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**LOWER SCHOOL HANDBOOK**

## **PS 8 MISSION STATEMENT**

PS 8 is a learning community dedicated to creativity, academic excellence and intellectual curiosity, with the aim of developing life-long learners and engaged citizens. We are committed to the intellectual, artistic, moral, emotional, social and physical development of each child.

# **WELCOME**

Welcome to a new year at PS 8! This handbook lays out the PS 8 Lower School procedures and practices and gives answers to many questions commonly asked by families. Keep it close at hand the entire school year!

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

**Welcome to PS 8!** Whether you are a prospective or current PS 8 Lower School parent, student, teacher, or community member, I hope this handbook answers most of your questions about the school. It is designed to be your guide to what happens within these walls. However, our programs and policies grow and change along with our children, so if you have questions or concerns that are not addressed here, I encourage you to ask, discuss, and respond. This handbook, like the school itself, is a collaboration between all of you and all of us.

Seth Phillips, Principal

Robert Mikos, Lower School Assistant Principal

Patricia Peterson, Interim Acting Lower School Assistant Principal

## CORE VALUES

### **Our Community is Child-Centered**

We strive to ensure that all decisions put the interests of children first.

### **Our Community Embraces Diversity and Individuality**

We value diversity of culture, experience, and perspective.

### **Our Community is Inclusive**

Believing that all people bring unique abilities and talents, we work to ensure that all members – including students, staff and families – feel a sense of belonging and find ways to participate in our community.

### **Our Community Prepares Students for Citizenship**

We strive to develop students' understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship – both in and out of school – and work to give them the skills they need to become active members in a democratic society.

### **Our Community Works as an Effective Team**

Staff, families and the larger community collaborate to achieve our mission.

### **Our Community Takes Responsibility**

We search for answers and avoid excuses.

### **Our Community Acts with Integrity and Respect**

Ethical and honest behavior is part of everything we do. We believe how we achieve results is as important as the results we achieve.

### **Our Community Strives for Excellence**

We seek continuous improvement through reflection, innovation and thoughtful risk-taking.

## ABOUT PS 8

PS 8, also known as The Robert Fulton School: The Magnet School for Exploration, Research and Design, opened in 1846 at 65 Middagh Street, between Hicks and Henry Streets (now marked with a brass plaque). As the population of Brooklyn boomed in the late nineteenth century, the school outgrew its building and construction began on the current lower school building, which opened in 1906. Previously, the address was the residence of John A. Roebling, chief engineer and principal designer of the Brooklyn Bridge. Growth in student enrollment once again necessitated a larger facility, so in 2009 construction began on an addition to the 1906 building; the addition opened for the 2011-12 school year. In 2012, PS 8 was approved to expand to include a middle school serving grades 6-8 at a campus located on the fourth floor of Westinghouse High School on Johnson Street in downtown Brooklyn (less than a ten minute walk from the rest of the school.) Starting in the 2014-15 school year, PS 8 is serving students in grades K through 8. Like the community it serves, PS 8 is both historic and modern.

PS 8 provides enrichment programs to all grades based on the Renzulli model of giftedness, which argues that all children have gifts and that schools should cultivate each child's individual talents. At PS 8 we encourage children to explore their areas of interest, to research their passions, to design products, to solve problems, and to present their conclusions. Students become experts in their own fields. You can learn more about the Renzulli model at <http://www.renzullilearning.com> or by reading "The Enrichment Triad Model: a guide for developing defensible programs for the gifted and talented" by Joseph S. Renzulli.

### Who was Robert Fulton?

Widely and wrongly credited with having invented the steamship, Robert Fulton (1765-1815) was actually an engineer who refined and improved the steamship design to make it practical. His first working steamboat traveled on the Hudson River from New York City to Albany in August 1807. Fulton and his partner, Robert Livingston, founded a successful commercial steamboat service between the cities and a ferry service that connected Brooklyn to lower Manhattan. A lesser-known fact is that Fulton's first career was as an artist, painting mostly portraits, including one of Benjamin Franklin.

## ABOUT THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE)

PS 8 is located in District 13 of the DOE. Our local district personnel:

- Barbara Freeman, Superintendent,
- Precious Jones-Walker, Family Leadership Coordinator, cell (646) 385-6212
- Lorrie Ayers, Family Support Coordinator
- Kim R. Lawrence, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

335 Park Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
(718) 636-3284

The DOE website, <http://schools.nyc.gov/>, provides a wealth of information, including the city-wide school calendar. Families can also find the DOE annual school report cards, parent and teacher survey feedback and the most recent Quality Reviews.

## ABOUT THE SCHOOL DAY

### Morning Arrival

School hours are 8:20 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. The Middagh Street door is open between 8:10 and 8:30 a.m. At all other times, please enter the building on Hicks Street. **For security reasons we ask that you always exit the building through the main door on Hicks Street.**

Early drop-off and a free breakfast are available for all students from 7:50 to 8:20 a.m. Parents or guardians will be allowed to enter the building at 8:10 a.m.; they must then stay with their child until his or her teacher arrives at 8:20 a.m. All parents and guardians must be off the second and third floors no later than 8:30 a.m. All visitors to the school, including parents and guardians, after 8:30 a.m., must sign in and wear a badge.

### Lateness

School begins at 8:20 a.m. Any child not in his or her classroom by 8:30 a.m. is considered late. Parents and guardians should help their children develop the habit of arriving at school on time so they will not miss important work or announcements. Children arriving late need to obtain a late-pass before proceeding to class. Late-passes are given next to the security desk for the first 20 minutes of the school day. Students arriving later than that should stop in the main office for a late-pass. Teachers mark tardiness on each child's attendance record and report card. Habitual tardiness is disruptive to a learning environment and is reported to the school administration for appropriate action.

### Attendance

Attendance at school is mandatory and is of the utmost importance to learning. Absences are reported by each teacher and included on report cards, which become part of a student's permanent school record. You must provide a note to your child's teacher if your child is absent. All children are to be at school at least 95% of the time. Meetings may be scheduled with parents or guardians of students who fall below that level to discuss solutions and consequences. Please note that fourth grade attendance records are considered in the middle school application process, and tardiness and unexcused absences can adversely affect a student's middle school prospects.

### Breakfast Program

Our breakfast program begins at 7:50 a.m. in the cafeteria. Breakfast is free for all students. No sign-up is required; students may simply take part any day they would like to.

### Lunch and Recess

Lunch and recess are held in three periods between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in the cafeteria; you can confirm the exact time of a class lunch period with your child's teacher.

Students may bring lunch to school or purchase it from the cafeteria for a small fee. Students who bring their lunch may also purchase milk. Menus are sent home monthly with all children

and are available in the main office or online at the DOE school food website (<http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns>), allowing families to plan meals accordingly.

To determine whether your child is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, all families must fill out a lunch form (available at: <https://www.applyforlunch.com/>) at the beginning of the school year. Please complete this form even if you know your child is not eligible. Payment for school lunches can be made in advance at the school office.

Students who wish to eat will not be refused; however, if they have not paid, the parents or guardians will be sent a bill at the end of the month.

K-5 students have recess outside the school during the lunch period, weather permitting. The DOE recommends that students go outside at all temperatures, so please be sure to have your child bring appropriate weather attire and gear, marked with your child's name, for recess time.

### Dismissal

Children must be picked up by a parent, guardian or designated adult listed on the blue Emergency Card and over 18 years of age, unless the parent provides written notice in advance. The adult must bring a photo ID. Children must say goodbye before leaving, notifying the teacher that a parent or guardian has arrived. Teachers must be informed in advance of any alternate pick-up plans, including play dates, babysitters and after-school programs.

Grade	Dismissal Time	Dismissal Place
K	2:30 p.m.	Classroom
1st	2:35 p.m.	Front School Yard on Hicks Street
2nd	2:35 p.m.	Back School Yard
3rd	2:35 p.m.	Classic Wing Exit on Poplar Street
4th	2:35 p.m.	Middagh Street Exit
5th	2:35 p.m.	New Wing Exit on Poplar Street

Students who ride school buses are expected to keep to a regular schedule. If you need to alter your child's routine for one day, you must send a written note to the teacher in the morning with your child since for legal reasons the school cannot accommodate changes in transportation over the phone.

**Please confirm with your teacher as these may vary.**

**Any child not picked up by 2:40 p.m. is brought to the auditorium. Inclement weather does not affect dismissal policy.**

### **Early Dismissal**

If you need to pick your child up early, please notify the teacher in writing that morning. When you arrive at the school, go to the main office, and tell the secretary you are there to pick up your child. Your child will be sent down to meet you. Please note your children cannot be sent down to the school office before you arrive. There will be no early pick-ups between 2:10 and 2:40 p.m. After 2:10 p.m., students will be dismissed by the normal dismissal procedures. If you know that you need to pick up your child early, please arrive at the school before 2:10 p.m. or speak with the school office.

### **Transportation**

Based on proximity to school, students are entitled to free or reduced-fare Metrocards or free transportation to and from school by yellow school bus. Please consult the DOE's Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) website at <http://www.opt-osfns.org/> or ask at the school office.

## AFTER SCHOOL

### Virtual Y

Thanks to a grant, the Dodge YMCA runs a Virtual Y in the school that provides free after-school, vacation camp, and summer programs to a limited number of registered kindergarten through fifth-grade students. The after-school program runs from 2:45 to 5:45 p.m. (families have until 6:00 p.m. to pick up their children) and offers homework help, arts, and sports. Attendance is important. After-school program participants have priority registration for the summer and vacation programs. Contact Program Director Toi Knox-Ward for more information at [tknoxward@ymcanyc.org](mailto:tknoxward@ymcanyc.org).

### Kids Orbit

Kids Orbit runs a nonprofit after-school program for kindergarten through fifth-grade students. They provide snacks, homework help, and activities such as arts, crafts, and Tae Kwon Do. Families may choose three-, four-, or five-day options for a monthly fee or arrange for drop-in service if they pre-register. Kids Orbit also provides full- and half-day care on school holidays. Contact Kids Orbit for more information at (718) 768-4426 or <http://www.kidsorbit.com>.

### Kids Cre8

Kids Cre8 is a PTA-run, fee-for-service after-school enrichment program with a limited number of scholarships available for students who are in need. At the lower school, Kids Cre8 offers classes on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Classes generally meet from 2:40 to 4:40 p.m. for ten-week sessions; details about specific program offerings, costs, and registration deadlines are available at <https://ps8brooklyn.org/kids-cre8/>.

## CURRICULUM AT PS 8

You can visit the PS 8 website at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/academics/curriculum> for more information, including curriculum guides for individual grades.

### Reading and Writing

PS 8 subscribes to the “Balanced Literacy” approach, the goal of which is to teach children the habits and strategies of effective reading and writing. Teachers allot time each day for independent reading, small-group reading, phonics and word-study instruction, reading aloud and writing. You can find out more about the literacy curriculum at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/EnglishLanguageArts/default.htm>.

### Mathematics

PS 8 uses the “Bridges in Mathematics” math curriculum. Developed with initial support from the National Science Foundation, Bridges blends problem-solving and skill building in a program that moves through each grade level with common models, teaching strategies, and objectives. A Bridges classroom features a combination of whole-group, small-group, and independent activities. Lessons incorporate increasingly complex visual models — seeing, touching, working with manipulatives, and sketching ideas — to create pictures in students’ minds that help them invent, understand, and remember mathematical ideas. By encouraging students to explore, test, and justify their reasoning, the curriculum facilitates the development of mathematical thinking for students of all learning styles.

Teachers use the Bridges curriculum in conjunction with other teaching and assessment tools, including exemplars. For more information about the Bridges curriculum, see <http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/curriculum/bridges/>. For more information about exemplars, see <http://www.exemplars.com/>.

### Science

PS 8 follows the New York City Core Curriculum for Science, which employs kits and texts to engage in three or four study units per year, depending on grade level. Each year, the curriculum includes at least one unit of life sciences and one unit of physical sciences. For a complete listing of units by grade level, please visit the NYC Department of Education website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/Science/default.htm>.

### Social Studies

PS 8 follows the New York State Core Curriculum with some modifications to better facilitate learning. The curriculum is thematic and organizes content by grade level around key concepts such as identity, culture, change and civic structure. Teachers revisit these concepts often. In grades K-2, teachers instill in the students a sense of awareness about self, family, neighborhoods and communities small and large. In grades 3-5, teachers introduce the students to the diversity of world communities, the historic development of New York State, and the similarities and differences among the nations of the Western Hemisphere.

Teachers integrate social studies with other subject areas and enrichment activities whenever possible. For example, PS 8 has a partnership with the Guggenheim Museum, which allows students in third and fourth grades to create arts projects related to their social studies curriculum (as well as other parts of their curriculum).

### Arts and Physical Education

PS 8 highly values the arts as a strong complement to what is taught inside the traditional classroom. Children generally attend weekly or bi-weekly classes in dance, drama, music, and art, as well as weekly physical education classes. These classes are taught by specialist teachers. You can find more information about these programs at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/academics/curriculum/>.

### Outside Enrichment Partners

PS 8 and the PTA host enrichment programs in chess, art, music, dance and drama. Visual and dramatic artists, musicians and dancers expose children to a variety of creative practices through residency programs that last up to twenty weeks. Resident artists collaborate with teachers to ensure that activities are suitable for each grade level and tailored to complement subjects and themes in the curriculum. You can find out more about enrichment partners currently providing classes and residencies at PS 8 on the website at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/academics/enrichment/>.

### Library

Children visit the library regularly and are permitted to select their own books. Families are encouraged to volunteer a few hours a week to assist the librarian. Please contact Amanda Green, the librarian, ([agreen11@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:agreen11@schools.nyc.gov)) if you are interested in becoming a library volunteer.

### Curriculum Night

Every fall the school schedules an evening presentation about each grade's curriculum. Each teacher meets with families to outline expectations and talk about methods and materials that will be used during the year. If you have questions at any time about what your child is learning at school, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

### Conferences and Appointments

Teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the year; the schedule will be available in the fall. At these individual conferences, parents or guardians discuss their child's academic progress with the teacher. If there are issues that require immediate attention, you do not need to wait until the scheduled conferences, feel free at any time to make an appointment with your child's teacher. You can do this by sending a note to the teacher with your name and telephone number. Members of the administration are also available to meet with families. Contact our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier to be directed to the appropriate person to handle your concern.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times a year to students in first through fifth grades and twice a year to kindergarteners. The standardized tests do not factor into a report card. If you have any questions about your child's grades, please make an appointment with your child's teacher.

## Standardized Tests

Children in third, fourth and fifth grades take the New York State tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, as mandated by federal law. Fourth graders must also take a state science test. Parents and guardians receive a copy of their child's scores and percentile ranking in the summer after they take the state tests. The fourth grade statewide tests may be used to help determine your child's placement in middle school. (If your child is in third to fifth grade, your child's teacher may recommend that he/she attend test preparation workshops, which our teachers organize, before taking the statewide tests.) For more information, see <http://schools.nyc.gov>.

## Special Education

PS 8 uses the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model, where a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together in one classroom with both general education and special education students. There are ICT sections in each grade level and the school also offers related services, such as Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS), occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech therapy and counseling on site for students who have been evaluated and recommended for services.

If you are concerned that your child is struggling academically and may need an evaluation for special education services, please talk to your child's teacher. If your teacher agrees, s/he may try informal classroom interventions and/ or write a letter to the school psychologist requesting a formal evaluation. The psychologist's determination is guided by DOE regulations that require a student to be performing below grade level in order to receive services. Academic services are given when there is a diagnosed need and a child is functioning below grade level in one area. Related services (OT, PT, speech, counseling) are given if the diagnosed need is negatively affecting a child's ability to be on grade level.

### Homework

Homework is designed to reinforce the material covered in class. It is assigned by your child's teacher according to the following daily allotments:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>READING</b> (in minutes)	<b>WRITING AND MATH</b> (in minutes)	<b>TOTAL TIME</b> (in minutes)
1st Grade	10-20	10	20-25
2nd Grade	20-25	10-15	30-45
3rd Grade	20-35	15-20	35-45
4th Grade	20-35	25-35	45-65
5th Grade	25-35	35-40	60-70

**Children work at different paces. The above chart is the average time your child should be spending on homework.**

## FAMILIES WORKING TO SUPPORT PS 8

### The School Leadership Team (SLT)

To ensure that families and school staff participate in the decision-making process, the DOE requires every public school to elect a School Leadership Team (SLT). A consensus committee composed of an equal number of parents/guardians and staff, the SLT works throughout the school year to help the administration develop sound educational policies that reflect the needs and interests of all school members.

As mandated by the DOE, the main SLT function is to review the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). The CEP is a document submitted annually to provide a needs-assessment of the school, as well as objectives designed to address the identified needs. The SLT also reviews the school's budget to ensure it is aligned with the CEP objectives.

At PS 8, the SLT goes beyond these required tasks in an effort to be as responsive as possible to the concerns of our families.

The SLT conducts annual parent and student surveys, which enable the team to provide current and detailed information to the school administration about what is working well and what needs improvement. Recent SLT projects include:

- revising the Volunteer Handbook
- establishing Survey Gizmo as an effective and efficient means to survey the school community
- revising PS 8 Curriculum Guides
- exploring PS 8 workshop opportunities

### The Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)

PS 8 has an active PTA that helps to build our community and enrich our children's educational experience. The PTA has as its objectives:

- to provide support and resources to the school for the benefit and educational growth of the children
- to develop a cooperative working relationship between the parents and staff of our school
- to develop parent leadership and build capacity for greater involvement
- to foster and encourage parent participation on all levels; and to provide opportunities and training for parents to participate in school governance and decision-making

The PTA plays a vital role in raising money through donations and events to fund special programs and workshops, enrichment programs, teaching assistants and some teachers, and school supplies and materials.

All parents and guardians are automatically members of the PTA, and the PTA encourages parents and guardians to participate — however they can — in their children's education.

The PTA is led by an executive board, which provides families with the leadership necessary to be active and effective partners with the school. It disseminates information, raises issues and concerns, anchors the school in the community, and represents parent interests on SLT and regional committees. The PTA executive board serves for one year and is elected each spring by the members of the PTA. Both PTA general meetings and executive board meetings are held monthly.

All PTA meetings are open to the public and families are encouraged to attend. For a schedule of this year's meetings please see the calendar available at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/calendar/>.

### Volunteering Opportunities

Ideally, each family would volunteer at least two hours a month to PS 8. Two hours a month is an invaluable contribution to our school community. When you donate time to PS 8, you meet new people, share your talents, and make your kids proud of you and their school.

There are essentially unlimited volunteer opportunities and many of them can be done outside school hours, on your own time. Time commitments vary greatly – from chairing an event, to a weekly time slot in the cafeteria/recess, to a two-hour shift at our pop-up store, to making phone calls during our auction solicitations – if you have any time to offer, there are plenty of ways to contribute!

Please visit our volunteer webpage at [www.ps8brooklyn.org/volunteer](http://www.ps8brooklyn.org/volunteer) and fill out our online Particip8 Form – which will help us best route your skills to where our school needs them. Please continue to visit our webpage to keep informed about upcoming volunteer needs – as well as visit our Particip8 Board in the main hallway where sign-up sheets will be posted throughout the year.

Some specific volunteer opportunities are described below, with contact information when available. For any additional questions about how you can get involved, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org).

### Be a Class Parent!

Class parents are the main liaison between teachers and families. Whether it's organizing chaperones for a school trip, helping a teacher organize a publishing party, or merely communicating some classroom news, the class parent is the point of contact.

Class parents are also responsible for collecting gifts for the teachers and PS 8 staff at the holiday season and at the end of the school year. If you are interested in becoming a class parent, please email our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier and our PTA Class Parents Coordinator at [classparents@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:classparents@ps8brooklyn.org).

### Volunteer in the Classroom!

Many family members choose to accompany their child's class on school trips or help with a particular classroom project. This kind of volunteering is usually coordinated by a teacher.

### Have a Regular Volunteer Slot!

The school actively seeks volunteers for lunch and recess, the library, and for regular commitments in classrooms.

If you are interested in becoming a regular volunteer, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier for more information about how you can get involved. If you are interested in being a class parent specifically, email the Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier and the PTA Class Parents Coordinator at [classparents@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:classparents@ps8brooklyn.org). If you are interested in being a lunch/recess volunteer, email the Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier and the PTA Lunch/Recess Coordinator at [lunchvolunteers@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:lunchvolunteers@ps8brooklyn.org). If you are interested in volunteering in the library, you should also contact our Librarian, Amanda Green [agreen11@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:agreen11@schools.nyc.gov).

### Volunteer for an Event!

There are many PTA events throughout the year, designed to strengthen our community and raise money for our school. We welcome all members of our community to attend. We also encourage you to become involved in these events – as they depend on your support to succeed. A sampling of our events is available in this handbook and on our website. Keep an eye on the Weekly Upd8 email for sign-up opportunities. If you are interested in chairing any of these events, or have any specific questions about how to get involved, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org).

### Volunteer on a Committee or Task Force!

Many parents and guardians fill critical roles by being involved in school committees or task forces. Committees are created based on school needs, parent interest/skills and funding (as necessary). Some current committees are:

#### Fundraising Committee

Email: [fundraising@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:fundraising@ps8brooklyn.org); [grants@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:grants@ps8brooklyn.org)

The Fundraising Committee seeks to raise funds and marshal resources to support school programming, including specialty teachers and enrichment offerings. Specifically, we are in need of volunteers to organize the solicitation of donations/sponsorships from neighborhood businesses, conduct annual appeals and matching challenges, and manage specific fundraising events, such as Plates for 8.

#### Communications Committee

Email: [communications@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:communications@ps8brooklyn.org)

The Communications Committee works to connect families to one another. This committee is responsible for keeping website content fresh and interesting, and creating amazing posters and flyers to be distributed around school. We are always looking for graphic designers, writers, editors, and those who know or are willing to learn WordPress to post new content on our website.

### Technology Committee

Email: [technology@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:technology@ps8brooklyn.org)

The Technology Committee is essential for the upkeep of the PS 8 website, manages web updates, and is responsible for online payments. This committee also handles the export, formatting and maintenance of the beginning of the school year roster, student directory, and assists with Kids Cre8 After School registration. Maintenance of Google Drive, WordPress plugins, Domain, and WebHosting are also handled by the Technology Committee.

### New Parent Welcome Committee

Email: [welcome@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:welcome@ps8brooklyn.org)

Our New Parent Welcome Committee welcomes all new families to PS 8 by organizing events and meetings to help make the transition to a new school as smooth as possible. Every kindergarten class and new students in Grades 1-5 are assigned a Welcome Committee member to help answer any questions pertaining to PS 8.

### School Supply Drive Committee

Email: [schoolsupplies@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:schoolsupplies@ps8brooklyn.org)

The School Supply Drive is a fundraiser that supports PS 8 while saving parents time and money. The teachers and the PTA team up to develop a common list of grade level supplies that parents can buy online and then the supplies are delivered the week before school begins. PS 8 receives a percentage of the sales and parents buy the supplies at a discounted price.

### Celebr8 Reading

Email: [volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:volunteer@ps8brooklyn.org)

Help plan and execute the amazing events that make up our fall celebration of reading. They include the fork + pencil Book Fair, the Readathon, and the adults-only Night to Celebr8 Reading.

### Celebr8 Science

Email: [celebr8science@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:celebr8science@ps8brooklyn.org)

This evening event offers lots of hands-on opportunities for students of all ages to engage in science experiments, questions, and activities – those of their fellow students, teachers and volunteer parents. Help support our budding scientists!

### Kids Cre8 Committee

Email: [kids-cre8@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:kids-cre8@ps8brooklyn.org)

The Kids Cre8 Committee helps implement the PTA-run Kids Cre8 After School enrichment program. We are seeking engaged volunteers willing to help out program coordinators manage budgets, insurance, the registration process, and billing. If you are interested in keeping this program going and affordable for all our families, volunteer your time to help with its management!

### Garden Committee

Email: [gardencommittee@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:gardencommittee@ps8brooklyn.org)

The Garden Committee is a group of teachers, parents, and school administrators joining a network of city schools supported by NYC's Grow to Learn Program. The committee meets monthly to help plan, grow and maintain our school garden program.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

### Parent Workshops

PS 8 regularly offers workshops on parenting and education. Examples include literacy workshops facilitated by a Teachers College consultant and art workshops led by teaching artists. For more information on events and workshops, contact the Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier, see the calendar on the back of the school lunch menu, or look online at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/calendar/>.

### Festivals and Events

PS 8 prides itself on having a strong, inclusive community. Throughout the year, there are various events designed to help bring families and other school community members together. Some events such as the annual PTA auction double as fundraisers. These activities take many forms, including potlucks, dances and more. Some of the major events are:

#### September

Welcome Committee Events for New Lower and Middle School Families

#### October

fork + pencil Book Fair  
Readathon  
A Night to Celebr8 Reading

#### November

Fall Classic Softball Game

#### December

Holiday Craft Fair

#### January

Wine & Whiskey Tasting  
Dunk for 8

#### February

Annual Gala & Benefit

#### March

Camp Expo  
Lower School Dance & PJ Movie Night

#### April

Celebr8 Science

#### May

Spring Golf Outing

#### June

Paddlewheeler

For a more complete list of all school events, check our online calendar at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/calendar/>.

## COMMUNICATION

### School Notices

Notices from the principal, assistant principals, teachers, and the PTA come home both in backpacks and by way of email. MailChimp is the system that both the school and the PTA use to send emails (including our weekly newsletter, the Weekly Upd8) to the entire school community. Principal Phillips, Parent Coordinator Eileen Carrier, the PTA and some teachers also use MailChimp to send emails to specific classes and grades. To register to receive these emails, you must fill out the online form available at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/signup/>.

### Website

The PTA website, <http://ps8brooklyn.org>, is a source of essential information for the PS 8 community. Most of our website is open to the community and the public at large. It contains information about our school, our staff, the PTA, the curriculum, and our schedule, among other things. This is the primary place where we share information about upcoming events and news.

Registered members of our school community may also log into a password-protected portion of the website to access somewhat sensitive information such as PTA and SLT meeting minutes. To gain access to the password-protected portion of our website, please fill out the online form available at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/signup/> (the same form you fill out to receive school and PTA emails). Once we have verified that you are a member of our school community, you will receive an email with a user ID and password that will allow you to log in to our website.

### Media Waivers

Families will receive a DOE media waiver form at the beginning of the year. Please fill out this form and return it as soon as you can. As part of its work to inform our school community about, and engage families in, the life of our school, the PTA makes an effort to publish student work and other students' written articles about our school community on the website, <http://ps8brooklyn.org/>. In order to publish student work or post photos on a website, we need permission from families. Having permission on file eases the process of improving communications about our school. Thank you for your help!

### PS 8 Weekly Upd8

The PTA distribute a weekly newsletter by email to all families, staff and students who have registered on our website. The newsletter generally comes out on Friday and includes information on school-related activities in the following week. To view the current and past newsletters, visit the password-protected portion of our website, <http://ps8brooklyn.org/>. As noted above, to receive these emails, you must fill out the online form available at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/signup/>.

### **Parent Coordinator**

Parent Coordinators encourage family involvement through workshops, volunteer opportunities and special events that promote the school. They also identify family issues that should be addressed by the administration. Parents can reach out to our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier at (718) 834-6740 or [parent-coordinator@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:parent-coordinator@ps8brooklyn.org)

### **Principal's Report at PTA Meetings**

There are many, overlapping ways to get information directly from Principal Phillips. At each PTA general meeting, Principal Phillips presents a principal's report, in which he provides updates about the school and invites questions from members of the community. For the dates and times of scheduled meetings, please see the online calendar, available at <http://ps8brooklyn.org/calendar/>.

### **Grade Level Meetings with the Principal**

In addition, throughout the year, families are invited to speak with the principal. These meetings usually happen in October, January, and June and are organized by grade. They begin with an update from the principal on school-wide and grade-specific issues, followed by a question and answer session. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend and discuss general or grade-specific issues or questions regarding the school and their children. However, this is not the forum to discuss specific teachers or specific classroom issues.

These meetings – PTA and grade-level meetings – occur at different times during the day to provide a variety of opportunities for parents and guardians with different schedules to hear directly from and ask questions of Principal Phillips. We hope that by providing opportunities at different times during the day across the year, all families will have at least one time that works for their schedules.

### **Communicating Your Concerns**

What if your child is having academic, disciplinary, or social problems at school? The first line of response, no matter what the problem, is your child's classroom teacher. If you feel the problem is immediate, do not wait for the regularly scheduled conferences.

The teacher's time with the class is very important. Please refrain from discussions with your child's teacher at drop-off and pick-up. Instead, make an appointment, so the teacher can focus on your concerns without distraction. If you have spoken to the teacher and the issue remains unresolved, contact our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier. If you have issues about general school matters or policies, the PTA or SLT may be able to help.

### **NYC Schools Account**

NYC Schools is an online tool that gives you access to key information about your child's progress in school, including attendance, report card grades, general student information, and tests scores. To sign up for NYC School Account, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier. For more information visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/StudentRecords/NYCSchools>.

## SECURITY AND EMERGENCY

### Emergency Contacts

At the beginning of each school year an emergency notification card (the blue card) is sent home for parents/ guardians to complete. This card provides the school with your contact information in case of emergency. Please return this card promptly and include at least three emergency contact numbers, as well as the names of anyone who may be picking up your child from school. Be sure to update the card during the year with any changes. It is the primary way the school can notify you, a designated relative, or a friend when necessary.

### Emergency Evacuation Plan

In case of an emergency evacuation during the school day, students and staff will relocate to PS 29 at 425 Hicks Street. Parents and guardians should expect to pick up their children there. Please check the PS 8 website throughout the year for updates on this procedure.

### Emergency Closings and Delayed Openings

The Chancellor of the NYC DOE makes decisions about school closures and delayed openings by 6:00 a.m. on a given day. Families can find updated information by checking the DOE website (<http://schools.nyc.gov>), by calling 311, or by listening to local news radio (880 WCBS AM or 1010 WINS AM), local TV stations, or cable channel NY 1. If you have registered on our website, you may receive an email regarding closings and delays. Any school closure also cancels all field trips, after-school programs, and school transportation for that day.

### Visitors

All parents and guardians are welcome in the school. However, for the safety of children and staff, all visitors must sign in at the front desk and show photo ID. Visitors also must enter and exit via the front doors only, except during morning drop-off.

### Illness

If your child is too sick to benefit from school or is running a fever, please keep him or her home. Children should be free of fever or gastric illness for 24 hours before returning to school. In the case of contagious ailments like strep throat or pink eye (conjunctivitis), please consult a doctor for treatment and clearance for school. Children with head lice will not be allowed back into the classroom until all evidence of lice is gone. More information about lice can be found below.

There is no need to call the school each day when your child is absent, but your child should return to school with a parent's note or doctor's letter explaining the absence. For long-term absences, contact the main office.

## Allergies

The PS 8 approach to allergy management is guided by regulation A-715, issued by the Chancellor of the NYC DOE. It provides information, instructions, and tools to help our community collaborate and make any arrangements necessary to reduce the risk of exposure for identified students with severe food allergies. It is crucial that families start the allergy-management conversation by alerting the school and briefing the staff on their child's circumstances. Well in advance of your child's first day at PS 8, call the teacher or the principal to set up an Allergy Briefing Meeting. Please bring any relevant forms or prescriptions to the meeting.

The city's public schools do not provide, nor can they guarantee, "a peanut-, milk- or other allergen-free food service because the health risk of accidental exposure or cross contamination is always present." Our school cafeteria no longer serves food containing peanuts, and we ask that families who pack lunch be considerate of those with peanut allergies. But, despite these measures, we must remind families of children with allergies that our facilities cannot be considered peanut-free.

## Physical Exams

A Physical Exam Form is required for kindergarten, first grade, and all new students, and should be on file with the office before your child's first day of school. You should also update the office with current immunization records. If you choose not to immunize your child for religious beliefs or other reasons, you must submit a letter detailing these reasons. Your child can be excluded from school without up-to-date immunizations or the proper documentation.

## Nurse

The PS 8 full-time nurse maintains all health forms, trains teachers, and cares for non-urgent medical problems in her office. In the case of a serious medical emergency, the school calls the person identified on the Emergency Contact Form and EMS. If necessary, EMS takes the child to the nearest hospital. If your child requires ongoing medication to be administered during the day, you can pick up a Medical Administration Form (MAF) in the main office. The staff does not administer one-time medications such as Tylenol or antibiotics at school.

## Health Screenings

All kindergarten and first grade children have free vision and hearing screenings in the school. Parents and guardians will be notified of the results only if further testing is indicated. A blood test for lead is required for all children under six years old, followed by annual checks and nutrition counseling for those children with elevated lead levels.

## Lice

Professional, periodic head-checks funded by the PTA are conducted at the lower school throughout the year. If your child is found to have lice or nits (eggs), you should receive a call from the school requesting that you pick up your child as soon as possible. PS 8 works very hard to prevent the spread of lice in our community but its response is restricted by Department of Health regulations. Specifically, the school is allowed to send home children who are found to

have live bugs in their hair, but not if a child is found to have eggs only. In that case, the school can encourage, but cannot demand, that the child be picked up. Since it is very difficult to prevent the spread of lice when children with eggs remain in the school, we strongly encourage you to pick up your child as soon as possible.

When your child is found to have lice or eggs s/he should be treated professionally by a nitpicker or, if this is not possible, combed out thoroughly at home. Children returning to school after being treated for lice must be inspected by school staff before being allowed back into their classrooms. More information about the treatment and prevention of head lice may be obtained in the school office.

If you learn that your child has lice or eggs/nits, please inform our Parent Coordinator, Eileen Carrier. The school can then contact the PTA-funded professional lice check company and check classrooms to help prevent the spread of lice in the school. We appreciate your help and support!

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Cell Phones, Electronics and Toys

*PS 8's updated Cell Phone and Technology Policy will be announced soon.*

Children are not allowed to bring toys, electronic toys, or games to school or use them on school grounds. The school cannot be held responsible for any lost personal belongings, including electronic toys.

### Lost & Found

Please label all personal belongings, including lunchboxes, backpacks, coats, hats, and gloves with your child's name. Any unidentified item found on school grounds will be placed in a box in the auditorium labeled Lost & Found. If your child is missing an item, please look for it first in the main office and then check the Lost & Found. (You may want to check periodically if you don't find it at first, as it sometimes takes a while for lost items to be discovered). The Lost & Found is emptied during all school breaks, including Thanksgiving, Winter Recess, Mid-winter Recess, Spring Recess, and then again at the end of June.

### Photos – Class and Individual

Each fall a professional photographer takes individual and class photos at the school. The photos are returned to families before the winter holiday recess. This is a major fundraiser for the school, so please be sure to place an order.

**NOTE:** Media waivers are distributed to all families at the beginning of the school year. Please fill them out and return them as soon as possible. This allows our PTA (and the school) to publish photos and student work on our website, <http://ps8brooklyn.org/>, which helps us inform our school community about, and engage families in, the life of our school. Having permission on file eases the process of improving communications about our school.

### Birthdays and Holidays

Policies regarding holiday and birthday observances are arranged by the individual teachers, who are mindful of religious differences within our community. Please speak to your child's teacher about any proposed birthday celebrations in school ahead of time. If you are sending in a special snack, please be considerate of children with food allergies in your child's class.

### Dress Code

Please have your child dress appropriately for school and not allow him/her to bring or wear valuables to class. Sneakers are required for gym. Wheeled sneakers, or wheelies, are not allowed at school. Flip flops are unsafe and should not be worn.

### **Trips**

All children should have permission slips signed by a parent or guardian on file for neighborhood walks. For longer field trips, separate permission forms will be sent home for signature. No child may attend a field trip without a signed permission form.

## DIRECTORY

### Addresses

The PS 8 Lower School is located on Hicks Street between Poplar and Middagh Streets in Brooklyn Heights. The PS 8 Middle School is located a short walk away, co-located with George Westinghouse High School and City Poly High School.

#### *Lower School:*

Public School 8  
The Robert Fulton School  
37 Hicks Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

#### *Middle School:*

Public School 8  
The Robert Fulton School  
105 Johnson Street, 4th floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

### Contact Us

Seth Phillips, Principal: [SPhilli@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:SPhilli@schools.nyc.gov)  
Robert Mikos, Lower School Assistant Principal: [RMikos@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:RMikos@schools.nyc.gov)  
Patricia Peterson, Interim Acting Lower School Assistant Principal: [PPeters2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:PPeters2@schools.nyc.gov)  
Eileen Carrier, Parent Coordinator: [eileen.carrier@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:eileen.carrier@ps8brooklyn.org)

Lower School Office: (718) 834-6740

Middle School Office: (718) 875-1021

Website: <http://ps8brooklyn.org/>

PTA Email: [pta@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:pta@ps8brooklyn.org)

PTA Co-Presidents: [president@ps8brooklyn.org](mailto:president@ps8brooklyn.org)