

# Family Handbook

## 2023- 2024



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## Section 1: Welcome to YCS, A Neighborhood School

### About Our School

Yorkville Community School is a neighborhood elementary school that opened on Manhattan's Upper East Side in September 2009. Our school is located in a neighborhood that is rich with cultural institutions, parks, historic landmarks, family run businesses and community based organizations. We pride ourselves in the relationships that we have been developing with these organizations and community businesses in order to provide an enriching curriculum for our students. Each unit of study is enhanced by the meaningful connections that these amazing neighborhood places provide our students, within and outside the classroom.

### Yorkville Community School: Our Mission

Our neighborhood school is a diverse community of collaborative thinkers in which each member of the community brings a unique set of talents and skills. Our commitment to a child-centered, engaging education encourages all students to achieve high academic standards, meet and exceed their own personal goals, and realize social success. We achieve this goal by providing our student body with the strategies to take responsibility for their learning by continuously engaging them in rigorous and creative learning experiences. All grades engage in multiple thematic studies, presented using an integrated, cross-curricular approach that emphasizes research. Students sustain a sense of curiosity that is met by incorporating the community into units to provide authentic learning experiences. Our students will emerge from our school as active learners and positive members of the community.

### 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.

## YCS Daily Schedule

Period	Times
1	8:20-9:05
2	9:05-9:50
3	9:50--10:35
4	10:35-11:25
5	11:25-12:15
6	12:15-1:05
7	1:05-1:50
8	1:50-2:35

### Lunch Schedule

PreK- 10:35-11:25

KINDERGARTEN/FIRST LUNCH- 10:35-11:25

SECOND/THIRD GRADE LUNCH-11:25-12:15

FOURTH/FIFTH GRADE LUNCH-12:15-1:05

Lunch/ Recess Flip-10:35-11:00/ 11:00-11:25

Lunch/ Recess Flip-11:25-11:50/11:50-12:15

Lunch/ Recess Flip-12:15-12:40/12:40-1:05

## Section 2: Daily Life at YCS

### Arrival Procedures - Doors open at 8:20am

TIME	GRADE	ENTRANCE
8:20am	PreK Kindergarten First	West Entrance
8:20am	Second Third Fourth Fifth	Main Entrance

- PreK-Teachers line up students in Cafe
- Kindergarten teachers meet their students in the Cafeteria for the first 2 weeks of school
- **Breakfast:** All breakfast is "Grab and Go".

### Dismissal Procedures

Doors open @2:35pm for PreK Dismissal

Doors open @2:40pm for K-5th Grade Dismissal

TIME	GRADE	ENTRANCE
2:35pm	PreK	West Entrance Lobby
2:40pm	Kindergarten	West Entrance West Yard
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	West Entrance West Yard
2:40pm	2nd Grade	Main Entrance East Yard
	3rd Grade	Main Entrance East Yard
	4th Grade	Main Entrance East Yard
	5th Grade	Main Entrance Front of School

- **PreK Students will be dismissed out of the building/ West Lobby, to caregivers**
- Please adhere to dismissal times. K-5 Caregivers may not enter until designated dismissal time.
- Dismissal is not a time for parent-teacher conversations. We need to do our best to keep people moving to support a safe dismissal.

## Inclement Weather Dismissal Procedures

TIME	GRADE	ENTRANCE	Line-Up Spot
2:35pm	PreK	West Entrance Lobby	West Lobby-Students dismissed out to caregivers
2:40pm	Kindergarten	West Entrance	Cafe
	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	West Entrance	Cafe
2:40pm	2nd Grade	Main Entrance	Cafe
	3rd Grade	Main Entrance	Cafe
	4th Grade	Main Entrance	Main Lobby
	5th Grade	Main Entrance Front of School	Main Lobby-Students dismissed out to caregivers

### Early Dismissals

If a parent/guardian needs to sign out a child before the end of the day, **it must be by 2:00 pm.** Students are only released to adults who are listed on the child's Blue Emergency Card. Parent/Guardian must show a picture ID and must sign-out their child. Please try to make a child's doctor and dental appointments after school hours. Children miss important instruction when they are out of school.

**The Main Office closes at 3:00 pm.** YCS/PS151 does not have the staff to supervise children after school is dismissed. If we receive no word from a parent and/or **a child is left for an extended period of time, the school's policy is to send the child to the local 19th police precinct**, so that the child stays safe and secure until a parent arrives. The precinct is located at 153 East 67th Street, New York, NY, 10065, (212) 452-0600. Parents who are chronically late will be instructed to enroll their children in an afterschool program.

## **Daily Attendance**

Teachers take daily attendance promptly by 8:30 am. Students entering the main lobby after 8:30am are considered late. Lateness will be recorded in the students' official records and shown on their progress report.

## **Attendance/Lateness**

If your child is absent for three or more consecutive days, please email the [mainoffice@yorkvillecommunityschool.org](mailto:mainoffice@yorkvillecommunityschool.org) and 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. When appropriate, include a doctor's note indicating the reason for an extended absence. Attendance lower than 90% is considered poor attendance, (students absent 10% or more of the school year are considered chronically absent).

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

## **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 receive school lunch. ***There are several things that you can do to support our school in providing a healthy and productive lunchtime environment:***

- Remind your child to eat first and socialize later. We encourage children to “chew before they chat”, but please reinforce this at home. The lunch period is 25 minutes - plenty of time to finish eating.

### **If you are sending your child to school with lunch:**

- Please provide your child with healthy choices, for example a high protein sandwich (“brain food”) such as turkey, a fruit or vegetable (baby carrot sticks), cheese sticks, yogurt, etc
- Try to avoid sugary drinks and desserts with “empty” calories which spike a child's sugar levels but then leaves them feeling “cranky”. Milk is only available to children that are receiving school lunch. There is a water fountain in the cafeteria. **No soda or glass bottles are allowed in school. Candy is highly discouraged.**
- Try to find foods that are packaged in “child friendly” containers – many children struggle with juice and milk boxes. Pop-open thermoses seem to work best.

## **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 and will not include food.** Several students in our school have allergies that range from mild, to life threatening and we appreciate your cooperation to help them stay safe. Families must notify their child's teacher, in writing, a week before their child's birthday, if they would like to celebrate the day. Celebrations are at the discretion of the teacher, but may include: handmade cards, storytelling, the sharing of a book, art projects, etc.

- Advise the teacher on what day you would like to celebrate.
- **No food will be allowed.**

- Classroom teachers have the final determination in scheduling celebrations so they do not conflict with student allergy concerns, other classroom learning, events, schedules and routines.

### **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 do however, hold several celebrations to honor the work the children have done.

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Policy**

- Cell phones must be turned off and put in backpacks/out of sight, before entering the school.
- Smart watches/Apple watches must be turned off. The device should only be used as a watch during school hours.
- Cell phones, Apple watches, bluetooth, earpods may never be used during the school day.
- In the case of an emergency, parents can call the school office phone, 212-722-5240, and we will convey the message.
- Parents should not call a child's cell phone during the day.
  - If a phone rings or a child uses a phone during the school day the phone or device will be confiscated by the staff member and given to an administrator.
    - First Offense: The phone will be confiscated, the parent/guardian will be called and the device will be returned, by an administrator, to the parent/guardian, or to a mutually agreed party, at the end of the school day (2:40PM)
    - On the second offense, the phone will be confiscated, the parent/guardian will be called by the school and the phone will be returned, by an administrator, to the parent/guardian at the end of the school day.
    - On the third offense, the phone will be confiscated, the parent/guardian will be called by the school and the phone will be returned, by an administrator, to the parent/guardian at the end of the conclusion of a conference between parent/guardian and administrator.
- YCS will not be held responsible for any devices that are brought to school that are lost or damaged.
- In an effort to limit distractions and encourage positive social interactions, we request that parents/guardians limit their use of cell phones while in the school building.

#### **Per Chancellor's Regulation A413:**

##### **IV. STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Students who use cell phones, computing devices and/or portable music and entertainment systems in violation of the DOE's Discipline Code, the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413, and/or the DOE's Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy ("IAUSP") will be subject to discipline in accordance with the guidance interventions and disciplinary responses set forth in the Discipline Code.

**V. CONFISCATION OF CELL PHONES, COMPUTING DEVICES, AND HAND-HELD MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS** If a school confiscates a cell phone, computing device, or portable music or entertainment system for violation of the DOE's Discipline Code, the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413 and/or the DOE's IAUSP, the principal/designee must contact the student's parent. Confiscation and return of such items must be handled in accordance with the school's policy.



## **Dress Code**

In accordance with New York City Department of Education (DOE) policy, students have the right to determine their own attire, except where the dress is dangerous, interferes with the teaching and learning process, or violates the DOE's anti-discrimination policy.

- Students may not wear revealing clothing that does not provide full coverage of private body parts.
- In order to maintain a positive, safe, and inclusive learning environment, DOE policy prohibits students from wearing clothing in school, on school buses, or during any DOE- or school-sponsored programs or activities that take place on or off school property, which contains language (including slurs), images, or references:
  - which discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, religious practices, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight;
  - to profanity, obscenity, nudity, or sexual acts;
  - to threats of violence, injury or harm, or gang affiliation

## **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.
- The DOE requires one adult chaperone for every 10 children, so parents are invited 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 trips.**

**If we do not have the signed forms, your child will remain at school until his/her class returns - No Exceptions. This Department of Education policy is in place for the safety and well-being of your child. Permission by email or phone calls will NOT be accepted.**

## **Photography and Videotaping**

To respect the privacy of all members of YCS, we ask that if you photograph or videotape an event, that you do so for personal use. You may not share, (through Social Media sites) photographs and videos of anyone other than your child, without the written consent of that person/family. Any misuse of photographs or video, will be reported to the DOE.

## **Toys**

Toys can be a distraction and interrupt learning; therefore, they should not be sent to school. **YCS will not be held responsible for any toys that are brought to school and lost and/or confiscated.**

## **Scooters**

Scooters are not allowed in the school building.

## **Strollers**

Strollers are not allowed in the building.

## **Student Accountability**

Students may not leave their classroom or any designated area they are in without permission from their teacher or a YCS staff member..

## Section 3: Health and Safety

### 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. All classrooms must be "Nut Aware".

### Contagious Diseases other than COVID-19

Any incidence of contagious disease must be reported immediately to the main office. 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.

### Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School

#### Student Shows Symptoms of COVID-19 While at School

- Student experiences one or more COVID-like symptoms, including:
  - o Fever of 100.0 degrees F or higher or chills,
  - o New cough,
  - o New loss of taste or smell, and/or
  - o New shortness of breath.

### Criteria for Returning to School After Showing Symptoms (As of February 2023)

Any individual (student or staff member) showing signs of COVID-19 can only return to school when all the following conditions are met:

- Received a negative COVID-19 test AND
- Isolated for 5 days, and wearing a mask for 10 days AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.

OR

- Received a negative COVID-19 test AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.

OR

- Never got a COVID-19 test AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started AND
- The individual has been fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and overall symptoms are improving.

### Parents/guardians must advise the school if their child is out sick because they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 .

### 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 for the child to receive the medication in school. **No staff member can administer any 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 providing permission for administration to treat the child

### **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.

Visitor's must have a scheduled meeting or an invitation to a class/community event.

- Requests for meetings with YCS staff should be made via contact with the main office and/or your child's classroom teacher.
- Parents/ guardians are directed to call the main office to provide notice that they need to pick up their child early. Children will be brought down to the main lobby upon parent/guardian arrival for pick-up.
- Bathrooms in the school building are for student use only.

### **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](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)), calling 311, or by listening to local news radio, local TV stations or cable channel NY1.

## **Section 4: Teaching and Learning**

### **Instructional Philosophy**

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. All grades engage in multiple units of study throughout the year. **Our units of study/thematic units are presented using an integrated, cross-curricular approach that emphasizes the reading of nonfiction text and the stages of researching to explore, learn and teach.** Units are designed to provide engaging, rigorous and creative learning experiences. Our students sustain a sense of curiosity that is met by incorporating the community into our units to provide authentic learning experiences.

### **Features in a Unit of Study/Thematic Unit**

- Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts
- Teachers use a variety of question types, including those that promote higher order thinking skills
- Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts
- Provides hands-on materials and/or manipulatives for students to practice using new content knowledge
- Pacing of the lesson appropriate to the students' ability level

### 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

These qualities are encouraged through 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. In order to be successful in the endeavor we must explore who our children are and then use those observations to build and expand on who they are. Our expectations should be clear and age appropriate, our curriculum exciting and focused around inquiry.

## **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. Monthly School Newsletters will be sent home, to share with families, information about the curriculum, and 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.

To notify families of upcoming events or reminders, our Parent Coordinator can be of assistance.

There are **multiple** ways that we offer our families important information from our school.

- During the first days of school, teachers 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).
- **Family Fridays**
- **Emails from [yicsmainoffice@gmail.com](mailto:yicsmainoffice@gmail.com)** – school wide announcements (outgoing emails only)
- **REMIND APP**– – important information re: school closings, etc. **Families can join with code @yics151**
- **School Website- [www.yorkvillecommunityschool.org](http://www.yorkvillecommunityschool.org)**
- **Class Parents - Two volunteers per class; responsible for communication between teacher and class families.**

### **Contact with Families: Responsibilities**

The school will contact families of students who show a pattern of absence, or lateness, are not prepared for school, are struggling academically, and/or disrupt learning on a consistent basis. If behaviors persist, a meeting will be scheduled with the guidance counselor and/or administration.

### **Newsletter**

Our school-wide newsletter *Adventures* is distributed to families at the beginning of each month.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

To support our students academically in and out of school, administrators, teachers, and families need to have a shared understanding of their children's learning and work as partners to meet their academic and social-emotional needs. **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. If there are special circumstances or situations that require discussion, please do not wait until the scheduled conferences; make an appointment with your child's teacher.

### **Report Cards**

Students will receive a report card in December, March and June. The information provided in our Report Cards support our belief that collaboration and dialogue between school and families is critical in supporting the academic, social, emotional and physical development of our students. The DOE's Grading Policy is forthcoming.

### **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 additional assistance in understanding school communication.

### **PTA**

All parents are automatically members of the PTA and are welcome to all monthly General Membership meetings. The Parent Association/Parent Teacher Association will work to support teachers and families at our school. Additionally, the 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.

### WHO and HOW?

Question/Concern	Contact	How?
Academic Progress	Teacher	Note, Scheduled Meeting
Well Being/Emotional Development	Teacher Guidance Counselor	Note, Scheduled Meeting Note, Scheduled Meeting
Specialty Classes	Specialty Teachers	Note, Scheduled Meeting
Related Services	Related Service Provider Guidance Counselor School Psychologist Social Worker	Note, Scheduled Meeting
General school questions/ guidance with DOE/YCS policies and procedures	Parent Coordinator	Note, Scheduled Meeting
School issues other than curriculum	Parent Coordinator	Note, Scheduled Meeting
Absences, lateness, Pupil Personnel	School Secretary School Aides	Note, Call
Health Related	School Secretaries School Nurse	Note, Call
PTA Matters	PTA	Note PTA@yorkvillecommunityschool.org