



Environmental Charter  
Middle School

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2013-14

(ECMS reserves the right to amend & revise policies)

**ECMS-Inglewood**

3600 West Imperial Highway  
Inglewood, CA 90303

**ECMS-Gardena**

812 W 165<sup>th</sup> Place  
Gardena, CA 90247  
310-425-1605

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## Our Vision and Mission

The mission of Environmental Charter Schools is to inspire students to discover their own sense of purpose, to equip all students with the knowledge and skills to graduate from college and to empower them to become quality stewards of their community and world.

## Core Values

At Environmental Charter Schools, we value:

- Exceptional Student Achievement which reflects relentless effort and continuous improvement;
- Experiential Learning which is authentic, relevant, and active;
- Empowered Learners who discover their own passion and purpose;
- Collaborative Relationships among students, parents, teachers, and community members;
- Community Responsibility, beginning with the individual and extending to the classroom, campus, community, and world; and
- Environmentally Sustainable Practices that utilize “systems thinking” and wisely manage resources for today and tomorrow.

## Vision

At Environmental Charter Schools, our vision is to create schools that are *alive*. When someone steps onto an ECS campus for the first time, they will feel the positive energy and intellectual curiosity that are the driving force of the ECS community. Teachers act as facilitators of inquiry, seeking real-world examples and unique, hands-on learning opportunities that bring the subject matter to life for their students. By creating these learning experiences, teachers give students a bigger window to see what is possible for their future. ECS campuses will feel very different than other schools. Each school’s physical environment – the classrooms, the buildings, and the grounds – will act as a teaching tool that connects students to the world around them. Each Environmental Charter School will be known in the community as a safe, vibrant, and intellectually challenging place to learn and grow and will be supported by high levels of active community involvement. Students will be highly regarded as assets to the community due to their numerous service projects and collaborations with community partners. Each year, 100% of ECS high school graduates will be admitted to four-year colleges/universities and our graduates will thrive at their chosen postgraduate learning institutions. Our students will be sought after by colleges, universities, and employers for their knowledge of the world and how it works, for their collaborative and critical thinking skills, and for their highly developed sense of purpose. Because of the success of its programs, ECS will be viewed as a national model of educational excellence, evidenced by hundreds of educators seeking to replicate our educational model at their schools through the ECS Best Practices Lab.

## Charter Schools

Charter schools offer students and parents an alternative to traditional public schools. There are many different kinds of charter schools reflecting a myriad of educational approaches. As such, ECMS is a school of choice and not bound to any geographic area. Any child in the state of California is eligible to attend ECMS.

## Educational Program

The ECMS educational program is designed for students who have a desire to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that prepare them for success in college preparatory courses at the high school level as well as those skills that prepare them to be effective stewards of their community.

The curriculum is presented with an integrated approach that addresses rigorous academic concepts in an authentic, interdisciplinary manner. Students also take specialty subject courses to support their academic, social, and physical development, including College Readiness, Games and Movement (physical education), Arts and Handwork, and Green Ambassadors, an environmental education and leadership sequence. As hands-on components of the curriculum, environmental service learning projects empower students to utilize their skills and energy to help solve our community's most pressing environmental issues.

## Faculty

ECMS teachers are active in all parts of the school's life, advising committees and participating in community-building events. In addition to the full-time faculty, ECMS hires specialty teachers to teach arts and handwork and games and movement.

Communication between school and home is critical to student success. Parents are encouraged to contact their student's teachers regularly. Teachers can be reached by calling the main office, sending note, or via email.

## **ECMS Gardena Staff & Faculty**

Kami Cotler	Principal	
Robert Gloria	Assistant Principal	
Lacey Harris	Counselor	
Amy Frame	Director Curriculum & Instruction	
Anastasia Economou	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
Ethan Kuhn	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
Andrea Ruma	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Mimi Washo	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Sophie Korn	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Olivia Rotondi	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Tiffany McGinnis	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
Deborah Paulsen	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
Lewis Martin	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	
Kai Sanson	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade History	
Bonny Taing	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade English	
Adam Underwood	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science	
Beronica Miranda	Small Learning Groups Teacher (RSP)	
Ginnia Higgins	Games Teacher	
Bev Meyer Zemo	Games Teacher	
Krista Knutson	Handwork Teacher	
Billie Kariher-Dyer	Handwork Teacher	
	Math & Literacy Lab Teacher	
	Math Lab Teacher	
Shirley Ollie	Literacy Lab Teacher	
Sandra Loera	Para-educator	
Jasmyn Culpepper	Para-educator	
Corina Mora	Para-educator	
Guadalupe Lopez	Office Manager	

Grinko Marta	Administrative Assistant	
Toni Perez	Office Assistant/Translator	
Jannet Tran	Data Clerk	
Luis Gonzales	Site Manager/Campus Safety Supervisor	
Brandon Garrett	Campus Safety	
Ginnia Higgins	After School Coordinator	
<b>ECS Staff</b>		
Marcela Paez	Human Resources	
Sandy Rodriguez	Accounting Administrator	
Quynh Tran	Director of Operations	
Alison Suffet-Diaz	Executive Director	

### ECMS Inglewood Staff & Faculty

Beth Bernstein	Principal	
Mary Mouring	Assistant Principal/7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math/Science Teacher	
Geneva Dowdy	Counselor	
Amy Frame	Director Curriculum & Instruction	
	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Kashif Ross	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Austin Wester	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade English & History	
Mary Mouring	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science	
	Small Learning Groups Teacher (RSP)	
Chaka Forman	Games Teacher	
Katie Lipsett	Handwork Teacher	
	Math & Literacy Lab Teacher	
Yeison Hidalgo	Para-educator	
Maria Rubalcaba	Office Manager	
Kendall Lopez	Administrative Assistant	
Devincey Mouring	Site Manager/Campus Safety Supervisor	
	Campus Safety	
<b>ECS Staff</b>		
Marcela Paez	Human Resources	
Sandy Rodriguez	Accounting Administrator	
Quynh Tran	Operations Manager	
Alison Suffet-Diaz	Executive Director	

### Administration

The ECMS Administrative Team consists of an Executive Director, Principal, Assistant Principal, Counselor and Office Manager. They are supported by Environmental Charter Schools' staff; including a Director of Curriculum and Instruction. They participate in the creation and implementation of the school's policies and procedures. They are responsible for the financial integrity of the school and collaboratively coordinate the work done by the parent body to support the school. The Administrative Team focuses on curriculum, assessment, professional development, special education, and student support. The Office Manager and other office staff are responsible for the front office, all communications relating to daily attendance, the handling of student records, and student needs.

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has final legal and fiduciary responsibility for all of the schools within the ECS network. It is comprised of business and education professionals, community members, and parents. It is the ultimate authority in financial and policy issues. To make informed decisions, the Board receives input and recommendations from the Administration. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the school's practices and educational outcomes are consistent with the approved charter petition. Board meetings are held regularly and are open to the public. All parents are invited to attend. Time and location of Board meetings are posted on the school's website and on the bulletin board outside the school's office.

### Board Members

Ken Deemer, President  
Bruce Greenspon, Vice President & Secretary  
Diane Barkelew Wallace, Treasurer  
Brad Jewitt  
William Robertson  
Jorge Arroyo, Lawndale Elementary School District Representative  
Los Angeles County Office of Education, Ex-Officio Representative

## Parent Participation

Family involvement is a key component of student and school success. At ECMS parents should participate through:

- Parent orientation program on the first day of school
- Helping with homework
- Observing the school's programs and visiting classrooms  
Volunteering—including gardening, making props/sets for school plays, helping in classrooms, assisting in handwork class, chaperoning field trips, helping with fundraisers and fairs and participation in Parent Council.
- Attending fairs, student , and parent education events.

Parents/Guardians also support ECMS and their child by meeting the terms of the parent contract they sign when enrolling. In this contract parents promise to:

1. Ensure their student **attends school** on time every day and stays the entire school day as per required by law..
2. Bring their student to school completely in school **uniform**, including outerwear and footwear.
3. Send their student to school with a backpack and all the **materials** needed for class each day.
4. Establish a **nightly homework routine** to provide a quiet place and regular time to do homework; Sign Reading Logs each week; Sign student's agenda and look at completed homework assignments as needed.
5. Check **Progress Reports** every single week; Sign and return on Mondays; Use PowerSchool to regularly check grades.
6. Read the **Friday Letter**

7. Attend 3 regular **parent conferences and other parent meetings as needed including IEPs, SSTs or discipline related shadows.**
8. Arrange for their student to be in support classes such as, Literacy, Math Lab, or tutoring, as needed for remediation.
9. Support their student's health. Ensure they get enough sleep. Do not send gum, candy, soda or other sugary junk food to school for lunches or celebrations; send student with reusable water bottle.
10. Follow **school policies and procedures described in the parent student handbook, including the discipline process and supporting the Tribes Agreements.**

The class teacher may have specific recommendations for parent participation in addition to those listed above.

Parent/guardians **attend four mandatory meetings with their student's advisor each school year.**

- The first meeting is at the beginning of the year to officially meet the student's advisor, outline grade-level expectations, review student parent handbook changes, and other noteworthy items.
- The second, third, and fourth meetings throughout the school year are to meet with your child's teachers on a one-to-one basis and review academic and behavioral progress, test scores, and other relevant information. Bilingual staff members will be available to assist teachers who need help with translation.

### **Parent Council**

The ECMS Parent Council will consist of two parents from each grade level. The Parent Council members in the first year will be appointed by the administration and elected by the parents they represent every year thereafter. A member of the administration will attend Parent Council meetings and seek input on campus issues, clarify school policy and identify parent education needs. The Parent Council elects a Governor who reports on parent activities to the ECS Board of Directors and works closely with the administration as a resource on calendaring and other issues that affect parent involvement activities.

The Parent Council's role is advisory and consultative. It has an important role in informing decision-making processes but it cannot make decisions on behalf of the school.

### **Communication**

Communication with your child's teacher is very important. At the beginning of the year, teachers will notify you of the best ways to contact them.

- Parents must make arrangements with the teacher or the office to schedule any and all visits.
- Parents may not arrive during the instructional day or before/after school to meet with teachers unless arrangements have been made in advance with the teacher.
- Teachers are available via telephone, email, and by appointment.

School information is always available via:

- bulletin boards
- flyers

- notes sent home with the student
- email
- automated phone calls
- Friday letter
- website [www.ecsonline.org](http://www.ecsonline.org)
- ParentLink

Every Friday, a letter will be sent home with your student. Please look for the “Friday Letter” each week. Friday Letters are also available in the front office and posted on our website.

Powerschool is our online student information system. Parents receive a Powerschool password at the beginning of the school year. With it, they can access Powerschool using any computer with an Internet connection. There is a computer in the front office parents may use for Powerschool access. On Powerschool, parents can see their students’ scores on assignments, absences and missing schoolwork. If you have questions about Powerschool or need a new password, please contact the front office.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Members of the school community should first attempt to resolve any conflict with the person or persons directly involved or affected by the issue.

- **Students:** If there is a conflict between students and direct discussion cannot resolve the conflict, students will be expected to follow the conflict resolution techniques taught in the classrooms through real-life situation, role-playing and/or discussions. Students may choose to walk away from a situation, choose to share how they feel without continuing to find consensus, or chose to use active listening and problem-solving strategies to reach a consensus amongst the students. Learning and practicing these skills and strategies is a part of ECMS’s Tribes program. Staff will incorporate these techniques into problem-solving situations as a regular practice. If students are unable to resolve the conflict they will be expected to ask a teacher or staff member for assistance in resolving the conflict. If the teacher or staff member is unable to resolve the conflict, the counselor will facilitate a dispute resolution process.
- **Parents:** If a parent has a conflict with their student’s teacher, the parent should first attempt to resolve the conflict with the person or persons directly involved or affected by the issue. If the conflict is not resolved they should contact administration for assistance.
- If parents have concerns about student conflicts or discipline, they should speak with the administrator handling the issue.. If conflicts are not resolved, contact the Principal for assistance. If the conflict involves the Principal, parents will request a dispute resolution process through the Executive Director.
- If parents have conflicts with other parents, they should speak with an administrator. If conflicts are not resolved, contact the Principal for assistance. If the conflict involves the Principal, parents will request a dispute resolution process through the Executive Director.

The final school-level appeal is the Principal. Conflicts not resolved at the school-level can be appealed to the Executive Director. The final level of appeal is the school’s Board of Trustees.

The party initiating the appeal must submit a written request for Board of Trustees review to the board chair within (5) five business days of the Executive Director’s final decision. The Board of Trustees will hear the appeal at the next scheduled regular meeting, unless the board chair determines that the urgency of the issues necessitate that a special meeting be called to hear the appeal. All confidential issues will be heard in closed session, in accordance with the Brown Act.



## **Student Work & Images**

Environmental Charter Middle School may use photographs of children's work to document the life and growth of our school. There may be occasions when photographs of children performing are part of that documentation. Please be aware that images of your child or their work might be shared with the state or other schools as part of our effort to demonstrate the efficacy of our curriculum. If you do not wish for pictures of your child to be used, please contact the main office.

## **The Five Agreements—Tribes**

The Tribes Learning Community program is designed to create a safe and supportive community for students. Teachers include Tribes activities in their lessons to ensure that students feel included and learn the skills they need to be successful members of a learning community. Parent support of our Tribes Agreements at home will help students avoid disciplinary problems.

Environmental Charter Middle School students are expected to:

- Follow the Five Tribes Agreements:
  1. Attentive listening
  2. Appreciations/No put downs
  3. Right to Pass & Right to Participate
  4. Mutual Respect
  5. Mindfulness

In following the Five Tribes Agreements students will:

- Demonstrate respect for and cooperate with all adults at school.
- Treat classmates and schoolmates with respect, both in the classroom and on the playground.
- Be in class on time and prepared to do work.
- Complete all assignments in a timely manner, both in class and at home, to the best of their abilities.
- Follow all school rules and behavior codes, including no fighting, threatening, bullying or put downs.
- Accept responsibilities and consequences for their choices.
- Contribute to creating an atmosphere where school is a place to feel safe and supported in the learning process.
- Deliver all home-school communications promptly.
- Treat our school environment with respect.
- Participate in classroom activities.

## **Academic Honesty/Cheating**

It is our expectation that students take responsibility for their learning and experience the pride that accompanies academic achievement. This ensures a positive learning environment that emphasizes intellectual integrity. Plagiarism/Cheating impedes a student's academic progress and compromises the trust between teacher and student, which is fundamental to the learning process.

Cheating and/or Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Receiving or providing information during a test or for a test given in an earlier period.
2. Using material on tests when the teacher has not given permission to do so.
3. Violating the teacher's testing rules and procedures.
4. Using somebody else's writing (word for word—or almost word for word) and using it as your own (Plagiarism) or using somebody else's ideas and saying they are your own and not giving credit.
5. Using or copying another student's assignment to turn in as your own work.
6. Allowing other students to use your work on assignments with the exception of specific group, lab, or collaborative projects.

### **Student Success Team**

To assist our staff in better identifying and meeting the needs of underachieving students, our school utilizes a Response to Intervention process.

The Response To Intervention (RTI) process begins in the classroom, with teachers' expectation that all students shall succeed. ECMS teachers will use multiple assessment tools to monitor student progress and implement differentiated instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

If these adjustments are not sufficiently effective to resolve concerns, the core teachers will meet to evaluate student strengths and challenges and collaborate on possible strategies to support student success. The student's situation is re-evaluated at each subsequent core-team meeting and, if insufficient progress is made, a Student Success Team meeting is scheduled. Teachers, parents or administrators may schedule a Student Success Team (SST) meeting.

Student Success Teams are a formal way to address concerns administrators, teachers or parents have regarding a student. Student Success Teams can address social, academic or behavioral concerns. A Student Success Team consists of the class teacher, parents, administrator and/or other suitable staff members (e.g., teachers or staff with appropriate expertise or special knowledge of the student or situation). Depending on the child's age and the situation, the child may be a member of the Student Success Team. During an SST meeting, participants explore the issue of concern, strategies used previously to address the issue and brainstorm future strategies. SST meetings can result in the creation of either a "Student Behavior Contract" or a "Student Success Plan". Both can include strategies to be implemented by teacher, administration, parent and/or student. The Student Success Plan describes strategies to be implemented to help the student improve in identified academic areas and, in some cases, includes a behavior contract. The Student Success Plan also includes goals and benchmarks for student achievement, time frames for progress, and follow-up meeting dates.

The SST is not a special education function. It is not subject to the special education timelines or legal requirements. The conclusion of the SST process may result in the referral for services through the provisions of a Section 504 Plan, services for English Language Learners, G.A.T.E., academic remediation, or for Special Education Assessment. ECMS will refer a student for a special education assessment when the team identifies that the modifications or assistance provided in the general education classroom is not sufficient in meeting the student's needs.

Student Success Team meeting request forms are available at the school office. Parents may request a Student Success Team meeting after having met with their classroom teacher and/or administrator regarding their concerns.

### **Students with Special Needs**

As a public school within California, state law requires all charter schools to identify and assist students with academic, physical, or social/emotional issues that may impede their school performance. ECMS serves its

special education students with an onsite special education teacher who collaborates with classroom teachers and provides resource support to students. We also receive support from the Southwest SELPA

*If your child has previously received special education and/or been served under a 504 Accommodation Plan at another school it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school that the student has an IEP or a 504 plan upon application.* If you have indicated your child has an IEP or a 504 plan, our special education teacher will contact you to discuss continued services.

Students with disabilities may be eligible to receive special education services. These services are based on assessment and determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the parents, on-site special education coordinator, classroom teachers, and administration. Special education services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of students. Such services may include support, instruction and accommodations in the general education classroom, or other settings.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive financial assistance from the US Department of Education. Section 504 requires that students with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), a program designed to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the educational needs of students without disabilities. For students who are not eligible for special education services, but meet the federal definition of disabled under Section 504, a Section 504 Plan is developed which indicates the accommodations, supplementary aids and or services that will be provided to assist the student in accessing the general education program.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is critical to success in school. Every student is expected to attend school on a daily basis, unless there is a valid reason for his/her absence. Education Code 48400 states that each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years is subject to compulsory full-time education.

## **Truancy**

Students are truant when:

- Absent from school without a valid excuse for **three full days in one year**.
- Absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year
- Any combination of the above

Students that are considered truant will be referred to the School Attendance Review Team for intervention.

Do not allow your child to have a parent permitted absence/truancy. Unexcused absences/truancy may include the following:

- Personal business
- Car problems
- No clean clothes
- Rain
- Walk out/demonstrations
- Personal travel

If your student has an excused absence or is tardy they must:

- Report to the office before going to the classroom.
- Turn in a note for the absence

- Sign in
- Obtain a pass to class or a tardy slip
- Return to class

Students who are tardy or absent are responsible for making up missed work with the individual teacher.

### **Early Pick Up**

We discourage parents from picking students up early, but if your child must leave early, parents will need to go to the office and sign their child out. Parents should not go to the classroom to get their student.

We also encourage you to keep your Emergency Contact information current, so we can reach you when your child needs to go home. If we cannot reach you, then we will call the other emergency contacts on your contact list. Students will only be released to people on the emergency card.

Repeated inability to reach parents and emergency contacts may result in referral to the Department of Child and Family Services.

### **Medication/Health Services**

ECMS's health services are offered in the Main Office. Although ECMS does not have a health specialist on staff, a trained staff member is available to provide basic assistance during school hours.

Students needing health services during school hours should go to the main office, sign in, and wait for instruction or directions.

### **Prescription and Non-Prescription Drug Policy**

When a student must take any medication at school, a parent or guardian must:

- Bring the prescription or non-prescription medication to the office in its original container with the student's name, physician's name and the name of the medication.
- Dosage and time to be administered clearly labeled.
- Bring in proper medical forms filled out (please see the main office for these forms).
- Medication must be picked up by parents at the end of each school year. Medication cannot be stored over the summer. Medication not collected will be discarded.

Students must report to the main office when the medication is to be dispensed. Students may not carry prescription medication while at school, with the exception of asthma inhalers.

Students may not carry non-prescription items including, but not limited to, cough drops, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and/or allergy medicine.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

If you are interested in applying for our Free and Reduced lunch program, applications are available in the main office. Lunch can be ordered by the month in the main office.

Lunch is also available for purchase or as part of the National School Lunch Program. After the first few weeks of school, monthly order forms are distributed to students and the school orders lunch selections based upon the forms returned. The order form does not guarantee the section will be available.

Students should bring a fork and a cloth napkin and a mid-morning snack, each day. Do not send sugary foods. Gum, candy, and soda are not allowed.

Students who are bringing a sack lunch should have:

- A healthy lunch including vegetables, fruit, and whole grains
- A plain, logo free reusable container for their lunch
- A reusable water container – single use plastic bottles SHOULD NOT be brought to campus

Due to the possibility of severe allergic reactions and a variety of other considerations, we request that children do not share food. If your student has a food allergy, please notify the main office and note it on the emergency card. If you order school lunch and your student has a food allergy you must bring documentation from your medical provider in order to receive an alternate meal.

### Dress Code

Dress code is plain, solid-colored polo shirts and plain pants or shorts. All clothing must fit comfortably, so it does not interfere with students' ability to jump, run, and climb.

- Shirt: *White, Navy Blue, Black, Light Green, or light blue* polo or knitted style shirt with short or long sleeves
- Outerwear: Jackets, sweaters or sweatshirts must be solid colors: *White, Navy Blue, Black, Light Green, or light blue* only. Uniform must be visible under the outerwear.
- Bottom: Black, Khaki colored jeans, chinos, dress pants or skorts/shorts only.
- Shoes: flat, comfortable, and closed-toed. Students need to be able to run in their shoes.

### **Other Rules and Regulations:**

- Pants cannot fall below the waist, be baggy or sag, and may not contain designs
- No sweat pants or Dickies
- No blue jeans
- Black leggings may be worn only with shorts or skirts
- Skirts, shorts, and skorts must be knee length
- Belts: solid black, brown or blue, no adornment on belt or buckle
- Students should wear flat, comfortable, closed-toed shoes.
- Students not in uniform will not be permitted to attend field trips
- No bandannas or 'do-rags'.
- The wearing of hoods, hats and beanies is forbidden inside the classroom.
- Plain sun hats are allowed on the playground. If a student is out of uniform, parents may be asked to bring the student a change of clothes or the student may be given "loaner" clothes for the day.
- Perfumes, colognes, scented body sprays (for example, Axe or Body Shop) and scented lotions may not be brought to school. Students may apply them before coming to school, and, if they wish, use unscented deodorants or lotions at school.

### **Dress Code Compliance Procedures**

If a child's clothing does not conform to the dress code, they will:

- First offense: receive a warning notice to bring home to parents to sign and return.

- Second offense: the student will be given loaner clothes to wear, and their parent will be called and required to bring appropriate clothing.
- Third offense: student will receive a disciplinary referral (SRC).

### **Enrollment Procedures**

Admission to ECMS is open to any child who resides in California.

Applications for admission will be available in January. Application information will be posted on our website. Siblings of ECMS students have a preference in enrollment at ECMS. If more applications are received than seats are available, there will be a random public lottery held on March 6<sup>st</sup>.

### **Re-Enrollment Procedures**

Each spring, enrolled students will need to notify ECMS of their intent to return the following year.

- Deadline for re-enrollment notification is February 7, 2014 and will be posted in the Friday Letter.
- Re-enrollment forms will be distributed via the student's advisory teacher and can be found at the end of this handbook.
- If ECMS does not receive notification of re-enrollment by the deadline, a student's space may be given away.
- Students who lose their space may apply for re-admission. Their application will be treated the same as any other applicant's.

### **Disenrollment**

If your child has more than five unexcused absences or if your child is absent for more than five consecutive days and there is no notification to the school, your child may be un-enrolled from ECMS and their space allocated to another student on the waiting list. Parents have the option to send a letter of appeal to the Board of Directors contesting their disenrollment prior to finalization.

Following disenrollment we will notify your home district that your child no longer attends ECMS.

### **Retention Policy**

Upon enrollment at ECMS, students whose previous year's Reading and Math CST scores are "Far Below Basic" and/or students who score more than three years below grade level on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (ECMS's diagnostic assessment), will be identified as at risk of retention. The following will take place for those identified as at risk of retention:

- Parents will be promptly informed of the student's academic standing
- Student will be admitted to the SST process for academic support.
- An academic plan will be developed with the teachers, parents, and student.
- The student will receive supplemental support services such as: one-to-one instruction by the classroom teacher and/or aide, computer programmed learning tutorial to address specific individual needs, after school mathematics and/or literacy lab, or a small-group class within the school day (in lieu of a specialty class).
- Student success will be regularly monitored with recommendations

ECMS does not endorse social promotion and is committed to helping students achieve the necessary skills to progress from grade to grade yearly. Each student will be assessed individually according to his/her total needs.

The promotion and retention of special education students will be determined according to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## **Student Safety**

### **Drop off & Pick Up**

Staff supervises the yard during pickup and drop-off. Each campus has a different pick up and drop off plan. Supervision at the end of the day is not available after pick up time, unless students are enrolled in the after school program or participating in tutoring. The Police and/or Department of Child and Family Services will be contacted if a child is not picked up by the close of the after school program day.

### **Emergency Contact Information**

Please be sure that your emergency contact information is up to date. The office uses this information whenever a child is ill, injured or needs to go home for any reason.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Here at ECMS, our mission is to foster student growth and development by creating a safe space for students to learn academically and socially. Bullying, Cyber Bullying, or any other form of harassment towards other students and staff will not be tolerated. "Bullying" means any severe or continuing physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward one or more students that are likely to frighten students or interfere with their participation in school.

## **Discipline Policy**

The purpose of discipline is to both facilitate learning in the classroom and to teach students self-regulation skills that will serve them in all areas of their lives. ECMS supports student behavior through our Tribes social emotional program, counseling services and with a developmentally appropriate educational program.

Please see page 8 for a description of the Tribes agreements and the rights and responsibilities of ECMS students.

### **Progressive Discipline Policy**

ECMS's progressive discipline policy provides a progression of interventions that accompany each successive disciplinary referral to our Student Responsibility Center. At the Student Responsibility Center (SRC) students reflect on their actions, take a cooling-off period, and if necessary, ask for help in resolving ongoing issues.

When a student violates classroom rules teachers use interventions, such as verbal reminders, moving a student's seat, one on one after class conversations and a phone call home. After documenting **three** interventions, **including a phone call home**, teachers will refer students to the SRC.

For highly disruptive or unsafe behaviors, students can receive an immediate referral to the SRC. More serious school violations, including but not limited to:

- Physical violence
- Threatening others
- Vandalism
- Jeopardizing the safety of others
- Theft, and any other illegal or dangerous activities,

These violations may result in immediate suspension or referral for expulsion.

## Progression of SRC Referrals

### First Referral

- Student reflects on actions
- Student meets with Counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal and finds a way to repair his/her actions
- Counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal calls parents to inform them of the situation.

### Second Referral

- Students reflect on his/her actions,
- Student meets with Counselor, Assistant Principal or Principal
- Student performs a repair and loses a recess
- Parents must meet with Counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal.

### Third Referral

- Student reflects on his/her actions,
- Student meets with Counselor, Assistant Principal or Principal
- Student performs a repair and loses a recess.
- Parent and student should visit student's resident school to provide the student with perspective on his/her educational choices.
- Student may be referred for additional counseling.
- Parent must spend a day at school "shadowing" their student

### Fourth Referral

- Student reflects on his/her actions,
- Student meets with Counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal,
- Student performs a repair and lose a recess
- Student is referred for counseling or other remediation.
- Parent is encouraged to take student to visit the alternative/continuation school that student's district might required him/her to attend if student is expelled.
- Student loses field trip privileges for trimester and must perform an act of service to make up for the impact of his/her actions on his/her community.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade students lose end of year privileges, which may include student culmination ceremony.

### Fifth Referral

- Student reflects on his/her actions,
- Student meets with Counselor, Assistant Principal, or Principal, performs a repair and loses a recess. Student is suspended.
- Parents must attend a meeting where a probationary contract is created. Students will be referred for expulsion if he/she violates the contract.

### Sixth Referral

- Student is referred for expulsion.



## Suspension/Expulsion Procedures

Since the Suspension/Expulsion Procedures can have an extremely significant impact on both the student and the school, ECMS adheres to the following guidelines.

### **Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion**

ECMS's rules and procedures for suspension and expulsion are intended to afford students due process rights. The decision to recommend suspension or expulsion of a student will be at the discretion of the Administrator or the administrative designees. A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the acts that are enumerated in this section and that are related to school activities of any kind. These acts may occur:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or coming from school
- During, or while going to or coming from, a school-sponsored activity

A pupil shall not be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion unless the Executive Director or Principal of the school in which the pupil is enrolled determines that the pupil has:

- Recklessly caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless in the case of possession of any object of this type, the people had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the Principal, or the designee of the Principal.
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code (commencing with §11053), an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with §11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and then either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- Recklessly caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- Stolen or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. However, this section does not prohibit use or possession by a pupil of his or her prescription products.
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
- Had unlawful possession of, or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in §11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code.
- Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
- Possessed an imitation firearm.
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or committed a sexual battery.
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a pupil who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of either preventing that pupil from being a witness or retaliating against that pupil for being a witness, or both.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in hazing
- Engaged in an act of bullying. Bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act.

- Aided or abetted the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person (suspension only).
- Committed sexual harassment
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence
- Engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or pupils
- Made terroristic threats against school officials and or school property.

### **Mandatory Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion**

If the Executive Director or Principal determines that a student committed one of the following acts at school or at a school activity off school grounds:

1. Possessing, selling or furnishing a firearm
2. Brandishing a knife at another person
3. Selling a controlled substance
4. Committing or attempting to commit sexual assault or committing sexual battery
5. Possession of an explosive

### **Procedures for Suspension and/or Expulsion and Rights of Students Ensuring Due Process**

#### **Informal Conference**

When a situation involving a student arises that calls for suspension, an informal conference will be conducted by the administrative staff and will include the student and the student's parents/guardians. In the case of an emergency situation, where a clear and present danger exists that threatens the health and safety of students or school personnel, the student may be suspended without a conference. Should a student be suspended without a conference, the parent/guardian will be notified of the suspension and a conference will be held as soon thereafter as reasonably possible.

#### **Notice to Parents/Guardians**

At the time a suspension is recommended, a member of the administrative staff or designated personnel will make reasonable attempts to contact the parent/guardian immediately via telephone. If the parent cannot be reached immediately by telephone, staff will continue to follow up throughout the day or attempt to contact the parent in person (for example, when the parent picks the student up from school). In addition, a written notification will be sent home promptly. The written notice will detail the incident and specify the grounds for suspension, including the recommended date(s) of suspension. The notice will request a conference with the parents/guardians, if one has not already been conducted, and will require parents/guardians to respond to this request immediately.

#### **Length of Suspension**

The maximum number of days of suspension for a single incident is five (5) consecutive school days, unless the administration and parents/guardians agree to a longer term or under the circumstances set forth in the expulsion procedure. For suspensions exceeding five days, a second conference will be scheduled with the parent/guardian upon completion of the fifth day of suspension to discuss the progress of the suspension. The total number of days for which a student may be suspended shall not exceed 20 school days in any school year unless the student transfers in from another school and already has a suspension record for the year. In that case, the total number of school days may be increased by 10 days for a total of 30 suspension days in that school year.

#### **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

In the case of students with disabilities, ECMS will comply with the discipline procedures as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For students who receive special education services, the maximum number of suspension days cannot exceed a total of 10 school days in a school year. ECMS will follow IEP components in terms of student discipline. ECMS will work with the Special Education Program Coordinator within the Local District Office that serves its geographical area if it is determined that an alternative placement is in order.

### **Discipline of Students with 504 Plans**

Students with Section 504 Plans will be afforded the following protections: As the 504 student's cumulative suspensions approach a total of 10 days, the Student Success Team must meet to hold a re-evaluation meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether the misconduct of the student is caused by the student's disabling condition and whether the student's current educational placement is appropriate. If the student's Section 504 Plan and placement are appropriate, and if it is determined that the behavior is not the result of the student's disabling condition, the school may proceed in the same manner as it would with non-disabled students.

### **Provisions for Students' Education While Suspended**

ECMS will make all reasonable arrangements to provide the student with classroom materials and current assignments to be completed by the student at home during the suspension.

### **Administrative Hearing**

Upon a suspension that may lead to a recommendation by the Principal or designee for expulsion, the pupil and the pupil's guardian or representative will be invited to an administrative hearing to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing.

### **Expulsion Hearing**

The decision to recommend expulsion of a student will be at the discretion of the Principal or the administrative designees, while the final decision for expulsion rests with the ECS Board appointed Expulsion Committee. Students may be recommended for expulsion if either of the following conditions exist:

- Repeated violations persist and other means of correction have been unsuccessful in bringing about an improvement in behavior.
- The severity of the violation is such that the presence of the student poses a continuing threat to the health and safety of the student or others.

Notice of the recommendation for expulsion will be provided to the student's parents as soon as reasonably possible.

Students recommended for expulsion have a right to a hearing before ECS Board appointed Expulsion Committee to determine the appropriateness of an expulsion. This hearing will be conducted within a period of thirty (30) days from when the school administrator determines that grounds for expulsion exist.

Parents/guardians will be notified of the expulsion hearing at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. The written notification will include:

- Date, time and place of the hearing.
- A description of facts pertaining to the incident that calls for the expulsion.
- Grounds for expulsion.
- A statement that the student and the student's parents/guardians may appear in person at the hearing, that they have the right to bring witnesses, and that they may present evidence on the student's behalf.

### **Record of Hearing**

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

### **Presentation of Evidence**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Principal or designee to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion" above.

### **Written Notice to Expel**

The Principal or designee, following a decision of the ECS Board Expulsion Committee to expel, shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) The specific offense committed by the student for any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion"
- 2) Notice of the right to appeal the expulsion. Expulsion appeals shall be brought to the Los Angeles County Board of Education or if the LA County Board of Education will not hear such appeals, student may appeal to the ECS Board of Directors.
- 3) Notice of the student or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the ECMS
- 4) Rehabilitation Plan

The ECMS Principal or Designee shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the Student's district of residence and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). This notice shall include the following:

- a) The student's name
- b) The specific offense committed by the student for any of the acts listed in "Grounds for Suspension or Expulsion."
- c) Rehabilitation Plan

### **Rehabilitation**

Pupils who are expelled from ECMS shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the ECS board appointed Expulsion Committee at the time of the expulsion order, which order may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to ECMS for readmission.

### **Alternative Educational Programs for Expelled Students**

If a decision is made to expel a student from ECMS, the school will work cooperatively with the student's district of residence (Student Discipline Proceedings Unit for former LAUSD students), county, and/or private schools (if the last school of attendance) to assist with the educational placement of the expelled student. As permitted by law, ECMS will communicate any incident of violent and/or serious behavior to the district/school to which the student matriculates.

### **Readmission**

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be at the sole discretion of ECMS's principal or designee to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the capacity of ECMS at the time the pupil seeks readmission. If readmission is denied, the student may appeal to the ECS board appointed Expulsion Committee.

### **Suspension and Expulsion Periodic Review**

The ECS Board of Directors or a committee appointed by the Board will hold an annual review of the Suspension and Expulsion Procedures to make sure that the policies and procedures. During the review, the Board of Directors and/or a committee appointed by the Board will make any necessary modifications to the list of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

### **ECMS Compliance Policies**

## **Tobacco Free School Policy**

Environmental Charter Schools have a 100% tobacco free school policy. This policy prohibits all tobacco use by everyone, everywhere on campus, at all times – including school events after regular school hours. This policy also prohibits students from bringing tobacco products on campus. A copy of the new policy is available in the office.

## **Abuse Reporting Policy**

ECMS employees are required by law to report any suspected child abuse to the Department of Children and Family Services for investigation. (Tel:1-800-540-4000). These reports are confidential and staff cannot provide any specific information regarding reports to parents. Complaints filed by parents will be referred to local law enforcement for investigation.

## **Federal and State Laws Affecting Family Educational Rights and Privacy (FERPA)**

The privacy of school records is protected by federal and state laws, which cover nearly every type of pupil. School employees and district officials, who have a legitimate educational interest, have a right to access pupil record information without the consent of the parent or student. Other individuals or agencies may be authorized to access, review and/or obtain pupil records by court order or by statute. Under the law, a school district may identify certain categories of information as directory information and may provide directory information to certain individuals, officials and organizations identified by the district as those who have a legitimate need to know. Some student records such as discipline, special education or psychology records may be maintained in local district or central district offices. Parents have the right to file complaints regarding District procedures affecting rights of privacy with California State Department of Education and/or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201

## **Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures (UCP)**

Environmental Charter Middle School's (ECMS) policy is to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. ECMS is the local educational agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. ECMS will seek to resolve complaints pertaining to compliance in accordance with state law, Title 5, California Code of Regulations.

The same complaint procedure may also be used to file complaints against ECMS which allege unlawful discrimination under the following federal laws: the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 (discrimination based on mental or physical disability); age; ancestry; ethnic group identification; religion; Title VI (discrimination based on race, color or national origin), and Title IX (discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation) or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Discrimination complaints must be filed within six months from the date the alleged discrimination occurred or the date when knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination was first obtained. These complaints and concerns about a violation of state or federal regulations governing programs such as special education, Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, consolidated categorical aid, No Child Left Behind, migrant education, child nutrition program can be submitted in writing to ECS Executive Director, Alison Suffet-Diaz, or ECMS-G Principal, Kami Cotler or ECMS-I Principal, Beth Bernstein. Any person with a disability or who is unable to prepare a written complaint can receive assistance from Ms. Diaz, Ms. Cotler, or Ms. Bernstein.

The sixty (60) day time line for an investigation and ECMS response will begin when the complaint is received. The review will conclude within 60 calendar days from date of receipt of complaint, unless the complainant agrees in writing to extend the time.

If the complainant disagrees with ECMS's decision, they have fifteen days after receipt of the decision to file an appeal with the California Department of Education. The appeal must be in writing and include a copy of the original complaint, as well as a copy of ECMS's decision provided to them.

ECMS acknowledges and respects every individual's rights to privacy. Discrimination complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential, as appropriate and except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation or proceedings, as determined by the Principal or designee on a case-by-case basis.

ECMS prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process, including but not limited to a complainant's filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of discrimination. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

The complete Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedure is available in the main office.

## Calendar and School Schedule

### Important Dates

July 22-26: Summer Bridge—Option 1

July 29-August 2: Summer Bridge—Option 2

#### First Trimester (8/26/2013 – 11/15/2013)

August 26: First Day of School—Parent Conferences

August 27: First Full Day of School

September 2: Labor Day Holiday

September 16: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

September 24: Picture Day (Make Up Day October 8)

September 23-27: NWEA Testing Inglewood

September 30-October 4: NWEA Testing Gardena

October 14: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

October 24 & 25: Parent Conferences Minimum Day—

October 31: Interdisciplinary Benchmark #1 Due

November 1: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

November 11: Veterans' Day Holiday—No School

#### Second Trimester (11/19/2013 – 3/21/2014)

November 18: No School For Students-- Professional Development for teachers

November 27: Minimum Day

November 28 & 29: Thanksgiving Break

December 23: January 10: Winter Break

January 13: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

January 20: Holiday – Martin Luther King Day

January 21-24 NWEA Testing Inglewood

January 27-31 NWEA Testing Gardena

February 3: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

February 6 & 7: Parent Conferences Minimum Day

February 10: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

February 17: Holiday – Presidents' Day

February 28: Interdisciplinary Benchmark #2 Due

March 10: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

#### Third Trimester (3/24/2013 – 6/20/2013)

March 28: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

March 31: Cesar Chavez Day-- No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

April 14-18: Spring Break

April 21: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers

April NWEA Testing TBD

May 5-16: CST STAR Testing

May 15 & 16: Parent Conferences Minimum Day

May 19: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers  
 May 26: Holiday – Memorial Day

June 6: Interdisciplinary Benchmark #3 Due  
 June 9: No School for Students—Professional Development for Teachers  
 June NWEA Testing TBD  
 June 16: Summer Break Begins

Bell Schedule Fall 2013

Period	Monday		Tuesday-Friday		
1	<b>Late Start</b>		8:00	9:00	
2			9:05	10:05	
<b>Recess</b>			10:05	10:20	
3	10:00	11:00	10:25	11:25	
4	11:05	12:05	11:30	12:30	
<b>Lunch</b>	12:05	12:45	12:30	1:05	
5	12:50	1:50	1:10	2:10	
6	1:55	2:55	2:15	3:15	
<b>Advisory</b>	3:00	3:35	3:20	3:35	
7	3:40	5:00	3:40	5:00	Academic Support,
8	5:05	6:00	5:05	6:00	Enrichment, Clubs,
9	6:05	6:35	6:05	6:35	& Electives

Minimum Days

Period	Tues/Wed	
1	8:00	9:00
2	9:05	10:00
<b>Recess</b>	10:05	10:20
3	10:25	11:25
4	11:30	12:30
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30	12:35
7,8,9	12:40	6:35





# ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Re-Enrollment Form 2013-2014

Due date: March 7, 2013

*This form is mandatory to re-enroll at ECMS. If you fail to return this form by the due date your space may be given away to another student. \*If you are not planning to re-enroll your student please notify ECMS as soon as possible so that we can make an offer to another student on the waiting list.*

### STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ in 2012-2013  
   **First  Middle  Last**

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
   **Address  Apartment**

\_\_\_\_\_  
   **City  State  Zip**

Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Phone Number to receive school messages: \_\_\_\_\_

### FAMILY INFORMATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Father's (Guardian's) Name  Home Address (if different from student)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Home Phone  Day Phone  Cell Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employer  City  Work Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mother's (Guardian's) Name  Home Address (if different from student)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Home Phone  Day Phone  Cell Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Employer  City  Work Phone**

Parents/Guardian's e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**If applicant is not living with both parents, please include the name(s) of stepparent(s) or legal guardian, if applicable.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**First Name  Last Name  Relationship  Phone Number**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**First Name  Last Name  Relationship  Phone Number**

I attest that the information submitted on this application is correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**