



# Battery Park City School Family Handbook

# Contents

---

<b>Our Mission</b> .....	4
<b>Registration</b> .....	9
<b>Communication with Families</b> .....	10
<b>Safety</b> .....	15
<b>Building Community</b> .....	21
<b>The Curriculum</b> .....	24
<b>Academic Policies</b> .....	32
<b>Middle School and High School Admissions Processes</b> .....	33
<b>What to Bring to School &amp; What to Leave at Home</b> .....	33
<b>Other Policies</b> .....	35
<b>Digital Citizenship</b> .....	37

The cover image is from our second annual 276 Cares Squares for Peace event in June. This annual event was initiated by students in our middle school in response to the Orlando nightclub shooting. Students work in small groups to create a sidewalk chalk image that represents peace and justice. The whole school joins together on this day to contemplate kindness, compassion and justice.

Dear Families,

Welcome to PS/IS276, The Battery Park City School. Our school is characterized as a place where children's natural curiosity is nurtured, a place that is rich in language and imagination, and in scientific and historic investigation. Our students have the opportunity to build on their fascination with the world around them and then to share that fascination and what they are learning with others. Along with academic learning, we also stress the importance of building independence and responsibility for one's actions, the environment and the community.

The Battery Park City School's core values are grounded in:

- the importance of keeping our students at the center of the decision-making process;
- the creation of a school community that has shared values of excellence, curiosity, and care for our world;
- providing learning experiences that enable all students to be challenged; and
- the importance of involving families and the wider community in the teaching of all our children.

This handbook contains basic information about school policies and procedures. The information should be helpful in answering many of your questions. All policies and regulations of the school are made with the safety and welfare of the children in mind.

If you have any questions about PS/IS 276 policies or procedures, please ask.

With warm regards and best wishes for an excellent school year!

Terri

## Our Mission

---

The mission of PS/IS 276 is to provide a public education for grades kindergarten through 8 that fosters the intellectual, social, creative, and physical growth of each student in a safe and nurturing environment. We strive to empower each student to achieve his or her greatest potential and inspire students to use that potential for the benefit of others and the world.

4

At PS/IS 276, we work to develop foundational knowledge and skills – reading, writing, mathematics, and critical thinking – to enable each student to engage in intellectual inquiry. We guide students in their exploration of the broader world through direct and meaningful experiences while reinforcing their responsibilities and connections to it. In doing so, we strive to foster students' relationships with their peers, school, communities, and the natural world as we work together to create individual and shared knowledge. We promote the imagination as a crucial skill for conceiving the possible and the impossible, as we pose questions and solve problems. We also support growing bodies and growing minds by instilling healthy life habits including nutrition, physical exercise, and sports. Finally, as we recognize that learning happens both at school and at home, we seek to build strong partnerships with students and their families.

### **Address & Phone Numbers**

55 Battery Place  
New York, NY 10280

212-266-5800  
212-266-5802

Attendance/Absence  
212-266-5800 (press 1)

### **School Office Hours**

8:00 am.-3:30 pm.

### **School Hours**

Breakfast is from: 8:00 am. to 8:20 am.  
Half day: 8:20 am to 11:30 am  
Full day: 8:20 am to 2:40 pm

### **P.S. 276 Battery Park City School Website**

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

# Teacher Contact Information

---

Teachers can be contacted by email or by leaving a message in the office.

Teacher emails are:      `firstname.lastname@bpcschool.org`.

Principal:                      Terri Ruyter                      [terri.ruyter@bpcschool.org](mailto:terri.ruyter@bpcschool.org)

LS assistant principal:      Alexis Hoffman                [alexis.hoffman@bpcschool.org](mailto:alexis.hoffman@bpcschool.org)

LS school counselor:      Rachel Goodman                [rachel.goodman@bpcschool.org](mailto:rachel.goodman@bpcschool.org)

MS assistant principal:      Nico Victorino                 [nico.victorino@bpcschool.org](mailto:nico.victorino@bpcschool.org)

MS school counselor:      Mara Boden                     [mara.boden@bpcschool.org](mailto:mara.boden@bpcschool.org)

MS Dean:                      Mary Valentine                 [mary.valentine@bpcschool.org](mailto:mary.valentine@bpcschool.org)

HS advisors:                 Mary Valentine and Mara Boden

## Office Staff

Parent Coordinator:      Susan Townes                 [susan.townes@bpcschool.org](mailto:susan.townes@bpcschool.org)

Enrollment Secretary:      Erica Weldon                 [erica.weldon@bpcschool.org](mailto:erica.weldon@bpcschool.org)

School lunch payments:      Sabrina Raza Wiese [sabrina.razawiese@bpcschool.org](mailto:sabrina.razawiese@bpcschool.org)

---

## Our School Day

Breakfast	8:00 am to 8:25 am
Period 0	8:25 am to 8:30 am
Period 1	8:30 am to 9:15 am
Period 2	9:15 am to 10:00 am
Period 3	10:00 am to 10:45 am
Period 4	10:45 am to 11:35 am
Period 5	11:35 am to 12:25 pm
Period 6	12:25 pm to 1:15 pm
Period 7	1:15 pm to 2:00 pm
Period 8	2:00 pm to 2:45 pm
Dismissal	2:45 pm

## Arrival

**All students and families of PS/IS 276 must enter through the main school entrance at the corner of Battery Place and First Place.** The North Entrance (on Second Place) is used by P94M, the school with which we share our building, for arrival and dismissal. Please do not try to enter through the North Entrance. You will be told to go to the front of the building.

Students may enter the building beginning at 8:00 A.M. for the free breakfast program in the cafeteria. There will be faculty on duty between 8:00 - 8:25 A.M. to supervise all students. No students can enter the building before 8:00 A.M. as there is no supervision at that time.

School starts at 8:25 A.M. Students should arrive at school by 8:15 A.M. to have time to get to class on time if they are not a part of the breakfast program. Important work and routines at the beginning of each day set children up for success, and being on time helps children feel comfortable and secure.

- Kindergarten families escort their kindergartners to the classroom until the beginning of October. After adjusting to school and learning how to line up in the gym, kindergartners line up in the gym and their teachers pick them up there.
- First through fifth graders line up in the gym with their class starting the first day of school. Parents do not escort their children to the gym.
- Parents should not go beyond the orange wall to decrease traffic and confusion. It is best if you say goodbye to your child outside the school doors. We have staff on duty in the lobby to help children get to the gym safely and confidently.
- Middle schoolers should swipe in with their ID cards upon arrival. Students who choose to enter the building before 8:10 A.M. will gather in the cafeteria. Otherwise, students will be swiped up in the elevator to their homeroom floor starting at 8:10 A.M.

## Absences

Every absence is considered a significant loss of instruction. Please notify the office by 8:30 A.M. if your child will be absent from school. Voice mail will record calls regarding student absences before and after school hours.

The Department of Education has an automated calling system that will notify you if your child is absent or tardy. If you feel that this call is in error, please let the office know.

When a student returns after an absence, he/she **MUST** bring a written explanation to the homeroom teacher signed by a parent or guardian. The office will record on the daily attendance sheet if the student has brought in a note. **Students are responsible for making up all work missed while absent.**

Excessive excused or unexcused absences may result in further inquiry by the school or the Department of Education. Excused absences include illness, religious commitment, family emergencies, or doctor's visits. All absences (excused or

unexcused) are recorded in the DOE electronic record-keeping system and are noted on your child's report card. You can also get an updated record of your child's attendance through ARIS, the parent information system. Attendance is especially critical in fourth grade if you anticipate applying to another middle school and seventh grade, as matriculating schools look at attendance to determine admission. **Family vacations are unexcused absences.** Please make every effort to arrange vacations during scheduled school holidays.

A student is considered truant if he/she:

- is absent from school without permission.
- leaves school without permission.
- is absent from class without permission (cutting).

Appropriate follow-up measures will be taken for a student who is truant.

### Lateness

Students arriving after 8:25 A.M. are considered late and must get a late pass before going to their classrooms. Lateness is recorded in the DOE's electronic record-keeping system and on your child's report card. If your child is late and did not check in at the office, it is possible that the lateness will be marked as an absence.

### Early Departure

The following procedures are followed to assure the safety of children who are released during the day.

- Written notification should be sent to the teacher stating the time of release.
- Only individuals identified on the student's blue emergency card will be allowed to pick the child up from school.
- The parent (or other named adult in the note) must **COME TO THE OFFICE, SIGN FOR THE CHILD AND BE PREPARED TO SHOW OFFICE STAFF IDENTIFICATION.** All children must be signed out in the office. Children will remain in the classroom with their teacher until notified by the office staff that an adult has arrived to pick them up
- **Students are not allowed to leave the building during school hours unaccompanied by an adult. Adults must come into the building to sign children out during the school day.** This is due to legal liability and we are unable to be flexible on this point.

### Dismissal

**Lower school** teachers dismiss each class outside at the designated spot in fair and inclement weather. On half days, students will be dismissed at 11:30 A.M. For safety's sake, please encourage your child to get in the habit of shaking hands with his or her teacher, saying goodbye, and pointing out who has come to pick him or her up. Please help teachers keep children safe by standing back from the building until you have your child and then moving away from the building. **If your child is going home with a friend after school or is being picked up by a friend's parent or caregiver WRITTEN PERMISSION is required in advance from both families.** Remind your children that they will not be able to call home during the school day in order to make

after school arrangements to visit a friend. Likewise, **parent phone requests for last minute changes in end of the day plans cannot be accommodated.**

**Emails to teachers throughout out the day requesting a change of plans cannot be accommodated.**

With written permission, fifth grade students can be dismissed to go home unaccompanied. Additionally, with written permission, siblings in grades 5 and up can pick up younger siblings.

8

Middle school students are dismissed at the end of the day are expected to leave school on their own or go to after school. They are not allowed to hang out at school unless they are attending after school.

### After School

Our after-school program is offered daily through Manhattan Youth. If you are interested in this program, please contact afterschool directly. Registration information is available through their website: <http://www.manhattanyouth.org/>.

### Schedule Changes Due to Inclement Weather

Inclement weather may result in delayed openings, early dismissals, or school closings. Radio and television stations carry this news as soon as decisions are made. School closings are also posted on the New York City Department of Education website <http://schools.nyc.gov> or you can call 311, the city's information line. As soon as we are notified, we will post school closings on the website [www.bpcschool.org](http://www.bpcschool.org).

### Transportation

#### School Bus

General education bus service is very limited. Students in kindergarten through second grade must live more than ½ mile from school. Students in grades 3-6 must live more than one mile from school.

#### Strollers, Scooters, Skateboards and Bicycles

Many students ride their bikes, skateboards or scooters to school. Under **no circumstances** are bikes, skateboards or scooters allowed in the school building. Bikes, skateboards or scooters should be locked up to the bike racks OUTSIDE of the school building.

Strollers are not allowed in the building. We have a designated stroller parking lot just to the right of the front door. DO NOT block the school entrance with strollers and scooters. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us to ensure the safety of our children and our building.



## Metrocards

Students residing outside a given distance from the school are provided with an MTA student Metrocard. This pass enables eligible students to ride to and from school for free or half-fare and is valid on school days only. The type of pass a child receives is pre-determined by the DOE based on each child's official home address.

Eligible students will receive two student Metrocards during the school year, one in September and one at the beginning of February.

If a student loses a Metrocard, s/he should go to the school office between 2:45pm and 3:15pm to receive a replacement card. Replacement of lost Metrocards is a complicated administrative task and we are given a limited number of cards. Students are expected to take care of their Metrocards and not to lose them.

## Elevator policy

Elevators are restricted to those traveling more than 4 floors. Elevators are only activated with a RFI card. It is expected that school community members will use the stairs when going up 4 flights during the day. Parents should use the stairs when taking their children to the third and fourth floors. Classes take the stairs to lunch and to other special classes that are within four floors. On arrival in the morning, students will be keyed upstairs to their floor if they are going to 6, 7, or 8. At all other times, students should use the stairs UNLESS they are accompanied by an adult or have an elevator pass.

Students who have a medical condition that limits ability to use stairs should bring a note from home. Students should bring this note to our school nurse, who can issue them an elevator pass. Students traveling in the elevator without an adult need to have an elevator pass.

## Student ID cards

All entering students receive a student/photo ID card that is used for attendance and lunch. Lower grade students leave their ID cards at school. It is important that students do not lose their ID cards as they will need to use them for the time they are at PS/IS276. The first card is replaced free of charge. Additional lost cards can be replaced for a \$5 fee in the office.

## Registration

---

We are a locally zoned public school. Lower school students are all registered over the counter as long as families can prove residence in the neighborhood. If we run a waitlist, we follow instructions from the Office of Student Enrollment.

Our middle school gives priority to students who live in our zone with students in our fifth grade receiving priority over students in other elementary schools. There is no

sibling priority for middle school admissions or for lower school admissions if the sibling is in the middle school.

If you move away, we ask that you let the office know so that we can properly take your child off of our register.

### Applications to Private School

If you apply to private school, there is additional paperwork. Teachers need four weeks to write recommendations and collect paper work for these applications. Please plan accordingly. We are unable to provide “early” report cards to meet admissions criteria. We will submit new report cards as soon as they are ready in December, March or June.

10

## Communication with Families

---

At PS/IS 276, we recognize that a collaborative relationship between home and school is important for successful learning. We have a variety of ways that we communicate about school.

Teachers have email accounts and communicate with families via email. As the teachers' primary job is to educate children, they are not expected to reply to emails during the school day.

As a general policy, teachers respond to parent emails within 2 school days. A reminder note in the signature line of all teacher emails will be consistent across the school: "Please allow 2 business days for teachers to respond to your e-mail. If you do not hear back within 2 business days, please re-send e-mail."

Because teachers do not check email during the school day, we do not alter dismissal plans via email or phone call without 24 hours-notice.

### School-wide sources of information

- Parent coordinator weekly “School Happenings” email informing and reminding parents of upcoming school wide events.
- PTA weekly emails informing and reminding parents of upcoming PTA meetings, elections, fundraising, ecological and community initiatives, school and neighborhood events.
- School website. The PTA and the school work to have our website accurately updated
- School calendar (found on the website)

- PTA Facebook page to share community happenings and services. <https://www.facebook.com/Psis276TheBatteryParkCitySchoolPta>
- All parents are invited to attend PTA meetings and SLT meetings which are scheduled for convenience.

## Curriculum Information

The curriculum is clarified in several ways throughout the year:

- Back to School night is held in late September during which time parents meet teachers and learn about the program and policies (including homework).
- Evening events such as the Science Fair and arts evenings allow parents to see student work from across the grades.
- Family Fridays for grades K-5 scheduled 6 times a year and posted on the calendar
- Open School week held the third week in November. Parents are welcome to visit their child's class to observe. We request that you make an appointment to make sure the class is in the room and so that the class is not over crowded.
- Information on the curriculum is also available on our school website.

## Report Cards

Report cards go home in December, March, and June. Our report cards are standards-based and use the format required by the Department of Education. The criteria used to evaluate student progress are aligned with Common Core Learning Standards and report how students are doing in regards to meeting these standards.

## Conferences

Officially scheduled parent-teacher conferences take place once in November and March. Parents/guardians or teachers may request additional conferences at any time throughout the year. Parent/guardian requests for a conference with the teacher should be made by contacting the teacher.

Please note, parents who share custody of their children are expected to attend parent teacher conferences together. It is important that both parents hear the same information about their children's progress. Please contact the office if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.

## Parent and Family Involvement

We are a community with a common goal: to provide our children with the best possible education -- an education that will prepare them for high school, for college, and for the world. The following is a list of ways that you can help us and help your children succeed in our school.

## Class Parents

Class parents are a vital resource for teachers in communicating with families about field trips, special events, and materials needed to enhance the curriculum. Each class has two volunteers who take an active role in maintaining phone trees and communications. One class parent also acts as the PTA representative for the

class/grade in order to make sure communication about PTA events is communicated to families.

### Parent Teacher Association

Parental involvement is a key component of our school. The PTA organizes a number of community-building, community service, and fundraising events. The PTA provides leadership and opportunities for parents seeking to become more involved in the school and their child's education. Be on the lookout for information on how you can participate in the PTA – attend monthly meetings, volunteer to work on a committee, help out at a fundraising event. The PTA funds enrichment programs such as music, Spanish and chess, educational resources from books to field trips, and professional development for teachers. The PTA depends on the involvement and support of all families to enable the community and enrichment programs to thrive. By contributing time, resources, cash donations and ideas, families ensure that our students experience a wide variety of programs. Some of the events sponsored by the PTA include: Annual Appeal, Photo Day, the Winter Carnival, the Spring Auction, the Run for Knowledge, and more.

12

The Annual Appeal is the most efficient way to raise funds for our school. Every year the PTA determines a suggested donation amount – but every dollar makes a difference and every dollar is appreciated. Donations can be made with cash, check or credit card all at once, or on an installment basis. Many employers also match contributions. Our PTA is a 501c(3) organization so donations are tax deductible. Donations may be made online at [www.bpcschool.org](http://www.bpcschool.org) or sent to the school to the attention of: Direct Appeal. Checks should be made out to: PS/IS 276 PTA.

### School Leadership Team

School Leadership Teams are advisory committees, mandated by the state, that provide a structure for collaborative school-based decision making. The Team represents the key stakeholders in the education of our children - administrators, parents, teachers and school staff. The number of staff members and parents must be balanced. The mandatory core members are the principal, PTA president and the UFT Chapter leader. The remaining team is comprised of equal numbers of parents and teachers. There are elections for parent SLT members in the late Spring each year. If you are interested in running for an SLT position, you should contact a member of the SLT.

The SLT supports and advises the principal on the school's mission and policies and creates the Comprehensive Educational Plan for the school.

PS/IS 276 parents are invited to attend meetings as observers. Minutes and schedules are posted on the SLT page on our school website. Parents may submit agenda items to SLT members and/or class parents and PTA officers.

## Volunteer

Parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom, on trips and at lunch/recess. When you volunteer, you are volunteering to support the class as a whole, not just your child.

Please keep in mind the following:

- Follow teacher direction.
- Do not use your cell phone while at school.
- Do not take pictures of children without prior approval.
- Interact with all children, not just your child or your child's friends.

## NYCDOE Parent Support

The Department of Education has many resources on its parent webpage.

<http://schools.nyc.gov/ParentsFamilies>

FAM is a tool that allows parents to view their child's academic performance, with instant access to their child's standardized test/assessment scores and attendance records. Each family is provided with their child's student ID number and they use this ID to log onto FAM.

## Kindergarten and First Grade Communication

Teachers on the grade level compose monthly grade level newsletters which are distributed via email and posted to website. This newsletter includes current and upcoming units of study, policy reminders as necessary, and important dates (field trips, etc.) The purpose of these newsletters is to help parents better understand curriculum and to give a framework for parents to have a rich and informed conversation with children about school. As young children move towards independence and are developing communication skills and executive functioning skills, these newsletters will provide important information to parents so that they can support their children in previewing upcoming events and reviewing what they are learning.

## Second and Third Grade Communication

Second and third grade teachers send out a weekly email that includes an overview of curriculum, reminders of upcoming dates, and special events. In addition, the teachers keep their class websites up to date with a curriculum overview and relevant resources (spelling games, etc.). Weekly homework is distributed in the classroom as a packet through the homework folder. There may be additional reinforcement work that is sent home daily in the homework folder. We also expect that students will ask for homework if they lose it or do not receive it. Parents should support students in requesting missing homework packets. Parents can also help their children manage nightly schedules with predictable homework structures.

## Fourth and Fifth Grade Communication

Fourth and fifth grade teacher teams keep class websites up to date with homework (weekly homework along with word work) and a curriculum overview. The website helps students and teachers to communicate with parents. We also are helping students learn to access and use the website as it is an important tool for middle school. By fourth and fifth grades, students begin to copy homework down in planners. We expect our fourth and fifth graders to begin to become increasingly independent and responsible for their work as they move towards intermediate school. Students are also expected to transport permission slips to/ from home and school.

## Middle School Communication

As students enter middle school, the demands for independence increase dramatically. They now transition from class to class and need to learn to flexibly navigate multiple teachers and teacher styles successfully and independently, a skill that will be needed in high school and college. In middle school, teachers begin to have individual subject matter websites. Teachers introduce their websites and then students are responsible for knowing how to access each class website for information. At the beginning of the year, students will be set up with “study buddies” in advisory with whom they can check for assignments.

## Middle School Homework

All students are expected to write down their homework for each class in a homework planner. Major assignments are posted to the class webpage. However, not all nightly homework is posted (we want to encourage responsibility for writing down homework). If there is no homework in a class, students should write down NO HOMEWORK so that it is clear that they have not forgotten. All teachers will give students time to record their nightly homework in their planner during the school day. If they have questions about the assignment, students are expected to contact two peers before an adult. We also encourage students to reach out to teachers about concerns before parents reach out to us. This builds autonomy and the confidence to solve problems and to communicate directly with teachers -- skills and habits that will be increasingly valuable as students grow up. As students become increasingly independent and prepare for the transition to high school, it is important that parents become less involved in monitoring school assignments.

## Middle School Grades

Grades are based on a combination of work habit, participation and product. All assignment grades are standards based. Students can get scores of falling below standard, approaching standard, meeting standard, or meeting high standard. This is described in greater detail at back to school night and in the back to school night curriculum packet that is posted on the webpage. Students are expected to share returned assessments and assignments with grades/feedback with their parents.

Natural fluctuation in grades is expected. Students are expected to take risks and we recognize that research shows that mistakes are important for growth and learning. Students always have the opportunity to revise/improve their work.

Adolescents need to take on responsibility for their grades and work. At the same time, they still need some monitoring and coaching to be successful. Not all students are successful at independence at the same time. Students, on occasion, miss homework assignments. Students are first informed if they are missing an assignment. Teachers will send an email home to parents once a month or so regarding major or a pattern of missing assignments.

More detailed information on the middle school grading policy is in the middle school handbook.

### 7th grade

Grades from 7th grade are an important component in high school applications. Additionally, attendance can be a make or break part of an application. More than 10 absences in the year can automatically disqualify a student from admission to some of the more competitive high schools.

### Other Questions

If you have any questions about your child's school experience, you should always contact the teacher directly as soon as possible. Our teachers have the best understanding of your child and his or her experience in school.

## Safety

---

The safety of the students in our care is one of our top priorities. We have a Safety Plan on file with the Department of Education and the New York City Police Department, monitor access to the building through vigilance and electronic security systems, and rehearse safe evacuations and emergency drills in the building. We also have a School Safety Committee that meets monthly. If you would like to join this committee or sit in on the meetings, please let administration know.

### Emergency Card and Contacts

The Student Emergency Contact Sheet (often called "the Blue Card") provides the necessary information for the school to contact families of students who have emergencies, accidents, or illnesses. Each child must have an updated *Student Emergency Contact Sheet* on file at the school office. Parents need to notify the school immediately if any changes need to be made to the Student Emergency Contact Sheet. **Schools are not authorized to release pupils to persons not listed on that sheet. Please make certain that the list is up-to-date.** Parents also need to ensure that their child understands what to do in case of an emergency. As early as kindergarten, parents need to begin helping their children memorize their full name, along with the

names of their primary caregiver (mother, father, or other), in addition to their address and phone number.

## Emergency Drills

Fire and lock down drills will be held on a regular basis based on the guidelines issued by the New York City Department of Education. Absolute silence is required during emergency drills so students and staff may listen for instructions from safety personnel.

All teachers have an emergency folder that contains family contact numbers and pertinent medical information for the students in their class. Teachers are instructed to carry these folders with them during drills. Students and faculty with limited mobility will be escorted to Fire Rooms (FDNY approved rooms that are fire safe). Students in Fire Rooms will be accompanied by an adult.

16

In the event of a real emergency, we will make a call based on information from safety officials about whether to remain in the building or to move to another building. We have several evacuation sites for our school. The Office of Emergency Services will decide which site we evacuate to. Parents will be notified via 311 or school email blasts.

## Procedures for Citywide Emergencies, Extreme Conditions or Major Storm Days

In emergency situations, the Chancellor will make an announcement to all public schools in the city that schools will close or will have a delayed opening. This announcement is made in consultation with other city officials.

All authorized delayed openings will result in a 2-hour delay, moving the start of day to 10:25 A.M. In case of emergency conditions or a major storm day, the decision is announced on the 311 information line, on the Department of Education website (<http://www.schools.nyc.gov>) and on our school website.

When there is an authorized citywide school closing or delayed school opening, all field trips and all after-school programs will be cancelled unless the Chancellor makes an announcement to the contrary. When there is an authorized citywide delayed school opening, Special Education school buses will run, but their arrival times will be delayed by two hours. It is expected that when there is a delayed opening, students will be in school until their regular dismissal time. However, if citywide emergency conditions or a storm worsen, the Chancellor may have to announce an early dismissal. The Chancellor will notify bus services of the earlier dismissal schedule. School staff will remain in school with children until they are picked up. You should have plans in place with someone who can take care of your child in case of early dismissal. Your child should know of these plans. Please note that you must have these emergency contacts listed on the Blue Card.



## Student Health

It is the family's responsibility to inform the school of any health issues their children may have. It is important that teachers, the office, and our school nurse, be informed of these concerns.

### Medication and Illness

During school hours, students may have their medication given to them by the school nurse. However, we must have a Medication Administration Record filled out and signed by parent and doctor and on file with the nurse. **STUDENTS MAY NOT TRANSPORT MEDICATION TO THE SCHOOL. A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST BRING THE MEDICATION TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE WITH THE PROPER FORMS FROM THE PHYSICIAN.** The medication must be sent to school in the original container labeled and dated by the pharmacist or physician and should include: name of student, name of medication, exact dosage to be taken, and time at which dosage is to be taken at school. Short-term medication (not to exceed ten days in succession) may be administered upon parent completion of a form obtainable in the nurse's office. If the forms are not completed properly, the staff will not be able to administer the medication at school.

Life-threatening allergy problems (e.g. allergy to peanuts) should be brought to the immediate attention of the school so that the staff can be trained to administer necessary medication.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact the individuals listed on the student's emergency card and follow the protocol indicated on the card. Please make sure that the information on these cards is kept current and inform the office when changes need to be made.

### Immunizations

The NYS Department of Education and the Board of Health require that all children who come to school are fully immunized. **We are required to exclude children who are not immunized and do not have documentation from a physician indicating the reason.**

### If your child becomes sick in school...

The school will contact you immediately. It is your responsibility to come to school to pick up your child. If you are unavailable, a person listed on the emergency card will be contacted.

### Returning to School After Illness

By keeping your child home, you are not only helping him/her to get well faster, you are also preventing the illness from spreading to other members of the school community. Let the school know as soon as possible that your child is ill. When your child returns to school, give him/her a note for the teacher explaining the absence. **Children**

**should not return to school until they have spent 24 hours fever and diarrhea free.**

<b>If your child has</b>	<b>He/She must be kept out of school</b>
Chicken Pox	6 days after the appearance of rash
Whooping Cough	14 days after the “whoop” begins
Fever	24 hours after the temperature is normal
Strep	24 hours after the temperature is normal
Head lice	After treatment and examination by school staff
Pink Eye	After treatment and doctor’s note

### Head lice

We have contracted with the Lady Bugs, a small organization that specializes in lice checks and getting rid of lice. The Lady Bugs come four times a year, usually right after vacations. Parents are asked to help cover the cost of these visits through donations to the PTA.

If a case of lice is found in your child’s classroom, an email is sent home with information on checking for lice, removing them, and treating lice infestations at home. Since head lice spread easily and rapidly, children who have an infestation must be kept home until all lice are completely removed from the hair. A child returning to school must be accompanied by an adult and re-examined by school personnel before they can re-enter class.

The NYCDOE has a “no head lice” policy. Student with live lice are sent home. The DOE does not allow us to send children home with nits (the eggs of lice.)

### School Meals

At PS/IS 276 we recognize the importance of healthy food on student performance. Consequently, we have snack and lunch policies to provide students adequate nutrition and fuel for their school day.

The PTA has a Wellness Committee that works with the Office of School Food to plan tasty, healthy meals that help our children develop healthy eating habits.

We welcome and encourage parents of lower school students to volunteer at lunch time. Volunteers can help in the cafeteria at the salad bar, help young children open milks and thermoses, and engage in conversation with children at their tables. You

can also help monitor recess and in escorting young children between the cafeteria and recess. Some parents are coordinating lunch clubs. If you are interested in helping out with a lunch club, please let the parent coordinator know.

### Breakfast

Breakfast is served daily from 8:00 A.M -8:20 A.M. in the cafeteria. Students have a choice of hot breakfast or cereal or bread, milk and fruit. Breakfast is served free of charge for all students.

### Lunch

Lunch periods are 50 minutes long for all students and incorporate recess time and lunch time. We strive to make lunchtime into a beneficial and constructive part of the school day during which students use appropriate table manners. Children may bring lunch from home or eat school lunch. We work to ensure that all children have adequate time to finish their lunches.

19

School lunch menus are posted on our school website. New federal nutritional mandates state that all children must be served a fruit and/or vegetable with their lunch. Because of the new federal mandates that restrict calories served, students will no longer be allowed to go back for seconds for a main meal or sandwich. Students are always welcome to visit the salad bar for additional food. Our salad bar is lovely. It offers a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit every day. In season, our salad bar includes items from local farmers' markets.

Parents who would like to have their children eat school lunch have payment options. If you anticipate that your child qualifies for full price lunches at \$1.75 each (includes hot meal, salad, fruit, milk) and you would like your child to eat school lunch most days, you can pre-pay through MySchoolLunch.com.

Please note, your child's records and report cards are not released until all accounts at the school are settled.

### Recess Guidelines

All students have the opportunity for recess during lunch. Students in grades K-3 also have additional outdoor time built into their classroom schedules. At PS/IS 276 we believe in the importance of active, cooperative and imaginative play for students' emotional and academic development.

Each week, we have club options for students who do not want to play on the yard. During inclement weather, students gather in the auditorium. Each lunch period has the gym available for recess several times a week to ameliorate the need to have recess in the auditorium.

## General Expectations for Children

At all times, students are expected to listen for and follow adult direction and supervision. Whatever the game or activity, students are expected to speak respectfully to staff and to each other.

## Equipment for Recess

There is a bin of recess equipment available for use in the yard. Only sponge/soft balls are allowed as there is too much glass overlooking the yard for real sports equipment. Students are responsible for gathering school equipment at the end of recess and returning it to its proper place.

20

## Snack

Lower grade classroom teachers have established snack policies for their classrooms. Snacks should be healthy, such as pretzels (no candy, soda, or gum).

## Nut and Other Food Allergies

We would like to raise every parent's level of awareness about food allergies that several children have at our school. For these students, food can represent a danger and must be carefully monitored. The welfare and safety of all of our students is our top priority.

It is the family's responsibility to notify the school of a child's allergies. The school will develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school day that will be shared with parents. When all parents and school personnel work collaboratively, we can ease the burden of food allergies for the school-age child.

While New York City Public Schools are not able to be entirely "nut free," we request that snacks and other foods brought to the school to share with students are free of peanuts and tree nuts.

We take food allergies seriously. We have designated booths for children with severe allergies. It is our expectation that students with school allergies learn to manage their allergies. We have separate tables designated for students with severe allergies that will be restricted to those students with similar allergies. School food is not guaranteed to be allergen free. Please be aware that we do serve peanut butter sandwiches to students without allergies. We make every attempt to have children eat lunch with friends. However, because of the severity of some allergies, we restrict who is allowed to eat lunch at the allergy booths.

## Celebrations

### Birthdays and Celebrations in Class

Lower school children can bring treats to share with the class to celebrate their birthdays. Parents and guardians should discuss the celebration with the teacher in advance.

Party invitations are not to be distributed in school. They should be mailed to students at their homes. Teachers are NOT ALLOWED to assist in distributing party invitations.

### Holidays

It is the policy of PS276 to not celebrate religious holidays. Such celebrations are the province of the family. In kindergarten, holidays may be a part of the curriculum so that children will learn about traditions from many cultures, but a distinction is made between learning about holidays and actually celebrating them. American cultural holidays such as Halloween and Valentine's Day are not celebrated in school.

## Building Community

---

*Treat others as you would like them to treat you.*

The Golden Rule is found in cultures around the world. Inherent in it is the idea that we treat all people, not just members of our own group, with consideration and respect. The Golden Rule provides the basis for our discipline policy.

The focus of PS/IS276's discipline policy is to create a school community that accommodates and supports each student's social, emotional, and academic growth. In order to establish a school climate that is fair and safe, we have established rights and responsibilities for students and a corresponding structure of logical consequences that is based on the New York City Chancellor's Discipline Code. These expectations are meant to secure the safety and learning of all students and to manage groups of students fairly as they participate in classrooms, on the playground, and during all out-of-classroom activities. We see rules and consequences as important tools to teach children to monitor their own behavior and to contribute positively to the school and larger communities in which they live. All students must feel secure that no one will be allowed to interrupt learning in school.

### Chargers Community Agreements

As a community, we have articulated four core agreements that guide behavior.

1. Make thoughtful and safe choices
2. Be respectful to all
3. Contribute to the community
4. Walk quietly in hallways and stairs

We teach respect and responsibility at each grade level in appropriate ways that are consistent with our work across the curriculum. Important strategies that we use to build community and help children independently make thoughtful, healthy choices include establishing school-wide routines such as morning meeting in Lower School and Advisory in Middle School, using a system of logical consequences for all actions, and asking students to reflect on the impact of their actions and how they can remedy any mistakes.

22

Social and personal responsibilities are taught in classroom morning meetings and homerooms. These values are also integrated into the core curriculum study at each grade level. Teachers and students discuss community rights and responsibilities, and brainstorm ways that they can enact our core principles.

Knowing that students may need direct guidance to succeed, our teachers are committed to doing whatever is possible to guide student behavior before intervening with consequences. Our first response is always to remind students of our code of conduct, reinforce appropriate behaviors, and provide redirection to students who are straying into inappropriate behaviors. Sometimes, these initial attempts to redirect student behavior are insufficient. When this occurs, teachers can draw upon a continuum of responses to help build responsible behaviors. These responses are logical for the behavior and appropriate for the situation and focus on the importance of considering of how one's actions impact the community and how amends can be made.

If misbehavior continues, teachers will call home to keep parents informed, will maintain records of behavior, and will consult with the administration and colleagues who work with the child.

Teachers will follow up when behavior improves by contacting families to let them know of improvements.

To view the DOE's Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures: the Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities, K-12, visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/DisciplineCode>

## Language

We are a school community that prides itself on a culture of respect. Disrespectful language (profanity, name calling, etc.) is always inappropriate in a school setting. In addition, we have many younger students in our school who look up to the middle school students and copy their behaviors. All students need to learn to monitor their language at all times.

## Bullying, Cyberbullying and Other Harassing Behaviors

All students have the right to feel physically and emotionally safe at school. Bullying is a serious offense with serious consequences. The New York City Department of Education Discipline Code prohibits students from bullying other students for any reason, including taunting and/or intimidation through the use of epithets or slurs involving race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or disability. This policy is in effect on school grounds, school buses and at all school sponsored activities, programs and events.

Sometimes harassing behaviors can occur off of school grounds but still interfere with or disrupt learning. These behaviors can occur face to face, through gossip, or through social media. We take these behaviors seriously. “Cyberbullying” is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, phone, audio, game, or video) that is intended to harm, insult, or humiliate another in a deliberate, repeated, or hostile and unwanted manner. Anonymous postings or acts can be considered acts of cyberbullying and are expressly forbidden.

Any accusation of bullying or harassing will result in an immediate investigation by the school. This investigation will include a conference with students involved as well as witnesses. Parents/guardians will be informed of the results of these investigations and appropriate actions will be taken to address the issue. Additional consequences as described in the NYCDOE discipline code will be followed.

### Middle School Dean Team

If a Middle School student's behavior is consistently disruptive, despite a teacher's attempts to correct the behavior, the student is then referred to the Dean Team for an intervention. The Dean Team is comprised of the Middle School Dean, the middle school counselor, and administration. The Dean Team will meet with the students and parents (when necessary) to develop a behavior improvement plan and assign appropriate consequences for the negative behavior. When appropriate, the Dean Team may place a student on a conduct sheet. Conduct sheets are a way for a student to track his/her behavior and for parents to monitor progress at school. Students on a conduct sheet are responsible for checking in with their assigned person at the end of each school day to review the conduct sheet.

For questions related to discipline in the Middle School, contact the Middle School Dean or the Middle School Director.

### Detention

Occasionally it becomes necessary to discipline a student for violating the established school rules. Teachers may assign lunch detention as a consequence for in class disruptions.

### Suspension

If behavior continues to be disruptive, or the severity of the behavior warrants, students may be given a suspension as per the guidelines of the NYCDOE Discipline Code.

- Principal's Suspension. This takes place at school. The child is given class work during the day, a place to stay, and is monitored by middle school faculty.
- Superintendent's Suspension. For major discipline issues a judicial process is followed that includes a formal hearing and may result in suspension that must be served at an off-site location.

### Dress Policy

PS/IS 276 students are expected to wear clothes that reflect the fact that we are in school. Student attire should not distract anyone from learning and should be clean, neat, size appropriate (not too tight or too loose) and should not reveal underwear or too much skin. Clothing should be free of offensive or hurtful language or statements or images that would upset others. Clothing originally designed to be undergarments should not be worn as outerwear.

24

It is expected that all students will have gym shoes on gym days. We discourage flip flops and other shoes with limited support as hallways are crowded and toes can be injured.

Students should not wear hats or hoods indoors.

Students who wear inappropriate clothing will be provided alternatives at school and/or asked to call parents to bring a change of clothes.

We recognize that dress policies are inherently subjective. However, faculty and administration reserve the right to discuss dress with individual students and to enforce this policy as written.

## The Curriculum

---

### Mathematics

The mathematics program at the Battery Park City School is based on the Common Core standards in math. It emphasizes development of mathematical literacy, deep understanding of mathematical concepts, an ability to communicate effectively about mathematics, and the skills to solve problems using mathematics. We achieve these goals by providing balanced instruction in mathematical thinking and problem solving. For more detailed information on our mathematics program and the Common Core Learning Standards for mathematics, please see our school website.

In grades K-1 we use a combination of TERC Investigations and Contexts for Learning to provide a mathematics program that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Additionally, children engage in math centers/games that reinforce key math skills and concepts.



In grades 2-5, we use *Investigations, Contexts for Learning*, and rich mathematical problems to create a program that provides a strong balance between developing an understanding of process and content in mathematics and is aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

In grades 6-8, we use *Connected Math (CMP3)* as the foundation of our math curriculum. Our teachers utilize a range of rich, contextualized problems to supplement the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the range of learners in our school. We offer Algebra 1 as a Regents course for 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

We use assessments to plan for differentiated instruction throughout the year including pre-assessments, interviews, conferences and more traditional tests in grades 3-8. This helps teachers to differentiate their instruction. Teachers keep anecdotal notes throughout each unit and across the year and use this information to capitalize on student strengths and push their thinking to the next level.

#### **Some math goals:**

- Support students in developing a sense of mathematics and learning so that they can be mathematical thinkers.
- Focus on computational fluency: being flexible, accurate and efficient; with whole numbers with the broader goal of developing strong number sense
- Emphasize reasoning about mathematical ideas through conversation and writing
- Problem solve and use mathematics to understand our world through real-life problem-solving opportunities

### **English Language Arts (ELA)**

Literacy is more than being able to read and write. At PS/IS 276 we believe that literacy involves a complex set of processes that we use to understand our world and to communicate our thinking through oral and written language and, at times, other media as well. Being literate also means being informed. Reading and writing well both require a strong base of knowledge and rich experiences with creating and processing texts. Our goal for our students is that they develop identities as readers, writers and critical thinkers so that they can become problem solvers and active participants in society. As our students participate in our curriculum from grades K-8, they engage with multiple types of texts including fiction and nonfiction books, poetry, magazines and newspapers, electronic documents, graphs and images, video and spoken word. They discuss ideas in literature and informational texts. They question authors' purposes and choices and how those decisions impact readers. They engage in writing a variety of texts of their own.

Teachers at the Battery Park City School have created Common Core Standards aligned units of study in reading and writing. These units are designed to be engaging to students, to challenge students to learn by honing skills and deepening knowledge

of the world. Our ELA program incorporates reading and writing, speaking and listening, and practical skills such as word study, spelling, handwriting, and grammar. Teachers draw upon a variety of teaching strategies in their planning. Students engage with texts in whole class, small group, and independent settings. They write creatively as well as for more structured assignments and for on demand prompts.

In the elementary grades, we use a phonics-based program as the basis for our word study and spelling program and *Handwriting without Tears* to learn handwriting. Grammar is woven into the reading and writing curriculum throughout the grades K-8. While we recognize that children make mistakes as they learn, we reinforce the idea that attention to grammar and mechanics are tools to make sure that others can understand what we are communicating in our writing. We modify our expectations for accuracy and sophistication in self-expression as students advance through the grades.

For more detailed information on our ELA program and the Common Core Learning Standards for ELA, please see our school website.

Some goals for ELA:

- To nurture a love of and appreciation for the written word.
- To build a rich knowledge base of ideas, information and vocabulary.
- To build fluency in communicating -- both expressing ideas orally and in writing and in understanding ideas in print and spoken word.

## Science

Our science curriculum is designed to help students develop scientific literacy skills such as questioning, collecting, synthesizing and analyzing data, and communication. Building awareness of issues around environmental sustainability is embedded in this work. This includes building knowledge of the environment and ecology, society, technology, and the economy. Within this framework, we are following the State and City science standards for content and science thinking skills. We use the FOSS investigations materials to frame our science study. Our science program emphasizes hands-on investigations and inquiry. Teachers draw upon a range of media, texts, and field experiences to build science concepts and skills. Students learn to keep science notebooks starting in kindergarten to document and communicate their developing understandings in science. Lower school students have science with the science teacher two times a week. Students in grades 6-8 have science 3 times a week with an additional double lab period.

## Social Studies

Our social studies curriculum is aligned with the State and City curriculum guidelines and the Common Core Standards. Our social studies curriculum encourages our students to build an understanding of our wider world through studies that integrate

history, society and cultures, economy, and geography and includes hands-on inquiry as well as reading, writing, and the arts. Classes use a variety of texts, field experiences, and investigation of primary sources to ask questions and build content knowledge and skills in the social sciences. As appropriate, students link social action projects to their work in social studies.

## The Arts

At Battery Park City School, we have a strong commitment to developing children's talents and skills in the arts and appreciate financial support from parents through donations to our PTA to help fund these programs. Students have studio art and music every week. Children in the lower grades learn basics of musical literacy. By third grade, they learn recorder. Fourth grade is a time for students to begin to learn a musical instrument. We offer band and chorus to middle school students as well as a general music class that integrates music history and theory along with hands-on projects. We work with outside arts programs such as the Lincoln Center Institute and Creative Arts Team at City College to integrate drama into our curriculum.

## Foreign Language

Our PTA generously funds a Spanish language program for our students in grades 1-5. Students have Spanish twice a week. The goals of this program are to introduce the language and culture of Latin America and the Spanish speaking world and to begin to develop vocabulary along with speaking and listening comprehension.

Our middle school students study Spanish in grades 6 and 7. Middle school students are required to complete two years study of a foreign language. Our 8th grade students are given the option of taking Advanced Spanish, which prepares students to take a Spanish proficiency test for language placement in high school.

## Physical Education

Our students have PE every week and daily recess. The PE program works to develop habits of fitness, sports skills, and teamwork. We also have a competitive sports program in our Middle School that is run in collaboration with Manhattan Youth.

## Technology

Our PTA also funds our technology program. We are in the process of building curricula that are aligned with ISTE standards. Specifically, we believe that technology is a powerful tool to empower "students to become lifelong learners and providing them with the skills to face future challenges resourcefully and creatively is critical. It's not about using digital tools to support outdated education strategies and models; it's about tapping into technology's potential to amplify human capacity for collaboration, creativity and communication." As part of this program, we are working to acquire the hardware and programs needed for a strong technology program.

## Social Skills Curriculum

Our elementary school students learn social skills through morning meetings, group problem solving, our social studies curriculum, and the use of the *Second Step*

program. *Second Step* is one of the few research-validated programs for teaching social skills and problem solving for the elementary grades.

Our middle school students have a weekly advisory program that teaches social skills including handling peer pressure, as well as organization, study skills, and health.

Our school counselors provide support services to students, families and staff. Services may be rendered through individual sessions, small group sessions, and/or classroom support as part of curriculum or on an as-needed basis. The counselors also team with teachers for specific problems or programs related to social and human relation skills. Parents are encouraged to contact the counselors with any concerns regarding their child's development.

28

## Field Trips

Field trips are an important component of our program. Parents are notified about upcoming trips through the newsletter and the school calendar available online. Students without signed permission slips will not be able to participate in field trips.

## Differentiation

At The Battery Park City School we recognize that students come to us with a variety of gifts and interests. We deliberately do not screen students for admission because we realize that the world is filled with people who have diverse perspectives and strengths and that, frequently, the most powerful insights we gain are from those who have different ways of viewing and processing their experiences.

Teachers assess students frequently throughout the year to identify next steps for students. They then use this information to guide whole class, small group, and individual instruction. We have learning specialists on staff to provide additional support to students and teachers.

We design our instructional program so that we meet students where they are and then plan our curriculum, drawing upon student strengths and interests with the Common Core Learning Standards in mind, to help students grow academically, socially, and creatively. Our classrooms are well stocked with books, hands-on materials, electronic and other resources that facilitate the learning of all our students.

## Enrichment

We provide all students with the opportunity to stretch their learning in small group lessons in the classroom. Through careful development of units and lessons, students are able to work in small groups or independently on research projects. This allows them opportunities to read about and explore information of interest and then to communicate their learning at appropriate levels of sophistication. This differentiation happens in reading and writing as well where students read books at levels that challenge them in all units. In mathematics, teachers use rich problems in math

instruction. These problems are open-ended and allow for students to engage in complex mathematical thinking. 8th graders have the opportunity to take a Regents level Algebra 1 class. We also participate in mathematics competitions in the city.

### Academic Support Services

At times, students need additional support in school. Teachers identify students who are struggling with a skill or concept and then work to provide these services in the classroom. This support may take the form of small group work led by the teacher. An additional support teacher (reading, speech, or other specialist) may also work with the child to provide targeted assistance. The goal for this support is to help the child remain on track to attain grade level benchmarks.

### Special Education

At PS/IS 276, we are proud of the inclusive environment we have created that welcomes all learners. Our students who are provided challenges and supports to help them grow as learners and individuals. We believe that inclusion in the regular classroom is an appropriate starting point for all learners, and that a continuum of services should be provided to meet the needs of the students. Research shows consistently that all students learn best in heterogeneous classrooms that provide a variety of learning experiences that give all students access to the curriculum. At 276, that means that all students work toward the same overall educational outcomes with differing levels at which these outcomes are achieved, the additional support that is needed by some students and the degree of emphasis placed on various outcomes. As an inclusive school, we also draw upon practices that focus on high expectations for all and provide targeted instruction that allows all children to achieve their potential.

We acknowledge that every adult in the building plays an important role in the education of our students. While the classroom and core subject teachers may play the most evident role, arts, Spanish, and PE teachers also have important impact on our students. Additionally, related service providers who may work mostly with targeted groups of students also help shape the teachers' professional dialogue and decisions, and ultimately the experience of all our students. We are also fortunate to have a strong team of paraprofessionals who play an important role in the education of all learners. All faculty work closely together to support the learning of all our students.

One important way that we create an inclusive environment is through being purposeful in our use of language. As teachers work collaboratively, we call classes by the class number and not the teacher name. This helps to create a class identity as one that is focused on the students and not one of many teachers who works with the class.

Students in our school who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) receive a flexible model of services that are aligned with their learning goals and their IEPs.

### Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS)

Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) provide specially designed and/or supplemental instruction to support the participation of the student with a

disability in the general education classroom and provide consultation to the student's classroom or content specialist teachers. These services are designed to be flexible, helping students to remain in the general education classroom and utilize the combined expertise of both the content and learning specialists. They may be provided within the general education classroom or in a separate location.

### Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

According to the New York City Department of Education, Integrated Co-Teaching Services (ICT) is an integrated service through which students with disabilities are educated with age appropriate peers in the general education classroom. At 276, we create classes that are heterogeneously balanced. As a result, we have multiple ICT classes on a grade with students purposefully split across these classes in ways that allow us to meet IEP mandates and the needs of the students. This model of ICT ensures that students master specific skills and concepts in the general education curriculum, as well as ensuring that their special education needs are being met. In our ICT program, the teachers and paraprofessionals meet to co-plan and prepare lessons, activities and projects that incorporate all learning modalities. Together, faculty carry out instruction employing a range of methodologies to benefit the learning of all students in the classroom.

30

### Testing Modifications

Students with IEPs may receive testing modifications (extended time, etc.) as part of their individual learning plan. Students without an IEP may also receive testing modifications if their pediatrician fills out the paperwork for a 504 plan. This includes both temporary modifications (for instance, if your child has an injured arm) and modifications that last throughout the year. 504 plans must be renewed each year. You can talk to your child's teacher if you feel your child may benefit from extended time or other testing modifications.

### Homework

Homework is designed to create a bridge between school and home, providing practice of concepts learned at school and extending learning through projects. Additionally, an important purpose of homework is to teach children organization, time management, responsibility, and independence. *Homework is communicated through weekly packets in the lower grades and in planners starting in grade 4. Many teachers (particularly in the upper grades) also post homework to their class page on the school website. Please review your family's after school schedule and help your child plan for homework accordingly.*

Homework policies are reviewed at Curriculum Night in September. Shortly afterwards, students in early grades will begin to have homework. Students in upper grades can expect homework to begin during the first week of school.

Every child is expected to read at home every night. The best way to become a good reader is to read. We provide time for independent reading in school and we want your child to read at home as well. This can include older family members reading to younger children. This time together helps establish reading as an enjoyable activity and helps reinforce the idea that reading is something that everyone does. As our students grow in their abilities, we want to make sure that our students continue to read for pleasure as well as continue to practice to read for learning. Time set aside every night helps to provide the space to nurture this habit.

From first grade through fourth grade, children are expected to read for at least 20 minutes a night. From fifth to eighth grade, students should be reading a minimum of 30 minutes a night. Additionally, families can expect, on average, 10 minutes of homework a night per grade. For example, first grade has an additional 10 minutes; second grade 20 minutes, and so on.

**Kindergarten** students do not receive regular weekly homework beyond reading and being read to. We believe it is most beneficial for young children to use after-school time to play freely, to explore, to socialize, and to spend time with their families.

**First, second and third grade** students will receive weekly homework packets given out at the beginning of the week and collected at the end of it. This system enables families to become involved in student learning and to organize homework around family schedules.

In **fourth and fifth grades**, homework is designed to build responsibility and time management as well as to reinforce concepts learned at school. Students will learn to write down their assignments in planners and organize materials and time to successfully complete their work.

**Sixth, seventh and eighth grade** students will continue to develop responsibility for homework completion with longer projects due over time as well as daily assignments. They will also learn to use organized planners and study skills in Advisory.

Parents and guardians can help with homework by showing a positive interest in it, encouraging their children while avoiding undue pressure, and providing a suitable place and quiet time for work. Do not do their homework for them. The general rule is as simple as ABC – homework should be done **All** by myself, parents should **Back** off, and there should be a **Cut** off time. *If homework proves to be confusing or too challenging for your child, please contact your child's teacher (for lower school students) or have your child contact his/her teacher directly (middle school students).*

Dial-A-Teacher at (212) 777-3380 may be able to help with your homework questions. You can call from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

## Academic Policies

---

"Honesty" is often defined as truthfulness and trustworthiness. One of the goals of our school is to help our students develop values that will allow our students to be successful in life. We expect our students to conform to the highest standards of academic honesty. Students who submit work which is not their own, or who assist others in cheating, are committing an act of academic dishonesty.

### Honor Roll

32

We begin to offer academic recognition to students in middle school. To qualify for honor roll, a student must:

- Have no content/skills grades below an MS
- Have only 3s and 4s in work habits (with at least 1/3 being 4s)
- Pass all pass/fail classes
- Get a 90 or above in physical education

To qualify for principal's honor roll, a student must meet the criteria for honor roll, plus:

- Earn MHS in at least two classes

### National Junior Honor Society

The purpose of the Battery Park City School NJHS is to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in our students.

Candidates eligible for selection to this chapter must be second-semester 6<sup>th</sup> graders or 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who have been in attendance for a period of one half of the school year at the Battery Park City School. Students eligible for selection to the chapter must have the distinction of "Honor Roll" and must complete an application and interview.

### Graduation with Distinction

Allowing students to graduate with distinction is our way of celebrating student particular interests and talents. All of our students have things that make them distinguished, and some of them choose to apply to receive recognition for those things at graduation. Students can apply for distinction in four areas: academics, athletics, the arts and service (some students choose to apply for distinction in multiple areas). The application requires students to prepare a portfolio documenting their work throughout middle school in that area and to explain – both in writing and a small group presentation – how their work helped them grow as an individual and contribute to their school community.



## Middle School and High School Admissions Processes

---

A key part of the fall of fifth and eighth grade is the application process for Middle and High School.

While our fifth graders receive priority for a seat in our Middle School, they still must complete the Middle School application process. This process will be explained in detail in the fall of fifth grade. There are a number of interesting Middle School options for District 2 students. While we believe that we offer an exceptional Middle School program and are hoping that families opt to stay at 276 for middle school, families are encouraged to explore other options.

The High School Admissions Counselor will meet with 7th grade families in the late Spring and again with 8th grade families in the fall to provide an overview of the high school admissions process and answer questions about the process. Once dates and timelines have been finalized by the DOE, the Admissions Counselor will meet with 8th grade families to share information and answer questions. Our school staff is dedicating a great deal of time building relationships and visiting with high school administrators so that we can best assist our middle school students find high schools that are best matched to each student's interests and talents.

ATTENDANCE/BEING ON TIME IS CRUCIAL particularly for students in grades 4 and 7! Receiving schools look closely at each applicant's attendance in grades 4 and 7 and take excessive absences/tardiness seriously! Absences/tardiness related to illness, family-situation and special circumstances are excusable. The school can write an explanation for these absences, but the schools to which your child may apply will not know the difference between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Extended vacations are not looked upon favorably and are not viewed as an excused absence. This is a DOE policy.

The DOE sets the schedule for the distribution of middle and high school acceptance letters. Scheduling varies each year. There is a formal appeals process if a student does not get into his/her school of choice.

## What to Bring to School & What to Leave at Home

---

It is important that students come to school prepared and ready to learn.

### Electronic Devices

Students are not allowed to use personal electronic devices such as electronic games, iPods, and iPads at school. Any items brought to school must be put away for the day. We recognize that parents provide their children with cell phones for safety reasons. Therefore, we understand that students will bring their cell phones to school. Students can call parents immediately upon arrival or at dismissal. Other than that, cell phones

must remain turned off and stowed away during the school day including breakfast and lunch. Cell phones that are being used to make calls, text, or play games during the day will be confiscated and returned to students at the end of the day..

Students are allowed to use e-readers and personal computers for academic work during the day. If you want your child to use this equipment please contact the middle school administration.

The school cannot guarantee the safety of these items during the school day. Unfortunately, at times, cell phones go missing during the school day. While we try to help the child recover the missing phone, the school is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Students are responsible for the safe-keeping of all their personal belongings.

34

### Cell Phone Policy

While we understand students bring phones to school, it is our policy that phones must be turned off and stored in student backpack. Cell phones are not necessary to use during the day and students who need to contact home can seek assistance from an adult at school. Students should, as they enter the building, remove headphones and begin shutting down their phone.

Cell phones may be used as set forth below (consistent with Regulation A-413). During the school day and/or after school:

- Cell phones may not be turned on or used while on school property.
- Cell phones may not be turned on or used during instructional time, except for instructional and educational purposes with the explicit approval of the teacher and/or teaching artist.
- Cell phones may not be turned on or used during lunch or recess.
- Cell phones may not be turned on or used in the bathroom or locker room.
- Cell phones may not be turned on or used during field trips, fire drills or lock down drills.
- Cell phones may not be turned on or used during NYS exams.

Students are not to call, text, or message their family members during the school day. If students need to reach a member of their family, they can use one of the phones in the main office. Students may not photograph or take videos of any staff members or other students in and outside of the building.

In an effort to enforce this policy we will implement the following consequences:

1. If a phone rings during class, the student will be reminded of the policy and instructed to turn off the phone.

2. Students seen using phones anywhere at school will have the phone take for the remainder of the school day. The teacher who takes the phone will turn it into the office on the 8th floor or the main office.
3. Students with consistent cell phone usage during the school day will have to turn their phone into the office each morning and parents will be contacted.

## Other Personal Property

We strongly discourage bringing items of significant monetary or sentimental value to school. Although we do try to assist students in finding lost items, we are not responsible for personal property that students bring to school.

## Lost and Found

Lost and found items will be kept in the lobby and the middle school office on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Parents and students are encouraged to inspect the lost and found on a regular basis. Please be aware the school is not responsible for items lost at school or those placed in Lost & Found. All items in Lost & Found will be donated to charity at the beginning of every month.

## Care of School Materials

Students are held strictly accountable for the care of books and other school materials issued to them or checked out from the library. Students will be charged the full replacement value for damage or loss. Please help your children organize their books and backpacks. Report cards are held if there are any unpaid book fees owed to the school.

## Other Policies

---

### Assigning Students to Classes

At the end of the school year, grade team teachers meet to discuss class composition for the following year. They review students, their grades and overall group dynamics as they recommend and build heterogeneous classes for the following school year. The grade team teachers develop a draft outline of proposed class lists which is reviewed by academic and specials teachers as well as guidance staff and administration to review class make up. The fundamental goal is to create classes that are balanced and can provide a safe and effective learning environment.

Key points to remember are:

- Class groups are put together to achieve balance in each of the following areas: gender; racial and ethnic diversity; special education and general education (mandated by law); academic achievement; interpersonal dynamics between students; and other individual student needs (the school's belief is that a heterogeneous student body learns best).
- Classes are assembled with regards to the community of students, not to their suitability for particular teachers.

- Once the previous categories are addressed other information is taken into account, including what you have told your child's teachers throughout the year.
- We are unable to consider requests regarding specific teachers or classmates.
- Teacher assignments are not finalized until long after the class groups are assembled (typically just before the first day of school).
- Once the classes are assembled, changes are not made except for extenuating circumstances.

## Extracurricular Activities

### Lunch Clubs

A variety of clubs are offered to the student population at PS/IS 276. All clubs meet during lunch and are overseen by a faculty member. Clubs are student driven and, as a result, offerings change from year to year. Clubs meet for the entire lunch period. Children participating in a club will bring their lunches to the designated classroom or location where the club meets. If a child needs a hot lunch, s/he is given a pass to go to the cafeteria and bring his/her meal to the club meeting room.

### Athletics

At 276, every middle schooler has the opportunity to find his/her inner athlete. We strongly encourage all students to participate on a sports team. If your child doesn't feel comfortable playing a sport, there are jobs such as videographer, manager, and score keeper that are important to our school's athletic program.

Team members are expected to participate in all practices and games/meets and to maintain their grades. For some sports, student athletes are expected to dedicate some of their time on weekends.

If an athlete is failing one or more subjects in school or exhibits inappropriate school behavior, he/she will be put on probation and will not be allowed to play or participate in a team sport. If a student is suspended for disciplinary reasons or has repeated behavioral issues, that child will not be allowed to practice or play a game with the team for the duration of the suspension.

### Student Council

PS/IS 276 has an active Student Council whose role is to represent the voice of the students to the administration, plan events and fundraisers, promote Charger pride, and approve student clubs. In September, every middle school homeroom class elects a class representative to serve in student government. These representatives meet weekly during lunch to discuss and work on different projects including events, fundraising, communication, and social action activities.

# Digital Citizenship

---

Many of our students in grades 5-8 (and increasingly in younger grades as well) have smart phones. They use these powerful computers to communicate with their families and friends. They download a variety of apps to document their lives, communicate with others, and to entertain themselves. Along with easy access comes tremendous responsibility. How do our students make responsible choices in deciding what images to post, what comments to make, and what websites to access? We work to help them understand the implications of their digital footprints for themselves and for others. Inappropriate use of social media that takes place during or after school and that negatively impacts other members of the community will be subject to disciplinary action at school.

PS/IS 276 is a [CommonSense Media](#) Digital Citizenship Certified School. This certification means that teachers, students and parents are trained in digital citizenship.

## PS/IS 276 Internet Access and Appropriate Use Agreement

The New York City Department of Education has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the Department of Education. Below are excerpts *in italics* from the [DOE internet acceptable use policy](#) that pertains to students. Following the excerpt, we have included explanations of how that component is addressed at school.

### Privacy

*Users have no right to privacy while using the Department's Internet Systems. The Department monitors users' online activities and reserves the right to access, review, copy, store, or delete any electronic communications or files. This includes any items stored on Department-provided devices, such as files, e-mails, cookies, and Internet history.*

Everything on DOE computers and internet systems is subject to FOIA requests. We are adopting Google Classroom, a free learning management system that has maximum privacy settings. Within the bpcschool.org organization, we have disabled web/search history and location history.

### Prohibited Uses of the Department's Internet Systems

*Users may not engage in any of the activities prohibited by this policy when using or accessing the Department's Internet Systems including wifi and LAN systems. If a student is uncertain whether behavior is prohibited, he or she should contact a teacher, supervisor or other appropriate Department personnel. The Department*

reserves the right to take immediate action regarding activities that (1) create security and/or safety issues for the Department, students, employees, schools, network or computer resources, or (2) expend Department resources on content the Department determines lacks legitimate educational or Department content or purpose, or (3) the Department determines are inappropriate.

#### *Students Using the Department's Internet Systems*

- *Students must not reveal personal information about themselves or other persons on social networking sites, in chat rooms, in emails or other direct electronic communications, or any other forum over the Internet. For example, students must not reveal their home address, or telephone or cell phone number.*
- *Students should not meet in person anyone they have met only on the Internet.*
- *Students must promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employee any message or other activity they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.*
- *Students should not allow Department computers to save their passwords and should log out after completing work at a station.*

#### **Acceptable Use**

*The use of student bpcschool.org accounts and school technology must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of PS/IS 276. Transmission of any material in violation of any national or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material and threatening or obscene material. Additionally, gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to the department's Internet Systems or to any third party's computer systems. A partial list of unauthorized activities includes:*

- *Accessing, posting or distributing harassing, discriminatory, inflammatory, or hateful material, or making damaging or false statements about others;*
- *Sending, posting, or otherwise distributing chain letters or engaging in spamming;*
- *Damaging computer equipment, files, data or the Department's Internet System in any way, including spreading computer viruses, vandalizing data, software or equipment;*
- *Malicious tampering, phishing or hacking activities;*
- *Intentionally seeking information about passwords belonging to other users;*
- *Modifying passwords belonging to other users or attempting to log in through another person's account;*
- *Accessing, copying, or modifying another user's files without authorization;*
- *Using the Department's Internet Systems for personal financial gain.*

Members of the Battery Park City School community are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- Illegal activities are strictly forbidden.
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers of students or colleagues.
- Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private.
- Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users

### Violations of this Policy

*If a student violates this policy, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken consistent with the Discipline Code and applicable Chancellor's Regulations. If a student's access to the Department's Internet System is revoked, the student may not be penalized academically, and the Department will ensure that the student continues to have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program.*

*All users must promptly disclose to their teacher, supervisor, principal or manager any information they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.*

The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. The system administrators may close an account at any time as required.

