

Peck Slip School Family Handbook

2019 – 2020



Dear Peck Slip Families,

We are delighted to welcome you – or welcome you back – to the Peck Slip School community! This handbook describes Peck Slip School procedures, policies, traditions and curriculum. Please plan to read through this resource carefully and refer to it regularly. We are looking forward to a great year with you and your children!



Maggie Siena
Principal, Peck Slip School

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Ladder of Communication

The first stop for most inquiries regarding your child are with his/her classroom teacher. If you are unsure whether an issue you have should be brought to the Principal, or if you feel escalation is needed, please email the Parent Coordinator for assistance. (See staff contact list for contact information.)

Concern	Who you should contact
Your child's academic progress	Your child's classroom teacher or enrichment teacher
Social concerns in the classroom	1. Your child's classroom or enrichment teacher 2. Guidance Counselor
Classroom Academic Activities	Your child's classroom teacher
Classroom Social Activities	Your child's class parent
General school questions	Parent Coordinator
IEP/Special Education questions	1. For ICT: Classroom teachers 2. Special Education liaison 3. School Psychologist 4. Assistant Principal/Principal
Questions about the After-School Program	Manhattan Youth Site Director
Questions about School Lunch	School Secretary or Parent Coordinator
Questions about your child's attendance record	School Secretary
Change in Dismissal Instructions from school (temporary or one-time)	Note backpacked to your child's classroom teacher
Change in Dismissal Instructions from school (on-going)	Note backpacked to your child's classroom teacher <i>and</i> change must be made to Blue Emergency Card in Main Office.
Changes in dismissal from After School	Manhattan Youth Site Director
Questions about School bus or MetroCard	School Secretary or Parent Coordinator
PTA questions (fundraising, events)	PTA Executive Board
Foreign Language Translation	Parent Coordinator
Recommendation for private evaluations/therapies, tutors	1. Guidance Counselor 2. Assistant Principal/Principal
Questions about registration/forms	1. School Secretary 2. Parent Coordinator
504 Forms, medication	School nurse
Sick Notes/Emails	Classroom teacher <i>and</i> School Secretary
School Issues other than listed above	Parent Coordinator

Peck Slip School Procedures & Policies

School Hours

Prekindergarten: 8:15 AM – 2:35 PM

Kindergarten through Grade 5: 8:20 AM – 2:40 PM

Arrival

- **School starts** at 8:15 AM for PreK and 8:20 AM for K – 5.
- **Breakfast for K – 5 students is served** 7:50 – 8:10 AM (PreK students eat breakfast as a part of the prekindergarten program). At 8:10 students in grades 1 - 5 will be asked to finish up and head to their classrooms.
- **Students can begin entering the school** at 7:50 AM. Do not bring children inside before 7:50 AM.
- **PreK parents/caregivers** escort their children to the classroom at 8:10 by the west (red) stairwell.
- **Starting at 8:10am** children will say goodbye to their parents at the main door and come into the school building without them.
- **Kindergarteners will gather at assigned tables** in the cafeteria and will be picked up by their teachers at 8:20.
- **Children in grades 1 – 5** will go upstairs and line up outside their classrooms, and teachers will open their classroom doors at 8:20.
- **Maggie will ring the school bell at 8:20**, and at that time, the front door will close. **Any students not inside the building at 8:20** will need to have a parent/guardian sign them in at the security desk before they go upstairs.
- School staff will be supervising in the Cafeteria and in the hallways outside their classrooms.

Absence

- **Regular attendance is incredibly important** – kids who miss school fall behind. 15 – 20 days absent a year is considered chronic – that’s just two days a month. Please make every effort to have your child at school every day! However--
- **If your child is sick, s/he should stay home.** Anytime your child is running a fever of 100° or more, vomiting, or infected with a communicable illness, s/he must stay at home. Children with fevers can return after they have been **fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducers like acetaminophen. If your child has been sent home during the school day because they have vomited, your child should not return to school the next day.** As with fever, your child should be free from vomiting for **at least 24 hours** before returning to school. Children with diagnosed communicable illnesses should return when their doctor has indicated it is safe. Please contact our school nurse if you have any questions.
- In addition to summer vacation, students are off from school each year for a Winter Break in December – January, Midwinter Break in February, and Spring Break in April. There are also several three and four day weekends over the course of the year. *Please plan family trips for these times.* When children take additional vacation time it is an unexcused absence. Please note: teachers do not prepare additional work for children taking additional vacation.
- Likewise please make efforts to schedule doctor and dentist appointments to take place after school or on days school is not in session. Thank you!!
- **We are required to note the reason students are absent.** If your child is absent, please call the main office or email Tammy & your child’s teacher to let us know why.

Punctuality

- **Students are expected to be at school on time every day.** Late arrivals are very hard on the students who are late and very disruptive to everyone else in the room. Be considerate of the school community – be on time.
- **PreK students who arrive after 8:15 AM are late.**
- **Kindergarten – grade 5 students who arrive after 8:20 AM are late.** Parents/Caregivers must sign in late students.
- **Latenesses are entered into students’ permanent school records, and play a role during the middle school application process.** Please be aware that middle schools consider more than 4 latenesses a year excessive!
- **If lateness is an ongoing issue, seek help.** Maggie, Denise, and Rebecca are happy to help you plan routines and structures that promote punctuality.

Dismissal

- **PreK students are dismissed from the classroom at 2:35 PM.** PreK parents/caregivers may begin going upstairs at 2:30 PM.
- **Kindergarten – third grade students are dismissed** from spots in front of the school on Peck Slip, rain or shine.

Pearl St.	5-508	5-506	4-504	4-502	9-306	4-304	8-208	4-12-K	8-12-K	2-22-K	DOORS	1-308	2-314	2-312	3-324	3-326	3-322	2-318	Water St.
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After teachers have identified the grown-up picking up each child, they will shake the child’s hand and hand her/him over. Do not take your child before the teacher hands her/him to you. Please note that this is NOT a good time to engage teachers in conversation. Making sure each student is safely dismissed is their top priority.

- **4th and 5th grade students are escorted to dismissal spots on Peck Slip.** Teachers do not dismiss these older students to their caregivers. Students who are not picked up may return to the school building to wait for a caregiver.
- **We do not have outdoor supervision on the street at dismissal.** Once children have been dismissed to their parents/caregivers, they are the parents’/caregivers’ responsibility. There are no school staff members supervising this area. Students should not re-enter the building to use the bathroom, get water, etc.
- **Parents/Caregivers arriving late** must go to the office to sign out & pick up their children. **Please do not be late.** We are not staffed to provide supervision after school, and it is really, really stressful for children. Parents/caregivers who arrive late for dismissal must sign in, come to the office and sign their child out.
- **Changes to dismissal plans need to be made in writing by sending a note in your child’s backpack to their classroom teacher.** Changes may not be made by calling or emailing the office.

Early Pick Up

- Unless there is an emergency students are expected to attend school until dismissal.

- Because early pick up is so disruptive, we ask that you refrain from doing so unless it is absolutely necessary. Every minute of the day counts, and we must minimize disruptions.
- If you must pick your child up early, please sign in and come to the office. We will call your child's classroom, and s/he will meet you in the office. You must sign your child out.
- **Students who need to leave school early must be picked up by 2:20 PM.** Otherwise you will need to wait until regular dismissal at 2:40 PM. We will not call classrooms during this time with dismissal information. Thank you for your cooperation!!

Buses

- Yellow school bus service is available to K – 2 students who live a half a mile or more from the school and 3 – 5 grade students living a mile or more from the school.
- **Do not rely on your child to convey changes in dismissal plans**, especially when it involves busing. We love them, but they cannot be trusted to accurately relay this information. Please send changes in writing or via email **with as much advance notice as possible**.
- Children may not bring friends on the bus to facilitate play dates - children not signed up for the bus may not ride the bus at any time.
- **Bus service can be smooth sailing or very (very) challenging**, and bus service at the beginning of the school year is especially stressful and frustrating. Understanding what everyone's roles are in the process might help to clarify how everything works.
 - The **Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT)** makes yellow bus (or MetroCards) available to eligible children. OPT works with contracted vendors (like **Consolidated, the bus company** they use for our routes), and the vendors (like Consolidated) hire and manage the bus drivers. The Office of Pupil Transportation provides a school with available bus stops for the school. The school then offers the list of stops for the families to choose from. Once students sign up for the bus and choose a stop, those stops become active on the route. ***The OPT determines the order of the stops, and sets the time schedule for the route based on those stops and the information they have about the distance between them and the school.*** School provides the route information to the families, but has no involvement in setting the times, determining order of stops, determining roads used to travel to those stops, or the hiring/scheduling of drivers. Neither the OPT nor the bus company is managed by the school.
 - **For changes in service:** When a driver calls in sick, or is on vacation, the bus company sends a replacement driver. ***The school does not get notified when this happens.*** When the bus arrives late to stops, ***we also are not notified.*** The office finds out about these things only if families on the route call to inform us. In the morning, the office staff is not here until 8am, and since the bus route starts and practically finishes before we arrive at the office, your main points of contact in the morning are the **driver** and the **bus company**. These numbers are provided to all bus families.
 - **More information regarding the morning route:** If you feel that the bus is inordinately late, you may call the driver and/or the dispatcher at the bus company to check on the bus' whereabouts. Note that if your child is late to school as a result of riding a delayed bus, they will not be marked late. ***Buses are required to arrive no later than five minutes before school starts (in our case, 8:15).*** If the bus arrives late to school in the morning, we will notify families via email and we will lodge a complaint.
 - **More information regarding the afternoon route:** Dismissal is at 2:40, and it takes several minutes for kids to walk downstairs, and for Peck Slip staff to make sure all bus riders are present and accounted for before boarding the bus. If there is any question

- about a rider, we will wait until we are 100% sure we have everyone before we allow the bus to leave. Sometimes the bus arrives before dismissal and is waiting outside, and other times, arrives a few minutes after dismissal, depending on traffic. Therefore, please note that the bus arrival time might vary, up to 15 minutes any day, or possibly more on occasion. If the bus arrives at Peck Slip after 2:55, we will email bus families to let them know the bus has arrived late. **If you do not hear from us, you should assume that the bus left by 2:55.** As with mornings, if the bus is inordinately late arriving to your stop in the afternoon, your main contact will be the **driver** or the **dispatcher**. The main office will not know where the bus is along the route, or at what time it will arrive at your designated stop. Please note: ***In the afternoon, buses are required to arrive at the school no later than thirty minutes after school ends (in our case 3:10). If the bus arrives after 3:10, we can lodge a complaint.*** As parents, you can lodge a complaint any time you feel afternoon bus service has not been satisfactory.
- **If you would like to lodge a complaint about the bus service, call the Office of Pupil Transportation at 718-392-8855. You will get a reference number for your complaint. Please forward this reference number to us** so we may keep track of the volume, and try to expedite the handling of your complaints. We can't stress enough how important this is – the more complaints that get lodged, the more attention the issue will get. The school can also file complaints (and we have filed 3 already this week), but **it is critical that families affected by the bus issues call.**

Strollers/Scooters/Skateboards

- **Please note that for safety reasons** we cannot accommodate strollers, scooters, or skateboards inside the school building.
- Strollers, scooters, and skateboards **cannot** be stored at school.
- Scooters and skateboards can be stored in the alcoves next to the main door **behind the line**.
- Strollers should be parked **on the street at the curb**, as they are too big for the sidewalk space.
- Though space just outside the school is available for stowing scooters, strollers, and skateboards, school is not liable or responsible for lost, stolen, and/or damaged items. This is New York City – park at your own risk. We recommend labelling scooters to avoid confusion.
- Please note that we do encourage school-aged children to stop using the stroller. See Rebecca N. if you need assistance with this transition.

Breakfast

- Breakfast is free for PreK students, and is served in the classroom shortly after arrival.
- Breakfast is free for all K-5 students in the Cafeteria starting at 7:50am.
- Like the lunch, the breakfast offerings are vegetarian. A sample breakfast menu may be found at [Vegetarian Breakfast Menu](#)

Lunch

- Students eat lunch and have recess between 11:50 AM - 12:50 PM.
- Lunch is free for all public school students in New York City. Woo-hoo!
- Students do not need to sign up for lunch. You may send lunch from home or have your child line up for school lunch any day.
- Peck Slip offers a vegetarian menu, including hot meals and a cheese sandwich option. A sample vegetarian lunch menu can be found at [Pre-K - 8 Vegetarian Lunch Menu](#) (Please note: we serve a cheese sandwich instead of peanut butter & jelly).

- Because we have both students and staff members with very serious peanut allergies, **Peck Slip is a PEANUT FREE SCHOOL**. If you send lunch from home, please make sure it includes no **peanuts or peanut products**. We cannot emphasize enough how important this is for the health of our community. **DO NOT** send peanuts or peanut products in lunches or snacks at any time.
- Other students have a variety of other food allergies. Please remind your child not to share their lunches with others!
- Occasionally parents pick students up from school to treat them to lunch. If you do, we urge you to respect the lunch time of 11:50 - 12:50 to minimize disruption to the classroom. Thank you!
- **Please label your children's lunch boxes and all containers** so that items may be returned to you in case they are lost.

Birthdays

- Children who celebrate birthdays during the school year may bring a birthday treat to share. These should be ready to pass out – think cupcakes, cookies, or brownies. **DO NOT** bring cakes. **You must arrange birthday celebrations with your child's teacher in advance**. Not only do birthday celebrations affect the schedule, teachers also need to plan accommodations for students with food allergies.
- Keep it simple – just a birthday treat. No decorations, beverages, party favors and the like. Please save these for home parties.
- Siblings may not join in – it's too disruptive to their learning.
- Birthday party invitations may **NOT** be passed out at school, even when all kids in the class are invited – too often they have gone missing... Plan to use email or snail mail.
- Students (and staff) with summer birthdays celebrate during our annual Summer Birthday Party in June. Parents do not attend this school-time event.
- Each teacher will communicate additional classroom birthday traditions.

Holidays

- We do not formally teach or celebrate such holidays as Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, Mothers'/Fathers' Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, etc. We do acknowledge the holidays children celebrate and allow children to bring them into the classroom by sharing experiences, reading picture books, and supporting independent activities. For example, children may make Father's Day cards during Worktime or writer's workshop. Or, children may play out a Christmas or Hanukkah scenario in Dramatic Play. However, there are two holidays that we feel have a special impact on children:
- **Halloween**. In the spirit of play, Peck Slip students hold a Halloween parade on (or near) Halloween each year. Students and staff are encouraged to dress in costume for a morning parade culminating in a brief concert in front of the school. Family members are invited to attend.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday**. Each year students study a different aspect of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy. In one activity repeated annually, students draw or write their dreams for the future.

Cell Phone Policy

- While students are permitted to bring electronic items to school (including cell phones; smart watches; laptops, tablets, iPads, and other similar computing devices; and portable music and

entertainment systems), **they may not be turned on or used during school hours**, except for instructional and educational purposes and with the explicit permission and approval of the teacher. Instead, they must be stored in students' backpacks.

- If a student uses a cell phone, smart watch, computing device, and/or portable music and entertainment system in violation of the school's policy the device will be confiscated, stored in a locked location in the office, and returned only to a parent/guardian.
- If a device is used in a manner inconsistent with school's policy more than 3 times in a school year, the student's right to bring that device to school will be revoked for that school year.
- The school is not liable or responsible for lost, stolen, and/or damaged cell phones, smart watches, computing devices, or portable music and entertainment systems.

Lost & Found

- **LABEL YOUR CHILDREN'S CLOTHING AND BACKPACKS.** In time, all sweatshirts and jean jackets begin to look the same. Labeled items can and will be returned to children. The rest is donated to the needy at the end of each month. The lost & found is located right outside the cafeteria.

After school

- Manhattan Youth provides after school for students in kindergarten through fifth grade at Peck Slip. Amanda Montalvo is the Site Director. Amanda's email is amanda@manhattanyouth.org.
- Though they use Peck Slip's facilities, Manhattan Youth is an entirely separate organization. All questions/concerns regarding the after school program should be directed to Amanda or another Manhattan Youth representative.
- Manhattan Youth's website is www.manhattanyouth.org and the phone number is 212-766-1104.
- Manhattan Youth runs from dismissal to 5:50 PM, including on half days.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Every morning at roughly 8:30 AM students lead the Pledge of Allegiance over the PA system from the office. Students and adults are welcome to participate or respect a moment of silence. Because teaching staff also has this right, parents/caregivers who want their children to participate are responsible for teaching the Pledge to their kids.

Private School Recommendations

- Our teachers do not write letters of recommendation or fill out checklists for private school admissions. Instead we attach a copy of the child's most recent report. Parents should give application forms to Tammy in the office.

Recess

- Recess is an essential part of the school day. It provides the opportunity for physical release, socialization, problem-solving, and joy. Recess is challenging & important - a time of much learning.
- At Peck Slip, recess is highly structured and supervised. Play spaces are divided into three areas: a space for Active Play (running games, ball games), Mellow Play (more stationary play), and Games (supervised and structured recess activities available children who need support at this important learning time of the day).

- Kindergarteners & first graders take turns having recess in the gym and the rooftop play yard. Second - fifth graders take turns using the rooftop play yard and the playstreet in front of the school.
- Unless it is raining, snowing, there is ice on the play surface, or the wind chill factor creates an effective temperature below zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius), recess takes place outside. Dress your children for outdoor play each day – this includes appropriate shoes for running.
- On the rare occasions that we must be indoors for recess, students play indoors or watch about 20 – 25 minutes of entertainment appropriate to their age.

Dress code

- While we have no official dress code, children are expected to dress neatly and appropriately, with hair groomed and out of students’ eyes, which are much needed for learning.
- Appropriate means...
 - A school day is likely to involve glue, paint, clay, running, and other outdoor play. Dress your child accordingly.
 - No Heelies, flip flops, heels or high-heeled sneakers. We recommend well-fitted sandals, rubber soled shoes, or sneakers.
 - **Sneakers are a must** on the day your child has P.E. Check with your child’s teacher.
- On Fridays staff members often opt to wear Peck Slip tee shirts. Kids are encouraged to join in.
- Remember – LABEL EVERYTHING!!

Gift Giving

- It is natural that families may want to contribute gifts to teachers and staff members. However, as City employees, all school staff members are bound by complex Conflict of Interest rules, and are subject to investigation if they accept inappropriate gifts. Please be sure to adhere to these guidelines:
 - Gifts should be of nominal monetary value.
 - Staff members may not accept cash gifts – this includes checks and cash cards, like Amex.
 - Teachers may accept class gifts under the following conditions:
 - They are from the whole class and no individual child or family is mentioned as the giver,
 - Every child/family has an opportunity to be included regardless of monetary contribution, and
 - No family has been made to feel obligated to contribute to the gift.
- A full description of prohibited activities can be found in [Chancellor’s Regulation C-110](#).
- School Safety Agents cannot accept any gifts (but enjoy your children’s cards).

Visitors

- From time to time a family asks if a school-aged visiting relative or friend can spend time at Peck Slip. If you are planning to make this request, please:
 - Email your child’s teacher and Maggie with your request with at least one week notice.
 - Understand that we may say no - school is a busy place, and the time may not be right for a visitor to the classroom.

- In the event that your request can be accommodated, arrange for an adult responsible for the visiting child to stay at the school for the duration of the visit (in the event of a medical or safety issue).

Health & Safety

Security

- When entering the school **all adult visitors must present ID**, sign in, and receive a visitor pass. Even if the safety agents know who you are, they are required to sign you in, and will refuse entry to anyone without an ID. Thank you for your understanding.
- **All exits other than the main entrance are alarmed. Do NOT use a side door to exit the building.** False alarms result in unnecessary **lockdowns** - instruction halts until we determine the reason the alarm went off.
- Adults may not visit classrooms without making an arrangement with the teacher. Similarly, please do not drop in for a meeting before school begins unless you have an appointment – teachers are very busy planning for the day at this time.
- Adults may not use or accompany their children to students' bathrooms. Adults must use the adults' bathrooms. Adult bathroom keys are available in the office or at the front desk.

Emergency Contacts (Blue Cards)

- **It is essential that these cards are filled out completely and returned to the main office as soon as possible.** In the event the school needs to contact you regarding your child, it is important to list all the telephone numbers where you or your designated caregiver(s) can be reached during the school day (work, cell, home).
- **Please provide at least two emergency numbers for other adults** in case we cannot reach you (this happens a lot). **We highly recommend including a Peck Slip parent or two on this list.**
- If information changes at any time during the year, it is important that you come into the main office and update the Blue Card. If your address has changed, you need to furnish documentation in your name showing the new address.
- Unless you have sent a dated note, children are not released to anyone whose name is not on the Blue Card.

Evacuations & Drills (General Response Protocol)

- In the event of an emergency all school staff members are trained in general response protocols. We practice these with students so everyone knows what to do.
 - **Evacuation:** If there is a dangerous condition inside the building (fire, smoke condition, etc.), the school is evacuated to a designated safe space outside the school. Should we need to relocate to another site, parents are kept informed through Notify NYC or 311. For safety reasons we are not allowed to publish evacuation sites. We practice this 8 times a year, varying conditions (such as blocking one exit, simulating danger in that part of the school).
 - **Shelter-in:** If the danger is outside the building, such as a disturbance on the street, the building is secured so no one can enter or exit. While the situation is being monitored, we conduct business as usual.

- **Lockdown:** If there is a dangerous situation in the building, such as an intruder, we lockdown. During a lockdown, teachers close and lock doors, turn off the lights, and move children away from the door. We practice this four times a year. We are very careful to make these practices serious but never scary.

Snow days & Emergency closing

- Snow days and emergency closings are announced on the DOE website (schools.nyc.gov) and through most local media outlets. If it looks like weather may result in a school closing, please check these sources. *Please do not call the school regarding school closings or delays.* We are typically informed when the public is...

Lice

- Unfortunately, head lice are an unpleasant fact of school life. They are neither a health hazard nor a sanitary problem, but they are a force to be reckoned with.
- If there is a case of head lice in a class, a letter will be sent home informing families of that fact so that you can check your child's scalp. Please note we do not do whole school lice checks as they are prohibited.
- Children found to have lice will be sent home. Children who have been sent home because they have lice can only be readmitted to the classroom after being checked by school personnel. Children who have live lice cannot come back to school.
- Please inform the teacher if you discover lice or nits (eggs), so that the class can be informed. Please also inform any siblings' teachers.

Immunizations

- Students in grades K - 12 are required to be immunized against a range of illnesses. Parents can request a medical exemption, but there are no more religious exemptions.
- Students who have not received all required immunizations must receive the first dose for each immunization series within 14 calendar days from the first day of school. Within 30 calendar days of the first day of school, parents or guardians of such children will also need to show that they have scheduled appointments for all follow-up doses.
- To learn more, visit [Immunizations](#) under Health in School Life at schools.nyc.gov

Medication

- **The school nurse is the only person who can administer medication at school** (including inhalers and Epi-pens), and she can only do so after she has received a medical authorization form that has been approved by the Department of Education. Please contact the parent coordinator or the school nurse if you would like to request a form. Please remember, children may not bring any medication to school, including antibiotics, medicated creams or ointments, acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Communication

Home-to-school Communication

With Staff Members (see ladder of communication on page 3)

- If you have a concern about your child, reach out to your child’s teacher – she or he is the person with the most information and day-to-day contact with your child, and is most likely the best person to clarify and resolve issues.
- If your concerns are specific to one of the enrichment classes (art, big blocks, dance, music, physical education, science), please contact the teacher of that class.
- If your concerns have to do with the after school program, contact Amanda Montalvo at amanda@manhattanyouth.org.
- If there are specific events, problems or changes in your family’s usual routine which may affect your child, please let your child’s teacher and/or the guidance counselor know. This helps us better understand and support your child.
- You may contact a teacher or other staff member by:
 - emailing the teacher
 - sending a note with your child
 - leaving a note in the teacher’s mailbox in the main office
 - calling the main office and leaving a brief message
- Please briefly state your concern and if you would like to set up a meeting or speak on the phone. Please give a few possible meeting times and include the best way to contact you. Teachers will respond within 48 hours.
- A brief word of advice: Email is a useful, paper-free way to ask quick questions. But if you have serious concerns or issues, plan to discuss them in person or on the phone rather than through lengthy emails.
- **Do not email teachers or the office with last minute changes or requests.** Unless we receive a note prior to the school day, we will follow the usual dismissal plan for the day.

With principal

- If you wish to meet with Maggie, you can arrange an appointment by stopping by the office or sending an email.
- Again, please briefly state your concern and if you would like to set up a meeting or speak on the phone.

School-to-home Communication

- Email & backpack folders are our most likely means of communication. Please check both daily.
- Teachers will post classroom information on Seesaw, a web-based communication program. Posts to Seesaw include information about classroom curriculum, reminders, and important dates. *Please **do not** use Seesaw in place of email.* Questions/concerns should be conveyed through email (see above). Teachers will help families set up Seesaw accounts on Back-to-School Night (September 12).
- Parent Coordinator Denise will send a weekly email with school-wide news and important dates.
- Most other communication will be by email. Please make sure we have your most current email address.
- Families have the opportunity to sign up for School Messenger. We will use this system to text you with urgent messages or in the event of emergencies.
- **If you have a missed call from the school, please do not call to ask if someone tried to reach out. We rarely have that information.** When we call we will either leave a voice message, try to reach you via another number, or send an email. Thank you!
- If we reach out to you, please respond to us in a timely manner. Thank you!

Back-to-School Night

- On September 12, parents/caregivers are invited to Back-to-School Night. You will hear from the principal and your child's classroom teacher. You will also have an opportunity to see our enrichment teachers. **Please note: childcare is not available for this event.** Please do not bring your children.

Progress Reports

- Progress reports are distributed to students' families 3 times per year: right before the parent teacher conferences in November and March, and on the last day of school. Samples of progress reports are available on the school website.
- If your child is not here on the last day of school, we will hold the progress report for you in the office. If you prefer that we mail it, we ask you to provide a self-addressed envelope with 2-3 first class stamps.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Parent-teacher conferences are held for all students' families in November and March.
- This is the time for individual discussions about your child's class work and progress. Student work is often available for you to peruse, and if you don't get into the classroom often, it's a great way to see what the class is working on.
- To get the most out of these conferences, it is important to take a positive approach in talking to the teacher. If you have concerns that you are not sure how to raise, you may want to consult with principal Maggie, assistant principal Casey, parent coordinator Denise, and/or Rebecca N., our guidance counselor.

Classroom Visits

- Approximately once a month family members are invited to their children's classroom to see what is happening and learn a little something with the kids. **Please do not pull siblings attending Peck Slip from their classrooms** to join you at these visits or daytime concerts and other special events.
- **When visiting our classrooms, please do not bring food or beverages with you.** This is important not only for safety and housekeeping reasons, but because:
 - You are showing that your full attention is on your child's work,
 - You are modelling your willingness and ability to delay gratification,
 - You are showing that you will follow rules even when you prefer not to, as your children are so often expected to do.

Student Directory

- Early in the year our parent coordinator Denise will distribute a school directory. This directory will only include information you have approved. Please carefully check the draft distributed before it is published to be sure your information is correct.
- The directory is to be used solely for individual & personal communication by Peck Slip administrators, staff, parents and students. It should not be used for commercial, political, or charitable solicitation.

Website

- The school web address is www.peckslip.org

- On our website you will find class & grade pages, an up-to-date calendar of school events, a link to the breakfast and lunch menus, links to important sites (like Manhattan Youth) and current weather.
- If you connect to Amazon through our website a percentage of your purchase goes to our PTA at no cost to you. Make www.peckslip.org your Amazon bookmark, connect through the site & order away. You won't know the difference, but the PTA will!

Parent Involvement

Peck Slip School PTA

- Peck Slip has a world-class PTA, and every parent/caregiver is a member.
- Our PTA has two primary goals: community building and fundraising.
- PTA Meetings are held one Wednesday a month. Each year two to three are evening meetings, and childcare for school-aged children is provided. All other meetings are held after drop off on Wednesday mornings.
- Though the lion's share of the work is done by our tireless Executive Board, they cannot do it without you – to make it work, they need your help. Plan to attend at least one PTA meeting, give what you can to *Bridge the Gap*, the annual direct appeal, volunteer at an event, and/or consider running for office – Member-at-Large on the Executive Board positions are left open for new parents.

Class Parents

- Class Parents serve as the liaison between the PTA and the families in your class, and assist classroom teachers with classroom activities and communication. It is a wonderful way to give back to the school community and stay connected to what's happening in your child's classroom. On Back-to-School Night classroom teachers will ask for volunteers to be class parents. If more than two people volunteer, the teacher typically names two people official class parents & lets them know who is willing to help. Here are some of the things that are expected of class parents:
 - Attend monthly PTA General Meetings, and communicate critical information to class.
 - Collect donations for book fair.
 - Collect donations for holiday and end-of-year gifts (see guidelines for gift-giving).
 - Organize class-wide or grade-wide social events/mixers.
 - Work with the classroom teacher to understand their expectations, as this will vary by teacher. Some of the things teachers request assistance with might be:
 - communicating classroom supply needs
 - sending requests for classroom volunteers
 - communicating class activity or trip information
- The PTA & Parent Coordinator will co-sponsor meetings for class parents 2 – 3 times a year.

Volunteering at school

- Teachers will be in touch with volunteer requests. Please note that some children have a harder time at school when their parents are present – please be ready to follow your child's teacher's lead.
- Volunteering opportunities include:
 - Preparing materials (at school or at home)
 - Helping with projects in the room

- Weekly volunteering in art and/or science classes
- Chaperoning field trips

Chaperoning Field Trips

- Parent chaperones play a vital role in maintaining the safety and educational value of the trip. Please take note of these **“Rules of the Road” for parent chaperones:**
 - **Do not tell your child you are chaperoning a trip until this is confirmed by your child’s teacher.** We often have more volunteers than we can accommodate.
 - As with classroom volunteering, some children have a harder time on trips when their parents are present – again, please be ready to follow your child’s teacher’s lead.
 - Always follow the instructions of the teacher who organized the trip.
 - Silence your cell phone and put it away.
 - Limit adult socializing.
 - Do not bring siblings of any age. This is a liability as well as safety issue.
 - Do not purchase souvenirs or food for your child or any other students.
 - Remember that you are there for all the students, not just your child.
 - All students must return to school at the conclusion of a field trip even if you are chaperoning the trip. If you wish to leave school and take your child with you after the class has returned to school, you may do so by signing out in the office.

School Leadership Team (SLT)

- Every New York City school has a School Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of an equal number of school staff and family members.
- The Peck Slip School SLT is comprised of five staff members (the principal, the UFT Chapter Leader, and three additional staff members) and five family members (one PTA co-president plus four additional family members elected by the PTA).
- The SLT meets monthly to oversee the creation and implementation of the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), a document that aligns annual goals with the school’s budget.
- The SLT also discusses other relevant school-wide issues. The Peck Slip SLT has also adopted the practice of reading and discussing a book or articles related to one or more of our annual goals.

Classroom & Curriculum

Peck Slip School Mission Statement

The mission of the Peck Slip School is to educate young people to be passionate about learning, curious about others and the world, and committed to community engagement. Peck Slip graduates will be active learners and independent thinkers who have high standards, the ability to reflect on their skills, understandings and abilities, and a desire to do their best. Students will apply the same standards for excellence to academic, artistic, athletic, and social endeavors. The impetus for their work will be inquisitiveness about the world and involvement in the diverse communities they participate in – both local (the classroom, neighborhood and city) and global (the human family). Three core principles support this mission:

- *Learning is an enjoyable, life-long pursuit. There is always more to learn.*
- *Perseverance through challenges underlies success.*
- *Human beings are interdependent. In the classroom and across the world, we rely on one another.*

With a sense of optimism and appreciation, Peck Slip students will be avid, lifelong learners eager to discover the world, engage with others, and act on their power to make positive changes in their communities.

Content Studies

In-depth inquiry of topics that interest children builds powerful habits of mind, including curiosity, the drive for mastery, questioning, and metacognition. Designed around significant, enduring ideas (*animals are adapted to survive in their environment*, for example), these studies teach students how to study topics in depth, preparing them for a lifetime of learning.

Peck Slip students engage in two to three in-depth studies per year. Topics include Life Studies (such as Pets, [Seeds](#), Birds); Systems ([Restaurants](#), Bridges, Subways), Cultures (Eastern Woodland Indians, New Amsterdam) and History (Immigration, Colonial New York, [Social Movements](#)). Students learn through nonfiction texts (including primary resources), trips, interviewing experts, and exploration and experimentation. Reading and writing instruction is often integrated in the content studies. In addition, students acquire, integrate, and demonstrate skills and information through the arts.

Literacy

Instruction in reading and writing focuses on building strong skills in the context of making meaning. Kindergartners develop solid letter-sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, sight word vocabulary, and print concepts through direct instruction as well as reading and writing integrated in content studies. First graders are consolidating these skills and gaining fluency as readers of increasingly complex books. Second graders are developing independence as readers, learning to choose just right books on their own and deepening their understanding of various text types and structures. Students in third through fifth grade are developing sophistication as readers, building comprehension skills while studying different genres, authors, and text forms.

Comprehension plays a crucial role across all grades. In addition to teaching comprehension skills students can use in independent reading, teachers foster strong comprehension by reading interesting and challenging texts aloud.

Peck Slip students learn to write through a process that includes direct instruction in spelling patterns and grammar and a workshop approach to learning writing process, genre, and voice. Our youngest students are encouraged to use drawing and estimated spelling to express themselves while they are beginning to learn early conventions and mechanics of writing. As our students grow, they are encouraged to develop their own voice and style while meeting increasingly demanding expectations for spelling and grammar. Handwriting plays a role as well. Students in grades K – 2 learn conventional print, and in third grade begin learning cursive. In all grades Peck Slip students learn to read and write across fiction and factual genres, with the ultimate goal of developing a love of literacy and an eagerness to read and write.

Mathematics

Peck Slip students are expected to gain deep understanding of mathematics concepts as well as fact mastery and efficient, accurate computational skills. The math curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and draws from a number of resources for lessons, problem solving experiences, games, and practice opportunities. Our goal is for students to be skillful and interested in mathematics, and to see its relevance to their lives.

Students learn both traditional and alternative approaches to operating with numbers, and are expected to master addition and multiplication facts.

Kindergartners learn addition facts to a sum of 10 and begin learning doubles.

First graders learn addition facts to a sum of 20.

Second graders learn the standard algorithm for addition and develop familiarity with combinations to 100.

Third graders learn the standard algorithm for subtraction and multiplication facts to products of 100.

Fourth graders learn the standard algorithm for multiplication and divisibility rules for numbers 1 - 12.

Fifth graders learn the standard algorithm for division.

We emphatically request parents allow us to adhere to this timeline. Research shows that when children memorize facts and procedures before exploring their conceptual bases they are **less** successful in mathematics later on.

Social and Emotional Learning

Our students' social and emotional growth is as important as their academic development. Through a variety of experiences, students learn to be increasingly resilient, persistent, empathetic, assertive, and reflective. Teachers receive training in the Responsive Classroom approach, and lead classroom activities and discussions with the aim of developing community and individual awareness. Social and emotional growth is fostered directly, through class conversation, and through experiences like collaboration, play, and the content study curriculum.

Play

Play is a powerful, cognitively-rich activity that also happens to be extremely fun. Play promotes social and emotional growth as well as the development of executive function, the set of internal controls that are the foundation for school success.

Play is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum. Pre-kindergartners and kindergartners have Worktime daily, during which they play alone or with classmates at activities including blocks, dramatic play, the water/sand table, construction, art, puzzles and games. First graders have Worktime regularly as well.

As children get older, play is integrated into the social-emotional curriculum and the content studies. Students engage in play activities to build community, develop interpersonal relationships, and deepen understanding of curricular themes. For example, students may dramatize a social scenario to explore appropriate and empathetic ways to react. Or they may build models, write plays, or create board games in the context of a content study.

PreK – grade 1 students also have one period a week of play with the Imagination Playground big blocks in the movement room.

The Arts

Peck Slip students receive visual arts, dance, and music instruction once a week, and a storyteller visits once a month. Dance, theater and music are also integrated in classroom activities, often in connection

with the content studies. Arts curricula are aligned with the New York State Blueprint for the arts, and include both technical instruction and arts appreciation.

Physical Activity

Peck Slip Students have physical education at least once a week. PE includes wellness education, skill building, aerobic exercise, and developmentally-appropriate experience with fairness, team play, and winning and losing. All students have recess midday, going outside unless it is raining, snowing, or exceptionally cold. Pre-kindergartners through first graders have an additional recess either mid-morning or in the afternoon.

Library

Peck Slip has a beautiful library with a mouth-watering collection of books. Students in all grades visit the library with their teachers once every week or two to hear a story, peruse the collection, and check out a book. Students in grades 2 - 5 may take books home. If a book goes missing, we ask for \$15 to replace it (library books, which are covered & catalogued, are more expensive than books purchased online).

Academic Intervention Services

When students are struggling to meet grade level expectations, the teacher meets with the Intervention Team, a group of school-based learning specialists, to help determine what supports are needed, such as small group instruction in their areas of weakness. Parents are informed about the extra support and receive additional information about their child's progress. If we find that a student is still having trouble keeping up in spite of this additional help, parents can request an evaluation to determine whether their child qualifies for special education services.

Special Education

When students qualify for special education services they are provided with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that is created by a school-based support team in collaboration with the student's parents. This is a legal document that mandates the supports a child is entitled to receive. Supports typically include instruction from a special education teacher, speech and language support, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and/or counseling. Frequency, group size, and location are determined by the team with the parents. IEPs are reviewed annually. Parents can request additional reviews if they feel an IEP is not serving their child's needs. To learn more about special education and the referral process, please see [*A Shared Path to Success: Family Guide to Special Education Services for School Aged Children.*](#)

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

Like most New York City schools, the Peck Slip School has at least one Integrated Co-Teaching classroom on each grade. In ICT classrooms a mixture of typically-developing students and students with IEPs are taught by two full time teachers, at least one of whom is a certified special educator. ICT classrooms offer the same rigorous and engaging curriculum as other classes on the grade, and the teachers work closely to ensure the classroom curriculum is accessible, engaging, and challenging for all students. The two teachers use a variety of models for instruction:

1. Team Teaching: Both co-teachers deliver instruction to the whole group at the same time.
2. One Teach, One Observe: While one teacher leads the lesson, the co-teacher collects specific data about the students, the co-teacher or the environment.

3. Station Teaching: Teachers divide content and students. Groups of students rotate through stations in which they work on non-hierarchical activities.
4. Parallel Teaching: Two co-teachers teach the same content to separate groups simultaneously.
5. Alternate Teaching: One teacher works with the large part of the class while the co-teacher works with a smaller group.
6. One Teach, One Assist: one teacher leads instruction while the co-teacher circulates providing unobtrusive help as needed.

Most general education students will spend at least one year of elementary school in an ICT classroom. While the ICT structure was originally designed to support students with disabilities, there is robust evidence that it benefits students of all abilities. Not only do students develop their capacity to relate and empathize with each other, they ALL benefit academically from increased opportunities for small group instruction.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our content studies. Teachers organize and arrange field trips to enhance, deepen, and support what students are learning. They are not optional excursions. They range from walks around the neighborhood to visits to museums, parks, and other landmarks, big and small, in our incredibly culturally rich city. Classes travel on foot or by subway, school bus, or chartered bus, depending on the destination. **Please note: when we cannot walk, the subway is our preferred mode of transportation.** It is safe, efficient, and far more reliable than the yellow school bus. *If you have concerns about your child riding the subway on field trips, please reach out to Rebecca N. or Maggie.*

Teachers will notify you of upcoming trips and give information on lunch, transportation, admissions fees, etc. Please do not hesitate to inform the teacher if you are requesting assistance to cover trip costs or fees. All trips require signed permission slips. *Children who do not bring in a signed slip cannot go on the trip.* Please be sure to get permission slips in on time.

Homework

Beginning in first grade Peck Slip students receive homework, consisting mostly of reading at home. Teachers may also assign additional math practice or work that supports the content studies. Your child's teacher will provide each family with a copy of the homework policy in September. Unless otherwise specified, children should be able to complete homework independently, and it should not be onerous. Please inform your child's teacher if s/he is struggling with homework.

We do not place a heavy emphasis on homework at Peck Slip, and you will not see a lot of it coming home. Our homework policy is based on the available research on homework, which notes that there is little correlation between homework and academic success in the elementary years (with the exception of reading. More reading = better readers). Instead, we encourage students to engage in free creative play, organized enriching activities, playdates (the best!), and age-appropriate chores (setting and clearing the table, feeding pets, tidying their rooms...). Children should definitely practice self-help skills (dressing themselves, putting on shoes and jackets, taking off boots, cleaning up after themselves).

Rules & Discipline

Peck Slip School adheres to the [Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures](#), a copy of which is provided to all families each school year. The standards describe infractions and the progressive discipline we use to address them.

At the building level, Peck Slip School has four basic school-wide agreements:

Be safe.

Be kind.

Be helpful.

Be your best.

These agreements cover it all and they tell kids what to do rather than listing exhaustively what NOT to do. They are discussed school-wide, and definitely encourage positive behavior. However, it takes many lifetimes for people to learn to adhere to these tenets, and as you can expect, our young people do make mistakes. When that happens, we respond with discipline and guidance.

First, teachers make every effort to address misbehavior in the classroom. They may use time outs, conflict mediation, a peace corner, or loss of privileges to teach students about appropriate behavior. When children are exceedingly disruptive, defiant, or aggressive, teachers may send them to the office. We discuss what problem students were trying to solve with their behavior and brainstorm other, acceptable solutions. Consequences also follow, and in most cases we try to help students come up with ways to restore trust and make injured parties feel better. If they are sent to the office, students may be required to call home themselves to report what they have done. When necessary, we ask parents to meet with us to discuss strategies for addressing misbehaviors.

Finally, positive interpersonal relationships are of paramount importance. Teachers invest significant time and energy to foster safe, kind, and inclusive classrooms. If your child is experiencing problems at school, please make sure we know, so we can help.

Please note that bullying is different from conflict. Most children will experience conflict, sometimes physical, especially when children are very young and just beginning to reliably use words to express their feelings. In comparison, true bullying is relatively rare. Bullying includes:

An Imbalance of Power: *Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.*

Repetition: *Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. (stopbullying.com)*

Bullying is a very difficult problem, and evokes very strong reactions. When we become aware of a bullying situation, our first priority is to ensure that all students are safe, and we will take appropriate steps to protect children who have been targeted. We also work with children who are using bullying behaviors to develop more appropriate tools and strategies.

We ask adults in our school community to remember that in these situations everyone is suffering. Children who bully are still children, and deserve our compassion and understanding. In addition, children who bully have parents - that is, someone's kid is the one who is bullying, and one day it may be yours. If we suggest to you that your child may be bullying, we ask you to keep an open mind and work with us. We want all our students to become assertive & empathetic people, capable of building and tending to strong relationships. That is mighty hard work!

If you believe your child is being bullied, please inform the school right away. We will investigate and get back to you about what we learn. We are absolutely committed to working together to ensure all our students are safe and learning to be good friends and community members.

Grading Policy (K-5)

At the Peck Slip School we maintain a fair grading policy, accurately reflecting each individual student's growth and acquisition based on New York State standards. Progress reports measure competency in each content area by tracking students' academic progress and classroom performance.

Progress reports reflect student achievement as demonstrated in classroom assignments, writing pieces, formal and informal assessments, and participation in each subject area. Absence and excessive lateness are not factored into progress report marks but may contribute to lower marks since they often result in a student's inability to participate in lessons and achieve mastery in each subject area.

To maintain consistency and provide transparency to students and their parents, progress report forms and the rubrics used to complete them will be made available at the beginning of the year.

Timeline of Student Reports

PS 343 issues progress reports three times a year (November, March, and June). November and March reports are sent home just before parent/teacher conferences. June reports are sent home on the last day of school. At the end of the year, overall pass/fail marks are entered into a Department of Education online database.

November Progress Report

The November report is a narrative description of the student's behavior and academic performance as determined through teacher observation and beginning of year assessments. Teachers highlight student's area of strength and focus area for growth.

March and June Progress Reports

In March and June students receive standards-based checklist reports aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. In addition to a brief narrative, the March & June progress reports communicate progress in Social/Personal Growth, Approach to Learning, Reading, Writing, Word Study, and Mathematics. The scales of marks are as follows:

Social/Personal Growth and Approach to Learning

Social and personal growth is measured by frequency of desired behaviors. Teachers report whether students **rarely, sometimes, mostly, or almost always** engage in developmentally appropriate positive behaviors. Students approach to learning is measured and reported in the same way.

Academic Standards

Academic marks are standards-based. For each academic standard, teachers indicate whether a student is **below, approaching, meeting, or exceeding** end-of-year grade level expectations as described in a grade specific rubric. Students are typically approaching most grade-level expectations in March and meeting them in June. All standards and supporting rubrics are aligned with the NYS Common Core Learning Standards.

Online Marks

At the end of these reports you will see the marks that teacher will submit online for your student's MyStudent account. The MyStudent marks are 1 - 4, which mirrors our 4 point scale (Below=1, Approaching=2, Meets=3, and Exceeds=4). **Unlike the marks described above,** the marks teachers

enter for your child's MyStudent account represent their success in meeting mid-year benchmarks. For example, if a second grader "Subtracts within 1000" appropriately for March, they would be marked as 3 for Meets. In June, the marks entered into the MyStudent account represent success in meeting end-of-year expectations. **Please note:** Marks on our progress reports and on your student's MyStudent account do not determine whether a child will be retained. Decisions about retention are made in collaboration with parents/guardians and take into account many factors.

Appealing a Progress Report mark

To appeal a progress report mark on a March report, parents should meet with the student's teacher to review the teacher's evidence for the rating within 60 days of receiving the report. If the teacher and the parent can't come to an agreement, the parent should make an appointment to review evidence with the principal. To appeal a progress report mark on a June report, parents should contact the principal within 60 days of receiving the report. The principal will review evidence with the parent. If the principal should decide to change a student's mark, the principal will provide written notice and rationale of the change to the teacher, in accordance with the UFT agreement.

Opportunities to Discuss Student Progress

Parents will be informed of their student's progress during parent-teacher conferences in November and March. Parents may also schedule meetings with teachers to discuss student progress on Tuesdays, during scheduled parent engagement time, 2:40-3:20 pm. In addition, teachers, counselors and related service providers can also be reached via email to discuss student progress outside of scheduled conferences.