

PS 198:
The Isidor and Ida Straus School
Parent Handbook
2021-2022



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

Administration

Principal Katharine DeBenedictis
kmacmanus@schools.nyc.gov
Assistant Principal Linda Shkreli
lshkreli@schools.nyc.gov

Main Office Staff

The office staff will be available from 8:00am to 3:30pm, Monday – Friday to assist families. Please also visit our website <https://www.ps198m.org/> for contact information of additional staff members.

Secretary Danielle Santana
dsantana10@schools.nyc.gov
Parent Coordinator Raychel Manko
rmanko@schools.nyc.gov
School Aide Emily Rivera
erivera35@schools.nyc.gov

School Based Support Team

Psychologist Anita Radovic
aradovic@schools.nyc.gov
Rebecca Greene
rgreene15@schools.nyc.gov
Guidance Counselor Alison Harvazinski
aharvazinski@schools.nyc.gov
Social Worker Iris Lugo-Becker
ilugoBe@schools.nyc.gov
IEP Teacher Karen Bugden
kbugden@schools.nyc.gov

SCHOOL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

Our official school hours are 8:15 am - 2:35 pm. 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/Health Screening Checks Begin Outside the Black Gate	Building Entry/Exit
3 rd – 5 th Grade	8:10 am	8:15 am – 2:35 pm
Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	8:15 am	8:20 am – 2:30 pm

ARRIVAL DETAILS - *Please understand that these procedures are meant to keep our entire community both healthy and safe and may change in response to the circumstances of the school year.*

For All Grades:

- Parents/guardians are not permitted into the building at arrival and dismissal.
- 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 and families are not permitted to enter early to visit the office or see the nurse without an appointment.
- Please encourage your child to use the bathroom before leaving the house. Families are not permitted into the building without completing their own health screener, therefore it is difficult to have you rush in with a bathroom emergency.
- Per NYCDOE policy, when on school grounds, ALL individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated children and adults must wear a mask. Whereas all families should be prepared to supply their own masks daily, we will give you or your child a mask should you arrive without one.
- All parents/guardians should complete a health screening on their child before leaving their home, including a temperature check. If your child is not feeling well, they should not attend school.
- Upon arrival at school, families will be required to show proof of the DOE daily health screener (<https://healthscreening.schools.nyc/>). Signage that includes this website, as well as QR codes linking to it, will be posted on the gate surrounding the school entrance for families' convenience.
- If you arrive late for line up, please join the end of any existing lines rather than directly approaching the gate.

Breakfast:

- In order to maintain COVID-19 safety requirements for eating, **breakfast will be served from 8-8:15am**. It is important to utilize this service **ONLY** if your student(s) needs breakfast, and not as a convenient early drop-off option.
- Please arrive on time at 8 a.m. to the door nearest to the cafeteria on 95th St., east of the gate entrance and closest to 3rd Ave. A staff member will be there to check your student's health screener.
- Students will eat breakfast in the cafeteria while supervised by staff and be escorted from the cafeteria directly to their classroom at their grades regular arrival time.

Grades 3 - 5:

- Line up **OUTSIDE** of the black gate on 95th street **no earlier than 8:10am**.
- Line up heading **DOWN** the hill towards Third Avenue. Tuck into the Citibikes and building as best you can.
- School staff will check health screeners.
- Only after a staff member has opened the black gate 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.**
- Teachers will escort students into the building to their classrooms at 8:15am.
- Late students who arrive without a health screener will require temperature screenings.

Grades Pre-K – 2nd:

- Line up **OUTSIDE** of the black gate on 95th street at **8:15am**.
- Line up heading UP the hill towards Lexington Avenue. Tuck in as best you can in order to leave the sidewalk clear.
- School staff will check health screeners.
- You will enter after grades 3-5. Pre-K – 2nd grade will head into the large yard (Samuel Seabury Park) where you will line up with your child by your class sign. Parents/guardians should escort and wait with their child until a teacher arrives, then you may leave your child.
- Teachers and staff will escort students into the building to their classrooms at 8:20am.
- Late students will be held until a staff member can escort them to class. Late students who arrive without a health screener will require temperature screenings.

DISMISSAL DETAILS - *Please understand that these procedures are meant to keep our entire community both healthy and safe.*

Grade	Dismissal Time	Pick-Up Location
Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	2:30 pm	Large Yard (Samuel Seabury Park)
3 rd – 5 th Grade	2:35 pm	L-shaped yard

For All Grades:

- **Only adults (18 yrs. and older) who you have authorized on the Blue Emergency Card will be allowed to pick up a student. This includes their older siblings. Students will not be released to siblings under the age of 18 and identification will be checked. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Parents/guardians are not permitted into the building at dismissal.
- Please continue to observe the mask guidance as outlined in the arrival section above.
- 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.
- If your child is enrolled in one of our partner after school programs at PS198 (Beacon, Chess, KING), a teacher will escort them to that program location following general dismissal.
- Please always keep your child’s teacher(s) up to date with their dismissal plans, including after school, caregivers picking up, etc.

5th Grade Only - Self-Dismiss Procedures:

- Fifth 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 (i.e. go straight home, go to a neighbor’s home). It is not advisable to allow your child to hang out on the playground unattended after school.

Early Release from School

Given the limited nature of in person instruction since March 2020, early dismissal is not encouraged for any reason. If you must pick your child up early, please call school before you arrive and then again once you’ve made it to the building. Your child will be brought to the front door of the school—not to the corner, your car, etc.

Transportation

Danielle Santana, our secretary, is the contact for questions regarding transportation, including busing and metro cards. She can be reached by calling the main office (212-289-3702) or email, at dsantana10@schools.nyc.gov.

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 following school dismissal. The gate to enter the school yard from the park will be locked at 2:40pm. As with any playground, all children should be supervised by a responsible adult. **The school is not responsible for children playing in the yard**

after school is dismissed. Only children attending after school programs are permitted inside the building after the regular school day.

ATTENDANCE

POLICY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON DOE COVID-19 GUIDANCE

The definition of “present” during the 2021-22 school year is as follows:

- In Person: Student is physically present in the classroom/school learning environment for instruction
- Remote: Student is virtually present for synchronous or asynchronous instruction during the scheduled program day.
*Students may require remote attendance if they are in quarantine, or at home for DOE remote days (i.e. Election day, “snow days”)

It is mandated that each student attend school every day and arrive on time (both in person and virtually). Parents should always reach out to the classroom teacher or main office to report an absence. If and when a student is absent for three (3) consecutive days, the parent must submit a doctor's note when he/she returns to school. If a student exhibits a pattern of absences or lateness, the family will be contacted to offer support and assistance to improve attendance. After such attempts, if the attendance record does not improve, we are required to report the case to our DOE Attendance Coordinator, for follow up and to make a home visit if necessary. Letters from the main office will be sent to families to help track their child's attendance and to maintain accurate school records. **Please review these records in a timely manner and report any discrepancies to the main office within 24 hours.**

SCHOOL FOODS

Breakfast & Lunch

Both breakfast and lunch are free and available for all students, however, parents are asked to complete the [family income inquiry form](#) in order to ensure that NYC receives the federal aid needed to sustain the program. 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.

Pre-K students will have breakfast delivered to their classroom. Students are not required to take or eat breakfast in school. In order to maintain COVID-19 safety requirements for eating, **breakfast will be served from 8-8:15am for students in grades K-5.** It is important to utilize this service **ONLY** if your student(s) needs breakfast, and not as a convenient early drop-off option.

In order to comply with social distancing guidelines, lunch will be served in various locations both in and out of the building; we will use classrooms, the cafeteria, as well as our outdoor spaces where necessary. Younger children will be prioritized for eating indoors, in more traditional locations. Classroom teachers will communicate the arrangement for each grade at the start of the year. All students, no matter their dining location, will have the option of receiving a school lunch. Students always have the option to bring a lunch from home if that is their preference.

Given the need to limit the time students are in school without a mask, a snack time will not be provided at the start of the year. We will monitor and report changes to this policy as needed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Nursing Staff

Our building has two nurses on staff. They can be contacted by dialing the main office (212-289-3702) and asking to be connected. Our nurses handle day to day wellness assessments when children visit because they are feeling ill, assess and provide the medical attention that may be needed to treat an injury. They manage medication and student health forms. The school nurses do not replace a doctor's follow up. Families should always follow up by calling your physician to report any illness, allergy, or serious injury.

Health Accommodations and Medication (including asthma and allergies)

The NYC Department of Education works with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make certain that all students with special health needs are provided services to ensure their full participation in the educational setting. Parents 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 or nurse. 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 (MAF). This includes asthma pumps, epi pens, Benadryl, etc. Students are not permitted to carry their own medication in their backpacks unless it is indicated on their MAF. In the event of an emergency, should there not be a MAF on file, the nurse is required to call 911. **MAFs should be completed by the first day of school. Additional procedures for keeping students with asthma, allergies, or other health needs safe at school are student specific. It is important that a family reaches out to administration before the first day of school to communicate the child's needs and discuss individualized plans.**

Daily Health Screener

Upon arrival at school each day, families will be required to show proof that the DOE daily health screener has been completed for each child in your family (<https://healthscreening.schools.nyc/>). Signage that includes this website, as well as QR codes linking to it, will be posted on the gate surrounding the school entrance.

Student Pick Up

If a student fails a health screening or shows symptoms of COVID-19, the student will be assessed by the nurse on site. If it is confirmed that the student is showing symptoms of COVID-19, the guardian of the student must be immediately contacted to pick up the child. If the guardian cannot be reached, the school must contact the emergency contacts on the student's Blue Card. Children will not return to class if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Masks & Face Coverings

All students and staff over the age of two must wear a face covering while riding on school buses and anywhere on school property, indoors and outdoors, regardless of vaccination status, unless they have a medical exemption. Individuals are expected to provide their own face coverings, however, our school will have a supply of face coverings and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on hand as needed for children and adults.

- **Face coverings with an exhalation valve or vent are not permitted as exhalation valves allow unfiltered exhaled air to escape to others.**
- Bandanas and neck gaiters are not permitted.
- Face coverings that completely cover or hide an individual's face, such as ski masks, are not permitted.
- Unless otherwise approved by school administration, clear face shields cannot be worn unless accompanied by a face covering.

Students who request to remove their face covering must be permitted to for a short period of time. These "mask breaks" can also be offered throughout the day, at the school's discretion. The frequency of mask breaks may vary by grade level within a school but mask breaks do not last for more than five minutes and can only occur when:

- students are outdoors or well-ventilated areas.
- students can remain at least six feet apart.

COVID-19 Testing

Regular COVID-19 testing provides school communities and public health experts with valuable information. Every DOE school, starting in grade 1, will have 10% of their unvaccinated student population selected twice a month for ongoing random surveillance testing. Families can give consent for testing through their student's [New York City Schools Account \(NYCSA\)](#). We will also ask for written consent to keep on file.

Cleaning and Ventilation

For all students and staff, hand washing and sanitizing is considered a best practice to reduce the spread of all germs. Classrooms will always have a steady supply of soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer. Every day after students vacate the building, custodians disinfect the entire facility with an electrostatic backpack sprayer. This includes classrooms, handrails, furniture and all surfaces.

Regarding ventilation, every window is operational and can be opened. Classrooms are fitted with working air conditioners and the filters are routinely cleaned. Every classroom has two functioning air purifiers; these filters are also cleaned. The air handlers that supply fresh air and exhaust air from the building have Merv 13 filters in place and are routinely replaced.

Visitors to PS198 during COVID-19

COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocols permit visitors in the building 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 the health screener (<https://healthscreening.schools.nyc/>) to show the School Safety Agent upon arrival, as well as agree to a temperature screening upon entering the building. The School Safety Agent will log the visitor's name and address for COVID-19 contact tracing 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. **Should you must make a visit to school, we kindly ask that you find alternative childcare for younger siblings and do not bring them along with you.**

Please visit the DOE's website for further COVID-19 guidance: [School Year 2021-22 \(nyc.gov\)](https://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolYear2021-22)

Blue Emergency Cards

All students will receive a Blue Emergency Card. **It is imperative that it is filled out completely and returned to school immediately.** 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:

- Emergency Cards should indicate any person who **should not** have contact with your child. It is important for parents to communicate any orders of protection. Pictures of those individuals restricted from contact with your child will be placed on the back of the card and the Safety Agent will be informed.

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.

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. Tuesday afternoons from 2:35-3:15pm are reserved for Parent Engagement opportunities. Whenever possible, staff will schedule during that block.

Special Education/IEP Meetings

We attempt to have a comprehensive team available for every child's IEP review. We appreciate your flexibility and willingness to make yourself available at the requested time we coordinate for school staff. 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 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 2021-2022 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 02M198PA@schools.nyc.gov. PTA meetings will be held on Zoom until further notice.

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, unless the teacher requests the use for educational purposes only. This includes no taking pictures, reading E-Books, 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 need to communicate with your child while they are in school, kindly call the school at (212) 289-3702. **The full cell phone and device policy is included as an addendum to 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 AND CURRICULUM

The DOE is planning a full reopening of schools, which includes a return to full time, in person instruction. Current guidance states that there is no remote learning option for families. Classrooms will maintain a presence on NYCDOE Google Classroom and Zoom platforms to account for remote learning on snow days or other days indicated on the DOE calendar.

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 *FUNdations* and

phonemic awareness through *Heggerty*. For math, teachers primarily 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 instruction.

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. Clothing that suggests negative bias or inappropriate messages for young children is not permitted. Families 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, Raychel Manko.

Birthdays

In order to preserve valuable class time and reduce the time students go without masks, large birthday celebrations with specialty food items should be reserved for a family's personal time. Teachers will acknowledge a child's birthday by singing happy birthday, reading a favorite book, making a special crown, etc., however we will not be sharing birthday snacks in the classroom. As an alternative, **families may send a small goodie bag or single serving, pre-packaged treat to be distributed at dismissal.** Please be mindful that food allergies may exist for some students.

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.