

THE MANHATTAN NEW SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

P.S. 290



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New York, NY 10028
212-734-7127
www.ps290.org

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LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Families:

This handbook, prepared by members of the School Leadership Team (SLT), provides information you will find important as members of the MNS family. While the handbook attempts to address a wide range of school-related issues, I am sure other questions may come up during the course of your child's time here. If that is the case, please do not hesitate to contact the school when necessary, to have your questions answered.

Please take some time to review the handbook content carefully so that you will be aware of all guidelines, policies, and expectations. Your awareness is critical to promoting a school environment that is both safe and effectively operated.

In addition to reading this handbook, I also invite you to review the **MNS Programs and Activities Guide** which is posted on our school website: www.ps290.org under "Parent Resources" and also available in hard copy upon request. It complements this handbook and provides valuable information, including the many opportunities available for you to get involved in your child's school life. MNS is a wonderful place of learning because of the close collaboration between families, students and staff, so I strongly encourage you to get involved.

On behalf of the MNS staff, our SLT and PTA, I trust that this handbook will be an invaluable resource you will turn to again and again from one school year to the next.

Sincerely,

Doreen Esposito
Principal

MISSION & HISTORY

Mission

Manhattan New School (MNS), P.S. 290, is a true community of learners as evidenced by our rigorous academics and the dynamic relationship between students, teachers, administrators, staff and families. The essence of our philosophy is to encourage a child's natural curiosity, to develop a commitment to lifelong learning and to promote social responsibility as global citizens. This climate of academic dedication, respect and understanding contributes to the vibrant learning community that is our school.

Classrooms are literate environments with an abundance of books that support the development and love of reading, writing, questioning and the sharing of ideas. The richness of our curriculum in social studies, science, the arts and technology, further opens doors into literacy and creates a foundation for a lifetime of critical thinking. MNS students learn mathematical concepts and number methods that enable them to become true problem solvers. They can speak clearly and descriptively as they reason quantitatively. Our students learn to think of themselves as readers, writers, mathematicians and researchers.

We continue to welcome educators from near and far, to share our practice and help enrich our educational communities. The experience at MNS provides a foundation, preparing students to take their place as contributing citizens of the world.

History

The Manhattan New School was started by a group of teachers from the Teachers College Writing Project at Columbia University in the fall of 1991 under the leadership of Shelley Harwayne, former Co-Director of the Teachers College Writing Project. MNS began, as an "option school" - a school founded upon a unique idea - and has now become a fully recognized neighborhood public school. It was given the designation Public School 290 in the spring of 1994. While children used to come from all over the city, most of the student body now lives in the "zoned" area of the school (see the following section, "Who Can Attend", for NYC Department of Education (DOE) zoning requirements for admission).

In its first year, the Manhattan New School had 125 students and seven teachers. Today, MNS has over 600 students and 36 teachers. The MNS student body reflects the global diversity of our City with children from many countries and over 20 different languages spoken at home.

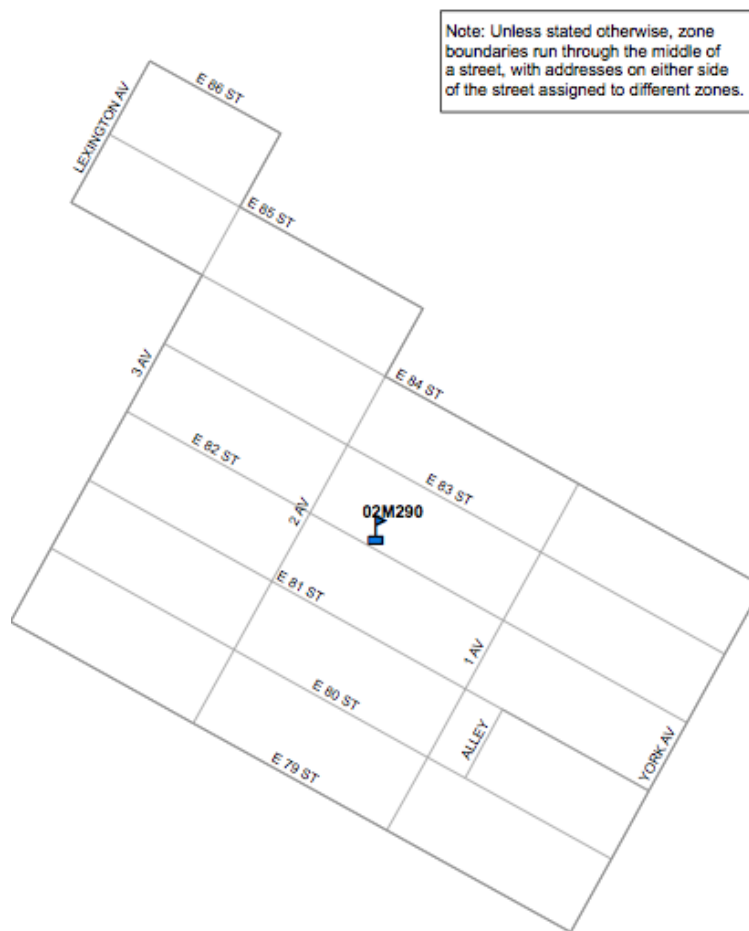
The Manhattan New School has been established as a national professional development site for best practices in literacy instruction. Several former and current staff members have written professional texts known throughout the country. MNS has student teachers from Bank Street College of Education, Columbia University Teachers College, New York University and Fordham University.

The school has grown in student population and, to meet our new challenges, we have reflected on and expanded our vision of teaching and of learning. We pride ourselves on being a highly literate community, but we also understand our responsibility to prepare students to cope with the multiple demands of an ever-changing society. As a result, our children learn within real-world contexts. Along with reading and writing, instruction in mathematics, science, social studies, technology,

music and art engages our students in meaningful explorations that develop critical thinking skills. Our students have the opportunity to investigate a range of big ideas, ask and answer important questions, and develop strategies that enable them to self-manage their learning. All classrooms house extensive classroom libraries. All students visit our SOLE-arium, a classroom “maker space” providing a rich “Self-Organized Learning Environment.” We strongly believe that this process creates a commitment to lifelong learning.

WHO CAN ATTEND

The New York City DOE maintains strict zoning requirements for registration of students to Manhattan New School. As of September 2012, children are zoned for MNS if they reside in the mapped area below.



Monthly tours of MNS begin in October of the academic year and are capped at 50 people per tour (*adults only, please*). Tours may be scheduled after the 1st week in September by calling the school office. Please refer to the “School Announcement” section of the MNS site beginning in January of the year your child is expected to enter kindergarten (children must be turning 5 in the calendar year beginning K) for further details regarding the registration process.

Information regarding admission to NYC public schools may also be obtained by visiting the DOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Elementary>.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

Administration

Principal: Doreen Esposito

Assistant Principal: Amy O'Brien

Parent Coordinator: Sally Mason

The parent coordinator is MNS's liaison between parents, students, teachers and staff. Any questions, concerns or issues can be brought to her attention by dropping in or making an appointment. The Parent Coordinator offers guidance and support and steers families through the proper channels to resolve any situation.

Contact information is available on the MNS website: www.ps290.org.

Parent Teacher's Association (PTA)

The PTA is the school's officially recognized parent-teacher leadership body. The MNS PTA is active and involved in supporting the education and learning needs of all children by reaching out to parents and guardians, exchanging ideas and information, and raising necessary funds in support of the school's educational programs and community building. The PTA depends on the involvement and support of all MNS families to enable the community and programs to thrive. By contributing time, resources, cash donations and ideas, families ensure that MNS students experience a first class educational experience. The PTA is governed by bylaws which are updated as needed in keeping with the Chancellor's A-660 regulation.

PTA Executive Board

The PTA Executive Board is the organization's governing body and addresses school needs and policies and determines how funds are raised and distributed. Members are elected yearly at the May General PTA meeting for the following school year. A restructuring of the Board with additional positions may take place after the reprinting of this handbook, however, the core positions will remain the same. The Executive Board is made up of the:

- 1) **Officers** (Co-Presidents, Co-Vice Presidents, Co-Treasurers, Co-Assistant Treasurers, a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary); and
- 2) **Delegates** – three delegates for each grade. The Kindergarten Delegates are elected at the 1st General PTA meeting of the school year, held in September.

Each Member of the Executive Board is responsible for heading up at least one school event, responsibility or fundraiser each year. They also welcome new families and recruit volunteers.

- The **Co-Presidents** are the PTA's chief executive officers and preside at all PTA and Executive Board meetings. They meet regularly with the Principal and the Parent Coordinator. One of the Co-Presidents serves on the School Leadership Team (SLT).
- The **Co-Vice-Presidents** work alongside the Co-Presidents and fill in as needed.
- The **Co-Treasurers and Co-Assistant Treasurers** are responsible for all PTA funds: keep records of PTA income and expenses, pay the PTA's bills and makes regular reports about the PTA's financial condition.
- The **Recording Secretary** takes the minutes at all PTA and Executive Board meetings and makes them available to the membership through NewsFlash, the school website and upon request.

- The **Corresponding Secretary** is responsible for communicating announcements to the parent body, as well as creating the MNS Directory and class lists.
- **Grade Delegates** act as liaison between the Executive Board and the Class Parents in their respective grades. Grade Delegates disseminate PTA information to Class Parents to distribute to their classes. Grade Delegates also head-up and coordinate PTA events during the year.

The PTA Annual Appeal and Parent Volunteerism

MNS family members can make a difference. In order to support and maintain programs, the PTA sponsors fundraising events throughout the school year. There are many opportunities to help. Time, cash donations, resources and ideas are all welcome. Donating to the MNS Annual Appeal and volunteering your time are two main ways to get involved.

Donate

The MNS Annual Appeal helps to offset a variety of expenses, including: Field Day, insurance, classroom startup needs, supplies, copying machines, accounting fees, computer hardware, air conditioning expenses, subsidies for grade specific trips and activities, 5th grade graduation and more.

In addition to the Annual Appeal, additional PTA-sponsored fundraising activities include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Auction | • Change For MNS |
| • Fest w/ Zest Spring Carnival | • Student Talent Show |
| • Photo Day | • Movie Nights |
| • Bake Sales | • Book Fairs |

Other ways to bring money into the PTA include:

- **School Store:** MNS logo clothing, water bottles, lunch boxes and bags may be purchased from the school store. Contact: school store manager at schoolstore@ps290.org
- **Amazon:** Visit our website www.ps290.org and click on the Amazon link on our site. After completing your purchase, a percentage is directed back to MNS.
- **Box Tops for Education:** Save “Box Tops for Education” labels and give to your child’s teacher in an enveloped marked with your child’s name OR drop in the Box Tops collection box outside of Main Office on the 2nd floor.

Volunteer

There are many opportunities to volunteer your time and skills. All of the programs listed above require the help of volunteers. In addition, there are several more formal ways to volunteer your time.

1. PTA Committees.

- **The Budget Committee:** drafts a proposed budget each spring for approval by the membership, and a written review of the prior year’s budget. Both are presented for approval at the June General PTA meeting.
- **The Fundraising Committee:** supervises all fundraising activities, develops and proposes new methods of raising funds.

- **The Community Outreach Committee (COC):** works closely with community leaders to represent the MNS parents citywide on issues such as school overcrowding, financing Teacher Assistants and school re-zoning.
- **The Nominating Committee:** is responsible for conducting the nomination and election process for the PTA Executive Board and the SLT. The Nominating Committee seeks out candidates by canvassing the membership for eligible candidates, preparing and distributing notices for upcoming elections, preparing ballots, tallying votes, etc.
- **The Helping Hands Committee:** Organizes and encourages MNS families to participate in volunteer activities that help the larger community.
- **The Global Committee:** organizes our *International Festival*, featuring foods, music, and games celebrating the diversity and cultural richness of the MNS community, plus an international cookbook, book clubs and pen pals.

2. **Class Parents:**

Although Class Parents are not elected members of the PTA Executive Board they are an important part of the PTA. They are on the front lines of communication to the parent body. Class parents are self-nominated and act as an important liaison between parents and the Grade Delegates with the purpose of providing support services for the classroom teachers. Class Parents work closely with their child's classroom teacher and provide services which may include assisting in the compilation of the class list, assisting in the classrooms, organizing class publishing parties, accompanying the class on field trips and recruiting other chaperones, coordinating the Auction Class Project and/or other Auction projects, and telephone/e-mail networking. Class parents volunteer and recruit volunteers for school-wide events, as well as work closely with Grade Delegates to disseminate information on PTA fundraisers and programs. If you are interested in becoming a class parent, please speak with your child's teacher as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year.

3. **Lunch Room Volunteers:**

Parents who are available to volunteer on a consistent basis are invited to assist in the Café at lunchtime (11 am to 12:45 pm). Emails are sent soliciting interested volunteers at the beginning of the school year.

School Leadership Team (SLT)

The School Leadership Team is a school-based organization composed of a total of equal numbers of parents and staff (teachers and administrators). State law mandates that all NYC public schools establish an SLT. The SLT at MNS meets monthly and determines the structure for school-based planning and shared decision-making.

Some SLT projects include the Comprehensive Education Plan, which sets annual goals for the school in all areas and focuses on developing education strategies for improvement, informational resource materials for families and more. SLT members work collaboratively with each other, chairing and/or serving on team sub-committees, with the goal of effectively resolving concerns and addressing the needs of all students. The SLT is not a PTA activity and it is not a fundraising entity.

Elections for the parent SLT positions take place at the end of the school year, typically at the May PTA meeting. Parents serve for a term of two-years.

School Hours

General School Hours:

Monday – Friday

8:20am – 2:40pm

Note: Children entering the building after 8:20 will be marked late. Parents/Caregivers may not enter the building until 8:40 am after the children are settled in their classrooms.

Arrival / Dismissal

School begins promptly at 8:20am. All students are expected to arrive at school in time to line-up no later than 8:15 am in their assigned locations. Locations are assigned by grade and parents are informed before school starts as to where their children need to be and at what time.

Strollers, bikes, scooters or pets are not allowed in the backyards or school building.

Arrival / Dismissal in Inclement Weather

On days when it is rainy, too cold or snowy, there will be no outdoor arrival in the schoolyards. All children will arrive in the Café via the First Avenue door and wait for their teachers for pick-up. Adult caregivers will not be allowed to enter the Café. Assigned staff will assist students who need support in removing rainy-day gear. Dismissal procedures are not modified. They remain the same as usual on inclement days.

Late Pick-Up Afterschool

All students must be picked up at the regular dismissal time for each grade. On rare occasions, if there is a delay in picking up a student, please call the main office. Students must be signed out in the main office before leaving the building.

Attendance

Official attendance is taken daily by your child's classroom teacher. Parents should be aware that having a good attendance record is extremely important.

Absences

It is important that a family member communicate with the school to report student absences. This helps keep us informed, as well as helps to ensure that our documentation is accurate and timely. If a student is absent for any reason, please **call** the main office at 212-734-7127, ext. 1 OR **e-mail** the school at: attendance@ps290.org. Please be sure to include the following information: child's full name, grade, teacher's name, reason for absence.

In addition:

- If your child has chicken pox, scarlet fever, fifth disease or any vaccine-preventable disease, you should inform the Nurse at 212-734-7127, ext. 6.
- If your child is out sick for 3 days or more, you should obtain a letter of explanation from your doctor.
- If your child is traveling out of town, please include copies of his/her itinerary, plane tickets etc. with your absence notification.

- If your child is present at school and signed up for PS290's After School Program, but you choose to pick up your child at dismissal rather than having them stay, please be sure to email the After School Coordinator, Felicia Weisberg, at fweisberg@ps290.org to make her aware of this change.

In situations of extended absences, please get in touch with your child's teacher to discuss a plan for homework and assignments missed.

The DOE closely monitors student absences and requires appropriate action in cases of excessive leave. Regular attendance is critical in maintaining continuity in your child's learning and directly correlates with academic success.

Parents are strongly encouraged to keep their children in school on days before or after long weekends or holiday periods. Teachers continue to provide solid instruction on those days.

Half Days

Half days are scheduled several times during the school year for Parent/Teacher Conferences, Professional Development and a variety of other reasons. On half days, students are dismissed at 11:30 am. School buses will run their normal routes.

BUS & TRANSPORTATION

School Buses and Metrocard Passes

The MTA typically provides a Metrocard to children who live within a qualified distance. Please note that this policy may change from year to year. Children with special services are eligible for yellow bus service if they qualify. Please contact the school if you have any questions. When a child is assigned to a bus route, make note of the route number (usually found on the side of the bus) and the bus number (above the front windshield).

Please note that bus drivers are legally permitted to drop off children whether or not the child's guardian/parent is present at the bus stop. For the most part the drivers will not do so, especially with young children. It is important to be on time and to have a parent/guardian available to pick up the child from the bus stop.

In the event that you are unable to get to the bus stop on time, attempt to call the school in advance so that they may apprise the driver. It is good practice to establish a relationship with other parents at your stop so that they will be responsible for your child in the event that you are late for pickup. Review with your child's bus driver the procedure he/she follows should you be late to the stop to claim your child.

Please contact Rachele Lisi at rlisi@ps290.org for all transportation questions.

The DOE's bus dispatch telephone numbers are: 718-585-8592 or 718-784-3313.

Late Bus

Children arriving to school late due to a delay by the school bus will be marked late but their attendance record will not be affected.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Curriculum

The curriculum at MNS is based on the national Common Core Learning Standards as adopted by New York State. Please refer to the DOE website (<http://schools.nyc.gov>) and <https://www.engageny.org> to view these standards and be sure to attend Curriculum Night scheduled during the first weeks of school.

Academic Intervention and Support Services

MNS acknowledges and celebrates the wide variety of learning styles that students bring with them and the school demonstrates its commitment to meeting the needs of all students by providing the appropriate general education practices and special education services. General education classes include students who may receive special education/related services such as Speech and Language service or Occupational Therapy, as well as students who receive the services of a SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) teacher. Students receiving special education/related services receive services that may be “pushed into the classroom” or students may be “pulled out” and serviced in a small group setting, as prescribed by their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Among the support services provided during the school day are: Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT), speech and language therapy, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), counseling, adaptive physical education, and reading recovery.

Students in need of academic support, are given at-risk academic services, in small groups or individually, by a member of the MNS staff. The School Assessment Team evaluates students in need of ongoing academic support. If needed, the child is referred for testing to determine whether or not they are in need of any Special Education services. If it is then determined that the child is in need of Special Education Services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed. This IEP is re-assessed each year at an annual review with the service provider and the student's classroom teacher, as well as every three years by the School Assessment Team.

For more info, contact IEP Teacher/Special Education Liaison, Elissa Eisen: eeisen@ps290.org.

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

In order to receive special education services, students are evaluated so that their needs can be identified and appropriate mandates provided. The ICT is one model through which students with mandated services are supported. The ICT classes are put together with the following considerations in mind:

- Students whose IEPs' indicate the need for placement in the ICT class – the number of students may not exceed 40% of the total number of students in the class.
- Students with no IEP, i.e. general education students – the number of students should comprise 60% of the total number of students in the class.
- Students comprising the general education percentage must be solid academically, socially and emotionally.

- Students are selected and placed at the discretion of the administration and classroom teachers.

How ICT Classes Work

There are two teachers in each ICT class – a licensed special education teacher and a licensed general education teacher. Both teachers collaborate to provide a balanced education program for the learners in the class. This is a very successful model that we value and prize as part of our practice.

One of the hallmarks of our practice at MNS is the collaboration between staff. Collaboration is the belief that two or more viewpoints create a stronger instructional and emotional environment for all children. Our ICT classrooms thrive as a result of the collaboration between our general education and special education teachers.

Integrated Co-Teaching is an integrated service through which students with special learning needs are educated with their age appropriate peers in the general education classroom. This inclusive environment provides students the opportunity to be educated alongside their peers with full-time support of a special education teacher throughout the day to adapt and modify curriculum and instruction.

ICT classrooms follow the same curriculum and pace as all other general education classes on the grade. When co-teaching, the general education and special education teachers meet to co-plan and prepare lessons, activities and projects that incorporate the appropriate learning modalities. Together, the general education and special education teachers carry out instruction employing a range of methodologies.

MNS makes every attempt to enable all students to experience an ICT class. While most do experience ICT, not all will. In some instances, the sheer volume of students in a grade may make it impossible for all to receive such placement. Additionally, children with 504's (i.e. those requiring testing accommodations) will not be placed in an ICT class, following DOE guidelines.

Class Assignments

Toward the end of the school year, grade teachers meet to discuss class composition for the following year. They review the students and overall group dynamics, as they recommend classes for the following school year. Each child's placement is carefully determined after consideration of many factors. The grade team teachers develop a draft outline of proposed classes, which is reviewed by the Principal and the Assistant Principal for final approval.

Requests for homeroom assignments are not honored. Please refrain from making teacher requests of your classroom teacher or the administration.

State Standardized Tests

Children in grades 3, 4 and 5 all participate in the New York State testing program which are comprised of two exams; the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Each is administered separately.

- The ELA and Math exams for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders each consist of three parts and are administered at the start of the school day on three consecutive school days.
- Grading is on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being "Exceeds the learning standards", 3 being "Meets the learning standards", 2 being "Partially meets the learning standards or meets part of the learning standards" and 1 being "Shows serious academic problems."
- Test dates vary from year to year. Check the MNS website for details.
- The 4th grade test scores are submitted as part of a student's application to middle school. Many of the specialized or SP middle school programs set minimum combined score or level requirements for consideration. Check each middle school's site for requirements.
- If a student scores high (usually a high 4) on the 5th grade exams, that child may be eligible to take the Hunter College High School entrance exam. Check the Hunter website in the early fall to determine if your child's score qualifies for this exam.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Toward the end of 4th grade, Valerie Radetzky, the MNS Guidance Counselor and Middle School Coordinator, will call a meeting for all 4th grade parents, providing them with a preview of the middle school process for the upcoming year.

In October, Valerie will hold a follow-up meeting to review specifics on the application process and to provide information on school tours and additional resources. Families can tour schools on their own or join an MNS-organized group tour.

Families will be given an update on District 2 schools, including information on the admissions outcome for current 5th graders, and important deadlines (if known). Also provided will be a District 2 Middle School Directory, information on specialized, Talented & Gifted, and Citywide programs, as well as general information on the private school process. A one on one meeting with Valerie to discuss the best fit for your child is offered throughout the fall.

Schools use a variety of criteria for determining admissions. These include the 4th grade State ELA and Math scores, report cards, and tests and/or interviews administered by the admitting school.

ATTENDANCE/BEING ON TIME IS CRUCIAL! Middle Schools take excessive absences/tardiness seriously! Absences/tardiness related to illness, family-situation and special circumstances are excusable. Extended vacations are not looked upon favorably.

Please make use of Valerie's website by going to www.ps290.org, locating her name in the directory and clicking on her "Guidance Page." There is a plethora of information available, as well as updates and calendar events. Please also get used to checking NewsFlash for updates and reminders. Finally, Valerie makes use of Parent Delegates to send information out to parents as well, so with these three resources, families should be kept in the loop. If you do not have access

to a computer, Valerie is happy to provide your child with a hard copy of reminders and information to bring home to you, as long as you let her know you do not have computer access.

DISCIPLINE

MNS follows the DOE Discipline Code (*The Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures: Discipline Code and Student Rights and Responsibilities, K-12*). It is expected that families review the Code with their children. Classroom teachers and the administration invest much time and effort in helping children to reflect on their behaviors and actions, helping them to set goals for making better choices in the future.

SCHOOL MEALS & RECESS

Breakfast and lunch are both offered at the MNS Café on the first floor.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served free of charge in the Café from 7:50am – 8:15am to any student wishing to take advantage of this service. Children must be finished eating by 8:15am when they will go to their assigned line-up location to be picked up by their classroom teachers.

Lunch

Lunch at MNS is served in two shifts that take place between 11:00am and 12:45pm. The first is from 11:00am and 11:50am and the second from 11:55am to 12:45pm. Students spend approximately 25 minutes eating and the remainder of their lunch period at recess. The schedule allows all the students time to eat with their class and have a break. Children who are signed up for a Lunch Club will attend their Lunch Club in lieu of recess.

Lunch from Home

Children may bring their own lunch to school. Glass containers, soda and candy (including the candy in Lunchables) are not allowed at MNS. A soft plastic lunch box, labeled with your child's first and last name is recommended.

If a child has forgotten his or her lunch, s/he can always eat School Lunch and the family will be billed at a later date.

School Lunch

A lunch/milk program is provided to all children and is free to qualifying families and available to all other children whose family wishes to pay (see fees below). At the start of each school year, all families will receive a Lunch Form which must be completed by all families. The DOE requires the completion of this form each year by ALL families, even if your child does not participate in the school lunch program. Alternatively, you can fill out the Lunch Form online at nyc.applyforlunch.com.

For more information on the DOE meals program, visit: <http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/meals/default.aspx>

Pricing and Payment Options for School Lunch

School meals are priced as follows:

Lunch, including milk: \$1.75 per day

Milk: .25 cents per day

Complete lunch full year: \$322.00; half year: \$161.00.

Complete milk full year: \$46.00

Families may pay for School Lunch by enrolling online (using a credit card), or by check. Checks should be made payable to "Manhattan New School" and brought to the main office.

For easy online payment, go to www.mySchoolBucks.com, to register for meals. To enroll online, your child's Student ID number (OSIS#) is needed. Please contact the MNS parent coordinator at smason@ps290.org if you need your child's Student ID number.

All children who desire will receive a school lunch. If a family has not pre-paid via the above methods, MNS will send the family a bill for those meals received. Please do not send your child to school with cash for lunch.

Behavior in the Café

Children may not share food in the school. The sharing of food raises serious concerns regarding cleanliness and the compromised safety of children who are affected by a range of food allergies.

Recess

MNS follows DOE policy when allowing children to go outside for recess. If the temperature is too cold or if it is raining or snowing, students are not permitted to go outside. If the yards are icy or the ground is slippery, the Administration will determine if students will be allowed outside. Under such conditions, children will have indoor recess where they will play games or participate in indoor activities. Parents should make sure their children are dressed appropriately based on the weather conditions. If a student is not properly dressed for the day's weather (i.e. coat, hat) that student will not be allowed outside for recess.

5th Grade Off-Site Lunch

Toward the end of the 5th grade year (usually April/May), 5th graders who have earned the privilege are given the opportunity at the discretion of their teachers to eat lunch off-site. Students are teamed into groups and are allowed to eat lunch at one of the numerous restaurants located on 2nd Avenue between 80th and 85th Streets.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health Policies, Requirements & School Nurse

The MNS nurse is at the school every day and is available to students as needed. Minor injuries are cared for at school. For more severe illnesses or injuries, the nurse will notify parents to have the child taken to the doctor. In emergency cases the school will be required to call for an ambulance. Parents will always be notified of a serious problem. It is, therefore, critical that parents keep the school notified of any change in address, home/work/cell phone numbers and emergency contacts.

The school follows New York City DOE and Department of Health policies and protocols for all health-related issues.

Our school nurse, Judy Hirschberg, can be contacted at 212-734-7127 extension 6.

Prescription & Over the Counter Medications

If your child requires prescription medication during the school day, a written letter from the doctor should be provided to the nurse's office along with the medication in its original container with your child's name and the name of the medication on the bottle.

The nurse may administer over the counter medication however, a note from the parent and/or doctor is also required. Over the counter medication will not be dispensed by the nurse unless a parent or doctor's note is received.

A child who feels ill in the middle of the school day will be given a pass from the teacher to go to the nurse's office. If it is determined that the child needs to leave school for the day, a parent will be contacted to take the child home.

Teachers are not allowed to administer medication to students, even with a doctor's note. All requests must be referred to the school nurse.

Security/ Safety

MNS has a school safety agent located at the operating entrance of the school. Adults may not enter the building until 8:40 a.m. after all the children have arrived. Anyone entering the school building must check in at the front desk with the school safety officer before being allowed access to the building. You will be required to show a government-issued photo ID and/or the MNS purple pass issued to all parents/guardians in the school.

Early Pick Up

Should you need to pick up your child from school early, you must officially sign your child out of school and pick up the "early pick-up" pass. The pass must be given to our school safety agent as you leave the building. Upon signing your child out, your child's classroom teacher will be contacted and your child will meet you near security.

All children must be signed out before they may leave the building. Only those individuals whose names are on a student's blue card or on the dismissal list signed by the parent and turned in to teachers at the beginning of the year can take that student out of school. **Children cannot leave**

the school by themselves – an authorized adult must be present. Please use the exit where the security agent is located.

Emergency Closing / Late Opening / Early Dismissal

MNS may experience a closure, an early dismissal or a late opening due to a situation such as inclement weather. In such instances, MNS follows the NYC DOE's procedures and only closes or shortens the school day if the DOE has made such an announcement for all city schools.

MNS will send an e-mail blast to all families to inform them of the closure or time change. Parents are also encouraged to check the DOE website and other local news sources such as Channel 1 News, AM radio stations such as WCBS (880) and WINS (1010) whenever there are questions about school closings.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Lunch Clubs

The MNS Lunch Club program provides students with an alternative to recess in the form of clubs that meet once a week for an entire semester. Club sign-ups are lottery based in September and in January. Detailed information and club descriptions are available on the school site.

By participating in lunch clubs, students have the opportunity to socialize with children from other classes as they engage in enriching activities ranging from arts and crafts to music and dance. During their usual 25-minute class lunch time, students eat with the other members of their lunch club. Then they engage in their selected activity for another 25 minutes.

For more information, please email lunchclub@ps290.org.

Afterschool Clubs

The MNS Afterschool Program offers activities for an entire semester (September-January and February-June). Detailed registration information and class descriptions are available at the school website.

Students are brought to the Café upon dismissal until their program begins at 3:00pm. Under supervision, they can have a snack brought from home and have the opportunity to work on their homework or play a game. The children will engage in their selected activity from 3:00pm until 5:00pm. Afterschool dismissal will take place between 5:00pm and 5:45pm.

The schedule follows the NYC public school calendar. The program is closed on days when NYC schools are closed, and on half days when all grades are dismissed early. Refer to announcements in NewsFlash regarding cancellations.

This program is tax deductible as childcare. For more information, please contact the afterschool coordinator, Felicia Weisberg at fweisberg@ps290.org.

Supplemental Programs and Activities

MNS provides a series of diverse and wide-ranging supplemental programs and activities to students throughout the school year. Some of these activities are spear-headed by the teaching, specialty and administrative staff, while others are organized by the school through partnerships with outside organizations that operate these programs (together with MNS staff) in the school. These programs may operate and vary by grade-level, while other programs are school-wide. Highlights of some programs offered are:

- Wingspan, providing children with a basic foundation in theater arts. (Kindergarten – 5th grade)
- Ballet Tales, in partnership with the New York City Ballet (1st Grade)
- Swimming at Asphalt Green, providing children with 15 sessions of free swim instruction. (2nd Grade)
- Manhattan School of Music Opera Program (2nd, 3rd Grades)
- Chess, where children are introduced to chess, chess strategies and sportsmanship, in partnership with the Little House of Chess (3rd Grade)
- National Dance Institute (NDI), where children participate in dance classes led by professional teaching artists with the aim of fostering a love of the arts and a curiosity about the world, in partnership with the NDI. (4th Grade)

A complete and detailed listing of all the programs and activities offered to MNS students can be found in the *Parent's Guide to Programs & Activities Offered at the Manhattan New School*, on the MNS website.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Change of Information

If your address, e-mail, telephone numbers, or any other contact information – including adults who may pick-up your child - changes, please inform your child's teacher as well as the school secretary. Please stop by the main office to update your blue card or you may request that one be sent home for you to return and complete. In cases of emergencies, it is essential that we be able to get in touch with all parents

Communication with Families

Information about MNS is disseminated to families and students primarily through the following:

School Website

The MNS school website, www.ps290.org, serves as both an important representation of our school to the public and to MNS families. Information such as upcoming events, schedules and notices, teacher and staff contact information, and copies of NewsFlash can be found on the MNS website.

Newsflash

The MNS newsletter, Newsflash, is e-mailed to parents and posted on the school website. The Newsflash provides school updates, information on upcoming events and highlights important happenings, events and news. It is a very important communication source for the school and one that parents should be sure to read. Please ask the parent coordinator to obtain a hard copy or a translated version, if needed.

Class Parents

Class parents communicate to all classroom families. Communications typically take the form of e-mail, backpacked materials or in-class announcements (at in-class events such as publishing parties, for example). [See “Parent Teacher’s Association” section of this Handbook for more information.]

Backpacked Materials

Students are often given handouts to bring home. Be sure to regularly check your child’s backpack.

Parent Communications with Students at School

Parents may never address discipline concerns with children other than their own when they are at school. Please contact your child’s teacher, the school administration or a child’s parent directly if you wish to discuss behavioral issues arising between your child and another child or children at school.

Direct Communications with Teachers & Staff

At MNS we work together as a team. When issues arise, teachers and administrators work together to discuss and resolve issues regarding our students. Our School Leadership Team analyzed the data from their parent and teacher survey and created this communication policy. The intention of this policy is to keep our students safe, strengthen the relationships between staff and families, and, more importantly, to provide our students with the least number of interruptions during their instructional time.

Email:

Teachers value your input and would like to hear from you. Please remember that teachers’ priority is teaching. These are some guidelines on how best to use this form of communication.

The teachers’ priority is the safety and education of our students. Email is not going to be checked during the school day and please do not expect that teachers will be checking emails over vacations or weekends. Teachers will respond to emails within 48 business hours.

Email should be sent only when necessary and used for non-urgent matters. Your child’s academic progress, learning expectations or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child’s teacher.

Across the community email should not include any information related to other students or staff as well as any personal or sensitive information.

Purpose and Protocol

- Setting up a meeting: briefly state reason for meeting and whether you’d prefer to discuss by phone or at school. Ex. I’d like to meet at school to talk about my child’s math progress.
- Sending a quick note: briefly state information you would like the teacher to know. Ex. I’m going away for a few days so my child might be a little sad.

- Dismissal plans: Please state who will be picking up your child. Dismissal plans must be emailed prior to 8 am the morning of, otherwise the child will not be dismissed to anyone who is not on the Teacher Dismissal Permission Form and the Blue Emergency Card, including relatives. Ex. Tomorrow 4/18 my child will be picked up by her grandmother Jane Smith.

Meetings:

For serious concerns please contact us via email, phone call or written note to set up a meeting or phone conversation. We can set up conference calls so that more than one adult can be included in the meeting. All teachers have time available on Tuesday afternoons for parent communication. We are available to make accommodations if that time is inconvenient.

Contact List:

Please contact your child's classroom or cluster teachers to address any questions or concerns. If after meeting with the teacher your question or concern is not being addressed, please contact Doreen Esposito desposito@ps290.org or Amy O'Brien aobrien@ps290.org

Please contact cluster teachers for questions or concerns in their classes:

Art – Pamela Saturday psaturday@ps290.org

Gym – Michael Miller mmiller@ps290.org

Science – Kristine Kaeser-Dessberg

kkaeserdessberg@ps290.org <mailto:kkaeserdessberg@ps290.org>

Music – Lisa Rizzi lrizzi@ps290.org

Technology – Steven Jaffe sjaffe@ps290.org

Questions or concerns at lunch or recess: Amy O'Brien aobrien@ps290.org

Attendance or lateness issues: attendance@ps290.org

Call office in case of emergency: 212.734.7127

Parent Coordinator - Sally Mason smason@ps290.org <mailto:smason@ps290.org>

English as a Second Language – Marisa Cohen mcohen@ps290.org

Math curriculum: Chris Lomot clomot@ps290.org

Service providers for questions or issues related to your child's special education services:

IEP related questions – Elissa Eisen eeisen@ps290.org <mailto:eeisen@ps290.org>

Counseling – Valerie Radetzky vradetzky@ps290.org

Speech and Language – Jennifer jrooney@ps290.org or Stacey Shea staceymshea@gmail.com

Occupational Therapy – Lisa Orgel lorgel@ps290.org

Contact class parents and grade level delegates for ideas regarding field trips, classroom activities, supplies, etc.

Dismissal:

Dismissal changes can be communicated via email or written note. **Emails must be received prior to 8 am the morning of, and written notes must be received prior to dismissal the day of**, otherwise the child will not be allowed to leave with anyone who is not on the Teacher Dismissal Form or the Blue Emergency Card, including relatives. If there is an emergency that will

affect dismissal, please call the school at (212) 734-7127. Please remember that teachers priority is teaching and they will not be checking email throughout the day.

Missing Materials:

In order to minimize interruptions during instructional time, students are not allowed to call parents during the day to ask them to bring in forgotten materials. If you realize your child forgot something, you may bring it to Dora's desk behind security in the MNS Cafe. Your child will be able to check this area at an appropriate time during the school day. This policy will be strictly enforced. Exceptions will only be made for medicine or eye glasses.

If your child left something in the classroom, he/she can retrieve it the next day. Children will not be permitted back to their classroom once the day ends.

Social Concerns:

Teachers are available to discuss any problems your child is having. Remember Valerie and Anita are available as well. You can contact them at vradetzky@ps290.org or alee@ps290.org.

Teacher to Parents:

Parents may expect communication from a teacher if a problem arises other than at report card time. For example, if your child is not meeting grade expectations, the teacher should contact you before the report card arrives.

Health Concerns:

Please share any problems your child is having with your teacher, but also with the school nurse, Judith Hirschberg (jhirschberg@ps290.org or 212-734-7127, ext. 6), the Assistant Principal, Amy O'Brien (aobrien@ps290.org) and/or the gym teacher, Michael Miller (mmiller@ps290.org). Contact each staff member as needed. For example, if your child is injured and requires restricted activity, all of the above need to know.

Note: The naming convention to send an e-mail is first initial followed by the full last name @ps290.org. For instance, parent coordinator, Sally Mason, can be reached at: smason@ps290.org. If you need help, go to the MNS website (ps290.org) to find a complete directory of staff and their e-mails.

Cyber Policy

Technology is an important tool now available to students in their daily lives. With the help of the Department of Education Office of Technology Assistance, we do our best to monitor and block access to websites that may provide inappropriate content for students at the elementary school level. While we try to be vigilant in school, there may be different guidelines at home, giving children more liberal access to the use of the many search engines and social networks available in cyber space. The common message between home and school must be that all children understand that access to technology must also be accompanied by a commitment to accept the responsibility for the appropriate use of this amazing tool.

Students at MNS are, therefore, expected to comply with the policies of the websites on which they register. This includes age limits. The web should also never be used as a forum for making disparaging comments about peers or to engage in any kind of behavior that impacts life in school in a negative manner. Students will be held accountable for any behavior that could be classified as “bullying” or behavior that proves to be disruptive to the educational process in school. Should these kinds of behaviors occur, the school will hold such students responsible and the DOE discipline code will be enforced accordingly.

Curriculum Night & Move Up Night

Parents have the opportunity to meet their child’s grade teacher and the specialty teachers (technology, physical education, music, science, art) in order to understand each teacher’s goals and expectations. Curriculum Night takes place on a weekday evening in late September. MNS encourages all parents to participate in Curriculum Night. It is a great way to get to know your child’s teachers, learn about the curriculum and meet other MNS families. In the spring parents are invited to attend Move Up Night where they meet the teachers in the grade their child(ren) will attend the following year and learn about the expectations for learning in that grade.

Electronics/IPods, Etc.

Chancellor’s Regulations prohibit any electronic devices other than cell phones in school. If a student is found using such a device during school hours, the device will be confiscated and returned only to parents.

MNS Cell Phone Policy:

We understand that some students have cell phones to communicate with parents/caregivers before and after school hours. Children are not permitted to receive or send phone calls in school or at recess or when they are out to lunch. If they have a cell phone with them, it must stay in the backpack, turned off, for the entire day. If a teacher sees or hears a child’s cell phone, it will be confiscated and cannot be returned until a parent/guardian comes to school to pick it up. The same is true if we see a child with a cell phone in the yard or in front of school during school hours, including after school. The school is not liable for lost, damaged or broken cell phones.

Field Trips

At various times during the year, your child’s teacher will organize several field trips to enhance the curriculum taught in the classroom. You will receive written notification prior to the field trip as well as a parental consent form, which must be returned in order for your child to participate in an off-site trip. The teacher will request parent volunteers to assist with the trip, and/or a monetary contribution to fund your child’s participation. In addition, you will be asked to complete a

permission slip for neighborhood walking trips. This permission slip will cover any field trips within walking distance of the school. However, you will always be notified prior to the trip.

Food Policy for In-School Events

MNS, in accordance with DOE policy governing school food, supports healthy eating and healthy foods. The Chancellor's Regulations governing school food, including bake sales can be found on the DOE website: <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/ChancellorsRegulations/default.htm>.

Please note that foods containing nuts or nut products are not permitted at in-school events.

Bake Sales

MNS PTA sponsors bake sales several times a year to support general and specific activities. Any home baked item must be individually wrapped and contain NO NUTS. Other individually wrapped items such as juice boxes, bags of pretzels and dried fruit are allowed.

Classroom Celebrations

When celebrating classroom projects, including publishing parties, food may be permitted. It is important to consult with your child's teacher to determine the food policy in the classroom. High sugar items such as donuts, cupcakes, cookies, etc., as well as nuts, are not permitted. Please share fruit, bagels, or whole grain products along with juice and water.

Birthdays

There are a variety of ways in which we celebrate birthdays at MNS. Celebrations are at the discretion of the teacher, but may include: hand made cards, story telling, the sharing of a book, etc. School policy specifies that sugary items such as donuts, cupcakes, cookies, and cake, as well as nuts, are prohibited. Please follow teacher guidelines regarding the celebration of birthdays.

Children are invited to stop by the principal's office for a birthday pencil.

Lost and Found

MNS maintains a Lost and Found, located on the first floor of the building, near the Art Room. Parents and children are encouraged to search through the Lost and Found bins as soon as an item is lost. Parents are encouraged to label all their child's belongings, including lunch boxes, backpacks, hats, gloves, jackets and boots. Please check the Lost and Found bins located in the cafeteria regularly, as items will be discarded periodically or donated to charity.

Parent / Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences take place twice a year, in the Fall (November) and in the Winter (March). In the weeks leading up to the Conference period, teachers will disseminate a sign-up sheet to parents, asking each family to indicate their time preferences. Parents will then receive a confirmation from their child's teacher indicating the conference time and date. Each conference is 10 minutes in length. If you feel that you need more time than the allotted 10 minutes, contact your child's teacher to arrange a meeting outside of Parent Teacher Conferences.

Publishing Parties

Publishing parties are a key way MNS builds community with families, children, teachers and staff. Classroom teachers will organize publishing parties throughout the school year. These parties provide families the opportunity to view the culmination of a study unit, and their child's project resulting from that study. While publishing parties often showcase writing, they may also feature math or social studies projects. These parties provide the classroom teacher with an opportunity to inform families about the goals and objectives of the study unit, the families with an opportunity to review the work of their child and others in the class, and the children to take pride in others reading or reviewing their published work.

School Store

Show school spirit by purchasing various items with the MNS logo from the school store. Order forms for items such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, lounging pj's, hats, lunch boxes, canvas bags, duffel bags and water bottles are sent home periodically. Contact the school store manager at schoolstore@ps290.org for further information.

Visiting the School

Any visitor is required to sign in at the security desk and to show an ID card. No one will be allowed into the school without first signing in with security. This procedure is in place to protect the children. When a special event is taking place where large numbers of parents will be entering the building at once – such as a publishing party or a concert – follow procedures set by the security agent to enable faster entry. In some instances, a school-issued parent/guardian ID and/or a sign-in sheet, by class, is required.

Kindergarten parents have special entry cards to be used during pick up only. Presenting these cards to security will allow you to enter the building without signing in during pick up hours.

When leaving the building, exit is allowed only at the location covered by the security agent. Use of the middle doors or the 2nd Avenue door for exit is never permitted.