

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



2019 – 2020

PAT CARNEY  
PRINCIPAL

ALEXIS QUERQUES  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, IA

# PS 340 FAMILY HANDBOOK

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September 5, 2019

Dear Families,

Welcome to our sixth year at P.S. 340!

We are so pleased to have you as members of our growing community. Our *Family Handbook* provides information about the policies and procedures in place at our school. Our most important priorities are keeping your children safe and comfortable, and creating a space that fosters effective teaching and learning.

All of our procedures and policies are designed to:

- Keep your children safe
- Maximize instruction time
- Create a calm, productive environment for the students
- Foster fairness for all families

We look forward to working with you this year!

Sincerely,

*Pat Carney*  
Principal

*Alexis Querques*  
Assistant Principal, I.A.



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## Mission and Values

P.S. 340 is a neighborhood elementary school serving areas in the Village, Chelsea, Union Square and Flatiron. We support success for all of our children by focusing on inquiry (investigation and questioning) and active learning. We do this through hands-on, project based content studies in social studies and science integrated with a structured literacy program. We are dedicated to educating our children to be serious thinkers and intellectually curious students. We work in collaboration with our staff, families and community, and with the recognition and consideration of the diverse needs of our children.

### **We strive to develop a sense of belonging among our students**

*We strive to develop a sense of belonging in all children. We create an environment where children feel welcome, comfortable, valued and important. As such, we value social and emotional learning, along with academic achievement.*

### **We recognize the importance of challenging, engaging work.**

*We value work that requires inquiry and perseverance, promotes intellectual curiosity, reflects the real world around us, and is based on big ideas. Our students engage in this higher-level work through the development of predictable processes, systems and structure, along with an organized environment and clear adult direction.*

### **We promote learning as an active process**

*We believe that children learn best when they are actively involved in a variety of hands-on activities that relate in some way to the real world around them. Our students use a variety of media in the arts and technology to promote active learning. We teach our students to actively reflect on, and evaluate, their own work.*

### **We encourage collaboration as a means to promote growth**

*We create a supportive, collaborative environment, recognizing that working with others, in a variety of different groupings, promotes both individual and community growth. As such, we offer social and emotional education as well as academic, and recognize and support diversity in our community.*

### **We communicate clearly, directly and sensitively**

*We clearly convey our expectations. Our communication is proactive, thoughtful and direct. Our tone is respectful, patient and professional. We take action based on understanding. We determine the best course of action through active listening, observation and the collection of information.*

## School Information

**The Sixth Avenue Elementary School (P.S. 340)**  
**64 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street**  
*New York, New York 10011*

**917-305-1000 (phone)    917-305-1005 (fax)**

**Website:** [www.ps340.org](http://www.ps340.org)

**E-mail:** ps340info@gmail.com

Pre-K: 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Kindergarten: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
First grade: 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Second grade: 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Third grade: 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Fourth grade: 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
Fifth grade: 6<sup>th</sup> floor

In an emergency, if the school needs to be evacuated, the evacuation location will be listed on the DOE website [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)

## School Hours

Full days: 8:20 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.

Half days: 8:20 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.

**School Closing** - In the event of a snowstorm, or other citywide emergency, the Chancellor will announce the decision to close schools throughout the city. The announcement will be broadcast on TV news. An announcement will also appear on the Department of Education website, [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)

## School Staff

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	
Pat Carney	Principal
Alexis Querques	Assistant Principal
Joanie Abrahams	Payroll Secretary
Ilene Heller	School Nurse
Cortnie Huling	School Aide
Reni Matsushita	Parent Coordinator
Farse Omar	School Aide
Beth Segarra	Community Associate
<b>TEACHERS</b>	
Valira Lewis	Pre-K
Arielle Mehraban	Pre-K
Kristina Milosevic	Pre-K
Hannah Mislán	Pre-K
Sarah Hang	Kindergarten
Michelle Johnson	Kindergarten
Manda Miller-Honick	Kindergarten
Erica Semel	Kindergarten
Hannah Huhr	First Grade
Emily Porter	First Grade
Lauren Reiss	First Grade
Elissa Turshen	First Grade

Natalie Herring	Second Grade
Karina Ignatova	Second Grade
Hannah Ticoll	Second Grade
Taylor Biedermann	Third Grade
Maura McAssey	Third Grade
Zoe Oppenheimer	Third Grade
Marcie West	Third Grade
Jeanette Hendrix	Fourth Grade
Devorah Kessler	Fourth Grade
Iva Maghuyop	Fourth Grade
Meredith Rossbach	Fourth Grade
Mary Ellen Bizzarri	Fifth Grade / SETTS
Allie Ontell	Fifth Grade
Kait Vignola	Fifth Grade
Chrissy Inserra	Music
Rosemary Martin	Science
Tom McGuire	Physical Education
Christie Newman	Dance
Dana Orlinsky	Art
<b>PARA-PROFESSIONALS</b>	
Tina Arroyo	
Lirika Batista	
Anthony DiMarco	
Maxine Guss	



Anyssa Hunte	
Daniela Hristova	
Sarah Kahn	
Alison Katz	
Kaetty Morales	
Clara Rosario	
Emerald Spatcher	
<b>RELATED SERVICE PROVIDERS</b>	
Alisha Bennett	School Counselor
Winnie Chan	Occupational Therapist
Tara Doeble	Occupational Therapist
Robin Goldenberg	Speech Therapist
Lynda Resurreccion	Physical Therapist
<b>SBST TEAM</b>	
Allyson Ehrlich	Social Worker
Paul Miller	Family Worker
Andrew Rose	Psychologist
<b>FACILITIES</b>	
Igor Ioustous	Custodian
Steven Lane	Staff
Arismendy Medina	Staff
Abel Salce	Staff
<b>SAFETY AGENTS</b>	
Agent B. Santana	

Agent Tiffany Easley	
<b>Kitchen Staff</b>	
Jimmy Castillo	
Sheryl Hayes	
Raynel White	

## Family Involvement

We are committed to fostering an inviting, collaborative relationship among the children, staff and our students' families. To that end, we have put in place a number of initiatives to involve families.

We try to strike a balance between inviting families frequently into the school, and considering the needs of working parents. Our events usually take place at the beginning of the school day, and we attempt to give you as much notice as possible.

### Parent Coordinator

Every NYC public school employs a parent coordinator whose role is to assist the principal in creating a welcoming school environment for parents, supporting family involvement, addressing parent concerns and serving as liaison to the PTA.

Our parent coordinator, Reni Matsushita, is located in the main office where she will work on a variety of family-related initiatives. You can reach her at 917-305-1000 ext. 1 or [renim.ps340@gmail.com](mailto:renim.ps340@gmail.com)

### Family Fridays

Parents are invited into their children's classrooms to observe and participate in their learning once a month on *Family Fridays* during the first period of the day (8:20 to about 9:00). *Family Fridays* are designed to offer you firsthand experience with some of your child's school activities.

- If it is difficult for you to attend every month, you might trade off with your spouse/partner, consider sending another relative or family friend, or team up with another family in the class and work with both children every other month.
- Students generally do not attend their siblings' Family Fridays.
- **Our first Family Friday is on September 27.** Please see our website for a full list of dates. *Occasionally, a teacher or grade level will reschedule their Family Friday to coincide with a content study celebration, or other activity, so that parents do not need to take multiple days off from work.*

### Content Study Celebrations

An important part of our school culture is the content study. The children engage in long-term social studies and science studies which are integrated with reading and

writing. At the end of their study, each class holds a culminating celebration to share their work with their families. They will display, describe and present their research, writing, artwork and other projects. Celebrations are usually held in the morning after drop-off. We will give you ample notice of any celebration so that you can plan accordingly.

*We encourage students to attend their siblings' celebrations, unless there are space, or other considerations. Your classroom teacher will let you know if siblings are invited to a given celebration.*

### **Class projects**

Teachers will involve families in the classroom in several ways. As our content studies come to a close, the children are busy working on a variety of projects that need adult help or supervision. Teachers will ask parents to volunteer to help with the projects and plans for the celebrations. Teachers may also ask for parent volunteers for other classroom activities, e.g., cooking, sewing.

### **Class Trips**

Trips range from walking and observing around our immediate community, to visiting museums, to taking larger trips with lots of planning involved. Most trips are related, in some way, to the curriculum. You may be asked to accompany the class on a class trip. Chaperoning a class trip is a great way for you to be involved with your child's class.

When you chaperone a class trip, please keep the following in mind:

- You will be responsible for a small group of children including your own child. Parents should not attend a trip only to be with their child. We need help managing the group.
- You are responsible, along with the teacher, for the safety and security of the children in your group.
- Do not bring siblings of any age if you volunteer for a trip.
- Do not buy anything on the trip for your child, or any other child.
- You must return to the school with us at the end of the trip.

Your child's teacher will notify you in advance of the trip, and ask you to sign a permission slip. Children who do not have signed permission slips are not able to go on the trip. Approval must be in writing, and may not be given over the phone. This is a Department of Education requirement. *Please make sure you give priority to returning the permission slip. It's very hard on a child if they must stay behind.*

## **Siblings**

We encourage students to attend their siblings' content study celebrations and music or dance performances, unless there are space, or other considerations. Your classroom teacher will let you know if siblings are invited to a given celebration. The sibling should return to his or her class in a reasonable amount of time, and does not need to stay until the very end.

*Students do not attend sibling's birthday celebrations.*

## **Class Parents**

One way to get involved in our school is by signing up to be one of two Class Parents. The primary role of the class parent is to assist the teacher and help foster a sense of community among the families in the class. Please see *PS 340 Guidelines for Class Parents* for details. We will hold a meeting of Class Parents early in the year to explain the role and answer any questions.

## **Class Lists**

We encourage and support families to make social connections with each other. Early in the school year, families enjoy making play dates and other social connections with other children and families. To that end, your class parent may compose and distribute a class list with contact information for all of the families in the class. Your participation is voluntary.

Due to privacy laws and considerations, the school is not able to give out any student information, including address and phone number, to other families. The PTA or class parents may collect that information, which you can decide to provide, or not.

*We ask that you use the information in the class list for social school connections only. Please do not send group emails to promote business, advertise events, promote children's classes, solicit information, or survey other parents about school issues.*

## **PTA**

PS 340 is fortunate to have a very active and vital Parent Teacher Association. Every parent/guardian of a student at PS 340 is automatically a member of the PTA.

Throughout the school year the PTA hosts many events which allow parent participation, and which help to build a greater sense of school community. It is because

of parent involvement that our PTA is so successful in fundraising which helps support many of our programs.

Families are invited to come to the monthly PTA meetings to keep informed about school programs, hear updates from the principal, learn about upcoming events, and find out how parents can help the school better serve all students. PTA meeting dates will be listed on the school calendar.

Please see the PTA link on our school website for more information.

### **SLT**

The School Leadership Team (SLT) is comprised of parents, teachers, PTA president and UFT Chapter Leader who work with the principal and advise her on a variety of issues. The SLT works with the principal to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) that sets annual goals for the school and systems to measure their achievement. The SLT meets once a month. The schedule can be found on the school calendar. An update on SLT meetings is given at each PTA meeting. SLT members serve for a term of two years.

### **Community Education Council (CEC)**

In 2003, the New York State legislature created 34 Community Education Councils. There is one CEC for each of the 32 school districts that make up the New York City public school system, along with two additional councils representing high schools and special education. The CECs are designed to be a voice for all parents of students in their districts. The Community Education Council for District Two (CECD2) conducts at least two meetings every month, which are open to the public. For more information, you may go to their website at [www.CECD2.net](http://www.CECD2.net).

### **Parent Workshops**

We partner with our PTA to provide a variety of parent workshops for families. In previous years we have offered workshops on social behaviors (*Encouraging a Positive Mindset in Your Child, Handling Tricky Social Situations with Your Child*), academic topics (*Math Night*), cultural responsiveness (*Border Crossers*), and Cybersafety.

### **Gifts for Teachers**

Families often wish to express their appreciation for their children's teachers by giving a gift. Teachers are generally touched and grateful for the gesture. Department of Education guidelines govern gift giving to any school employee, which are summarized below.

- Class gifts may be given, as long as they come from the whole class and individual contributors are not listed.
- Families may not be required to give, or contribute, to a gift. Class parents may ask, but not pressure families in any way to contribute.
- Families should not be asked to contribute a large amount.
- Gifts from individual families should be principally sentimental in nature and of small financial value.
- Teachers may not accept cash.

For the full Chancellor's Regulation C-110, see

<http://docs.nycenet.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-56/C-110.pdf>

## Our Communication to You

### **Curriculum Night**

In September, we host a Curriculum Night for parents. On Curriculum Night your child's teacher will describe her goals for your children, explain our program and curriculum, and talk about the daily schedule.

This year, Curriculum Night will be held on September 12 for pre-k, kindergarten and fifth grade, and September 18 for first through fourth grades.

### **Class Newsletters**

Your child's teacher wants you to know as much as possible about the learning activities during the school day. Teachers regularly send home information and photos about classroom events and activities at the end of the school week.

### **Weekly Principal EMail**

Pat regularly sends home a weekly email on Sunday night with information about the upcoming week.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are scheduled in November and March during both the afternoon and evening to accommodate different schedules. During conferences, the teacher describes your child's progress, explains his or her strengths and challenges, and gives you suggestions about how to help your child at home. You can come prepared with questions you might have. Conferences run about 15 minutes. Your child's teacher may

ask to meet you at other times during the year, if issues arise, and you may request a meeting as well.

### **Report Cards**

You will receive three reports during the year describing your child's progress against standards. We view report cards as a vehicle to share your child's strengths and challenges with you. We do not use them as a means to make children feel badly about themselves or inadequate in any way. Additionally, we do not use them to compare children, e.g., no "rank in class".

### **Informal Communication**

Your child's teacher may also contact you by phone, note or email if there is something that she would like to talk with you about. Our first official parent conference is in early November. This gives the teacher enough time to get to know your child, and formally present his or her work to you. Although she is always glad to meet with you to discuss any pressing issue, she is not able to schedule regular meetings, weekly or otherwise, with individual families.

### **Coffee with Pat**

Pat holds several informal morning meetings over the course of the year on various topics of interest. There is always time for Q & A. The dates are listed on our monthly calendar.

### **Emergency Contact**

In an emergency, we need to be able to reach you. Please keep all of your phone numbers up-to-date on the Blue Emergency Card. Please note our school phone number [917-305-1000](tel:917-305-1000) and share it with your emergency contacts, so that you will all know the school is calling. The phone number may look like a random cell phone number, and you might be tempted to ignore it.

We also have an emergency text system for true emergencies. We will collect your cell phone numbers, should you opt in, when school starts.



## Your Communication to Us

We encourage open communication between school and home. We will get back to you by the end of the next business day. Here are ways to communicate with us:

### **If you need help...**

Reni Matsushita, our **Parent Coordinator** can help you with any questions or concerns you might have, and can help direct you to the proper person within the school or DOE. Reni is located in the main office, and can be reached at 917-305-1000 x 1 or [renim.ps340@gmail.com](mailto:renim.ps340@gmail.com).

### **Classroom Teacher**

- *Send a note in with your child in his or her homework folder.* This is the method you should use if you have something the teacher needs to hear about during the school day, e.g., a change in the dismissal plan, as she might not check her email during the day. Teachers cannot take phone calls during the school day.
- *Email your child's teacher.* Feel free to email your child's teacher. She will give you her school email address. Email is a useful, paper-free way to ask quick questions, report on routine events and set up meetings. *It is not the best forum for lengthy discussions, curriculum debates, or discussion of important or sensitive issues. Teachers are not able to provide regular updates and reports to individual families via email.* Please do not expect your child's teacher to be available by email during the school day.
- *Speak on the phone.* You may call the Main Office and leave a message for your child's teacher, along with a phone number and a good time to call and she will return your call by the end of the next business day. Teachers do not take calls in their classrooms or during the school day.
- *Set up a meeting.* You may set up a meeting with your child's teacher if you have something you would like to discuss that cannot wait until Parent Conferences. At arrival and dismissal, please keep any discussions at a minimum, as the teacher must concentrate on the class.
- Our policy is to get back to parents before the end of the next business day.

*If issues develop between two children at school, it is best to talk to the teacher about the situation, instead of communicating directly with the other parent.*

### **Principal**

Pat is always willing to talk to parents. You may email her to make an appointment. If you have an issue related to your child's class, the best person with whom to speak first is the classroom teacher, as she is closest to the issues.

### **Change of Address**

Please email or call Beth if any information on the Blue Card changes: 917-305-1000 x 0 or [esegarra@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:esegarra@schools.nyc.gov)

### **Absence**

If your child is going to be absent, please email both the classroom teacher and Beth [esegarra@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:esegarra@schools.nyc.gov).

### **NYC DOE School Survey**

Every year, the Department of Education asks families for their feedback on different aspects of their child's school experience. You will receive the survey in your child's backpack in February. You may take the survey online or on paper. Please take the time to fill it out. It gives us important feedback about our school.

## Homework

Children receive reasonable, age-appropriate homework at PS 340. Our students have full, active, academically challenging school days. Many children participate in additional lessons, activities and playdates after school. This makes for a long day. We believe that lengthy homework assignments are not appropriate for young children. Research and experience shows us that excessive homework does not result in improved academic achievement for elementary school children.

Below is the homework you should expect your child to receive:

- *Pre-K* students do not receive any homework.
- *Kindergarteners and First Graders* bring books home in "book baggies" to read on their own, or with an adult to develop the habit of regular reading.
- *Second graders* will usually receive one or two weekly math assignments in addition to 20 minutes of nightly reading.

- *Third and fourth graders* will receive a *Homework Planning Sheet* at the beginning of the week describing when homework assignments are due. Students will complete 30 minutes of nightly reading and no more than 30 additional minutes of homework on average each night.
- *Fifth graders* will use a planner to take part in planning when to complete their own homework assignments as preparation for middle school. They will be assigned no more than an hour of homework an evening, including their nightly reading.
- We do not assign homework on weekends, holidays or school breaks.

The students may also involve you in some aspect of their learning, e.g., playing a math game, collecting leaves for a class book, interviewing you about your favorite restaurant.

## Arrival

We have a beautiful, new school building with many wonderful features. Unfortunately, the school has very little outdoor gathering space, and the lobby is not a safe waiting space. Students and families must wait outside until the school doors open even in inclement weather.

### **Breakfast**

You may drop your child off for school breakfast at the front door of the school at, and no later than 8:00 a.m. The doors close after the children enter at 8:00 am, so that they will have enough time to eat, and do not open again until 8:20 am. Students who come later, will need to wait for the school doors to open for arrival to enter. Parents do not stay with children during breakfast.

School doors open for pre-k at 8:15 am and for K to 5 at 8:20 a.m.

### **Pre-K**

Caregivers bring pre-k students to their classrooms on the fourth floor via the elevators.

- Before the yellow school doors open, pre-k families line up on the east side of the front door (to the left if you are facing the school).
- Front doors open at 8:15 am.
- Children who are not in their classrooms by 8:30 am will be marked late.
- Use only the left front door to enter the building and proceed to the elevators. Do not use the center staircase.

- After dropping off your child, use the elevators – not the center staircase, as the older children will be walking up to class – to return to the lobby.

### **Kindergarten**

In the beginning of the year, caregivers bring children to their classrooms on the second floor. As the children become more independent and familiar with school, they will enter the building on their own.

- Kindergarten families use the far, blue door on 17<sup>th</sup> Street to enter the building and the internal staircase. It is the door all the way down to the left of the main entrance if you are facing the school.
- Families should line up outside the door when they arrive at school.
- The Kindergarten door will open at 8:20 am.
- Please leave using the far door across from Room 202 or the elevator, not the center staircase, as the older children will be walking up to class.
- The Kindergarten door will close at 8:30 am, and you will need to bring your child through the main yellow front doors of the school, and he/she will be marked late.

**First through Fifth Graders** enter the school by themselves. In order to get the students in safely and quickly, we need to follow these procedures:

- School doors open at 8:20 am.
- Children line to the west of the yellow school doors (to the right if you are facing the school.) In order to facilitate the process, children should line up against the wall, with parents next to them. Please say your goodbyes to your child before he or she gets to the front door, so that we do not have a bottle-neck and long lines, e.g., kisses, backpack on, umbrellas closed. Children enter the building quickly in one line.
- If you are coming from 5th Avenue, children must get on the end of the line, and not wait in the front of the school.
- Please be aware of students from our co-located school, P94, getting off buses and coming into the building with their caregivers.
- The children will come into the building unattended and walk up the stairs to their classrooms.
- Parents will not accompany their child into the school. If you have business in the school building, e.g., office, nurse, please stop at the Security Desk.
- At 8:30 am, the front doors will close, entering children will be given a late pass and sent up to their classrooms.

### **A few words about lateness**

We believe it is important for all of the children to begin the day together as a community of learners. Children who arrive even a few minutes late can feel out of step with their classmates. It is, therefore, important that your child is not late to school.

Lateness is disruptive, not only for your child, but also for the other children in the class, the teacher, and the office staff who must accompany your child to the classrooms, which are spread out over six floors. We fully understand that there are circumstances that might cause you to be late occasionally, but it should not be a regular occurrence.

Lateness is part of the legal document tracked throughout the years as part of your child's record. Per DOE requirements, each late arrival is noted on your child's report card and remains part of his or her academic record. If a child is chronically late, a DOE attendance officer may contact the family.

### **Strollers & Scooters**

Unfortunately, we do not have room for stroller or scooter parking inside or outside of the school building. The FDNY has notified us that strollers, scooters, bicycles, etc, may not be brought into the building, folded or unfolded, as they constitute a hazard.

We fully realize that this presents an inconvenience for some families, however, this is the only safe policy. Please make sure your child's caregiver is aware of the procedures. Some parents and caregivers team up with another person, and they take turns watching the strollers (... and sleeping babies) outside the school, while the other one picks up both kids.

If you choose to leave your scooter or stroller outside of the school building, it is at your own risk. The school, including the Safety Agents, cannot take responsibility for the security of strollers or scooters, and will not review security tapes or investigate alleged incidents of theft. Do not lock up your items to any outdoor scaffolding.

### **Dismissal**

*Please make sure your babysitter is aware of all of these procedures.*

The teacher will have a procedure, e.g., high five with child, to make sure each child gets to the correct adult. Please be patient, and do not encourage your child to run over to you before the teacher has released him or her. We do our best to be quick, and we realize you may be in a rush, but handing children over to the correct caregiver is one of the most important things we do, and we need a consistent system, even if we know who you are.

Please leave the building immediately after picking up your child. The lobby or other parts of the school should not be used for kids to eat snack or put on coats and hats. If your child must use the restroom, please use the ones in the cafeteria or dance studio, and not the ones on the second or fourth floors.

### **Pre-K**

Caregivers take the elevators to pick up pre-k students at their classrooms.

- Strollers must be left outside, lined up against the building. They may not block the front door.
- School doors open at 2:35 pm.
- Caregivers use the elevators to go to the fourth floor, and the elevators or center staircase to leave the building.
- ***Caregivers sign out children before they leave the classroom.*** The caregiver is responsible for the child's location and safety after they take the child from the classroom.
- Fourth floor bathrooms are not available at dismissal. If a child needs to use the bathroom, the bathrooms in the cafeteria are open.

### **Kindergarten**

Caregivers use the front door and center staircase to pick up kindergarten students

- The doors will open at 2:35 pm
- Caregivers leave the second floor using any of the staircases or elevators.
- Second floor bathrooms are not available at dismissal. If a child needs to use the bathroom, the bathrooms in the cafeteria are open.

**First, Second and Third Graders** are picked up in the cafeteria. Parents enter the cafeteria through the double doors, and leave via the single door by the window.

**Fourth graders** are picked up in the Dance Studio.

**Fifth graders** are picked up in the Auditorium on the lower level.

Fourth and fifth graders are permitted to leave school on their own with previous written permission from parents. Blanket permission must be given, i.e., permission to leave any day on their own throughout the year, not on a case-by-case basis.

***A few important comments about safety:***

Keep your child in hand and in sight at all times. **When the classroom teacher turns your children over to you at the end of the day, we no longer keep track of them. You are responsible for their safety.** Our lobby has several elevators, and doors to the basement and outside. Children can get lost or wander outside.

While our Safety Agents will stop a child leaving the building by himself, they have no way of knowing if a child is part of a group, or is with the proper adult.

Do not let your child run ahead of you down the stairs or “hide” from you after picking him up from the classroom.

Do not walk ahead of your child out of the building.

Do not allow your child to slide down the bannisters, or climb on the stair railings.

Children should never be left unattended, even for a short while, on 17th Street. We have a narrow sidewalk, and a very busy street, with cars and bicyclists zipping by. If children play in the snow, or near the curb, they can easily step off.

**Early Pickup**

Please do not pick your child up early unless it is absolutely necessary. Tracking down individual children during the school day is disruptive for staff and students. Routine doctor and dentist visits should be scheduled after school.

We fully understand that there are times you need to get your child early, but children should not regularly leave early on any given day, e.g., summer Fridays, Wednesday for swimming lessons.

If you need to pick your child up early, come to the Main Office to sign your child out. We will bring him or her to the office to meet you. Keep in mind that, do to our small office staff and the size of our building, you may need to wait until someone can help you, as our office staff is sometimes assisting with lunch or in other areas of the school. *Please allow for waiting time.*

The end of the day is a busy time in the school and in the classrooms; therefore, all early pickup **must be completed by 2:15 pm**. After that time, you will need to wait until dismissal at 2:40 p.m. to pick up your child.

### **Authorized Child Pickup**

At the beginning of the school year, you will fill out two cards listing the names of the people who can pick up your child.

- *Yellow Release Form* - is kept by the teacher, and lists people who are authorized to pick up your child at the end of the day. This includes names of groups, other than Wingspan, who might pick up your child, e.g., YMCA. You may add to the list during the year. Please keep this card up-to-date throughout the year. Please be advised, teachers may ask for ID.
- *Blue Emergency Card* – is kept in the main office and lists people who can respond in an emergency if the school is not able to reach you.

We will not release a child to someone who is not listed on one of these cards, even if the person is known to us. This policy applies to relatives, babysitters and play dates with other children. If you would like someone else to pick up your child, you must notify your child’s teacher in writing.

### **Change in Pick-up Plans**

If your pick-up plans change, send a note in with your child specifying the name of the person picking up your child (not “Billy’s nanny”, but Elise Jones.)

If your pick-up plans change during the day, you will need to call Beth Segarra (917-305-1000) followed by an email ([esegarra@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:esegarra@schools.nyc.gov)) and copied to the teacher. Do not email only the teacher; she may not see it on time. Please do not leave a voicemail, for the same reason.

### **After School Program**

We partner with *Wingspan Arts* to provide an on-site, fee-based after-school program every day until 6:00 p.m. Please contact *Wingspan Arts* directly (212-586-2330) to register, ask questions, or relay your concerns about the after school program. Wingspan can book up, so make sure you sign up early.



The primary purpose of our after school program is to provide childcare for parents who need it. We do not offer on-site classes or enrichment programs after school via any other program except *Wingspan*. All after school classes are organized through them as a single point of contact for the school.

In addition, the PTA has compiled a list of other neighborhood programs which you can find on our website under the PTA tab. If you contract with the YMCA, or other groups to pick up your child after school, they need to follow our standard procedures, e.g., you must place their name (or company) on the Yellow Card, and they come to the classroom on time at dismissal. Due to space considerations, we are not able to bring all children going to a certain program to one spot.

## Attendance

We want your children to enjoy the full benefit of our program; therefore, students are expected to be in school, on time, every day. We ask families to schedule vacations during school holidays in order to minimize disruption. Because of the nature of our program, we are unable to provide make-up work for children who are on vacation.

Frequent absences and vacations have a big impact on your child's education – even in the early years. It can be very difficult for children to acclimate back into daily life at school. Additionally, since much of our curriculum is project-based, it is quite challenging for children to “make-up” missed assignments, or complete the work they miss while on vacations.

Please let us know if your child is going to be out of school by emailing **both** the teacher, and Beth Segarra in the Main Office ([esegarra@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:esegarra@schools.nyc.gov)).

School attendance is part of the legal document tracked throughout the years as part of your child's record. Per DOE requirements, each absence is noted on your child's report card and remains part of his or her academic record. Additionally, a history of chronic absences may impact middle school admissions. If a child is chronically absent from school, the DOE mandates that an attendance officer contact the family.

### **Extended Vacation**

It is important to avoid extending school vacations. In addition to being against NYC Dept of Education policy, it is disruptive to your child's learning. Topics build upon one another in our curricula, and it is difficult to "catch kids up". Additionally, most of our

lessons depend upon the children being there for the instruction, and plans change daily, based on student understanding, so, teachers may not be able to give you the work your child will miss.

## Eating

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is available, free of charge, to any P.S. 340 student. Children must be dropped off in the cafeteria at 8:00 a.m. – and no later - in order to have breakfast. PS 340 staff members supervise breakfast. Caregivers do not stay with children during breakfast.

### **Lunch & Recess**

School lunch periods and recess are supervised by school aides, para professionals and, generally, enrichment teachers, e.g., music, dance, PE. The staff works very hard to provide an environment conducive to eating, playing and resolving conflicts that inevitably arise during free play. The entire lunch and recess periods are 50 minutes.

Families have the option of sending in lunch from home, or eating school lunch, free of charge.

#### *Lunch from Home*

- When sending lunch from home, please consider healthy choices. Students may not bring soda or candy in their lunch. For safety reasons, please do not send drinks in glass bottles. Please label your child's lunchbox and water bottle. If children forget their lunch in the classroom, we offer them school lunch, as we do not have the staff to accompany them upstairs to get their lunch. We are flexible with this in the beginning of the school year as children are getting used to the process.
- We want you to know what your children are eating in school. Therefore, we do not allow food sharing. We ask children to put unfinished (non-messy) food back in their lunchboxes, so that you will be able to see if they are eating lunch, and make adjustments accordingly. Although the staff in the lunchroom will encourage children to eat, we do not force or pressure children.
- If you forget to pack your child's lunch, you may bring it to the office and we will see that your child gets it; however, lunch cannot be brought to school on a

routine basis. If a child does not have a lunch from home, we will offer him school lunch for the day.

*School lunch*

- School lunch is free for all students. Daily school menus are available on the School Food website:  
<http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/menusdailydisplay.aspx>.
- We use the healthier menu, labeled “alternative”.
- Children are offered water or milk at lunchtime.
- School Foods does not offer meal options, e.g., vegetarian, kosher.
- Pre-K students have their school lunch brought to them at their tables. They do not go to the lunch line have to balance their lunch and tray, etc.
- School aides are available at the lunch line to help kindergarteners, and other younger students.

*Lunch & Recess periods*

Because we have limited space in our yard, we need to have multiple lunch and yard periods. For grades with late (kindergarten) or early (pre-k) lunch periods, we provide ample time for a relaxing snack time during the day, and, as such, encourage you to send in a fairly hefty snack each day.

<b><i>Grade</i></b>	<b><i>Lunch</i></b>	<b><i>Recess</i></b>
Pre-K		
<i>Classes 1 &amp; 2</i>	10:20 am	10:45 am
<i>Classes 3 &amp; 4</i>	10:45 am	10:20 am
Kindergarten	12:50 pm	1:15 pm
1st	12:00 pm	12:25 pm
2nd	12:25 pm	12:00 pm
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11:35 am	11:10 am
4 <sup>th</sup>	11:10 pm	11:35 am
5th	11:10 am	11:35 pm

Recess is held in the yard, gym or auditorium, due to the small size of the playground. In all cases, recess allows for active play.

*Outdoor Recess*

Children need to play outside. Research and experience show us that kids are more alert and engaged when they have had outdoor playtime. Per DOE policy, students play

outside daily, unless there is rain, snow, extreme cold, or if the playground is frozen over. Please make sure that your child brings appropriate outdoor clothing. It is helpful to label gloves, hats, and coats to prevent loss. If the weather prohibits outdoor recess, the children will usually have indoor recess in our gym.

### **Snack**

The students have time for snacks in school depending upon their age and lunch period. Your child's teacher will provide more information.

As you know, sugar can have several negative impacts on children's behavior and ability to focus. Increased blood sugar levels are often followed by energy "crash" shortly thereafter. The reason we allow snack is because we believe young children benefit from an energy boost during the day.

To support your child's physical and mental health throughout the school day, please pack healthy snacks only. Please do not pack snacks like candy, gummies, fruit roll-ups, cookies, donuts and other sugary treats. (You can blame it on us. *"Sorry, the school says no."*)

For healthy snack ideas check out [http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy\\_school\\_snacks.html](http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.html)

We do not have refrigerators for children's snacks, so you may want to include a cold pack.

Gum and candy are not allowed in school.

### **Food Allergies**

Please inform your child's teacher and the school nurse if your child has a food allergy and we will make arrangements for his or her safety.

## Holidays & Birthdays

### **Holidays**

Holidays are low-key events at PS 340. We save most of our celebrating for our academic work (publishing parties, content study celebrations), class achievements performances, and birthdays.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are very special for children and we are glad to celebrate their birthdays with them. We want to keep the process manageable, so that we do not lose instruction time, or have hurt feelings. Your child's teacher will send you a letter describing the birthday process in her classroom. Please keep these factors in mind:

- o Parents and caregivers may come in to school on their child's birthday, and bring a treat for the class in pre-k, kindergarten and first grade.
- o Second through fifth grade parents may send in a birthday treat in the morning with their child, and the teacher will distribute them at a convenient time during the day. Families do not attend.
- o Bring/send individually prepared items, e.g., cupcakes, brownies, cookies.
- o Do not bring in anything that needs to be cut with a knife, e.g., cake, pie, or scooped into bowls (ice cream), unless discussing it first with the teacher.
- o Do not supply a drink.
- o Do not serve items with nuts.
- o If your child has allergies, please speak to your child's teacher. You may want to leave a box of snacks, e.g., cookies, with the teacher to use when there is a birthday celebration.
- o Do not bring party hats, goodie bags, gifts or piñatas. We will not distribute them, and do not wish to disappoint your child. Additionally, please do not give these items to kids out in the hallway or outside the school.
- o You may distribute party invitations in school only if every single child in the class is invited to the party. Your child may put the invitations in her classmates' mailboxes, after discussing it with the teacher.
- o When picking children up after school for a birthday celebration with friends, please be discreet and sensitive to the other children (and parents) who may not be invited, and remind your child to do the same.
- o Please bring your child to the office for a special birthday pencil from Pat. (*You'd be surprised what a hit it is!*)

**Students do not attend their sibling's birthday celebrations in class.**

## Clothing

- We do not have a student dress code. Children should be dressed comfortably so that they can work and play.
- We want children to interact freely with the materials in their classroom. Reasonable precautions will be taken in school to keep your child *relatively* clean, e.g., using smocks for painting; however, you should send your child to school in clothing that can get dirty, and save the designer clothes for the weekend.
- Pre-K, K and 1<sup>st</sup> graders should bring a complete change of clothing in a large Ziploc, labeled bag, in case of accidents. We have extra clothing in the main office, should an older child need them.
- Please do your best to send your children to school with clothing they can manage themselves, e.g., Velcro shoes vs. shoelaces, pant zippers or snaps vs. belts.
- Children may not wear hats inside the school, except if they are related to religious beliefs.
- Avoid flip-flops. They are hard to run and climb in.
- Children should not wear FitBits or watches that are really toys (lots of beeping and buzzing and settings.)
- **Children need to wear sneakers on gym/dance days for their comfort and safety. They are not allowed to participate if they are wearing regular shoes.**
- Please do not send children to school with overly distracting “blinking” shoes or headbands.
- The *Lost & Found* is located by the window in between the safety agent’s desk and dance studio. We periodically pack up the belongings and donate them. ***It is helpful to label all of your children’s belongings***, especially water bottles, sweatshirts and sweaters. You’d be surprised how many perfectly good items we give away at the end of the year.

## Health

### **School Nurse**

We have been assigned a very experienced, exceptional nurse, Ilene Heller, who has worked in schools in our neighborhood for many years. Ilene will send a note home every time your child visits her office. She will call you if your child is injured or needs to be picked up because he or she is sick.

Ilene is in Room 218 and can be reached at 917-305-1000 x 2.

### **Medication**

- Medication can be administered to your child only if the school has a current form (called a 504) on file. This includes over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol, allergy medicine, cough syrup, or eye drops, unless this information is included on a 504 form. You may pick up a form from the nurse's office in Room 218.
- All medication must be delivered to the school by an adult, full and unopened in the original bottle/package.
- Teachers and other school staff may not dispense any medication or apply sunscreen or other kinds of lotion.
- Children may not carry and/or take medication on their own.

### **Illness and Injury**

We appreciate your assistance in helping to prevent the spread of illness in the classroom. Per Department of Education policy, if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms or health issues, please keep him or her home for at least 24 hours from the end of the symptom(s) or the beginning of medical treatment: *fever, vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis (pink eye), any contagious illness, e.g., chicken pox, flu, strep throat*. Please keep in mind that, even though you may think other children are contagious, we may not require them to stay home from school for colds, runny noses, etc.

If your child becomes ill or injured at school and needs to be sent home, our school nurse will call you.

### **Lice**

Head lice are very common in school-aged children and are easily transmitted. To help identify and treat head lice, the PTA has contracted with *Licenders*, a private company that specializes in preventative head lice inspections. They will conduct lice checks several times throughout the year.

The NYC Office of School Health mandates that all children with live lice must remain at home until all lice are removed.

Children are not excluded from school if nits are found. Nits are not the same thing as lice. *Lice are insects that move around the head. Nits are egg cases laid by lice, stuck on to hair shafts; they are smaller than a pinhead and are pearly white - Office of School Health.* Nits can develop into lice. If nits are found in your child's hair, *LiceEnders* will inform you via letter. **We recommend and encourage you to treat your child so that the nits do not become full-blown lice.**

Lice are not caused by unsanitary conditions or dirty hair. It is important that children who have lice are not made to feel uncomfortable in any way. Please be careful how you speak with your child about other children who may have lice. We will treat your child in the same manner should lice be found in his or her head.

## Safety

### **School Safety**

A fundamental responsibility of ours is to keep your child safe while he or she is at school. Pat will devote one of the early *Coffee with Pat* sessions to talk about our safety measures, some of which are listed below.

- Every school has procedures for emergencies. Emergency readiness training starts in September and continues for staff and students throughout the year. New York State law requires schools to conduct a minimum of 12 emergency drills every year, designed to help prepare school communities for three different types of responses to emergencies that might occur: evacuation, lockdown, shelter in.
- All schools are required by the Department of Education and the NYPD to develop a School Safety Plan outlining all of the safety procedures in the school. This plan is developed by the School Safety Committee, and is on file with the Department of Education and the NYPD.



- A Safety Management Team meets once a month to review safety issues. The May 2020 Safety Team Meeting is open to parents.
  - A Building Response Team (BRT) is organized, trained and meet regularly, and are responsible for supervising emergencies.
  - Our school has two full time safety agents, Agent Santana and Agent Easley, who maintain the safety and security of our school building. Anyone who enters the building after arrival and before dismissal must show ID to the Safety Agent, even if she knows you.
- We ask that you take the direction of the Safety Agents respectfully and seriously. They are NYPD employees and are responsible for maintaining the safety and security of our children. Please follow their directions and do not argue with them.
- Our building is fully equipped with surveillance cameras in all stairwells, corridors, and outdoor/public spaces. The cameras are monitored regularly, and our building is periodically patrolled by the Safety Agents.
  - All of our outside doors have alarms that go off if a child opens the door. Please do not use our fire doors as exits if they are closed.
  - We maintain an emergency text system, to which parents must opt in, to communicate with you about true emergencies.

### **Evacuation Drills and Lockdown Drills**

In compliance with the Department of Education regulations, evacuation (fire) drills and lockdown drills are conducted throughout the year to help guarantee our students' safety. We will prepare the children for the drills.

In an Evacuation Drill, the alarms will go off and the children leave the building. We explain Evacuation Drills by saying: *We need to practice leaving the building quickly in case there is something unsafe and we need to leave the school.*

All New York City public schools must hold several lockdown drills following standard procedure every year. We make an announcement on the PA. The teacher locks the classroom door, and gathers the children in a predetermined safe area of the classroom,

where they wait quietly for an announcement that the drill is over. The drill lasts under 5 minutes.

The staff is aware of alternative plans in case the kids are not in their own classrooms, e.g., yard, gym, cafeteria. For this first drill, the teacher will prepare the children beforehand with a calm, simple explanation: *We need to practice staying safe in our classroom in case there is something unsafe in the school building.* The drills may sound scary to us as adults, but the kids handle them as routinely as we handled fire drills when we were in school.

### **Re-Location**

In an emergency, if the school needs to be evacuated for any length of time, children will be moved to another school. At that time, the evacuation location will be listed on the DOE website ([www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov)). We will attempt to place it on our website, and/or contact you via email, or emergency text, depending upon the circumstances, once the children are safely at the alternate location.

## Community Service

We believe that young children can learn that they can contribute in age-appropriate ways to the larger community, help those who need help, and make the world a better place. We do this through several initiatives:

- *City Harvest* - the PTA runs a food drive every year in November to help New Yorkers in need.
- *Room-to-Grow* - The PTA runs a toy drive in the spring to provide clothing and books to those who need them.
- *Social Action Group* - We run a Fourth Grade Social Action group where students focus on an issue of their choice. Last year they chose Global Warming as their issue, and focused on Saving the Coral Reefs. Fifth graders study Social Action as a content study in the spring.
- *Content studies* - We have a goal within our content studies, to include some form of social equity learning and/or community service.

## Items that should not come to school

We would like the school to be a safe, collaborative environment. Your child should not bring personal items of any kind to school, including school supplies, *unless the teacher has requested it*. These items cause disruption and hurt feelings, and include:

- Toys
- Games
- Pokemon-type cards
- Stuffed animals
- Candy or gum
- Electronic devices - including “fit-bits” and distracting watches that make noise.
- Money
- Any “weapon-like” items, e.g., Swiss army knife, or items that could be misconstrued as a weapon, e.g., water gun.
- Toys “disguised” as jewelry or watches.
- Any personal items, pens, rocks, toy figures, memo pads, etc.

Personal items must remain in a child’s backpack at all times, e.g., during arrival, dismissal, lunch and yard.

## Cell Phone Policy

*All NYC public schools are required to have a cell phone policy. The following policy was created and approved by the School Leadership Team.*

At PS 340, we believe that cell phones are important tools that parents use to stay in touch with their children as they travel to and from school. We, therefore, allow students of any age to bring a cell phone to school, as long as these conditions are met:

- Students do not use cell phones while in the school building, including during lunch, recess, *Wingspan* or class trips.
- Cell phones are turned off for the duration of the school day and do not ring.
- Cell phones are stored securely in the students’ backpacks.
- Parents do not communicate with their children during the school day via cell phone.

If these conditions are not met, the student may lose the privilege of having a phone in school. The school does not take responsibility for the safekeeping of cell phones, and is not responsible if they are lost or stolen.

### Shared Space with P94

Our school shares space within the building with *P94, The Spectrum School*. The program is part of the NYC public school system and provides schooling for children with special needs, particularly those on the autism spectrum. The children are of elementary school age. P94 is run by a different principal, is permanently located on one wing of our third floor, and shares space with our school, e.g., cafeteria, yard, gym.

The P94 staff is well trained to work with children who may not behave in a typical fashion, e.g., shouting, dropping to the floor. We want to let you know, so that you are not concerned if you see children that you think may be in distress.

Sharing a building is a common arrangement within the DOE, and tends to work well. The principals/directors of the programs meet monthly to plan, discuss and resolve issues.

### Miscellaneous

#### **Out of Zone Pre-K Students**

Students who currently attend pre-k at P.S. 340 are not automatically accepted into P.S. 340's kindergarten. All students, both zoned and non-zoned, must apply for admission in the spring. At that point, zoned students will have priority over non-zoned students, even if the zoned child does not attend our pre-k. Students who do attend our pre-k, however, will have priority over other non-zoned students who do not. We have no way of knowing how many zoned students will apply next year, so cannot accurately predict if the kindergarten classes will be full. We just mention it to make sure this Department of Education policy is clear.

#### **Class Placement**

We are not able to take requests to place your child with a particular teacher, class or child, or be placed separately from another child. As you must appreciate, there are

many factors we consider when making up classes, and need the flexibility to place children where we think they will do best. I am sure you can imagine the challenges we would face if we were to try to meet all families' requests, particularly given the small number of classes in each grade.

Having said this, we do not place children in classes blindly or randomly. We have a good idea about which students should and should not be in class together, and take our own knowledge and experience with the kids into account when making up classes.

### **Other**

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in or near the school building.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the school.
- Student bathrooms are for children only. Adults may use the restroom in the Auditorium on the lower level, or staff bathrooms on other floors.
- Dogs, and other pets, are not permitted in the school.

