



**P.S. 198 The Isidor and Ida Straus School**  
www.ps198m.org

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1700 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10128  
Tel (212) 289-3702 / Fax (212) 410-1731

Katharine DeBenedictis, Principal  
Linda Shkreli, Assistant Principal

# Parent Handbook 2020-2021



## General Information

### School Contact Information

PS198M  
Isidor and Ida Straus School  
1700 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10128

School Telephone (Main Office) 212 289-3702 ex. 01  
School FAX 212 410-1731  
School website [www.ps198m.org](http://www.ps198m.org)

### Administration

Principal Katharine DeBenedictis  
[Kmacmanus@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Kmacmanus@schools.nyc.gov)  
Assistant Principal Linda Shkreli  
[Lshkreli@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Lshkreli@schools.nyc.gov)

### Main Office Staff

The office staff will be available from 9:00am to 3:30pm, Monday – Friday to assist families. Please also visit our website for contact information of additional staff members.

Parent Coordinator Danielle Santana  
[Dsantana10@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Dsantana10@schools.nyc.gov)  
School Aide (full time) Emily Rivera  
[Erivera35@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Erivera35@schools.nyc.gov)  
School Aide (part time) Sharon McCoy  
[SMcCoy9@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:SMcCoy9@schools.nyc.gov)

### School Based Support Team

Psychologist Anita Radovic  
[Aradovic@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Aradovic@schools.nyc.gov)  
Diane Bowser  
[dbowser@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:dbowser@schools.nyc.gov)  
Guidance Counselor Alison Harvazinski  
[Aharvazinski@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Aharvazinski@schools.nyc.gov)  
Social Worker Iris Lugo-Becker  
[IlugoBe@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:IlugoBe@schools.nyc.gov)  
IEP Teacher Karen Bugden  
[kbugden@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:kbugden@schools.nyc.gov)

## School Arrival and Dismissal Information

### School Hours

Our official school hours are 8:30-2:00pm. In order to ensure compliance with health and safety regulations, we will have a slightly staggered arrival and dismissal. Please see below for details regarding these procedures and **adhere to the timing indicated for your child's particular grade**.

Grade	Line Up/ Temp Checks Begin Outside the Black Gate	Building Entry/Exit
3 <sup>rd</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	8:15 am	8:30 am – 1:55 pm
Pre-K – 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	8:25 am	8:35 am – 1:45 pm

### Arrival

#### Arrival details for all grades:

- Parents/guardians are not permitted into the building at arrival.
- Arrival takes place outdoors, rain or shine! **NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE**. We urge you to keep an umbrella in your child's backpack.
- There is no need to arrive early! Your child will not be allowed into the building before their official arrival time. Children cannot come into the building early for a bathroom. Parents are not permitted in early to visit the office or see the nurse.
- There is no early breakfast. Breakfast will be served in classrooms upon arrival. Grab and go breakfast bags will be waiting by the door.
- You and your child must be wearing a mask as per NYCDOE policy. The school will give you a mask should you arrive without one.
- All parents should do a health screening on their child before leaving their home, including a temperature check.
- Upon arrival at school, students will require random temperature screenings. Parents/guardians should not leave their child at school until temperature screenings have been completed. Students who fail the temperature screening will be required to be taken home and will not be permitted in school.

#### Grades 3-5:

- Line up **OUTSIDE** of the black gate on 95<sup>th</sup> street **no earlier than 8:15am**.
- Line up heading **UP** the hill towards Lexington Avenue. Tuck into the cobblestone/tree area as best you can and maintain appropriate distance.
- School staff will conduct random temperature screenings.
- Only after a staff member has opened the black gate at 8:25am will students be permitted into the L shaped yard to line up by grade. **Only students are permitted to enter the yard, no parents/guardians**.
- School staff will be waiting to greet students in the yard. Staff will escort students inside the building to their classrooms at 8:30am.
- Late students will be held until a staff member can escort them to class. Late students will also require temperature screenings.

#### Grades Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup>:

- Line up **OUTSIDE** of the black gate on 95<sup>th</sup> street **no earlier than 8:25am** (unless you've brought a sibling in an upper grade).
- Line up heading **DOWN** the hill towards Third Avenue. Tuck into the Citi bikes as best you can and maintain appropriate distance.
- School staff will conduct random temperature screenings.
- You will enter after grades 3-5 (around 8:30am). Pre-K – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will head into the large yard (Samuel Seabury Park) where you will line up with your child by your class sign. Parents should escort and wait with their child until a teacher arrives.
- Teachers will arrive to greet students by 8:35am and will then escort children into the building.
- Late students will be held until a staff member can escort them to class. Late students will also require temperature screenings.

## Dismissal

Pre-K - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade at 1:45pm (Large yard)

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade at 1:55pm (L shaped yard)

### Dismissal details for all grades:

- **Only adults (18 yrs. and older) who you have authorized on the Emergency Card will be allowed to pick up a student, including siblings.**
- Parents/guardians are not permitted into the building at dismissal.
- You must be wearing a mask as per NYCDOE policy. The school will give you a mask should you arrive without one.
- Students will be dismissed to their same arrival spot either in the large yard or the L shaped yard.
- Please do not be late for pick up. Please wait for your child by their class sign and maintain appropriate distance from other families.
- Please do not ask to speak with teachers at dismissal, as they are required to be back in the building for mandatory remote office hours with students and families. Please reach out via their preferred method of communication (School CNXT, email, phone) should you have a question or concern.

### Self-Dismiss Procedures: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

5<sup>th</sup> graders are permitted to self-dismiss from school provided we have written consent on file. An email or phone call is NOT sufficient. Parents or legal guardians are required to submit a signed letter to give consent for their child to leave school on their own, ONLY at dismissal. Students may not self-dismiss early to attend appointments outside of school, i.e. a doctor. **Students who self-dismiss are not permitted to walk a younger sibling or family member home from school.** They do not replace a parent or guardian picking up another student. Exceptions will not be made. Families are encouraged to consider the readiness of your child as it pertains to self-dismissing and are encouraged to come up with a plan for when they leave school.

### Early Release from School

Given the limited in person school days for any child this year, **we will not permit students to be dismissed early** unless there is a true emergency situation. If there is an emergency, please call school before you arrive and then again once you've made it to the building. Your child will be brought to the door of the school—not to the corner, your car, etc.

### Attendance & Lateness—SUBJECT to CHANGED BASED ON DOE GUIDANCE

**In Person Days:** The definition of “present” is as follows—

- Student is physically present in the classroom for instruction during the scheduled school day.

It is mandated that each student arrive on time and attend school every day unless ill or directed to quarantine. Late families will disrupt the orderly nature of arrival and risk complicating our ability to provide a safe environment for all students. Teachers will be taking the attendance of on-site students as soon as they arrive to the classroom. If a student exhibits a pattern of absences or lateness on their on-site days, the NYCDOE Attendance Coordinator will contact the family and potentially make a home visit. Chronic, unexcused absences or lateness will be investigated.

**Remote Only/Remote Blended Days:** The definition of “present” is as follows—

- Student is virtually present in a virtual learning environment for synchronous (live) instruction during the scheduled school day.
- A student is considered absent if they are not virtually present during remote lessons or scheduled teacher-student instruction during the scheduled school day.

The City will use “attendance” and not “interaction” as a measure of student engagement and instructional time in remote learning settings. Whereas student “interaction” was tracked in spring 2020, this year we return to a more traditional definition and practice of taking attendance, aligned to New York State Education Law. Parents have advocated for increased live instruction, thus it is parent responsibility to have students consistently present during the live instruction the school provides.

### **Breakfast & Lunch**

Both breakfast and lunch will be served in the classroom. Breakfast and lunch are both free for all students, however parents are asked to complete the family income survey in order to ensure that NYC receives the federal aid needed to sustain the program. Breakfast and lunch options are more limited this year given the grab & go nature of service. Please refer to the DOE website for monthly menus, noting that at times, the kitchen has to make last minute changes based on food supply.

Students who require breakfast in grades K-5 will take it from the “grab and go” station upon entering the building. Pre-K students will have breakfast delivered to their classroom. Students are not required to take or eat breakfast in school. Parents should communicate with teachers if they plan to provide breakfast consistently at home. Parents also need to communicate with their child so that they remember to take a breakfast when they arrive.

Lunch will also be served via individual bagged service in the classroom. Students have the ability to bring a lunch from home if that is their preference.

**Snack will not be an option for students in the classroom this year.** Given the shortened length of the school day, and the need to limit the time students are in school without masks, snack is not necessary.

### **Playing in the School Yard After School**

PS 198’s playground is not open to students before or after school. Samuel Seabury Park becomes open to the public immediately following school dismissal. The gate to enter the school building will be locked immediately following dismissal. **The school is not responsible for children playing in the yard after school is dismissed.** As with any playground, all children should be supervised by a responsible adult. Children are not permitted to enter the school building unattended to use the bathroom after school.

### **Transportation**

Danielle Santana, Parent Coordinator, is available to assist families with arranging school bus transportation (once made available by DOE) or metrocards for children who meet eligibility requirements. Please inquire in the Main Office for further information.

## **Ensuring Student Health and Safety**

**Please refer to the NYCDOE’s COVID-19 School Health Policy for COVID-19 specific information regarding student health and permission to attend school. It has been posted on our school website.**  
**<https://www.ps198m.org/>**

### **Visitors to PS198 during COVID-19**

COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols permit visitors on a very limited basis. Parents/guardians should expect to conduct school business via phone or virtual conference. This includes contact with all school staff, including the main office and nurse. Rare exceptions will be made as needed.

Visitors who are permitted to enter the building must complete a virtual health screening to show the School Safety Agent upon arrival, as well as agree to a temperature screening upon entering the building. **NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.** The Safety Agent will log the visitor’s name and address for COVID-19 contact and trace purposes. Visitors will be escorted around the building at all times. Please note that these are NYCDOE regulations for school visitors and are part of the Safety Plan approved by the NYCDOE and NYPD.

### **Emergency Cards**

All students will receive an Emergency Card. **It is imperative that it is filled out completely and returned to school immediately.** This will be true for both blended and fully remote students. It is extremely important that a parent/guardian provides a working telephone number in case of an emergency. **These cards MUST be updated whenever contact information changes.** Please note:

- Indicate any person who **should not** have contact with your child. It is important for parents to communicate with the school any information regarding orders of protection. Pictures of those individuals restricted from

contact with your child will be placed on the back of the Emergency Card and the Safety Agent will be informed. This information will also inform school staff who they can/cannot communicate with via virtual meetings.

### **Student Health**

The NYC Department of Education works with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make certain that all students with special needs are provided services to ensure their full participation in the educational setting. Parents and providers must provide the appropriate documentation to request in-school direct health services and/or accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These forms must be returned to the school for processing and approval by the 504 team. A new request and authorization form is required at the beginning of each school year if the child continues to require the requested services in school. **In order for the school nurse to administer any medication in-school, a physician must complete a Medication Administration Form.** If you have any questions, please speak to our school nurse. She can be reached by calling the school.

### **Immunization Requirements**

All students in grades Prek-K-12 attending New York City public schools must have documented immunization against the following diseases: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, Hepatitis B, and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib).

## **Supports for Families**

### **Ladder of Assistance**

PS198 is a cooperative community where the expectation is that teachers are always communicating with other staff members in the building, including the administration. The first point of contact for a family is typically the teacher, Guidance Counselor or Parent Coordinator. It is often best to speak with the child's teacher first, as they most often can provide detailed and accurate information as it relates to the daily performance and activities of a student. Student to student conflict is always first handled by classroom staff. If necessary, the Principal or Assistant Principal will be brought in for consultation. It is not always necessary, nor productive, to see the Principal about a concern or issue.

### **Meetings with Staff**

In the event that a parent would like to speak or virtually meet with a staff member, they should call or email that person to schedule a meeting. Parents should expect a response within 48 hours.

### **Special Education/IEP Meetings**

Most IEP Meetings will be scheduled in the afternoon from 1:45-2:20pm. This year we will have even less flexibility to free up teachers to attend meetings at other times of the day given the need to limit the number of adults and students that come in contact with each other during the school day. We appreciate your flexibility and willingness to make yourself available at the requested time. School staff will schedule in advance in order to assist you in arranging your schedule. An Annual Review of an IEP is required once per year, with additional reviews held on an as needed basis. For more information regarding special education services, please contact a member of our School Based Support Team (SBST) or your child's classroom teacher.

### **Communication**

Students thrive when the connection between the family and the school is present and strong. Our PTA works to bring together the parent body as a community and to keep you informed of daily events at PS198. The school's website, [www.ps198m.org](http://www.ps198m.org) is one resource for staying up to date on school events. Our school-wide communication system, SchoolCNXT is the platform that most easily connects parents with the school. All families are encouraged to sign up to stay connected with their child's classroom teacher, the main office, and the PTA. Once School CNXT has been updated for the 2020-2021 school year, new families will receive an invitation. In the meantime, the school will continue to communicate via email.

### **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

Every PS198 parent is automatically a member of the PTA. We encourage all parents to become active members as connecting with other families can often be a helpful support when navigating school matters. PS198 strongly encourages

that each parent take an active role in his or her child's school life. Whereas COVID-19 will limit large school events, virtual events will be coordinated throughout the year and families are encouraged to attend to the fullest extent possible.

PTA meetings offer parents an opportunity to become actively involved in their child's education and in the PS198 community. Meetings inform parents as to what is going on in the school, allow parents to share their ideas, solve problems, make PTA budget decisions, and help direct the school's future. Financial contributions are NOT required for participation in PTA meetings. Every vote is weighted equally and the voices of all parents in our community are encouraged to speak and be heard. The PTA can be reached by email at [PTA@ps198m.org](mailto:PTA@ps198m.org). This year PTA meetings will be held on Zoom. More information will be shared at the start of the year.

### **After-School Care & Resources**

Limited afterschool opportunities will be provided in the building. The following programs are after school options, but **are not** directly affiliated with PS198. They are independently funded and managed by their own hired staff. Parents are encouraged to contact these programs as soon as possible as they can fill up. For further information on other parent resources, please contact the school's Parent Coordinator.

### **Community Based Organizations**

### **Contact Information**

#### **Beacon After-School (on site)**

1700 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10128  
(212) 828-6823

#### **Union Settlement (off site)**

1775 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10029  
212-828-6132

### **Chancellor's Regulations**

#### **Policy for Use of Cell Phones & Other Electronic Devices**

Although not advisable, students can bring cell phones and other electronic devices to school, however neither the Citywide Discipline Code, nor the PS198 Electronic Device Policy allows students to use these items when on school grounds. This includes no taking pictures, reading eBooks, playing games, etc. When the student arrives at school all electronic devices must be turned off and placed in their school bag. The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of these devices. Use of electronic devices during the school day will result in disciplinary action. If you should need to communicate with your child while he/she is in school, kindly call the school at (212) 289-3702. **The full school policy is included at the end of this handbook.**

**When it is reported to the school that a student engaged in inappropriate texting or postings on social media, the incident may be subject to investigation by the local police.** Parents are strongly encouraged to restrict smart phone capabilities and monitor cell phone use carefully.

#### **Discipline Policy**

The school follows the NYCDOE Citywide Behavioral Expectations to identify infractions and apply appropriate consequences. Please note teachers have the authority to implement guidance interventions and disciplinary responses when a student disrupts the instruction of other students. In an effort to create a positive, strong, home-school relationship, please review the citywide discipline code with your child (<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/>).

## Academic Programming & Curriculum

A new paradigm for instructional programming was needed this year to provide students appropriate learning opportunities, under the social distancing parameters and fiscal constraints that currently exist. Students may engage in a Blended Learning or Fully Remote instructional model for the 2020-2021 School Year. In both models, students will utilize the NYCDOE Google Classroom and Zoom platforms for daily instruction.

The **blended learning model** incorporates a combination of both on-site instruction at the school and remote instruction at home on the days the students are not scheduled to be in the school building. By leveraging the Instructional Coordination Period for joint planning before students arrive each morning, the on-site teacher and the remote teacher will work together to coordinate student learning.

The **fully remote model** uses only synchronous and asynchronous online learning and does not include in-person learning. Students who have opted to learn fully remote will be online with their teacher(s) every day engaging in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Virtual Office Hours are held from 2-2:20pm each afternoon, by appointment.

### Proper Rest to Prepare for Virtual & In Person Learning

Whereas your child may not be leaving their house daily for school, it is important that they are prepared for learning each day. Sleep is food for the brain, and it is especially important for children. Lack of sleep reduces a child's ability to concentrate, learn, and solve problems. Children need enough sleep to focus and achieve their full potential. Students should turn off the electronics well before bedtime. Also encourage your child to exercise every day. We encourage families to take children outside, for at least a walk around the neighborhood. This too will help ensure a good night's sleep.

### NYCDOE Zoom for Live Instruction

Students at all levels will engage in virtual instruction on the NYCDOE's Zoom account.

### Zoom Etiquette and General Expectations

- Students are attending school via Zoom on remote learning days. Their appearance and behavior should be in accordance with a regular, in-person school experience. Therefore students should be out of bed, seated in an appropriate location or workspace, and dressed for school. Students who are dressed for the day as if they were out of the home will be more likely to participate as they would in our brick and mortar building. Their attention and focus will be more suitable for learning. Students should wake up, have breakfast, get dressed, brush their hair and teeth, etc. before logging on for their first meeting.
- Establish a consistent workspace. NYC is not known for large, spacious apartments. We do not expect every student to have their own desk to work at daily. However families are encouraged to establish a set workspace so that students understand the expectations of school and boundaries between the school day and weekends.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Your child's teacher and classmates can see behind the students. Should this make any family uncomfortable, rather than turning off the camera, we encourage you to find a workspace suitable to these conditions. Once student cameras are off, it allows them to disconnect from the class and limits the teacher's ability to engage with students effectively. **Students are expected to have cameras on unless directed by the teacher.**
- Stay on mute until it is your turn to speak. This will help to eliminate background noise that could distract others.
- Use the Zoom chat respectfully. The chat feature is a tool to make comments and ask questions without interrupting the speaker, but students should be aware that comments are public and recorded in the minutes of the session. Students are required to engage with the chat as they would in a regular classroom conversation.

### Behavioral Expectations for Students on Zoom

- Always be respectful and courteous to other students and teachers during Zoom meetings. Inappropriate, offensive or threatening comments; misrepresentation of identity, and/or disruptive behavior by any participants during Zoom sessions will not be tolerated.



- Students must use their @nycstudents.net email account to log into a Zoom session. Please ensure that your child logs out of any other Zoom accounts and logs in using these credentials each morning. Login credentials must not be shared. Sharing of login information violates other students' and teachers' rights to confidentiality, and could allow class participation by unauthorized persons and/or lead to disruptive behaviors that detract from a productive and positive learning environment.
- Students who are disruptive and/or "trespass" into Zoom sessions with other classes will receive appropriate consequences in accordance with the NYCDOE Citywide Behavioral Expectations. Consequences may result in temporary or permanent loss of technology access, which would prevent the student from participating in Zoom virtual sessions. Students receiving this consequence would have assignments provided to the student's parent/guardian to be completed asynchronously.

### **Privacy Guidelines for Parents/Guardians**

To maintain a positive, productive learning environment and confidentiality for students and teachers during remote learning, all parents/guardians are asked to follow the following privacy guidelines.

- Zoom virtual instruction is designed for students. To prevent disruptions to the learning environment, parents/guardians should not actively participate in sessions, although parents/guardians may assist their child with technology and/or remain with an earshot.
- Do not video record, audio record, photograph, live stream, or transmit in any other way any part of a Zoom meeting, including not posting on any social media platform.
- Any confidential or personally identifiable information related to students participating during Zoom meetings should not be collected, discussed or shared.
- Parents/guardians should not engage with students during Zoom meetings. If you need to speak with your child during a session, first mute your child's microphone.

### **Curriculum**

PS198 uses a variety of curricula that is aligned with state standards. Teachers implement English Language Arts lessons using *Teachers College/Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Reading and Writing*. In grades K-2 students learn phonics through Foundations and phonemic awareness through Heggerty. For math, teachers utilize the *Investigations* curriculum and *Context for Learning*. Additionally, teachers pull from other resources to enhance their instruction and differentiate their lessons to reach the wide range of learners that exist in any New York City public school classroom. Various web resources will also be accessed in order to enhance virtual instruction.

### **Homework**

All students will be assigned independent reading as nightly homework. There will not be additional assignments, unless teachers have students working on long term projects. No child should go without quality literature for nightly independent reading. On-site students will be permitted to borrow books from the classroom library. **Please make sure you return these books to school each day as they will need to be quarantined for several days before turning over to the next child.** Students working fully remote will have offerings to read through electronic sites. Families who would prefer to borrow actual texts from the school should contact the teacher. Students would not however be permitted to enter the school to pick out titles themselves; they would have to be selected by the teacher. Parents/guardians would be responsible for picking up and dropping off these books in a timely manner.

### **Communicating Student Progress to Families**

Teachers and families are encouraged to communicate frequently throughout the school year, using methods that are convenient for both parties (email, telephone, virtual conferences, etc.). Written feedback regarding student progress will take place at several points during the school year. Parents will receive two official report cards, one midyear, and one on the last day of school.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Dress Code**

There is no formal dress code at PS198, however clothing must be appropriate and take weather and temperature into account. Flip flops, other backless shoes or heels are not safe nor comfortable options for school. Hats are not permitted

for wear in the classroom. Clothing that suggests negative bias or inappropriate messages for young children is not permitted. Parents will be called and expected to come to school with a change of clothing, if necessary.

### **Cold Weather Play**

Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Temperature alone should not be a barrier to outdoor play. Our Chancellor directs schools to allow children outside unless it is snowing, there is ice on the playground, or the wind chill factor produces an effective temperature below zero degrees Fahrenheit. PS 198 takes precautions to keep students warm and to ensure that they are appropriately dressed on very cold days. We modify the duration of time they spend outdoors and provide protective clothing, such as gloves, to children in need. Please make sure however that you send your child to school with the appropriate items including gloves, a hat, a scarf, and multiple layers throughout the winter. If you need assistance in securing these items, please reach out to your classroom teacher or our Parent Coordinator, Danielle Santana.

### **Student Birthdays**

In order to preserve health and safety measures and to allow all staff and families to feel comfortable during the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no birthday celebrations at school which include ANY snacks or give-a-way items such as goodie bags, toys, candy, etc. Teachers can acknowledge birthdays by reading a favorite book, making a special crown, etc. **There are no exceptions to this rule. Any birthday “treats” that arrive at school will be sent home with the child.**

### **Toys, Cash and Other Valuables**

Children should not bring any items of value, nor cash to school. **The school will not be responsible for replacing cash or items from home that are lost, stolen or broken.** It is the parent’s responsibility that his/her child adheres to this school policy. Bringing toys/games/electronic devices may lead to conflicts between students ending in items lost or damaged. Therefore students who bring these items will be required to keep them in their backpack or they will be collected by school staff. Additionally, the school is not the place for students to wear valuable jewelry. Items can be either lost or broken. Teachers and staff will not be held responsible for any jewelry children remove during the day.



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1700 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10128  
Tel (212) 289-3702 / Fax (212) 410-1731

Katharine DeBenedictis, Principal  
Linda Shkreli, Assistant Principal

September 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian:

HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious health problems Americans have ever faced. Advances in medicine have made tremendous strides in keeping people infected with HIV healthy for many years. Still, it has no cure, and education is the only way we can help our students protect themselves from becoming infected.

The New York State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) require that HIV/AIDS education be provided for all students in kindergarten through grade 12. The *HIV/AIDS Curriculum* that NYC DOE developed for NYC students is **developmentally and age appropriate**. For example, in kindergarten, students learn how people get sick and how to get better.

As a parent or legal guardian, you have the right to excuse your child from ***certain*** HIV/AIDS lessons that teach about methods of HIV/STD prevention. These “opt out” prevention lessons are identified in the *HIV/AIDS Curriculum*. **Before opting out your child, parents are encouraged to review the standards and lessons available online at:**

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/learning/subjects/health-education/health-education-requirements>

**If you would like your child to be excused, you must write a letter to the school stating that:**

- Your child should not be in the classroom during the “opt out” prevention lessons; and,
- You will teach your child about prevention at home.

The HIV/AIDS lessons will be taught throughout the school year. Speak to your child's teacher or our Parent Coordinator Danielle Santana, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Katharine DeBenedictis*

Katharine DeBenedictis  
Principal



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## **ATTENTION ALL FAMILIES: IMPORTANT MESSAGE REGARDING SCHOOL FOODS!**

Dear Families,

Each school day New York City students are able to enjoy **FREE** breakfast and lunch meals. All families, **regardless of income or intent for your child to eat the food provided by the school kitchen, MUST** complete a school lunch form to ensure that our school receives the proper funding to support a variety of school programming. **This includes blended and fully remote students.**

Families can complete this form online at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/PickDistrict> or complete the paper application distributed on the first day of school for in-person students.

Please do not delay in completing this form! Our office staff is happy to assist you. Please contact Ms. Emily Rivera, School Aide to set up a virtual appointment (212-289-3702).

Thank you for your cooperation.  
Sincerely,

*Katharine DeBenedictis*

Katharine DeBenedictis  
Principal



### **SCHOOL BASED POLICY OF PS 198: USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

**Although not advisable**, students are permitted to bring the following electronic items to school (Chancellor’s Regulation A-413): 1) cell phones; 2) laptops, tablets, iPads and other similar computing devices (“computing devices”); and 3) portable music and entertainment systems, such as iPods, MP3 players, PSP, and Nintendo DS.

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

1. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be turned on or used while on school property. This includes the use of devices prior to the official start of the school day (i.e. morning activities, breakfast).
2. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be stored in a student’s backpack **at all times** when on school grounds.
3. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be turned on or used for the duration of the school day, and at all times when students are in the care of PS 198 school staff. This includes both when students are on school grounds as well as in locations other than the school building (i.e. electronic devices may not be used on a field trip, including school bus or subway travel to and from the trip).
4. Computing devices may not be turned on or used during the administration of any school quiz, test or examination, except where such use has been explicitly authorized by the school or is contained in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan.
5. Use of cell phones and other electronic devices during the administration of state standardized examinations is governed by State Education Department Rules.
6. Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be turned on or used during school emergency protocols, (i.e. evacuations, lockdowns), including drills or other emergency preparedness exercises.
7. PS 198 is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

**B. Confiscation and return of electronic items**

In determining whether to confiscate an electronic device, PS 198 will consider the nature of the violation. Where appropriate, measures will be instituted in a progressive fashion. Such measures may include, but are not limited to:

- warnings
- confiscation of item and return at the end of the school day
- confiscation of item and return following parent conference
- confiscation of item and return following student entering into behavioral contract
- revocation of privilege to bring item to school

**C. Discipline**

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

**2020-2021 School Year:** Students will be permitted to use personal electronic devices as directed by the teacher when required for in-person learning. Teachers will inform families when these devices may be necessary to support instruction in school. These devices must be used for instructional purposes only, and students must adhere to the Citywide Behavioral Expectations acceptable use of technology in school.