



**P.S. / I.S. 366**  
**Washington Heights Academy**

*A Neighborhood Learning Community for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8*

[www.whacademy.org](http://www.whacademy.org)



**Family Handbook / Guía Familiar**  
**2019-2020**

*Mr. Renzo Martinez – Principal*  
*Ms. Mercedes Diaz – Assistant Principal*  
*Ms. Lynne Doherty Herndon – Assistant Principal*



## **PS/IS 366: Washington Heights Academy**

*A Neighborhood Learning Community for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8*

*202 Sherman Avenue New York, NY 10034*

*212-304-3320 (phone) 212-304-3322 (fax)*

### **School Mission**

The mission of Washington Heights Academy is to prepare its students to respond to life's challenges and opportunities with confidence and intelligence. Our aim is to provide children with learning experiences that will foster a constructive growth mindset, strong self-esteem, responsible community involvement, and success in high school, college and career. Through high expectations and a rigorous academic curriculum that engages all students, we strive to raise critical thinkers and self-directed learners, and to support in students a love of learning—now and throughout their lives.

### **Misión de la Escuela**

La misión de la Academia de Washington Heights es preparar a sus estudiantes a responder a los desafíos y a las oportunidades de la vida con inteligencia y confianza. Nuestro objetivo es proporcionar a los niños experiencias de aprendizaje que fomente una mentalidad de crecimiento, fuerte autoestima, participación responsable en la comunidad, y éxito en la escuela secundaria, la universidad y la carrera. A través de grandes expectativas y instrucción rigurosa que involucre a todos los estudiantes, nos esforzamos para forjar estudiantes que puedan pensar críticamente y que tengan iniciativa propia. Deseamos inculcar en ellos un amor por el aprendizaje ahora y durante todas sus vidas.



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Dear WHA Families:

Welcome to the 2019-2020 edition of the Washington Heights Academy Family Handbook! We have produced this handbook to help build and maintain strong connections among all members of our school community. We hope this handbook will help you:

- Understand more about Washington Heights Academy's mission and core principles.
- Find out how you can become involved in the life of the school.
- Find answers to questions about communication, behavioral expectations, academic enrichment, and other topics related to your child's learning.
- Get general information about school policies and procedures.
- Learn how to contact your child's teacher and other school staff.

**Support Our School**

*The success of Washington Heights Academy depends on complete engagement from every family. In order to help our school fulfill its mission, we urge you to participate as fully as possible in your child's education, and in the day-to-day life of our growing school.*

We hope you will review this handbook carefully and refer to it often. We look forward to working closely with all of our families in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

*Renzo Martinez*  
Principal

*Mercedes Diaz*  
Assistant Principal

*Lynne Doherty Herndon*  
Assistant Principal

**PS/IS 366: Washington Heights Academy  
2019-2020 Family Handbook**



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## I. School Overview

**PS/IS 366: Washington Heights Academy (WHA)** is a Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8 public school serving families from District 6 in Manhattan.

Washington Heights Academy offers a child-centered, academically rigorous program that promotes personal, social and academic success for all students. Student achievement is supported through high quality classroom instruction and active family participation. The Academy embraces an educational philosophy that places relationship at the center of teaching and learning—an emphasis that is reflected in the school’s design.

Family engagement is an essential part of our school community. To support our school vision, the Academy seeks families who are deeply committed to their children’s education and who wish to be meaningfully involved in their children’s school lives. We will build upon the strengths of each family in order to ensure that all of our children succeed.

**Core Principles:** Washington Heights Academy is founded on the following core principles:

- **Relationship is at the heart of teaching and learning.** An effective learning environment places meaningful relationships—among teachers, students, families and other community members—at its center.
- **Family involvement is key to children’s academic success.** Families play an essential role in their children’s education and should be invited to participate meaningfully in the life of the school.
- **Children learn by doing.** Children learn by handling materials, exploring their environments, planning projects and conducting experiments. Effective teaching encourages learning through discovery.
- **Education is multi-dimensional.** A well-rounded education should include not only mastery of information and skills, but opportunities for self-expression, artistic creation, personal reflection, critical thinking and the development of social, emotional and ethical competencies.

### **WHA School App!**

Washington Heights Academy has a school application that runs on cell phones and other mobile devices.

To access the app, simply search for **Washington Heights Academy** in the app store!



## II. Admissions

At Washington Heights Academy, we believe that all children have unique interests and talents. Therefore, we do not test or screen students for admission. Children enter the school through the application process established by the New York City Department of Education.

In accordance with NYC Department of Education policy, children who are currently enrolled in WHA's Pre-Kindergarten program receive priority (after siblings) in the admissions process. Please note, however, that children attending Pre-Kindergarten at WHA are not guaranteed admission to Kindergarten at the school.



### Kindergarten Admissions Priorities

1. Students residing in the district whose verified siblings will be enrolled in grades K-5 in the school in September 2020;
2. Students residing outside the district whose verified siblings will be enrolled in grades K-5 in the school in September 2020;
3. Students residing in the district who are currently enrolled at the school for Pre-K;
4. Students residing outside the district who are currently enrolled at the school for Pre-K;
5. Students who reside in the district, other than those in (1) and (3) above;
6. Students who reside outside the district, other than those in (2) and (4) above.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2ABB0828-48A4-415C-A6E6-E4F7737C53DA/0/2018NYCKindergartenDirectoryManhattanENGLISH.pdf>

### III. Family Engagement

At WHA, families get to know teachers, school staff and each other through meetings, workshops, classroom activities and special school-wide events.

Families may support the Academy in many ways, such as joining the Parent-Teacher Association; volunteering in the classroom; serving on committees; donating classroom materials; planning and participating in special events; performing community outreach; serving as bilingual translators; contributing to WHA publications; seeking funds to enrich children's school experiences; or assisting with long-range planning to support the Academy's continued growth and success.

We welcome the participation of all parents in a variety of ways. Every effort has a positive impact on our children and on the school as a whole.

**Family Volunteers:** The support of our family volunteers can take many forms, from assisting with classroom activities to working on projects in the main office. Teachers may call on parents when they need field trip chaperones or special assistance for a classroom project. Parents also help out at Family Learning Nights and other special events. Parents may contact the Parent Coordinator to offer their assistance. Your help will always be appreciated!

#### Class Parents

Class Parents serve as liaisons between the classroom teacher and other parents, helping to coordinate classroom events and supporting the teacher as necessary. Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to volunteer for this role.

**Parent-Teacher Association (PTA):** Through its monthly meetings and various functions, the PTA provides a forum for collaboration among parents, teachers and administration. PTA members plan and implement special events and fundraising activities on behalf of the school. Elected PTA officers coordinate activities and represent the school in district and citywide meetings.

**School Leadership Team (SLT):** The SLT is responsible for guiding the school's educational direction and aligning resources to support these priorities. Its core responsibilities include producing an annual Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and developing a school-based budget aligned with the CEP. As mandated by the Department of Education, the SLT is comprised of parents (including the PTA president), school staff, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) representative, and the Principal. Members of the SLT are elected in two-year terms.

## IV. Communication

At WHA, communication begins at the classroom level with conversations between parents and their children's teachers, and extends throughout the school in a variety of ways.

### **News in the Homework Folder**

Be sure to check your child's folder each day for homework assignments, notes from the teacher, classroom news and important notices from the school.

**Communicating with your child's teacher:** Our teachers are committed to building successful working relationships with all families. Through ongoing communication with your child's teachers, you will develop a trust that will allow you to share information, solve problems, and celebrate achievement. If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, please contact the teacher via phone, email, or a note in the homework folder. The teacher will get back to you as soon as possible.

During the school day, teachers are intently focused on teaching our children, planning lessons, and conferring with colleagues. Please do not "drop in" on teachers. They will be unable to meet with you without an appointment.

**Open School Night:** On Open School night, the teacher presents an overview of the curriculum for the year. Parents will learn about major subject areas, the social-emotional curriculum, special projects, homework expectations, and routines for communicating with the teacher.

**Parent-Teacher (Report Card) Conferences:** The parent-teacher conference is an opportunity to review your child's progress, identify strengths, set goals, and make plans to support your child's learning. We encourage all parents to attend these important conferences, which take place in November and March.

**WHA Newsletter:** The WHA newsletter includes news from the PTA, articles by parents and school staff, and a calendar of upcoming events. Look for the latest edition in your child's homework folder or pick up an extra copy in the school lobby.

### **WHA School App!**

Washington Heights Academy has a school application that runs on cell phones and other mobile devices. You can check for updates from wherever you are and also receive important notifications from school. To access the app, simply search for **Washington Heights Academy** in the app store! You may also visit the WHA website at <http://www.whacademy.org/>.



## V. Behavioral Expectations

At WHA, we strive to provide positive discipline in the context of caring classrooms and to foster in all students a strong sense of respect—for themselves and for all members of the school community. Students are actively encouraged to apply practical “Life Skills” such as patience, perseverance and problem solving in their daily experiences at school.

While discipline begins with the classroom teacher, school administration plays an active role in defining and enforcing behavioral expectations for all children. Our aim is to establish consistent expectations and positive reinforcement through ongoing communication between home and school. We strive to be in touch with parents through phone calls, written communications and personal conversations throughout the year.

Administrators, teachers and staff members follow guidelines from the New York City Department of Education’s Disciplinary Code, with the aim of thoughtfully educating children in the behavioral expectations of the school.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode/default.htm>

### Safety and Respect

A successful school must provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which children and adults respect each other’s differences and celebrate the opportunity to learn from one another.

Our school vision emphasizes the development of social, emotional and ethical competencies as significant contributors to academic success. Specific supports include:

- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**, a system designed to improve student behavior and create a positive school climate and culture.
- **Responsive Classroom**, a research-based approach that serves as an essential support for WHA’s emphasis on social-emotional education in Kindergarten to Grade 5.
- **Middle School Advisory**, a special program for Grades 6 to 8 that provides students with a safe space to address academic, social, emotional and ethical concerns.

In keeping with these guidelines, you can expect to hear from your child’s teacher if:

- ◆ The teacher needs your input and support in addressing a situation that involves your child.
- ◆ The teacher believes your child could apply more effort to his or her work.
- ◆ Your child is not doing his or her work consistently.
- ◆ Your child is not completing his or her work at a satisfactory level.
- ◆ Your child is causing distraction during instruction.
- ◆ There has been an incident of concern between your child and another student.

You can expect to hear from a school staff member if:

- ◆ Your child was hurt during school in an accident or incident.
- ◆ Your child is sick or visibly uncomfortable at school.
- ◆ Your child is missing formal paperwork or documents at the school.
- ◆ Your child has not been picked up on time.
- ◆ Your child is excessively late or absent (averaging more than once a month for over 3 months).
- ◆ Your child has come to school inappropriately dressed.
- ◆ Your child is not consistently wearing his or her school uniform. **Families who choose to join the WHA community are expected to adhere to the school's uniform policy.**

You can expect to hear from the Principal or Assistant Principal if:

- ◆ Your child has violated any provision of the NYC Department of Education Discipline Code.
- ◆ Your child has used inappropriate language with or displayed disrespectful behavior toward any member of our school community.
- ◆ A behavior plan is being put into place for your child as a result of a disciplinary action by administration.
- ◆ Your child has been or will be suspended.

**If your child has had an incident with another child, please contact administration immediately to express your concerns. Parents must not approach other people's children to address disciplinary matters.**

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's behavior or about the behavioral expectations of our school, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **Classroom Management**

In keeping with our school philosophy, all staff members are supported in the development of positive systems of classroom management that include:

- ◆ Collaborative rule-making.
- ◆ Intrinsic rewards (the satisfaction of trying one's hardest and taking pride in one's results).
- ◆ Positive reinforcement (e.g., meaningful praise, increased responsibility, lunch with the teacher, "good news" notes to parents, positive calls home).
- ◆ Logical consequences (e.g., suspending a privilege if a student demonstrates that he or she is not yet able to use that privilege responsibly; restoring or increasing privileges when a student has earned them).

## VI. Special Programs

### Academic Support

Regular assessments allow our teachers to meet students at their current academic levels and to help them progress. Students who require extra support are served according to their needs through a variety of programs, including:

- English Language Learner Support (ELL)
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS)
- Special Education Services: ICT/SETSS, Related Services (Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Counseling)
- Extended Day (After School Academic Enhancement Program)
- Saturday Academy and Vacation Academy

We are committed to providing your children with every opportunity to be successful at WHA. Please contact your child's teacher if you feel your child would benefit from additional academic supports or enrichment programs.

### Enrichment Programs

Through the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development's **COMPASS** (Comprehensive After School System) and **SONYC** (School's Out NYC) programs, WHA provides a variety of out-of-school-time programming for students in elementary and middle school. We will also continue our relationship with the **New York Cares School Success Initiative**, which offers children's activities as well as adult programming. Other enrichment programs include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ballet Hispánico</li><li>• Chess in the Schools</li><li>• College Access for All</li><li>• Dancing Classrooms</li><li>• LEAP: Learning through an Extended Arts Program</li><li>• LINC (Literacy Inc.): Reading Buddies</li><li>• Yeshiva University START Science</li></ul> | <b>Sports</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Morning Fitness Program</li><li>• Basketball</li><li>• Soccer</li><li>• Track &amp; Field</li><li>• Volleyball</li></ul> |
|--|--|

Please let us know if you are aware of any community-based organizations that might be interested in partnering with our school. We are always seeking new ways to support and enrich our students' opportunities to learn and grow.

## VII. School Policies

**Start-of-Year Paperwork:** Please make sure that all paperwork is submitted promptly and that all information is accurate and up-to-date. Court papers must be submitted to the main office, along with the blue emergency card, emergency pick-up list and other required documents, during the first week of school.

**School Hours:** Regular school hours (Monday through Friday) are from **8:20 AM–2:40 PM**. The school opens for breakfast each morning at **7:50 AM**. To ensure the safety of all children, students cannot be left unattended in the building lobby. **Therefore, students should not be dropped off at school or arrive unaccompanied before 7:50 AM.**



**Arrival:** Pre-Kindergarten students arrive at 8:20 AM and have breakfast in the classroom. All other students may arrive at school between **7:50 AM** and **8:15 AM**. If your child will be eating breakfast at school, he or she should arrive no later than **8:00 AM** in order to have time to eat before being picked up by the classroom teacher at **8:20 AM**.

**Dismissal (2:40 PM):** Students are dismissed each day from designated school exits by their classroom teachers. Students in Grades 4 to 8 who have permission to walk home unaccompanied by an adult are released first. Other students are released to their approved guardians. Students whose parents are late in picking them up are taken to the Cafeteria.

**We ask parents to make every effort to pick children up on time each day.**

**Transportation:** Metrocards for eligible students can be obtained in the main office. To determine whether your child is eligible for busing, please contact the main office. The school support staff will help you make the necessary arrangements.

**Absence:** Children are expected to be in school every day unless they are ill. Doctor's visits and other appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. **If your child must miss school, please call the school office (212-304-3320) by 8:20 AM to notify the staff that your child will be absent.** When the child returns to school, please write a note to the classroom teacher explaining the absence and submit a doctor's note if available. If a child is absent from school for three consecutive days or more, a doctor's note is required.

### Lateness

Your child starts the day at a disadvantage if he or she is late for school. Furthermore, it is a disservice to other children when one of their classmates is consistently tardy. **If your child arrives to school after 8:20 AM, he or she must receive a late pass before proceeding to his or her classroom.**

## VIII. Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The **Policy for Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices** for **PS/IS 366: Washington Heights Academy** (WHA) is in accordance with DOE guidelines and has been discussed and approved by the WHA **School Safety Committee** and **School Leadership Team**. The guidelines below will establish the circumstances under which these devices may be used and the procedures for confiscation and return, if necessary.

### Cell Phones & Other Electronic Devices

- Students in **Grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8** are permitted to bring **cell phones** to school in accordance with procedures outlined under “Use of Cell Phones,” below.
- Students **younger** than Grade 4 are **not** permitted to bring cell phones to school.
- Students may **not** bring the following **electronic items** to school, as they may cause excessive distraction and safety issues:
  - laptops, tablets, iPads and other similar computing devices
  - portable music or entertainment systems



### Use of Cell Phones

- Some families of students in **Grades 4-8** may want children to carry a cell phone so they can communicate with them on the way to or from school. In this case, students must **turn off** the phone upon arrival at school and must keep the phones **in their backpacks** for the entire school day.
- **Cell phones may not be used during school hours.** Students will **not** be able to receive or make cell phone calls, or receive or send text messages, during school hours.
- **Cell phones must remain off during school hours,** including instructional time, quizzes, tests, fire drills or other emergency preparedness exercises.
- **Cell phones may not be used on school premises,** including classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria or the school yard.
- **Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted on school trips or during any other school-sponsored events.**
- If a parent wishes to speak with a child during the school day, the parent should call the **Main Office** at **212-304-3320, ext 0**, and speak to office staff. A staff member will then relay a message to the student.
- If necessary, students may call their parents from the **Main Office** during the school day.
- **Only** in the case of a **school-wide** or **city-wide emergency** may students call parents from cell phones during the day. If such a case arises, the administration will give permission for students to use their phones.

## **Violations of Policy**

Students who use cell phones or who bring computing devices and/or portable music or entertainment systems in violation of the DOE's Discipline Code, the above-stated policy and/or the DOE's Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy will be subject to discipline in accordance with the guidance interventions and disciplinary responses set forth in the Discipline Code. If the school confiscates a cell phone, computing device, or portable music or entertainment system for violation of the DOE's Discipline Code, the above-stated policy, and/or the Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy, the Principal or Principal's designee will contact the student's parent.

Confiscation and return of such items will be handled as follows:

1. **First offense** will result in confiscation of the phone, with the requirement that a parent or legal guardian come to the school for the return of the confiscated item.
2. **Second offense** will result in confiscation of the phone, with the requirement that a parent or legal guardian come to the school for return of the confiscated item **and** the understanding that the student has lost the privilege of bringing the cell phone to school.
3. **Third offense** will result in the device being retained until the end of the school year, with the requirement that a parent come to the school for return of the confiscated item.

## **Serious Infractions**

Serious infractions, including **inappropriate use of cell phones or other electronic devices**, will be officially reported to the Department of Education using the **On-line Occurrence Reporting System (OORS)**. Such violations will also result in forfeiture of the privilege of bringing a phone to school. Inappropriate uses of cell phones and other electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Texting
- Taking and/or showing photos and/or videos to others
- Voice recording of staff or students
- Videotaping of staff or students
- Videotaping of the interior or exterior of the school or grounds
- Accessing inappropriate internet sites

**Accessing inappropriate internet sites may result in additional disciplinary action, including notification of the DOE Legal Department.** It is the school's policy to respect the privacy of students. Therefore, the content of confiscated phones will not be examined by school personnel. This content may be examined by the DOE Legal Department if warranted, however, and may lead to further disciplinary action.

### **Please Note**

- The school will **not** be responsible for loss or damage to phones and/or other electronic devices that are brought to school or to any school-sponsored events.
- The school will **not** investigate lost or damaged phones and/or other electronic devices.
- The school will **not** hold another student responsible for theft, damage or restitution of a cell phone or any other electronic device.

## IX. School Safety

The safety of children, parents and staff is of paramount importance at every school. For this reason, we must insist that all visitors to the school respect the following policies and procedures:

**Visitors:** Please use only the **main entrance** when entering or exiting the building. As per DOE safety regulations, all visitors are required to provide identification and sign in with our School Safety Officer upon entering the school. **After signing in, all parents must proceed directly to their destination (e.g., PTA room, Main Office).** Parents should not remain at the security desk for extended periods of time. DOE regulations prohibit visitors from having extended conversations with the School Safety Officer or sitting behind the Security Desk.

**Elevators:** We are sorry, but the elevators require a key card and may therefore be used only when visitors are accompanied by a staff member. Please let the School Safety Officer know if you require the use of the elevator, and we will do our best to accommodate you.

**Supervision of Children:** We strive to create an atmosphere that is welcoming to all students and families. It is of utmost importance, however, that no children (including siblings) be left unattended at any time. When visiting the school, all siblings must remain in the same room with their parent or caregiver at all times, and must be carefully supervised so that accidents do not occur.

Due to safety concerns, children may re-enter the building after school hours only if they are accompanied by an adult. Department of Education policy stipulates that children may not be in any school building if a School Safety Officer is not on active duty.



### School Uniforms

Washington Heights Academy is a uniform school. We believe that uniforms not only reduce comparisons and competition with regard to clothing, but signify a sense of unity and commitment to our school community.

**All families who choose to join the WHA community are expected to adhere to the school's uniform policy.** In support of this policy, please follow the guidelines on the next page.

## X. School Uniform

All families who choose to join the WHA community are expected to adhere to the school's **uniform policy**. We believe that uniforms not only reduce comparisons and competition with regard to clothing, but signify a sense of unity and commitment to our school community. Students are required to wear their **uniform colors** throughout the year. Please see guidelines below.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Boys &amp; Girls</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>light blue</b> polo shirt</li> <li>• <b>dark blue</b> sweatpants or yoga pants</li> <li>• <b>sneakers</b> or comfortable shoes</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Kindergarten–Grade 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>Boys</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>light blue</b> polo or collar shirt</li> <li>• <b>navy blue</b> pants or shorts</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Girls</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>light blue</b> polo or blouse</li> <li>• <b>navy blue</b> jumper, skort, pants or shorts (no short shorts)</li> </ul>
	<p>In <b>cooler weather</b>, students in <b>Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4</b> may wear a <b>light blue</b> or <b>navy blue sweater</b> (pullover or cardigan) over the standard uniform.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>PLEASE NOTE:</u></b> Sweaters must be <b>blue</b>.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grades 5–8</b></p>	<p><b><u>Boys</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>navy blue</b> polo</li> <li>• <b>khaki</b> (beige) pants (<b><u>no</u></b> jeans)</li> <li>• <b>black, navy blue</b> or <b>white</b> shoes/sneakers</li> <li>• <b>black</b> belt</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Girls</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>navy blue</b> polo or blouse</li> <li>• <b>khaki</b> (beige) skort or slacks (<b><u>no</u></b> jeans)</li> <li>• <b>black, navy blue</b> or <b>white</b> shoes/sneakers</li> <li>• <b>dark blue</b> knee socks or tights</li> </ul>
	<p>In <b>cooler weather</b>, students in <b>Grade 5-8</b> may wear a <b>NAVY BLUE</b> sweater (<u>pullover or cardigan</u>) or <b>NAVY BLUE</b> sweatshirt over the standard uniform.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>PLEASE NOTE:</u></b> Top outer layer of uniform (<u>shirt or sweater</u>) must be <b>NAVY BLUE</b>.</p>	

## XI. School Food

Children must be well nourished in order to learn. Therefore, we encourage all families to provide healthy food choices for their children each day.

**Breakfast:** Pre-Kindergarten students arrive at 8:20 AM and have breakfast in the classroom. Breakfast is available to all other students from **7:50 AM to 8:15 AM**. If your child will eat breakfast at school, he or she should arrive no later than **8:00 AM**.

**Lunch:** Students may bring their own lunch or eat the food prepared by the school's dietary staff. Lunch periods are 50 minutes long, and include time for recess or free play after the children have eaten.

**Snack:** In lower grade classes, students receive a snack break each day. Students may bring their own snacks or share a snack provided in the classroom. **We ask that parents not send any nut or peanut products, as some children suffer from severe allergies to these foods.** Please check ingredients carefully, since these products are often included in cookies, snack bars and other foods.

### Lunch Application Forms

A lunch application form is given to each family at the beginning of the school year to determine whether your child qualifies for free lunch. **Whether or not your child will eat the school lunch it is important that all parents sign and return these forms, which have a significant impact on our school budget.**

### Birthday Celebrations (PreK-Grade 5)



Birthdays are an important time for many children. Large celebrations during school hours interrupt students' learning, however, and may create pressure for other families to "keep up." For this reason, we ask that birthday celebrations be kept simple. On your child's special day, we suggest that you bring cupcakes, juice boxes and "something from the heart" (e.g., a story, song, dance, game or some other simple activity the children can do together). **Birthday celebrations should not begin earlier than 2:00 PM.** Please check with your child's teacher the week before your child's birthday to schedule an appropriate time.

## XII. Health and Wellness

Your child's health is of great importance to us. All families must submit recent medical and dental forms upon admission to the school, and all immunizations and screenings must be current with Department of Health requirements. **If your child has allergies, asthma or other medical conditions, it is important that you let the school know immediately.** If your child may require medication to be administered at school, please contact the school nurse and she will provide you with the necessary paperwork.

### When to Keep Your Child Home from School:

We love to see your children every day! When your child is sick, however, it is important to keep him or her home from school. This not only benefits your child but other children and staff. **A child should be kept home from school if he or she has:**

- √ **A fever of 99.6 degrees or higher:** A child should be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- √ **Headache or Stomachache:** Please allow your child to rest at home until he or she feels well enough to return to school.
- √ **Vomiting or Diarrhea:** A child should stay home until it has been 24 hours after the last episode (without medication).
- √ **A "fresh" cold:** A child should stay home if he or she has a runny nose with green or yellow discharge, or is suffering from excessive coughing or sneezing.
- √ **Severe cough:** A child should see a doctor to rule out serious illness before returning to school.
- √ **Sore Throat:** A child should be tested for strep throat. If diagnosed with strep, he or she may return to school 24 hours after first antibiotic treatment begins.
- √ **Skin Rash, Infected Skin Patches, or Unusual Spots:** Please do not send your child to school until a doctor has examined him or her and determined whether or not the rash is contagious.
- √ **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)\*:** Please keep your child home until a doctor has examined him or her and determined when it is safe to return to school.
- √ **Head Lice\*:** Please keep your child home until a doctor has examined him or her and determined when it is safe to return to school.
- √ **Chicken Pox\*:** A child may return to school one week after the start of the rash and/or once all pox are scabbed over.

*\* Please notify the school immediately if your child has contracted any of these communicable diseases. If your child exhibits any of these conditions at school, he or she must be sent home in accordance with Department of Health regulations.*

**If your child must stay home from school:**

- √ Please call the school office (212-304-3320) by **8:20 AM** to notify the staff that your child will be absent.
- √ When the child returns to school, please write a note to the classroom teacher explaining the absence and submit a doctor's note if available.
- √ If a child is absent from school for three consecutive days or more, a doctor's note is required.

**If your child becomes ill at school:**

If your child complains of being sick or does not look well after he or she reaches school, we will make every effort to contact you.

In case of minor injury, the school nurse will provide care if needed and will call the parent or send a note home. If a child requires further attention, the nurse will notify you or your pediatrician. In case of emergency, if we cannot contact you, your child will be taken to the emergency room at the Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center.

**Emergency Contact Information**

It is **essential** that you provide the school with **up-to-date phone numbers** in case it is necessary to contact you. Please inform the main office **immediately** if any of your contact information changes.

If you have any questions about your child's health, you can contact your pediatrician, or call the school nurse at 212-304-3320.

## Notes