



Yorkville Community School
P.S. 151

A Neighborhood School

Family Handbook

2011 - 2012

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Section 1: Welcome to YCS!

Yorkville Community School: Our Vision

Our neighborhood school is a collaborative community of active thinkers who are preparing leaders of the 21st century. Our commitment to a child-centered, engaging education ensures that every student is encouraged to achieve high academic standards, meet and exceed their own personal goals and realize social success. We achieve this goal by providing our diverse student body with the strategies to take responsibility for their learning by continuously engaging them in rigorous and creative learning experiences. Our students sustain a sense of curiosity that is met by incorporating the community into our school to provide authentic learning experiences. We share a belief that each member of the community brings a unique set of talents and skills. This belief is celebrated by providing all children the opportunity to excel by applying best practices in teaching, skillful planning, and providing a supportive and challenging inquiry based curriculum. Our students will emerge from our school active learners and positive members of the community.

About Our School

Yorkville Community School is a new neighborhood elementary school on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Our school is located in a neighborhood that is rich with cultural institutions, parks, historic landmarks, family run businesses and community based organizations. The school has developed relationships with these organizations and community businesses in order to meet the needs of our students. Each unit of study is enhanced by the meaningful connections that these amazing neighborhood places provide our students to make, within and outside the classroom.

YCS- A Neighborhood School

Daily Life at YCS

Arrival Procedures

The school day begins at **8:40am**.

The Main Entrance opens at **8:35am**, (rain, snow or shine) and closes at 8:45am. All arrivals after 8:45am must use the East Lobby Entrance. Late Arrivals must sign in with security.

Kindergarten: Students enter up the **Main Entrance ramp**, turn left into the **West Lobby** and go upstairs to their class. Parents may escort their child to class. Please be sure to say "Good Bye" at the classroom door. Instructional time begins promptly by **8:45am**.

First and Second Grade: Students enter using the **Main Entrance(Center) stairs**, turn right into the **East Lobby** and go upstairs to their class. Instructional time begins promptly by **8:45am**.

Your child is allowed to enter the school on their own. A staff member will always be there to greet them.

Dismissal

The school day ends at **3:00pm**. West and East Lobby doors will open at 2:55pm.

Kindergarten: Students will be dismissed from their designated table in the Café. Caregivers should enter and exit through the West Lobby doors.

First and Second Grade: Students will be dismissed from the East Yard. Caregivers should enter and exit through the East Lobby doors.

- Children must say "Good Bye" to their teacher before being dismissed.
- Students in after-school programs will be picked up in the Main Hall.
- Any changes to your child's regular after school schedule must be submitted **in writing** to your child's classroom teacher (i.e. play-dates, no after-school program, an adult picking up your child who is not on your Blue Card). **Verbal permission, over the phone or in person, will not be accepted.**
- No students will be released between 2:45-3:00pm.
- **Prompt pick-ups are essential!** Late pick-ups can be extremely stressful for children. Please make every effort to arrive on time. Students who are not

picked up after dismissal will be brought to the late table in the Café or to the main office where you will be called. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the individuals you have authorized on your child's Blue Card to pick up your child.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 8:00am-8:20am. Students may not enter the building for breakfast after 8:25am **to ensure ample time for them to eat.** Children eating breakfast will use the main entrance, by Security, to enter the building. Children will not be permitted to enter the school between 8:25am and 8:40am **so that we may prepare for arrival.**

Attendance/Lateness

Students who are not in their classroom by 8:50am, will be marked late/absent. If your child is absent for three or more consecutive days, please be sure to send a note explaining the reason for the absence when your child returns to school.

Sending a note does not erase the absence, it just provides information so that the absence can be properly coded. **Do NOT call the school.**

We will follow-up with families regarding excessive absences and lateness.

Unexcused absences, such as extended holidays, are highly discouraged. Research has found that regular attendance is critical to school success and even a minimal number of absences during the school year can have a serious impact on a student's ability to achieve.

Half-Day Dismissal

The school day ends at 11:30am. The main doors open at 11:30am (rain, snow or shine).

All students will be provided the opportunity to eat lunch on half days. Students may bring lunch from home or eat school lunch. Please coordinate with your child's afterschool to ensure that it is in session on these days.

Scooters

Scooters are not allowed in the school building.

Lunch/Recess

Students will eat lunch in our school Cafe. Lunch/Recess periods are 50 minutes. Every class will be given time to eat and time for recess. At lunch, children are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Lunch will be supervised by staff members. Students can bring a bag lunch from home or can receive school lunch.

Please send you child to school with nutritious foods that will help them establish healthy eating habits and keep them energized throughout the day. Please remember to pack items that your child can open, i.e. Tupperware. **No soda or glass bottles are allowed in school.** In an instance where a child is highly allergic to certain foods, a doctor's note must be submitted regarding the allergy.

Lunch Forms

In the beginning of the school year, every child will receive a federal government form from which eligibility for free or reduced cost lunch is determined. Even if you are ineligible for free or reduced cost lunch, **you must return the form.** We are provided with a limited number of lunches based on the number of students signed up for school lunch and will have very few, if any, "extra" lunches available.

Kindergarten Snack

We understand that kindergarten children may be hungry in the afternoon; therefore snack time will be established in each kindergarten classroom. This is a brief period of time in which students will be provided with a healthy snack to "re-energize" them for continued classroom instruction. Families will sign up with their classroom teacher to provide snacks for the class each week. Snacks should be healthy (no candy, gum, or drinks will be permitted). All classrooms are "**nut free**". In an instance where a child is highly allergic to certain foods, a doctor's note must be submitted regarding the allergy. These children can bring a snack that is safe for them to eat. Some suggested snack items:

- pretzels, dried fruit or raisins
- cheese sticks
- Fruits and vegetables
- Pretzels, crackers, graham crackers

Birthdays

We recognize that birthdays are an exciting day for children. While we will allow for children to celebrate their birthday, celebrations will be small. Families must notify their child's teacher, in writing, a week before their child's birthday, if they would like to celebrate the day. They must advise the teacher of what snack they will be providing and on what day they would like to celebrate. All birthday celebrations will be held during the last period of the school day. A small snack may be brought in by the child's family; **no drinks or "goody bags" will be permitted, (they will be returned to families if they are sent).** Please, **no snacks containing nuts.** Classroom teachers have the final determination in scheduling celebrations so they do not conflict with other classroom learning, events, schedules and routines.

Holiday Celebrations

The Yorkville Community School has families from many different cultures and traditions. **It would be impossible for classrooms to honor each and every holiday our YCS families celebrate.** While we invite families to share their traditions, we do not want any child to be excluded from a classroom experience because it is centered on a specific holiday celebration. We do not decorate the school or classrooms for holidays, nor do we hold holiday celebrations. We hold several celebrations to honor the work the children have done to date.

Cell phones and Electronic Devices (PSP's, Gameboys, etc)

The DOE prohibits the use of cell phones in school. If your child must have a cell phone, it should be turned off and stored in their book bag. If you have an emergency, please contact the Main Office. Electronic devices/games are not permitted in the school. Cell phones and electronic devices will be confiscated if taken out and/or used during school hours.

Toys

Toys can be a distraction and interrupt learning; therefore, they should not be sent to school.

Dress Code

Children should come to school dressed ready to participate in various learning activities. Dress should be comfortable and should fit in order to maximize comfort, health and safety of the individual. Dress should be non-disruptive to the educational activities and processes of a school. Appropriate footwear is required. Shoes must fit and stay on a child's foot. Shoes without backs, such as flip-flops, are discouraged. No hats or caps may be worn in school.

Field Trips

Curriculum is enriched throughout the year with field trips. Our students will be provided with several opportunities to participate in community walks, trips to neighborhood parks, art institutions and the physical education complex. The DOE requires consent slips be signed by parents/guardians for trips. Children cannot leave the building without parental consent. For neighborhood walking trips, our "Neighborhood Walking Trip Consent" form will cover permission for the school year. Additional consent forms will be sent home for trips that require transportation or extend beyond our immediate school vicinity. The DOE requires one adult chaperone for every 10 children, so parents are encouraged and needed to join their child's class on trips. There will be a place on the permission slip for parents to indicate their interest in attending. We appreciate your assistance on trips and remind chaperones that they are there to chaperone the class and assist *all* students. Siblings of students may not attend the trip.

Section 3: Health and Safety

Student Health

Allergies

An Action Plan will be developed for any student who suffers from severe allergies. All staff members will receive a copy of the Action Plan and will be trained on how to respond to an allergic reaction.

Blue Cards

The Blue Card provides our school with emergency contact information. Please be certain that cards are filled out completely and returned to school as soon as possible. In the event the school needs to contact you regarding your child, it is important to list **all** the telephone numbers where your designated caregiver(s) can be reached during the school day. Please provide at least two emergency numbers. **Children are not released to anyone whose name is not on the Blue Card - no exceptions.** If information changes at any time during the school year, it is important that you come into the Main Office and update the Blue Card.

Contagious Diseases and Lice

Any incidence of contagious disease or lice in any classroom must be reported immediately to the main office. The child's family will be called immediately so that the child can be taken to the doctor and treated. The child will not be able to return to school without a letter from his/her doctor indicating that s/he is no longer contagious to others. Children with nits are not required to be sent home.

Illness

While regular attendance is promoted, please keep your child home from school if they have a fever higher than 99 degrees or a contagious cold.

Injuries

A child who has an accident that results in an injury during school hours will be seen by the **School Nurse**. In the case of minor injuries or illness where the child returns to

class, she or he will be given a note to take home to parents/guardians.

Medication

Students with chronic health problems who need to take medication on a regular basis must have a **504 Request Form completed by their doctor**. This form needs to be on file in the main office in order that the child can receive the medication in school. No staff member can administer medication - prescription or over the counter -to a student who does not have a completed 504 Form. A letter from a parent/guardian must also be provided to the school to grant permission for administration to treat the child.

Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuations

Fire drill instructions are posted near doors throughout the school and children are instructed in routines throughout the year to prepare for unannounced drills.

Emergency Closing and Delayed Openings

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE makes decisions about school closures and delayed openings by 6am on a given day. Families can find updated information by checking the DOE website (www.schools.nyc.gov), calling 311, or by listening to local news radio, local TV stations or cable channel NY1.

School Safety and Visitors

Our School Safety Agent is here to ensure that our learning community is safe. **All visitors** to our building are required to sign in, show identification and receive a visitor's pass including **YCS parents and guardians (unless there is a planned event for parents; for example Family Friday)**. When exiting the building, please use the doors by Security.

Section 4: Teaching and Learning

Curriculum

At YCS, we strive to provide our students with a curriculum that encourages exploration, observation, and questioning. Our goal is to create a learning environment where children feel safe sharing their ideas and develop a strong sense of who they are. Our curriculum integrates English Language Arts, math, scientific inquiry skills, social studies and the arts through Units of Study. Our goal is to provide students with multiple opportunities and experiences to deepen their understanding of the information they are presented with. Students are taught using an active curriculum that requires children to “think out of the box”, develop good social skills, and be able to articulate their feelings, observations, questions, and ideas. Our curriculum is developed using the Common Core State Standards, student interests, community resources, teacher observations, assessments and record keeping. These assessments enable us to develop an understanding of an individual student's learning and needs.

Qualities of a Learning Child

- Ability to play
- Identifies with learning/ connects something new with own experiences
- Works over time on something/caring about an on-going project
- Exhibits confidence as a learner
- Works attentively
- Perseveres
- Has a sense of self as powerful
- Can learn from others and with others
- Connects with others
- Exhibits self-control
- Ability to explore
- Asks questions
- Sorts, categorizes, sees patterns, sequential relationships, and parts of a whole

Celebrations of Learning

Celebrations of learning should take place as often as possible. Children are active participants in these celebrations. They are the planners and organizers; they share their work, listen and respond to the works of others. Family members are invited to be active participants of these celebrations.

Homework

Every child is expected to read at home each school night. "Books in a Bag" and reading logs are meant to facilitate this process and will be sent home with students as the school year progresses. Students are responsible for the upkeep of the book and for returning the books back to school. Students do not receive regular weekly homework (beyond reading and being read to). The purpose of homework is to extend and reinforce daily learning. Assignments should be purposeful and related to class activities, as well as to individual children's interests, needs and abilities. Parents can offer assistance in the following ways:

- Read with their child every night
- Listen to their child and answer questions
- Ask their child about what they did in school that day

Daily Homework

Kindergarten: Reading 20 minutes, (To, with, and/or by an adult)

First Grade: Reading 25 minutes, (To, with, and/or by an adult), 20 minutes of other work (may include math, unit research, and/or word study)

Second Grade: Reading 30 minutes, 30 minutes of other work (may include math, unit research, and/or word study)

Enrichment Programs

We have developed partnerships with several Community Based Organizations that will enrich our academic curriculum. Each enrichment program that we have partnered with will provide a trained lead teacher to provide instruction to our students. Classroom teachers work with partnership teachers to aide with instruction and management.

Building a Community of Learners: Climate Culture and Discipline

At YCS we value both academic achievement and character development. A child's talents, interests, and individuality are highlighted and encouraged. We value our students for their potential, as well as their achievement. Our goal is to continuously support their intellectual, social emotional and moral growth. The primary responsibility for providing and strengthening values resides with parents.

YCS Core Values

Honesty: Members of the YCS community are truthful and act with integrity and honor.

Responsibility: Members of the YCS community are reliable and hold themselves and others accountable for their actions.

Respect: Members of the YCS community acknowledge the intrinsic value of all people. We act with tolerance, courtesy, and thoughtful regard for all persons, for property, for the environment, and for ourselves.

Kindness: Members of the YCS community exhibit caring and compassionate behavior in all aspects of daily life. By our positive example, we encourage kind behavior in others.

Our most important responsibility is teaching children to respect themselves and others in their neighborhood, school, and classroom communities. Our goal is to build classroom communities where children treat others with fairness and respect. YCS will not tolerate behaviors which routinely disrupt the learning environment or cause a safety threat to others. It is important that families and students understand that some behaviors are reflective of early child development. We ask that families respect our judgment and trust that we are addressing situations as they arise. If you have questions or concerns regarding a specific situation, please contact a member of our community and we will address your concerns as appropriate.

Rights and Responsibilities

Yorkville Community School is committed to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment that facilitates effective teaching and meaningful learning and fosters a sense of responsibility, good citizenship, and accountability. It is, therefore, necessary that students understand that there are standards of behavior with which all students are expected to comply and there are consequences if these standards are violated. Students should be aware that rules, which govern their behavior, come in a variety of formats, all of which correspond with each other. Families will be receiving a copy of the *Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures* which outlines the discipline policies as set forth by the Department of Education for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. This document includes the DOE's citywide Discipline Code as well as a Student Bill of Rights. In addition to the DOE's Standards, every class will establish clear expectations to follow within their class and the school building. The rules and expectations will be posted in each classroom, along with a copy sent home to families to be reviewed together. The Code of Conduct is based on three core principles: *Being Safe, Being Responsible, Being Respectful*.

The following guiding principles support and maintain our effective learning community:

- At the heart of any effective discipline policy is prevention. Therefore students, parents, teachers and administrators need to work together to prevent problems as much as possible.
- A key goal should be the development of self-discipline. Opportunities for teaching and learning new skills and attitudes will be integrated into the curriculum and actively pursued when problems arise.
- Clear limits and consequences are important so that everyone understands what is needed for working together. The application of these limits and consequences must be informed by the needs of the students involved and the larger school community. Students need to understand what the core principles mean and be presented opportunities to be successful.
- Every human being has an inherent value.
Both classroom and school consequences should be appropriate to a student's behavior. The New York City Chancellor's Discipline Code will be used to determine interventions and consequences. Guidance interventions will be provided to aid in developing student

understanding of their action and its effect on the learning community.

Non-Negotiable

- Students have a right to work and learn.
Students should do their best to learn and participate in class and school activities and allow others to do the same. They should be prepared and arrive on time to school to ensure maximum participation in learning experiences.
- Students have a right to feel safe.
Students are expected to walk in the school building and keep their voices low when in shared spaces. Recess and lunchroom rules must be upheld.
Fighting, bullying, and unwanted physical contact will not be accepted. The New York City Chancellor's Discipline Code will be adhered to when determining consequences of these behaviors.
- Students should be treated respectfully and treat others with respect.
Students need to keep their community clean. They are expected to clean up after themselves in the classrooms and in shared spaces.

Section 5: Home/School Connection

Consistent communication between school and home contributes to student's success in school. During the first days of school, teachers will send a letter of introduction home that will include routines, plans, etc. *Adventures*, our monthly school newsletter, will be sent home to share information about the curriculum, upcoming events (field trips, celebrations of learning). **Any parent questions/notifications should be written in a letter to their teacher.** If a conference is requested, parents are asked to please provide teachers with a note regarding the topic and three available days they can meet with them.

WHO and HOW?

Question/Concern	Contact	How?
Scholastic Progress	Teacher	Note/ phone message
Well Being/ Emotional Development	Guidance Counselor	Note/ Phone message
Related Services	Related Service Provider Guidance Counselor	Note/ Phone message
School issues other than curriculum	Parent Coordinator School Secretary PTA Class Parents Principal	Call, email, note
PTA Issue	PTA	Call, email, note in PTA mailbox
DOE Policies and Procedures	Principal Assistant Principal	Email, note, phone message
Concerns about school	Principal Assistant Principal	Email, note, phone message
Absences and lateness	www.Arisparentlink.org	you'll need your child's student ID and Aris password.
After school programs	Wingspan Rhineland Stanley Isaacs 92 nd St Y Chess	212.586.2330 212-876-0500 212-360-7625 x 214 212-415-5624 212-475-8130

Newsletter

Our school-wide newsletter *Adventures* is distributed to families at the beginning of each month. Every newsletter consists of a message from the Principal, Grade news regarding upcoming teaching and learning, Guidance news, and Art news and updates.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in November and March. At these individual conferences, parents discuss their child's academic and social progress with the teacher. In addition, parents are invited to observe their child's class and school during Open School Week in November. If there are special circumstances or situations that require discussion, please do not wait until the scheduled conferences; please send a note requesting an appointment with your child's teacher.

Report Cards

Students will receive progress reports in November, March and June. The information provided in our Report Cards supports our belief that collaboration and dialogue between school and families is critical in supporting the academic, social, emotional and physical development of our students.

Translations

Many different languages are represented at our school. It is not possible to translate newsletters and other publications into all of these languages. Therefore, our staff will make an effort to reach out individually to families who might need assistance in understanding school communication.

PTA

The Parent Association/Parent Teacher Association will work to support teachers and families at our school. Additionally, the PA/PTA serves as a liaison between parents and the school administration. They provide tools and information to help parents become active participants in their child's education and the school community.

School Leadership Team

The New York State legislature mandates that all NYC Public Schools have a School Leadership Team in place by October of each school year. The SLT is made up of 50% parents and 50% staff. The Principal, PTA president and UFT Rep (or designees) are automatically on the team; other members are elected by their constituencies at a meeting held for that purpose. The SLT is a place where parents, administrators and staff members have an opportunity to communicate regularly and share ideas. Many of the responsibilities of the SLT revolve around creating the Comprehensive Educational Plan for the school and making decisions that will allow for this plan to be implemented.