M=Meeting, CM= Close to Meeting, N= Not Meeting)																											
	Criteria	Core				Math				Spanish				Specials				Admin./Counseling				Home Signature/Comment					
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Community Member/Behavior	- First time listener - Positive or Neutral action/behavior - Keeps hands/body to self - No suspensions, no major referrals unless repair/resolution meeting held																										
	Comments:																										
Attendance	- 90%+ attendance rate (excused absences) - Arrives on time to school and classes																										
	Comments:																										
Field Study	- 90%+ attendance rate on field study days - Positively represents Sunnyside																										
	Comments:																										
Academic effort	Classwork and homework meets performance expectations																										
	Comments:																										
8 th grade cohort service project participation	Participates in planning and execution of project with cohort. Reflection is completed and presented.																										
	Comments:																										
Whole-grade fundraisers 8th grade	Participates in at least two 8 th -grade fundraisers w/a \$200 goal (e.g. Adult's Night Out, Winter Craft Fair, etc.)																										
	Comments:																										

Overnight Trips

SES overnight marine biology trips (May), and the 8th Grade Retreat (February) are optional. There are behavior expectations that must be met for students to attend. Students **MUST** be Meeting ("M") on the Tracking Sheet. If they receive an Not Meeting ("N") or Close To Meeting ("CM"), students must meet with the relevant staff member to set goals for improvement, and schedule check-in meetings to monitor progress. During any of the overnight school trips, there are students who do not travel for various reasons and stay at SES to continue academic programming at school. We understand that sometimes certain students and families decide not to attend the overnights, and we do require that students who wish to travel meet expectations via the tracking sheet in order to attend.

Marine Biology Week 2027

6th Grade

Newport, OR

Tidepools! Yurts! Squids!

May 11-13, 2027

3 days, 2 nights

*Per student: ~\$450

7th Grade

Olympic Nat'l Park, WA

Hiking! Canoeing!

May 10-14, 2027

5 days, 4 nights

*Per student: ~\$750

8th Grade

Catalina Island, CA

Snorkeling! Kayaking!

May 10-14, 2027

5 days, 4 nights

*Per student: ~\$1,275

8th Grade Retreat 2027

8th Grade

Camp Collins | Gresham, OR

Community Building! Portfolio Kick Off!

February 25-26, 2027

2 days, 1 night

*Per student: ~\$275

*** PLEASE NOTE:** The costs shown here are 25-26 cost data, and may change for 26-27.

We will communicate with families ASAP with much more information about Marine Bio, including how to set up recurring monthly payments.

TRACKING DEADLINE: Students must have all "Ms" on Tracking sheet 2 weeks prior to marine biology overnight trips (April 24, 2027) and must continue to Meet in all areas continuing past that point in order to travel.

CHAPERONES: We cannot take these trips without parent chaperones. Sign ups and much more information about these trips and chaperone needs will be available later in the year.

(**Note:** 6th and 7th grade Chaperones attend at no cost. 8th grade Catalina Chaperones pay the same cost as students, given airfare, shuttle, and ferry transportation to the island.)

LATE ENROLLMENT: If a student enrolls after March 10, 2027 (2 months prior to travel), we will offer them a rich curriculum at SES in lieu of the overnight trip.

Fundraising

As you may expect, this comes with a sizable financial expense for our school. Our philosophy is "no one goes unless everyone goes." We expect that all students will participate in all trips, and also expect that the school and parent community will make sure that every student is able to attend each trip by contributing as much as they are able, helping to chaperone, and when possible, supporting our various fundraising efforts year-round.

How do we fund these trips?

1. Direct Contributions from Families (one-time or recurring)
2. SES GO Fund Scholarships (available by request, see below)

Student-Led Fundraising

All middle school students are expected to participate in AT LEAST one fundraising activity throughout the year. This may include working their core class's carnival booth during Harvest Fair, helping with various bake sales or babysitting nights, plant & t-shirt sales, and numerous other events. Student ideas about fundraisers are ALWAYS welcome, and it takes parent support to help make them happen.

PTSA Fundraising Go Fund

Our PTSA's robust calendar of events allows them to generously contribute towards the cost of overnights. These include Walk Run Move, Harvest Fair, Winter Craft Festival, 6-8 Musical and K-5 Musicals, Read-A-Thon, Auction & Gala, and so much more. Please join in the fun and support our community events as you are able by volunteering and attending.

Grants

Do you write grants? We are always looking for help identifying and applying to various grants or other funding partnerships. Please contact Tara (tbranham@pps.net) if you can help!

Adult support is integral to successful fundraising to keep these marine biology experiences happening year after year. To be honest, its sustainability is fragile unless we continue to come together on fundraising. How might you help? Please contact Tara Branham (tbranham@pps.net) with questions or ideas.

SES Go Fund - Scholarships for Overnight Costs



We know many families cannot contribute financially. That's why we have the SES Go Fund. Families in need of partial or full assistance are invited to apply for assistance from the Go Fund **by December 1, 2026**. While we do not require any sort of financial disclosure to access this scholarship fund, we respectfully ask families to complete a Go Fund Request as soon as you're able so we can effectively budget. Visit bit.ly/GOFundRequestForm OR scan the QR code to request support.