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The North Hills School

2023 & 2013 National Blue Ribbon School

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The North Hills School P.S. 221Q

Parent Handbook 2023-2024



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At P.S. 221, The North Hills School, our mission is to provide a nurturing learning environment in which students are challenged to reach their academic potential through a standards-based, rigorous curriculum. The members of our community – parents, teachers, and staff – are dedicated to developing and supporting each child’s unique talents. Our focus is on the development of the whole child. The North Hills School is committed to instilling in each student a desire to learn, problem solve, think critically, and persevere through challenges. Social-emotional learning is integrated into all areas of school life and fosters collaboration, respect, inclusiveness and building relationships.



Our Vision Statement

By working collaboratively as a team that includes teachers, parents, staff, and administrators, our P.S. 221 vision is to prepare our students to think critically, communicate effectively, and embrace learning throughout their lives. It is our belief that as responsible, empathetic global citizens, they will positively impact society.

School Hours:

School Hours for all students will be **8:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m.** Attendance will be taken by your child's teacher during first period. Please notify the school if you know your child will be absent.

Morning Arrival

All students will enter through the doors designated for their grade.

PreK/3rd Grade	Main Front Doors
3K/Kindergarten/G8	Kindergarten Playground
1st and 2nd Grade	Doors with Overhang on Marathon Parkway (1 right side/2 left side)
4th, and 5th Grade	Doors by the Queens Public Library

Afternoon Dismissal

All students will exit through the doors designated for their grade

PreK/3rd	Main Front Doors
3K/Kindergarten	Kindergarten Playground
1st and 2nd Grade	Doors with Overhang on Marathon Parkway (1 right side/2 left side)
4th and 5th Grade	Doors by the Queens Public Library (4 right side/3 left side) Lower Playground Doors, enter Marathon Parkway by public library

Arrival: The school doors will open at 8:20 a.m. Students should enter the building through their designated doors. If you arrive after 8:25 they must enter through the main entrance – all other doors will be locked.

Dismissal: Dismissal will be at 2:40 pm each afternoon.
*In the event of inclement weather you will be notified via email or robo call and follow procedure below for arrival and dismissal:
Grade 5 – enter/exit through main entrance

Dismissal - Late Pick-up:

Please arrange for pick-up promptly at 2:40 pm. If there is a change in your child's routine dismissal, such as not taking the bus home or going home with a friend, a written note must be sent to the teacher/office. Verbal messages from children will not be accepted.

If an emergency occurs that prevents you from being on time, please call the main office immediately to let us know. If you are late picking up, your child(ren) will be brought to the auditorium. Upon your arrival, you must enter through the main entrance and sign your child out from the late book indicating the time of pick-up.

Bus Children:

If your child takes the school bus home, he/she will be placed on the bus every day. Any changes in dismissal procedures must be made in writing.

Breakfast in the Classroom:

Daily free *grab and go* breakfast in the classroom is available for all students. Breakfast is optional; we know that some children prefer to eat breakfast at home.

Lunch/Recess:

Students will eat lunch in the by grade in the cafeteria.

K, 2, 3 11:15 – 12:05
1, 4, 5 12:10 – 1:00

Snack:

The School Leadership Team has developed the following policy regarding school snacks:

Water is the only beverage that should be provided during snack. Other beverages can be consumed during lunch. Save money and the earth by using a reusable water bottle during snack time. Also, please send in a snack that is healthy and ready to eat. For our youngest students, please peel oranges and cut up fruit, if necessary. These healthy snacks reinforce good eating habits and keep our classrooms neat and insect-free.

Please see the list below for some snack options:

Fruits & Vegetables	Yogurt
Dried Fruits	Raisins
Granola Bars	Crackers
Cheese Sticks	Pretzels
Whole Grain Cereals	Gold Fish
Graham Crackers	Rice Cakes

Emergency Blue Contact Cards:

Please complete the emergency contact cards by September 15, 2023. If any information changes, contact your child’s teacher immediately. **It is extremely important that all phone numbers, including cell phone numbers, be current.**

Your child will only be released to individuals you designate on the blue card

Communication:

Communication with our families is key to ensuring a successful school year. Regular emails, notices and flyers will share updates and important information. Also, be on the lookout for our monthly calendar of events compiled by our parent coordinator, and monthly newsletters compiled by each grade team. Our goal is to reduce our paper notices and communicate electronically. Therefore, we ask that you please give your email information to our parent coordinator and the PTA so you don’t miss out on events and news from our school. Notices and flyers will also be posted on our school’s website - www.ps221q.org. Families can also follow us on Twitter @PS221team.

*** Please take the time to read emails/notices and send back needed responses.***

NYC Schools Account (NYCSA):

It is important to set up a MYSTUDENT.NYC account for your students. This account is a helpful online portal that keeps track of your child’s education records including report cards, schedule, and transportation details. You will need your child’s Student ID OSIS# and an Account Creation Code. Contact our parent coordinator Teresa Kirchhofer at tkirchhofer@schools.nyc.gov for assistance.

Clothing:

Children are encouraged to be responsible for keeping track of their outerwear and other belongings during the school day.

- Please write your child's name on all outer garments, lunch boxes, and water bottles.
- Sneakers must be worn for gym.
- Assembly clothes – a white shirt and black or dark blue pants/skirt.
- There is a Lost & Found box located in the cafeteria for unclaimed items to be retrieved.

Attendance:

Good attendance is essential for a successful school year.

- Research shows that children who are chronically absent – missing 20 or more days of school in a given school year -- are less likely to graduate from high school.
- Data shows that students who miss more school than their peers consistently score lower on standardized tests, no matter their age, demographic group, city, or state.
- Please reach out to your child's teacher, our guidance counselor, or administration if there are any issues with getting your child to school

Absences:

- **If your child is sick, they should stay home. The best learning occurs when children feel their best. All work can be made up when they are feeling better.**
- **Please call the school/notify your child's teacher if they will be absent.** When your child returns to school if there is a note from the doctor please send it in with them.
- If a family emergency requires you to travel when school is in session, please provide the school with proper documentation, which includes an office form along with your travel itinerary. Please note that traveling does not constitute an excused absence.

Lateness:

- Arriving on time is important emotionally and academically for students.
- Lateness disrupts the flow of the day for your child and the class.
- Students may feel anxious and/or miss work.
- To ensure a smooth transition, all students should be here prior to 8:20. Arrive early enough so your child does not feel rushed and has the time they need to say good-bye to you
- Any students arriving late will enter through the main entrance and receive a late pass – they will be marked as late on attendance unless it is due the school bus being late.

Leaving during the school day:

- Students are not permitted to leave the school building before the end of the school day unless a parent/guardian comes to sign them out. No child will be allowed to leave school without a parent/guardian.
- If you know your child needs to leave early, please contact the office and their teacher to ensure they are ready at the designated time.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day, they will be sent to the nurse. If the decision is made that the student should go home, the student's parent/guardian will be contacted. Only the parent/guardian or a designee who is listed on the student's emergency blue contact card can pick up the student.
- Note: Please ensure that the office has current home, work, and cell phone numbers so that we can reach you in the event of an emergency. **If your phone number or email changes, please contact the school with the updated information.**

Medical:

Children are not permitted to carry medication in school. Please see our school nurse Mrs. Young Jang for forms that must be completed for medications to be maintained and administered at school either on a daily or as-needed basis. These medications, which you supply, are secured in our medical room.

*****If your child has allergies and/or medical conditions, please promptly inform your child's teacher and our school nurse*****

School Lunch Forms:

*Every student must return a signed school lunch form. Although school lunch is free to all, the NYC Department of Education requires this form be completed by each family every school year.

*Kindly complete this form by going online to <http://nyc.applyforlunch.com> or <https://www.myschoolapps.com/> or returning it to school.

Student Records:

Parents have the right to request a review of their child's school records. All requests need to be made in writing and sent to the attention of our guidance counselor Michelle Villacres at mvillacres@schools.nyc.gov.

Safety:**Fire, Evacuation, and Lockdown Drills:**

These drills are conducted many times during the school year. Proper safety procedures are reviewed by our teachers and staff. Students are expected to follow directions in a quiet, quick, and orderly manner.

Parking/Cross Walk:

- We know parking can be challenging. Please take the time to properly park your car when dropping off and picking-up your child to avoid a buildup of cars around the school.
- *******Double and triple parking can create an unsafe situation for our community and the possibility of a ticket*******
- Crossing Marathon Parkway or 60th Avenue in the middle of the street and between cars is extremely dangerous; please cross at the crosswalk with the assistance of our crossing guard. We truly appreciate your full cooperation in this matter.

School Visits:

All visitors must enter the school through the main entrance. Visitors must sign in with our school safety agent and present **picture identification and proof of vaccination.** After receiving a pass, all visitors should proceed to the main office, Room 118, where staff will assist you. At the end of the visit, all visitors must **exit through the main doors** as all other doors are alarmed.

SCHOOL-BASED POLICY OF P.S. 221 FOR USE OF CELL PHONES, SMART WATCHES, COMPUTING DEVICES, AND PORTABLE MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are permitted to bring the following electronic items to school: 1) cell phones; 2) smart watches, 3) laptops, tablets, iPads and other similar computing devices (“computing devices”); and 4) portable music and entertainment systems, such as iPods, MP3 players, PSP, and Nintendo DS.

A. The use of cell phones, smart watches computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems at school is subject to the restrictions below:

1. Cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems **may not be turned on or used during the school day** or during after school programs or activities on school premises. This ban includes the use of cell phones for photography or recording purposes.
2. **Cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems must remain turned off and stored in student backpacks during the school day and during after school programs or activities held on school premises.**
3. Cell phones, smart watches, and portable music and entertainment systems may not be turned on or used during the administration of any school quiz, test or examination.
4. Computing devices may not be turned on or used during the administration of any school quiz, test or examination, except where such use has been explicitly authorized by the school or is contained in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.
5. Use of cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, portable music and entertainment systems and other electronic devices during the administration of state standardized examinations is governed by State Education Department Rules.
6. Cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems may not be turned on or used during school fire drills or other emergency preparedness exercises.

B. Confiscation and return of cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems.

Students who use their cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems during the school day or during after school programs or activities held on school premises will meet with the following disciplinary consequences:

- **First Infraction** - Confiscation of cell phone, smart watches, computing device, and portable music and entertainment system by teacher or school personnel. The electronic item will be sent to the Principal’s office. Parents will be notified by the Principal or school personnel. The electronic item will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- **Second Infraction** - Confiscation of cell phone, smart watches, computing device, and portable music and entertainment system by teacher or school personnel. The electronic item will be sent to the Principal’s office. Parents will be notified by the Principal or school personnel. The electronic item will be returned to a parent at the end of the school day.
- **Third Infraction** - Confiscation of cell phone, smart watches, computing device, and portable music and entertainment system by teacher or school personnel. The electronic item will be sent to the Principal’s office. Parents will be notified by the Principal or school personnel. The electronic item will be returned to a parent at the end of the school day. For cell phones, there will be a revocation of cell phone privileges for a period of 2 weeks. During this time, the classroom teacher will be in possession of the student’s cell phone during the school day. Student will receive in-school disciplinary consequences according to the New York City Discipline Code.

Note: Students who use cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and/or portable music and entertainment system in violation of any provision of the DOE’s Discipline Code, the school’s policy, Chancellor Regulation A-413, and/or the DOE’s Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy (“ISUSP”) will be subject to discipline in accordance with the guidance interventions and disciplinary responses set forth in the Discipline Code.

P.S. 221 and school personnel are not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems. Students who bring these items to school assume all risks.

GRADING POLICY

We believe that grading has a purposeful and useful role in our school. It is the school's desire to make the process both meaningful and helpful to students, parents, and teachers. The P.S. 221 grading policy follows New York City Department of Education policies and guidelines, and reflects professional evaluation by teachers.

Grades are based on data which includes the use of standards-based rubrics and checklists, assessments, class work, projects, assignments, homework, participation, attitude, conduct, and work habits. Students *earn* grades; teachers do not *give* grades. Parents are encouraged to talk to students about schoolwork and grades, and contact teachers (first) and administrators (second) whenever there is a question regarding the grading policy.

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

Performance Levels	Definition of Performance Levels
4	Excels in Grade Level Standards
3	Proficient in Grade Level Standards
2	Below Grade Level Standards
1	Well Below the Grade Level

GRADING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

3 K & PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Our 3-K and Pre-K students do not receive written report cards. During parent-teacher conferences in November and March, parents will receive feedback on students' progress and understanding.

KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 5

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each marking period in December, March, and June.

Kindergarten – Grade 5 students will be assessed in the following areas:

- English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, and Language)
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Arts (Music, Visual Arts)
- Technology
- English as a New Language (only for students requiring mandated ENL instruction)
- Academic and Personal Behavior

Important Definitions (Kindergarten – Fifth Grade):

Teacher Observation:

Observation of students gives the teacher valuable information about students' progress, understanding, strengths and challenges, cooperation, study habits, and attitude. Teachers use a variety of tools for assessment/data collection such as: examination, analysis, and a review of students' work utilizing rubrics and checklists.

Class Participation: The insightful explanations and interesting connections being made by students. Class participation can foster a high level of energy and enthusiasm in the classroom learning environment. Class participation will be evaluated on the frequency and quality of student contributions, and how students effectively respond to others' comments. Participation may also include performance on informal and formal writing, projects, and/or other work. Participation will be measured and tracked via checklists, rubrics and other data collection systems.

Performance: A performance assessment shows what students can do by performing a task related to a skill or concept that has been taught in class. A task describes what the student is expected to do. Performance can be measured by rubrics, checklists, and other assessment tools/data collection

Academic & Personal Behaviors:

This domain includes the learning habits and skills that support academic readiness and achievement, and includes non-cognitive, social-emotional qualities.

Manages time and consistently demonstrates effort to independently achieve goals.
Works in an organized manner
Persists through challenges to complete a task by trying different strategies
Asks for help when needed
Respects school rules and works well in the school community

Homework Policy:

Homework is assigned to reinforce and support the learning in our classrooms. Homework helps students develop a sense of responsibility by fostering independent work habits and organizational skills.

Kindergarten	10-20 minutes
First Grade	20-30 minutes
Second Grade	30-40 minutes
Third Grade	40-60 minutes
Fourth Grade	40-75 minutes
Fifth Grade	50-75 minutes

- Independent reading is not included in these guidelines and is adjusted as the year goes on.
- Homework assignments may include written work, studying, reading in content areas, and research.
- Homework which is not handed-in may affect the report card grade in the academic area (for example, incomplete assignments and projects impacts an overall grade.)
- Each child should have at least two homework buddies to call if he/she has questions about the homework assignment.

Homework provides parents with further information regarding their child’s learning, thereby strengthening the home school connection. Please check nightly with your child to see if homework has been completed and contact your child’s teacher with any concerns regarding homework. They should not exceed the above times when completing it.

Procedure for Changing a Student’s Report Card Grades, Attendance, or Number of Late Days:

- Once report cards have been distributed to families in December, March, and June, any changes to report card grades, attendance, or number of late days must be approved by the Principal.
- Parents should report any discrepancies to classroom or cluster teachers within 2 days of the report card distribution date.
- All changes to report card final grades, final attendance, and final number of late days must be made prior to July 1st of that year.

Calendar for Report Card Distribution and Parent Teacher Conferences:

Marking Period	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Dates of Marking Period	Report Card Available Online Date
1	November 2	September 7	December 14
2	March 7	November 27	March 7
3	May 9	February 26	June 26

*Report Cards and additional student information can be viewed on your DOE School Account <https://mystudent.nyc/>. For access to your DOE School Account, please contact our Parent Coordinator.

PROMOTION IN DOUBT PROCESS

Chancellor’s Regulation A-501 outlines promotion standards for New York City public school students in grades K through 12 as well as procedures for implementing the promotion policy, including the promotion in doubt process.

The Promotion in Doubt (PID) process allows schools to formally notify families, in writing, that their child is at risk of not meeting promotion standards and being retained in the same grade for the next school year. Additionally, it enables schools and families to plan for the needed supports and interventions to help students achieve promotion standards by June.

Promotion Timelines

The timelines provide an overview of key deadlines and actions relating to the promotion process for schools.

TIME FRAME	ACTION
Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences	Schools give early notice to parents if their child’s performance is not approaching standards.
Ongoing	Schools review student promotion criteria information and update sources systems as needed.
January	Promotion in Doubt Process Begins—Schools identify students as Promotion in Doubt.
February	School mails Promotion in Doubt letters to families.
Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences	Schools update parents on their child’s progress towards meeting promotion standards.

Promotion Criteria

Students with Disabilities

- For students with existing IEPs, any changes to a student’s promotion criteria must be made by the end of January to be in effect for June’s promotion decisions.
- For students who were initially referred to special education or students who are new to DOE schools with existing IEPs, changes to a student’s promotion criteria must be made by the end of **May** in order to be in effect for June’s promotion decisions.
- For more information on how promotion criteria is determined, applied and evaluated for students with disabilities, please see our School Based Support Team.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: PARTNERING FOR YOUR CHILD’S FUTURE

The Learning Standards are designed to provide our students with rigorous curricula to ensure that they develop the creativity, critical thinking skills and ability to problem solve that they will need to meet the challenges of the modern world. But standards are a starting point, not a destination. By developing and cultivating a solid foundation of knowledge, our students will get the most from their education. Important to us, is also creating an environment in which all children develop a LOVE of LEARNING that will serve them for years to come. In a world where things change and grow so quickly, this will help them succeed in wherever life takes them. Below you will find ways you can support learning as a family.

Good Study Habits

To help your child develop good study habits:

- Set up a comfortable location at home for doing homework with simple supplies, such as pens, pencils, paper, scissors, and tape, near at hand.
- Set up a regular homework time.
- Help your child get organized. Have them write down and organize assignments each day. They need to learn how to manage their time and work toward long-range goals.
- Encourage them to do the most difficult homework first, not last.
- Check to see that assignments are complete and on time. Be more concerned with the process they use to complete work than with getting a right answer.
- Make sure your child knows the teacher’s homework policies.

Ask Your Child’s Teacher

Communication between you and your child’s teacher can help support this learning at home. Here are some questions you may want to ask.

To Learn More About a Standard:

- Can you show me examples of student work that meets this standard?
- May I look at some of my child’s work related to this standard?
- When will my child work on this standard during the school year?
- What activities and materials are you using in school to help my child meet and exceed this standard? What classwork and homework do you expect to assign?
- What are some exercises I can do with my child to help him or her with this standard?
- Besides the standards covered in this guide, what else is my child expected to learn this year?

To Learn How Your Child is Doing in School:

- In what subjects is my child working at grade level? Are there any areas that need improvement?
- Is my child reading at grade level? Can you show me some books that my child can read?
- How much time each day does my child spend working on each subject area?
- How do you assess my child on these subjects during the year?

To Learn How to Support Your Child:

- Besides report cards, what are the best ways to keep up to date on how my child is doing?
- If your child is not on grade level: What support is the school able to offer my child? What can I do at home to help my child do better in school?
- If your child is on grade level or above: What extra enrichment and support do you suggest for my child? How can I help at home?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Family members are in the best position to act as positive role models for the responsible use of social media. A Parent and Family Guide was created to help you guide your children in using social media responsibly and effectively as described in the Student Social Media Guidelines: 12 and Younger.

The guidelines as well as an activity book for students to accompany the guidelines were created by New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) teachers, librarians, students, and parents in partnership with Common Sense Education. You can find the guidelines, activity book, and related resources and materials for both elementary and secondary school students by going to www.schools.nyc.gov and searching ‘social media guidelines’.

STANDARDS OF INTERVENTION AND DISCIPLINE MEASURES

The New York City Department of Education is committed to ensuring that our schools are safe, secure, and orderly environments in which teaching and learning take place each day. A safe and supportive school depends upon the efforts of all members of the school community—administrators, teachers, students, parents, counselors, social workers, safety personnel, related service providers, cafeteria workers, custodians, and bus staff—to treat one another with mutual respect.

Included in the Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures document is the Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, which promotes responsible student behavior and an atmosphere of dignity and respect by establishing guidelines to help students as they strive to become productive citizens in a diverse society.

For more information, visit: www.schools.nyc.gov and search ‘discipline code’.