

Amanda C. Rowe Elementary School



Family Handbook 2025-26

**Your guide to the policies of Portland Public Schools and procedures followed at
Amanda C. Rowe Elementary School**

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Joe Trivisonno, Principal

Melissa Richard, Assistant Principal

Dear Amanda C. Rowe Families,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year at Rowe! We are very much looking forward to working in partnership with you to provide high-quality educational experiences that ensure success for all.

We hope that you find this family handbook helpful in understanding Rowe's practices and procedures. We consider this handbook a living document that will be consistently revisited and revised as needed as we grow together as a school community.

Please take some time to review the contents and let us know if you have any questions or concerns or if clarification is needed.

Sincerely,

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Attendance

Regular school attendance is essential to academic success. Because the process of education depends upon exposure to subject matter, continuity of instruction and class participation, absence from class is detrimental to student learning. The interaction of students with our staff and with other students contributes to mastery of content, critical thinking, and development of effective communication and social skills. Frequent absences and/or tardiness causes children to miss the full benefits of planned educational activities. Please make every attempt to have your child at school on time. Your child should be in their classroom by 8:55 am for a 9:00 am start.

Parents and legal guardians are responsible for school attendance of students who are under 17 years of age. You are expected to notify the school office if your child will be absent, tardy, or dismissed early from school.

An absence will be excused for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Appointment with a health professional that must be made during the school day
- Observance of recognized religious holidays when required during the regular school day
- A family emergency
- A planned absence for a personal or educational purpose that has been approved

Behavioral Expectations

We use a consistent behavioral framework at Rowe that adheres to the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports model (often called PBIS). Expectations for students are guided by the following common language, known as our School Wide Expectations:

- We are safe
- We are respectful
- We are responsible

Rowe staff use this simple, common language consistently with students in order to teach and reinforce desired school behaviors. When students do not display desired behaviors, we use a restorative approach that includes logical consequences for students to learn from mistakes, repair damaged relationships, and get back on track for learning and developing social connections.

We teach students to conduct themselves in ways that allow for both safety and comfort within the school environment. If students use language or exhibit behaviors that cause harm and inhibit the physical or emotional safety of others, we implement restorative practices that involve teaching, learning, and restoring respect and positive relations with those impacted. Such actions may include,

but are not limited to the following: swearing, sexually suggestive language, physical aggression, verbal aggression, threats, derogatory language, discriminatory language, discussion of weapons, discussion of violence, play that suggests violence, and possession of weapons or items suggestive of violence, including toys. If you have questions about this or other topics related to supporting the social emotional development of our students, please connect with Jeremy Lynch, Culture & Climate Coordinator, or a member of the school PBIS team.

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is provided for kindergarten students living more than a half mile from school. Students in grades 1 through 5 must live one mile or more away. Students in special education or students with medical issues not meeting distance requirements may be allowed to use school transportation or buses under some circumstances. Riding the bus is a privilege and not a right. Students who do not follow the Student Bus Conduct Code will be referred to the Administration. Serious or repeated violations may result in the loss of privilege to ride the bus. Please refer any questions to the Portland Public Transportation Department.

For the safety of all students in the district, our Transportation Department cannot accommodate requests for students to ride a bus other than their own. We appreciate your understanding.

Celebrations

We LOVE honoring students on their birthdays and for other special achievements, which we do consistently at Rowe.

We have decided not to have any food or gifts in our classrooms for celebrations during school hours.

This does not mean that our children will forgo class celebrations. Instead of food, students have made craft projects during celebrations, like birthday crowns. Some teachers wrap their desks like a present or assign special privileges, like being the line leader for the day. We have seen many creative ways to honor students on “their special day” without putting pressure on parents to send expensive cards, treats, or gifts.

We want our school to be a safe and comfortable environment for all students, and we have done this for several reasons, which reflect our value of respect for all:

1. To make classroom celebrations more equitable and minimize disruption to the teaching day
2. To minimize non-nutritious foods being brought into school and allow individual parents the opportunity to control how much and which foods their children eat during the school day
3. To increase the sensitivity of our community to the needs of our students who have health issues that affect their food intake - this includes students who have diabetes, as well as those students who have severe food allergies or celiac disease

Chapter 104 – Gifted and Talented Program

Chapter 104 is the Portland Public School District's program for students identified as gifted. In accordance with state law, children are selected for this program based on standardized test scores and teacher recommendations in reading, writing and math. PPS Chapter 104 teachers and

consultants work with groups of students as well as classroom teachers to provide enhanced learning opportunities. Most of the Chapter 104 work happens within the general education classrooms with small pull-out groups meeting as scheduled or needed.

Community Partnerships

We are always looking for opportunities to connect with families and our community; please let us know if you have an idea or interest that may enhance the educational experience of our students or support the teaching of our staff.

Computer/Internet Use

As part of Portland Public Schools' curriculum and instructional practices, supervised internet access is offered to all students for educational purposes. Proper use and protocol for computers and technology are governed by the district's [Elementary Technology Usage Guidelines](#).

Conferences - Under Construction

Family-teacher-student conferences take place twice per year during dates and times determined at the beginning of each school year. Specific information about conference scheduling will be shared with you each year, prior to conference times.

Crisis Plans and Safety-Related Procedures

For the safety of every person in the building, all visitors must have a reason for being in our school or on school grounds. Visitors must sign in and receive a visitor badge from the office as an established safety procedure to ensure a safe environment for all students and staff.

Many preventive and emergency response measures are in place in our school system to provide for the safety of our students and staff. The Board of Education policy requires each school to have a specific, step-by-step crisis plan in place. The plans follow the procedures developed for the Portland Public Schools School Emergency Management Plan. Each school is also required to conduct practice drills to make sure that staff and students are familiar with the emergency plan. When possible, families will be notified when our building conducts a drill so that you may have conversations at home with your children. More information about the school's emergency plan is available from the administration.

Dismissal

Dismissal at the end of the school day is a very busy time. For safety reasons, and to make dismissal an orderly process, we ask that you cooperate with the following procedures. Please PARK in the parking lot or along the designated right-hand side of the parking lot sidewalk. If your child's typical dismissal plan will be different on any given day, please communicate with the main office early in the day. We appreciate families not making last-minute changes. Parents/guardians are asked to wait for students in designated spots. Rowe staff will escort students to this area at our 3:30 pm dismissal time. Thank you for your continued assistance in ensuring the safety of each child during this busy time of day.

Early Release Days

District-wide early release days are scheduled on Wednesdays between September and June when dismissal takes place at 2:30 pm. Early release days are used for staff professional development.

Emergency Information

It is very important that you promptly return annual Emergency Forms to school so that all student information is up to date and entered into Infinite Campus, our student database. Please notify the school if you have a change of address, email, telephone number, place of employment, or emergency contact information.

English Language Learner Services

Support for students in grades PreK-5 with Limited English Proficiency is offered from designated staff in our building, in collaboration with teachers and other providers. All PreK-5 ELL students are fully mainstreamed into the general educational setting, with the opportunity to work on their language goals in small groups. Students are formally evaluated to determine their level of English proficiency and receive a range of instructional support that will change as they become more proficient.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned to provide students with experiences that enrich the educational program. A field trip permission form will be sent home for you to sign and return before the scheduled field trip. Students will not be permitted to participate in field trips unless the permission form has been returned. School rules, bus rules, and established policies must be followed at all times to, from, and while on field trips.

Evacuation Drills

Evacuation drills are conducted 5 times a year in accordance with state law. Students are expected to follow teachers' directions and exit the building in a calm and orderly way. Evacuation routes are posted in each room. Staff do their best to assure students understand the difference between a real emergency and the drills we do for practicing safety procedures. Families are encouraged to practice fire drills at home as well and can check with our staff if you ever have questions or concerns about how your child is managing these experiences.

Head Lice

Head lice exposure is a possibility whenever groups of children are together. We ask for your help in controlling the problem by checking your child's head once a week. The school nurse will check students who are scratching persistently in the classroom. If the child is found to have a head lice infestation, you will be notified right away. Our school nurses are available if you would like more information about head lice. A useful website is www.hsph.harvard.edu/headice.

Health Screenings

Children in kindergarten and grades K, 1, 3, and 5 receive vision and hearing screening. Parents/Guardians are notified if concerning results are found that may require follow-up with their doctor or other provider. If you ever have questions about your child's eyesight or hearing, please let us know, and we will help you with the next steps.

Healthy Snacks

At Rowe, we value the health and well-being of our students. We encourage healthy snacking choices to support student growth and learning. While small treats are okay occasionally, we'd like to discourage the regular consumption of candy, soda, and large bags of chips at snack and lunchtime.

Homework

Meaningful homework can help students succeed in school and develop good study habits. Homework can provide students an opportunity to practice and deepen learning related to what has been taught at school. Homework expectations and experiences differ from grade to grade; your child's teacher will provide you with information regarding homework, if applicable.

Illnesses and Injuries at School

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be called to come pick up your child. It is very important that parents/guardians keep emergency phone numbers up-to-date so that you or your emergency contact can be reached quickly in the event that your child becomes ill or is injured at school.

Accident report forms are completed for significant injuries that occur on school grounds. Parents/guardians are notified by phone or a note describing the accident, the extent of injury, and the treatment provided.

Immunizations

Maine law requires that children in grades Kindergarten through 5th, complete the following immunizations:

- Polio, 4 doses (3if the third is given after the 4th birthday),
- DTP or DtaP, 5 doses (4 if the fourth is given after the 4th birthday),
- MMR, 2 doses and
- Varicella (chicken pox), 1 dose before attending school.

Immunizations are required unless the student is exempted for medical reasons (requires a note from a doctor), or religious or philosophical reasons (requires an early written statement from parent/legal guardian). Non-immunized students may be excluded from school in case of an outbreak of a disease for which they are not immunized against. Questions concerning these requirements may be directed to the school nurse or Portland Public Schools Central Office.

If your child receives immunization updates during the school year, please bring a copy of the updates to the school nurse so that we may keep the school health records up to date.

Library and Policies Practices

The mission of the library/media program of Portland Public Schools is to promote literacy and ensure students and staff are effective users of ideas and information, equipped with the necessary skills and desire to become lifelong learners.

CIRCULATION: Students are responsible for taking care of and returning items they check out from the school library. Overdue fines are not charged, but replacement fees are requested for lost or damaged materials. Families unable to pay the full amount may request to make alternative arrangements by speaking to the librarian. Overdue notices are given to students bi-weekly. Notices regarding any items that are one month overdue are sent home.

Lost and Found

Please label items such as jackets, sweatshirts, boots, water bottles, lunch boxes, backpacks, and other belongings so they may be returned if lost. Parents, guardians and students are encouraged to check the school's LOST & FOUND periodically, before or after school hours, to identify and retrieve any lost belongings. The LOST & FOUND area is located down the main hallway on the right. When

the LOST & FOUND area becomes full and items go unclaimed, the school will donate them to charitable organizations.

Medications

It is Portland Public Schools policy that only absolutely necessary medications be administered to students in school. A Portland Public Schools medication form must be completed and signed by the parent or legal guardian. If the medication is a prescription medication, a physician signature or current pharmacy label must be provided. The medications that must be administered during the school day must be sent in an original, unbreakable container that is properly labeled with the name of the medication, date, dosage, and the name of the student who is to receive it.

For allergies, parents or legal guardians will be responsible for providing specific instructions from their physician for action to be taken when a student contacts an allergen which may cause anaphylaxis (e.g., from bees, wasps, nuts, other foods, latex, etc.). Parent or legal guardians are also responsible for providing medications needed in case of allergic reaction.

Portland Public Schools reserves the right to refuse requests for administering medications to students if any of the criteria outlined above is not met.

Parent Teacher Organization

The Amanda C. Rowe PTO is an active, non-profit group that promotes the general welfare of student education by supporting educational programming. The PTO provides a united effort among members to raise funds for enrichment and resources that are not funded by the local school budget. Please visit the Rowe PTO Facebook page for more information <https://roweschoolpto.org/>.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Rowe is a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports school. PBIS is a research-based program that addresses students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs through teaching, modeling, positively acknowledging students for following expectations, and providing interventions for students who need greater levels of support. The Rowe staff, under the leadership of our Culture & Climate Coordinator, reinforces and recognizes students who exhibit Schoolwide Expectations. These expectations are as follows:

- We are safe
- We are respectful
- We are responsible

Mile tiles (small paper squares with the Rowe logo) are given along with specific positive feedback to students who are meeting behavioral expectations. Mile tiles are collected centrally and placed

on themed boards throughout the school year. Each time a board is filled, a school wide celebration follows! PBIS is a big part of life at Rowe, and we communicate regularly about it.

Placement Procedures

Student placement is a thoughtful process that involves time and input from classroom teachers, school support staff, and administrators. Our goal is always to create balanced classroom communities based on student progress, peer relationships, gender balance, English language learner status, and students who require additional support. We are unable to honor requests from parents or guardians requesting a specific teacher as it would be impossible to honor all such requests. We believe that every teacher at Rowe works hard to understand and meet the needs of all students within their classrooms. As a school we value strong home-school partnerships to assure and promote student success. We work together to provide support for any needs or issues that may arise, always placing the best interests of our students first.

Playground and Outdoor Learning

Playground supervision begins at 8:35 am, but not before. Families are expected to make arrangements for your children's supervision prior to this time. At the close of school – after dismissal- children are expected to leave the school grounds promptly. **The school does not provide playground supervision after the 3:30 p.m. dismissal time.** Students that play on the equipment after hours are at their own risk and must not interfere with the Recreation Program or other school-related functions.

Students will be outdoors daily, except in cases of seriously inclement weather or unsafe surfaces (such as with extreme windchill and icy conditions). Teachers and staff use tents, tables, benches, logs and the landscape to enhance the learning opportunities for our students. Please assure your child comes to school with appropriate clothing for the predicted weather. Please let us know if you need help with finding the right supplies and outdoor gear.

Progress Reports

All elementary schools in Portland Public Schools follow a trimester schedule for tracking student progress. We will formally communicate progress and needs to parents or legal guardians three times a year. Parent-teacher-student conferences provide a key understanding to understanding student progress and setting student goals.

Religious Holidays

Please refer to the Portland Public Schools Holiday Observances Guidelines and Holiday Calendar available in each school office. Current academic calendars are also available on the Portland Public Schools website: <https://www.portlandschools.org/>

School Schedule

8:35 am Playground supervision begins

8:35-8:50 am Arrival and morning recess on the playground for all K-5 students

8:50-9:00 am Children enter school and their classrooms

9:00 am Student learning day begins

3:30 pm - Dismissal

School Cancellation or Delay

Announcements are made on local radio and television stations in the event of an emergency, weather-related delay, cancellation, or early school closure. A “robocall” will also be implemented to communicate plans with all families. Please do not call the school office for this information, as there may not be anyone present at the school during these days. School delays or cancellations are announced beginning at approximately 6:00 am. Early school closings are rare, but may require announcements during the school day.

School Meals

A nutritious breakfast and lunch will be available daily to all students free of cost for the 2025-2026 school year.

A school lunch menu is provided each month. You can access the monthly lunch menu for elementary schools here: <https://www.portlandschools.org/departments/food-service/menus>

Each lunch has three options:

Red Option - Meat-Based Option (I.E., chicken burger)

Green Option - Vegan Option (I.E.,E veggie burger)

Yellow Option - Alternate (I.E, Sunbutter and Jelly)

Families should refer to the school lunch menu with their children to determine which meals will be selected each week.

Families can access <https://www.paypams.com/> to pay for milk if they only want milk and no school lunch.

School Pictures

A commercial school photographer takes school pictures each year. Families will have the opportunity to purchase school picture packages from the school photographer. Purchase of school pictures is optional.

School Supplies

Amanda C. Rowe Elementary School provides all necessary school supplies for students. However, given periodic budget constraints, classroom teachers may send requests to families for some basic supplies for their children or the classroom such as tissues, disinfecting wipes, pencils, pencil boxes, crayons, markers, notebooks, etc., along with materials for special projects as optional donations. Check with your child's teacher for more information about what is needed if you are interested in donating at any time.

Searches

Lockers, desks, and other school storage facilities are school property, and remain under the custody and supervision of the school, even when they are assigned to individual students. Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in lockers or desks or other on-site storage. School officials have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent.

School officials may also search students' wallets, purses, bags, backpacks, pockets, vehicles, and other property when they have a reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law, Board of Education policies, and/or school rules.

Special Education

The Portland Board of Public Education has adopted a complete set of policies related to special education services that comply with state and federal special education regulations. Students who are eligible to receive support through our Student Support Services staff must be identified with a specific disability through special education evaluations and under the determination of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) team. Detailed information about this process and Student Support Services may be found at www.portlandschools.org

Standardized Testing

Portland Public Schools uses a variety of assessments to measure and monitor student progress and inform instruction. It is very important to remember that assessments provide important information about how our students are progressing and help determine if interventions and/or further evaluations are needed. Your child's teacher is essential in providing a daily lens and ongoing classroom data related to each child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive strengths and needs.

Student Records

Portland Public Schools complies with all federal and state laws concerning the confidentiality of student records. At the start of the school year, a notice about parent and student rights related to student records is sent home with all students. If you need more information, please contact the Principal.

Telephone and Watch Use

New policy on device-free schools. On June 10, the PPS Board of Education adopted a [revised policy on Student Use of Personal Electronic Devices \(JFCK\)](#). The objective of this policy is to support the district's efforts to provide a safe, positive, and productive learning environment for students. While personal devices can be helpful for learning, they can also cause privacy concerns, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, negative mental health impacts, and learning environments where students are less engaged with their school community.

The updated policy establishes that **“personal electronic devices that are not issued by PPS shall not be available or accessible to students for the duration of the school day.”** This policy will apply at all grade levels from the start of the 2025-26 school year and includes all personal electronic devices, such as cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and laptops. Here is a brief overview of what students and families can expect in the fall:

- **Elementary students will be strongly encouraged to leave all personal electronic devices at home. If they do bring devices, they will have to keep them off and in their cubby.**

Students violating these rules will be subject to the school's behavioral intervention and support protocols, which may include:

- Requiring parents to pick up the device from school,**
- Not being allowed to bring electronic devices to school and/or**
- Other interventions consistent with the school's protocols, the nature of the offense, whether or not it is illegal, and the student's behavioral history.**

Traffic Safety

A speed limit of 15 miles per hour is in effect during school opening and dismissal times. Signs clearly mark bus-only zones, staff parking, and car zones. Vehicles should approach all areas slowly and with extra caution. The Rowe School parking lot can become very crowded and congested each day. Vehicles must enter and exit the parking lot very slowly. Family members dropping off children (morning only) should pull the vehicle to the side and have children exit the side closest to the sidewalk.

Walkers/Bicyclists/Skateboarders/Scooters

We ask you to talk to your child about traffic safety and review guidelines and rules regularly. Children must use sidewalks and cross streets at locations where a crossing guard is on duty wherever possible. Skateboards and rollerblades are not permitted at school. The choice and permission to ride a bike and use locks will be each family's responsibility. Please note that current state law requires that children up to the age of 18 must wear a helmet when bike riding. The school is not responsible for bikes or bike equipment on school grounds.

Bike Rider Expectations

- Bike riders will walk bikes on school grounds (i.e., sidewalks, playground, Sagamore Village path)
- Bikes will be parked in the bike rack located at the main entrance
- Bike racks are off-limits during school hours to all students
- Appropriate locks should be used to secure bikes

Valuables and Personal Items

We encourage students to leave extra money, toys, and other personal belongings at home. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal belongings. Items that distract students from learning will be confiscated by school staff until the end of the school day, or until a parent/guardian can pick them up at school.

Volunteers and Visitors

We love additional support in school, special events, and field trips.

All adults who wish to volunteer must apply online. Approved volunteers must coordinate with the school and community coordinator to schedule dates and times before volunteering. The Portland Public Schools volunteer sign-up link can be found on the PPS website at https://www.portlandschools.org/community/support_our_schools.

If you are just visiting the building for an appointment or meeting with adult staff (not student-facing), please sign in with the office and proceed to your planned location.