

PS9
The Sarah Anderson School

Kindergarten
Handbook



2016-2017 School Year

Public School 9
100 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024
www.ps9.org

Kindergarten

It's a big year of excitement and change –a time of “letting go” as the child starts a full day of school-- on the way to developing a greater sense of his/her own self. The kindergarten year starts off gradually with an orientation and phase-in period for the first three weeks of school. Information about the phase-in period will be sent to the families over the summer. As with all classes at PS 9, Kindergarten has a teacher and a full time assistant teacher working with the students. Kindergarten children are assigned homework beginning in the spring to instill a sense of responsibility and reinforce skills taught in school.

The New York State and New York City curriculum is taught in all kindergarten classes with an emphasis on two general themes: studying families and the exploration of the five senses.

Attached to this handbook you will see a sample of what a typical week looks like for a kindergartner.

Enrichment Programs at PS 9

Arts:

Kindergartners participate in art two times per week. The arts transcend language barriers, ethnic differences, and standardized levels of academic achievement. For this reason in the higher grades, the curriculum is enriched by an integrated arts program designed to complement and strengthen the academics through affiliations with cultural institutions such as: The New York City Ballet and Carnegie Hall. PS 9's close proximity to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The American Museum of Natural History, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts allows teachers to build the arts into the students' everyday experiences.

Spanish:

All students in grades K-5 will be offered instruction in learning the Spanish language. Kindergartners attend Spanish two times per week. It is designed to support and reinforce grade level CCLS units as it exposes students to the Spanish language.

Chess:

PS 9 students receive chess instruction once a week from kindergarten through Grade 2. Chess is designed to be an exposure program. In addition to the availability of after- school chess instruction, students also have the opportunity to compete in chess tournaments throughout the year.

Gym:

All students participate in gym once a week and go outside for recess on good weather days. Please make sure your child is dressed comfortably on these days. Children will need sneakers on gym days, or they will not be allowed to participate. No wheeled shoes are allowed at any time in the school building or on school property.

Library:

Kindergartners visit the library once a week and are able to take books home. PS 9 has a part-time librarian. The remainder of the time the library is staffed by Learning Leaders (parent volunteers).

Music:

Kindergartners participate in music class two times per week. Every Monday, all K classes take a joint music class in the auditorium in preparation for their spring concert known as K Sing.

Clusters:

Teachers in New York City are by contract entitled to a certain amount of time during the school day to prepare lessons. During this "prep" time, students are engaged in enrichment classes, known as "clusters". Clusters are taught by Department of Education teachers who work with all PS 9 students. The scheduling of clusters varies from class to class and from grade level to grade level. Every PS 9 student will receive experience in all cluster areas by the end of his/her time at PS 9. Our cluster program includes classes in Physical and Health Education, Music, Art, Spanish, Technology and Library. Our cluster schedule is enhanced and enriched by experiences in instrumental music (grades 3, 4 and 5), and ORFF Movement/Instrumental Music.

Kindergarten Frequently Asked Questions

What time is drop-off?

Students must arrive at school by 8:30 AM. You may drop your child off as early as 8:10 AM. Free breakfast for children in all grades is available in the cafeteria starting at 8:10 AM. You should walk your child into the main school entrance on 84th Street where he/she will be escorted by a member of the Fifth Grade Safety Patrol to the designated class table in the cafeteria.

What happens if my child is late?

If you arrive past 8:30 a.m., you must take your child to the main office to get a late pass.

NOTE: Overall student attendance and lateness are factors in PS 9's evaluation (Dept. of Education Report Card), so it is critical that we support our school's success by bringing students to school ON TIME. Late arrivals also disrupt the class's morning routine.

When and where is pick-up?

After the phase-in period is complete, Monday-Thursday pick-up will be at the 83rd Street/Columbus Avenue entrance (in the Kindergarten Play Yard). Gates open at 2:45/2:50 PM. Friday pick-up will be at the classroom. In inclement weather, pick-up is in the classroom. In that case, a note will be posted on the 83rd Street door directing you for classroom pick-up.

What is PS 9's policy on food allergies?

PS9 is not a peanut free school. If your child has a peanut or other food allergy, please discuss with your child's teacher immediately. Please also meet with PS 9's Nurse to make sure the proper information/paperwork is on file. When necessary, it is possible to have the allergy-inducing ingredient (i.e. nuts) restricted from the classroom and a section of the class lunchroom table can be reserved and maintained for children with severe food allergies where they will be monitored by a paraprofessional.

What is the lunch schedule / routine?

All Kindergarten classes have lunch together in the cafeteria. Cafeteria aides and the assistant teachers are on hand to help students navigate the lunch line, open any thermoses or packaged items, and generally ensure that all children have a safe and pleasant lunch. Children will be billed appropriately for milk and lunch. The citywide school lunch menu is posted on a bulletin board in the main entrance hallway (West 84th Street), and can be found on the DOE website at the following link: <http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/meals/default.aspx>. Please note that New York City's school food sets national standards in quality and nutrition, with no artificial trans-fat, high fructose corn syrup, or additives.

Do Kindergartners have snack-time?

Snack, which all students must bring from home, is served in the morning. Snack schedules can vary across classrooms, so during Curriculum Night you can ask your child's teacher when snack fits into the morning routine. Snack items should be healthy, filling, quick to open, and easy and neat to eat. These include cut-up fruit, yogurt in a twist-open container, granola bars, and cheese sticks.

NOTE: Classrooms do NOT have refrigerators or microwaves so include an ice pack in your child's lunchbox for items that should remain cold, and place already heated items in a heat-containing thermos. Please also pack all necessary utensils, as classrooms are not equipped with these. Please LABEL your child's lunch & snack containers with their name and classroom. If your child attends Re-Create Afterschool, snack will be provided before activities begin.

Is there a Lost & Found?

Yes. There are two bins in the well (outside of the auditorium). You can look for any lost/misplaced items there. Reminder: it helps to locate your child's lost/misplaced belongings if everything is labeled with your child's name. Please label everything.

What physical activity will my child be involved in?

Kindergartners have recess every day after lunch in the kindergarten yard along 83rd Street. Kindergartners also visit the yard for snack and recess four times a week and gym in the cafeteria once a week. The yard has two sections: a playground with a padded ground surface and age-appropriate jungle gyms, and an adjacent "activity yard" with tables and benches. Children are welcome and encouraged to participate in activities in both areas. Playground aides and assistant teachers supervise the children in the playground at all times. During bad weather the children participate in supervised board games, or in the well area outside the auditorium.

Is there a rest period?

Yes. There is a 15-20 minute rest period where students go to their rest spots throughout the classroom.

Will there be homework?

There is no homework for the early part of the school year. You will be asked to read with or to your child every day, and your child will be given sight words each week to go over with you at home. After Spring Recess, your child will have short homework assignments placed in the red folder. The purpose of the homework is to introduce children to the concept so they are better prepared for first grade. You will receive more information on homework practices and goals from your child's teacher later in the year.

How are Kindergarten birthdays celebrated at school?

Classroom birthday celebrations are limited to one treat (cupcake, fruit, pretzels) per child. (Candles or cakes are not permitted). Party favors are not permitted and will be sent home. Some classes celebrate all the birthdays each month with a single monthly celebration for children only. Each teacher will inform you of the protocol early in the school year.

My name is spelled incorrectly in the PA directory. How can I correct it?

Changes will be formally requested once the school year begins. Any changes can be submitted via a form on www.ps9.org, under Parents' Association, PA Directory. You also will have a chance to review it at Meet the Teacher Night, after which all edits are made and the Directory will be sent out to PS 9 families via the weekly email update.

Is there a dress code?

PS 9 is not a uniform school, but students should not wear t-shirts with inappropriate slogans or pictures. In addition, the administration asks that no students wear flip-flops. Flip flops can lead to injuries on stairs and in line.

What busing services are available and how can I learn more?

Busing is handled by the administration. Please contact the main office for information.

How can I change my address or make updates to original information?

A new residency questionnaire must be filled out for a change of address for each child (if more than one child attends PS9). Bring a copy of the new lease or Con Edison bill to the main office and speak to the pupil accounting secretary to make changes or updates to your child's blue emergency card and file.

What is Curriculum Night?

Curriculum Night (September 22nd) - also known as "Meet the Teacher Night" takes place every year. This is an opportunity for you to see your child's classroom and hear from your child's teacher. For the first half hour or so, teachers will walk you through the different areas of the classroom (the meeting area, games, artwork, etc.) and provide a detailed description of that classroom's daily routine. Teachers also discuss the Kindergarten curriculum, giving you a sense of what your child will be learning throughout the year.

Part two of this evening, once the teacher leaves, is an opportunity for parent "business" – i.e. volunteer/assign class parents (who will, for the school year, solicit chaperones for class trips, organize the class art project for PS 9's annual auction, coordinate parent-teacher conference schedule, and send general communications to the class). Parents can also organize a "parents' night out" (i.e. pot-luck hosted at someone's house or dinner at a restaurant), and/or a class play date so families can get to know each other. In addition, you will learn about PA programs, events and committees, and ways to support PS 9.

Classroom Visits

Throughout the year there will be opportunities to visit your child's classroom. There will also be an opportunity during the year to celebrate a published, final piece of work as well as an opportunity to see some work in progress. The teachers will share these dates with you as they are scheduled.

What does the Parents Association do and how can I get involved?

The PA at PS 9 is dedicated to supporting PS 9's education enrichment programs such as having an assistant teacher full day in every classroom, chess for grades K-2, music, art and Spanish. The PA hosts many events and fundraising efforts throughout the year. Contact PA Co-Presidents if you would like to get involved.

Parent Involvement

Along with all the essential components that make a public school successful, it is extremely important to have a motivated and involved parent body. Parent involvement at PS 9 is a key to its success. The parents in our school realize the importance of making a contribution that not only benefits their individual child, but all the students. Our students come from all over the city and from different parts of the world, with parents that work in a variety of occupations. Each experience that is brought forth is a wonderful and unique contribution to our community. There are many opportunities for parents to become involved in the fabric of PS 9.

Parent Association - Every PS 9 parent is automatically a member of the PS 9 PA. But other opportunities exist to become involved in PA activities. The Executive Board is elected in for a one-year term from July 1st – June 30th. The officers of the PA include: Co-Presidents, Vice Presidents, Recording/Corresponding Secretaries, and Treasurers. In addition, there are various Committees such as Membership and Parent Involvement, Budget, Fundraising, Hospitality, Communications, Class Parent Liaison, Grants, Merchandise are just a few. For more information visit www.ps9.org

PA Meetings - Monthly PA meetings are a fantastic way to learn about our school. Ms. Kate kicks off each meeting sharing fresh information, and there's generally a chance for parents to ask questions. Meetings also feature guest speakers – sometimes our own specials teachers (music, art, Spanish) who share the curriculum for the programs they run for our children and sometimes we welcome local officials or other outside guests. You will also learn about our various committees and ways you can get involved and make your own mark at PS 9. Meetings take place monthly and most often on Fridays after drop-off at 8:45 AM. We also have two evening meetings per year to accommodate those who cannot attend the morning. Those are usually on Wednesday evenings at 6:45 pm. We encourage all parents to attend!

Kindergarten-At-Large

A critical role, Kindergarten-at-Large parents disseminate information from the PA across all K classes. KAL reps help with events, fundraisers, important notices, etc. They plan the Kindergarten orientations in the Spring and Fall, and coordinate volunteers for events such as Spring Fair. This role is held by current Kindergarten parent(s).

The School Leadership Team consists of parents, PS 9 staff and administrators who formulate a Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) as well as a budget for our school. School Leadership Teams are mandated by the Department of Education. This group is responsible for developing school-based educational strategies and ensuring that resources are available for implementing those strategies. SLT members serve as the communication link within the school and to the greater school community. They evaluate the school's educational program, focusing on the goal of continuous student achievement and improvement to reach the school-stated mission. The PS 9 School Leadership Team meets one to two times each month. Meetings are open to the entire school community and minutes from the meetings are posted on the PA bulletin board in the school's PA Room, which is located right outside the nurse's office.

Class Parents – These parents are the first level of support in the school. Class Parents work closely with the teacher to communicate information to the parents in their classrooms, and organize events involving the students and teachers. Also these parents report and discuss issues or concerns to the PS 9 Class Parent Liaison who represents our parents' concerns to the principal. These positions (usually three-four per class) are selected at the Meet the Teacher Night in early fall of the school year.

Become certified to be a Parent Volunteer – “Learning Leaders” is a Department of Education-recognized volunteer training and certifying group for PS 9. The three 2-hour training sessions can qualify parents to volunteer within the building during the school day, i.e. helping out in the library. The training sessions are available on-site in the fall.

Class Trips - PS 9 students go on many interesting class trips during the school year, and parents are invited to go along as a teacher's helper. It is a great way to share an event with your child, as well as a good opportunity to get to know his/her classmates and teacher better.