

# 3K, Pre-K, Kindergarten Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents and Families,

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Harriet Tubman Learning Center (C.S.154M). Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child. This handbook is designed to ensure that you understand the policies and procedures, and that your family has a rewarding experience with the school's program. In the handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program and have provided the answers to these questions.

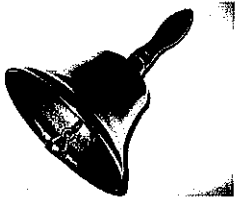
The purpose of this handbook is to outline the school's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital. Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers.

We are asking parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program.

We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences. Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year in writing. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Your child's regular and prompt attendance at school is crucial to his/her success. I can't emphasize this point enough. Most early learning activities are group oriented and involve interaction with classmates. Therefore, it is next to impossible to make up work at home. Please view school as a priority and see to it that your child attends everyday except in cases of illness or emergency. When your child is absent please call our school secretary and provide documentation for the absences. Although our students are small, we follow the same attendance policies as the rest of the district and according to state law.

Come and talk with us should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.



# Attendance Policy for 3K/Pre-Kindergarten/ Kindergarten

## Absences Unexcused Absence--

An absence is unexcused when a parent has not contacted the school or provided documentation regarding their child's absence.

**Excused Absence--** Parent notifies school on day of or prior to day of absence due to illness or injury, death, in a family, health/medical appointment and or religious observance.

1st Unexcused Absence	Personal Phone call from Teacher's Assistant Kinvolved text message to parent
3rd Unexcused Absence	Personal phone call home from Teacher's Assistant. Kinvolved text message to parent
5th Unexcused Absence	Attendance Team Meeting (to include social worker, counselor, and parent) If medical concerns, request school care plan. Kinvolved text message to parent
7th Unexcused Absence	Home visit from School team and letter sent home; Kinvolved text message to parent
10th Unexcused Absence	Conference with the Principal

Missing a day of Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten means that your child is missing the opportunity for them to expand their skills. Children who miss multiple days of school make it difficult for the teacher to move them along with the rest of the class. It is important for our children to be at school every day and on time. We will communicate with families by sending a Kinvolved text message each time a student is absent from school. Families should respond to the text message to confirm the student's attendance.

## **School hours**

Monday-Friday	Start Time	School End Time
PK-5	8:00 a.m.	2:20 p.m.

## Morning Procedures

The school day officially begins at 8:00 a.m. for all students. Kindergarten students may be dropped off at 7:30 a.m. to participate in the breakfast program. 3K & Pre-K Children should be dropped off at their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. **Kindergarten Children may not be dropped off before 7:30 a.m. for their own safety as there is no available staff to supervise them.**

**Breakfast is served in the cafeteria between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m.**

Grab and Go breakfast will be available for kindergarten students who arrive late, after breakfast ends. Pre-kindergarten students will have breakfast in their classrooms when they arrive at 8:00 a.m.

### **Breakfast and Lunch**

A free breakfast is provided for **all** students

We also offer free **lunch** for all children. We still require that the lunch form is filled out as it is necessary for our Title 1 eligibility; therefore, we are asking each parent to complete the form and return it to the school. The form is available online or you can fill out a paper application at school. You may now fill out your lunch form online **at [nyc.applyforlunch.com](http://nyc.applyforlunch.com)**

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS ILL OR HAS AN ACCIDENT WHEN PLAYING?**

If your child is ill or has an accident while playing, your child will be escorted by the teacher aide to the school nurse's office and you will be called. It is essential that you provide emergency contact information to the teachers with the two names and current telephone/cell phone numbers of family members or close friends who can collect your child from school in either one of these events, should you not be available. Be sure these people know that you have given their contact information to the school.

### **Illness**

School children sometimes complain of illness at school but are able to continue with their class work without going home. Feeling that parents may wish to know what criteria is used in making decisions about whether to send a child home or return a child to class, we are sending this list of GUIDELINES to you.

- ✓ A child with a temperature is sent home.
- ✓ A child who vomits at school is sent home.
- ✓ A child who reports diarrhea and states that he/she is having difficulty getting to the restroom on time is sent home.
- ✓ A child with a questionable rash is sent home.
- ✓ A child with "pink eye" and who has discharge in the eye is sent home.
- ✓ Any child who is so uncomfortable that he/she is not able to function in school is sent home.
- ✓ A child must be fever, diarrhea and vomit free without medication for **24 hours before returning to school.**

We try to take into consideration a child's report of having been sick at home or of illness in other family members. We never refuse to allow a child to call home if he/she states that a parent has requested this. **PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU GIVE US YOUR CURRENT PHONE NUMBERS IN CASE WE NEED TO CONTACT YOU.** If you have questions, please contact the school nurse at 212 864-2400, X1221.

### **Administering Medication:**

Children taking prescription, over-the-counter, or homeopathic medication at school require the following:

- ✓ Medical form with a written, detailed description of the condition including the name and dosage of each medication signed by the doctor.
- ✓ Written permission to administer the prescription or medication signed by the parent and the physician. Dosage and times that medication is to be administered must be included.
- ✓ Please ask the school nurse for the forms.

- ✓ If your doctor states that the child has a need for a medication, you must bring the medications in its original container, or sign a refusal to supply the medication to the school nurse.

#### **Parent Meetings and Workshops:**

Parent meetings and workshops will be scheduled on a variety of subject areas to enhance your awareness as a parent in order to better support your child's education. You will receive a flyer to sign up for the meeting/workshop in your child's red folder. We use the flyer to plan ahead for the number parents and/or children that will attend. Some meetings/workshops will be planned for both the parent and child and some will be planned for parents only. This is a vital part of our 3K, Pre-K and Kindergarten Programs therefore, we strongly encourage all parents to attend and participate.

#### **Field Trips:**

Field trips to nearby points of interest will be scheduled throughout the school year. These trips will be designed to supplement the curriculum and to provide a variety of experiences for the students. Parents will receive notices of field trips, including the cost per student and will be asked to sign and return the permission slip form with cost for the trip. Children who do not have a signed permission slip will not be allowed to attend the field trip. Parents may be asked on a rotating basis to chaperone on the field trips. If you want to take your child with you upon return from the field trip site, **YOU MUST SIGN THE CHILD OUT in the main office.**

#### **Birthdays**

We are happy to celebrate birthdays and to have a child's class join in the celebration. All parents/guardians are welcome to come in and join the celebration as well. If a parent/guardian would like to plan an in-school party for his/her child, **the child's teacher must be notified in writing, two (2) weeks in advance.** This is necessary to plan for the party and to discuss other student's food allergies. The party will usually be done during the last period of the school day.

#### **Allergies/Other Restrictions**

If your child has any known allergies, especially to foods, please let the teacher know in the beginning of the year. We may occasionally do an activity involving food, and it would be helpful to know if a student cannot eat a certain type of food. Also, if your child has any other type of restriction, such as physical activities or celebrations of certain events, please inform the teacher as soon as possible so that arrangements are made during these types of activities.

#### **DAILY FOLDER/Book bag**

Your child will have a folder that will need to go back and forth every day. This folder will hold all homework and notes that need to be sent home. Please make sure to empty the folder every single night! Nothing other than completed homework or notes to the teacher should be in the folders in the morning.

**\*\*\*Please check your child's book-bag/folder DAILY!!!\*\*\* If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to send an e-mail or a note in your child's folder. We are so excited to have your child in our classroom! Working together, let's make this a wonderful year of school for your child!**

### **RECESS/Outdoor Play**

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students have approximately 20-minutes recess/outdoor play period every day. We will go outside unless the weather drops below 15 degrees or in the case of rain and snow. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

### **Labelling-**

Please mark your child's name on all items that the child brings to school.

### **Lost & Found**

Please label your child's possessions such as coats, caps, sweaters, book bags, and lunch boxes. The school maintains a lost and found area in the cafeteria. Items not claimed at the end of each 9 weeks will be donated to local charitable organizations.

### **Library Visits**

Our classes will visit our school library once a week to have a story read to by our media specialist, and then to check a book out. These books will be sent home in your child's book-bag and are to be sent back to school after a day or so of enjoying it with your child.

### **Release of children**

We assume responsibility for your child only while he/she is in our care. No child will be allowed to leave with anyone except the parent who enrolls the child and anyone who is an emergency contact on the emergency (blue card). If parents choose to elect another person to pick up their child, a letter must be submitted to document the inclusion of additional persons prior to release. Anyone unfamiliar to us will be required to show proof of identification. Please make the alternate pick up person is aware of the requirements.

**\* If there is a court order keeping one parent or guardian away from a child, we must have a court paper to this effect in our files**

### **HOW DOES THE VISITOR POLICY MAINTAIN PERSONAL SAFETY?**

All visitors, including parents, must sign-in at the main entrance of the building with the security agent. Parents and visitors are NOT allowed to enter the building through the student entrance. The visitor management system requires visitors to show formal identification such as a driver's license. Personal Safety is taught in school so that children remain safe at all times. They are also taught how to respond to situations in which they do not have parental permission to participate.

### **Naptime (3K & Pre-K)**

All children have the opportunity to rest each day after lunch. Each child has his/her own mat, with individual sheets and blankets. Every Friday we will send home linens to be laundered. They must be returned the following Monday.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parents and teachers make different contributions to the child. Together, they can give each child the needed support and guidance which will help him/her move toward the ultimate goal of responsible adulthood. Your child's teacher is eager to cooperate with you in this endeavor!

**The teachers need to know as much as possible about your child if they are to plan the right kind of program to meet your child's needs. Parents are encouraged to provide the teacher with information about their child's interests and special needs.**

**Parents are more than welcome to visit the classroom in which your child is a member. You are welcome anytime...we have an OPEN-DOOR POLICY. When you plan to visit, please notify your child's teacher in advance if at all possible. By doing this you will be able to talk to her about your visit so that she may share plans for the day's activities, suggest how you can observe the children, and decide what your role in the classroom will be on that particular day. We welcome parents as resource persons and are delighted when parents are willing to share some of their interests, skills, and hobbies with the children.**

**If a parent has a concern about his/her child's experience the interpretation of school policy, the parent is encouraged to voice that concern to the child's teacher, the administrators, or the Parent Teacher Association representative. If necessary, we will hold a meeting with all concerned parties to help facilitate and problem solve in order to find an agreeable solution.**

**Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged whenever the need is apparent. Scheduled conferences will be held for all students in the fall and again in the spring. Please do not hesitate to ask for a conference at any time. During these early school years, parents and teachers should be in close contact so that our staff can better understand and work with you and your child.**

### **School Uniform Policy**

Uniforms provide a sense of belonging and unity amongst the student body. Consistency in dress eliminates comparison and competition and allows children to focus on learning and achieving their best. Adhering to the Uniform and Dress Code is expected of all students. The uniform and dress code requirements for all grades and is available on our main office.

### **Late Pick Up**

Students must be picked up promptly at the end of their school day. We understand that emergencies do occur. Please call the office if there is an emergency and notify us that you will be late. Our younger students (3K & PK) may often become upset when parents are not there to pick them up on time. Late children will be supervised in the office until they are picked up by a parent or caregiver. Staff members have other responsibilities at the end of the day so please try to be on time. Before leaving the building, the person picking the child up must sign him/her out in the sign-out book in the main office. If it becomes very late and a child is not picked up or if no one on the **blue emergency card** can be reached, the 28th Police Precinct or the Administration for Children Services (ACS) will be notified.

### **Dismissal Routine Changes**

Please note that it is very important that your child's teacher has your child's dismissal schedule in writing. If there are changes to the regular schedule you must send a note via backpack mail with your child that day. For example, if your child is leaving early on a given day, send a note to inform the teacher.

Students **will not be released to any person not named on the blue emergency card without a written note**. Please do not call or email the school to make changes in dismissal plans unless it is an emergency situation. Emergency changes in arrangements may be called in to the main office no **later than 2:00 PM** to ensure that your child's teacher receives the message in time.

### **Communication**

Consistent communication between parents, teachers and administration contributes to a student's success in school. Please take advantage of the avenues of communication below:

#### **Backpack Mail**

Backpack Mail is the most direct system of communication between parents and teachers. Important information will be sent home via backpack most days by your child's teacher and sometimes by the school administration. There should be a designated folder that your child uses to bring home mail. After every school day parents should get into the routine of checking that folder for any notes from the teacher or school information. Parents should also use this folder to send notes to the teacher with dismissal routines, meeting requests or other questions or concerns.

#### **Monthly Calendar**

The parent Coordinator sends home a monthly calendar listing school events to keep parents informed of school activities.

### **Teacher Communication**

For questions and concerns about your child, please speak with your child's teacher first before contacting others in the building. The classroom teacher spends the most time with your child and should always be your first contact. During classroom hours, teachers are not available to speak with parents. All discussions with teachers, in person or by phone, must be scheduled for the teacher's preparation period. The best way to do this is to send the teacher a note in your child's backpack or leave a message with the school secretary in the main office (212-864-2400



ext.1261, 1263). Please do not use dismissal time for conferences with your child's teacher. Teachers are responsible for the students in their class and cannot discuss your child with you at this time. Some teachers communicate by e-mail and some do not. Please keep in mind that even if your teacher encourages e-mail communication, most messages will not be checked during the school day, so you will not receive a response until after the end of the school day (evening).

#### **Parent Engagement Tuesdays** (Teacher Talk Tuesdays)

Teachers are available on Tuesday afternoons after dismissal to engage with parents in individual meetings, class meetings or workshops. If you would like to meet with your child's teacher during that time, please send a note to him/her by backpack mail. Workshop and class meeting information will be communicated by the teacher.

#### **Back to School Night**

Back to School Night is held in September every year. At Back to School Night your teacher will meet as a group with all of the parents in the class to introduce classroom procedures, curriculum goals and what to look forward to in the coming year.

#### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Official DOE Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice during the school year, in November and in March. Teachers will either post a sign-up sheet or contact parents about setting up conference appointments. All parents should attend these conferences, even though they are only ten minutes long. Parents may schedule additional meetings with teachers if more time is necessary.

#### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued three times per year in grades K-5. Report cards are given out during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall (grades K-5) and spring and on the last day of school in June. Report cards must be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher in November and March. It is highly recommended that parents make a copy of their child's report card before returning it to the teacher. At the end of the school year parents are given the report card to keep. While the grades are kept on record, the Department of Education does not keep copies of report cards, which include teacher comments. Once the report card is issued in June, safekeeping is the parents' responsibility.

#### **Physical Exam Forms**

Children entering 3K, PK, Kindergarten or new to the school must submit a physical exam form that has been filled out by the child's pediatrician. These are due during the first two weeks of school.

#### **Media Consent Form**

Media Consent Forms must be filled out for every student. If you do not consent, you may simply write "no consent" on the form. All families are asked to fill out the form at registration or complete it when it is sent home at the beginning of the school year.