



**P.S. 217**  
**PARENT HANDBOOK**  
Policies and Procedures

**WELCOME!**

Welcome to PS 217, International School of Arts and Letters. We look forward to working with you and your child during these critical, formative years. This handbook is intended to provide you with helpful information. You are encouraged to contact your child's teacher, Parent Coordinator or Administration if you need further information. We sincerely welcome your interest and involvement in your child's education.

**ADDRESS**

1100 Newkirk Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11230

**PHONE NUMBERS**

718-434-6960  
Main Office . . . . . ext. 0  
Parent Coordinator . . ext. 1081  
Guidance Counselor. . ext. 1030  
Nurse . . . . . ext. 2550/2551

**FAX NUMBER**

718-434-8170

**OFFICE HOURS**

The office is generally open from 8:00AM to 3:00PM. If you need any forms prepared by the office, please notify the school 3 business days in advance of the time you'll need it. You can do that by seeing the school secretary or parent coordinator.

**TEACHER/PARENT MEETINGS**

Tuesday afternoons from 2:30PM-3:35PM are reserved for parents to make appointments with teachers about issues that cannot be discussed over the phone. Please write a note or email to the teacher to request such an appointment.



**PRINCIPAL**

Franca Conti

**ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS**

Jane Van Auken  
Rosanne Riccardelli  
Lucy Buckley  
Donna DiTucci-Cappiello I.A.

**SECRETARIES**

Virginia Sforza  
Carol Booras Musacchio  
Janice Paré Shirley  
Maria Adamita

**PARENT COORDINATOR**

Ute van Sitteren

For any questions about teachers, classroom visits, or general questions, you can contact the Parent Coordinator between 8:00AM and 3:30PM.

Tel: 718-434-6960 ext. 1081

Email: [jvansitteren@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:jvansitteren@schools.nyc.gov)

She will be able to answer many of your questions or will be able to point you in the right direction. She can also help to set up a meeting with any of our administration members and/or teachers.

**Parents' Association of PS 217:** At PS 217 we have a very active Parents' Association. The PA shares an office with the Parent Coordinator, room 108. Executive Board Members are nominated and elected in May/June. Every parent at PS 217 can be an active member of the PA. You can just walk into room 108 and tell us you are ready to get involved. We always can use more help. With so many events in a school with so many students, we never can have too many parents to volunteer.

**YOUR PA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS ARE:**

*Co-presidents* Maria Newsom, Mukta Begum  
*Co-vice-presidents* Maria Deutscher, Jennifer Willig  
*Co-Secretaries* Melissa Friedling, Amy Rhodes Froehlich  
*Treasurer* Tom Smith

## SCHOOL HOURS

Children should not arrive at school before 7:30<sup>AM</sup>. There is no adult supervision before that time. School hours for children are as follows:

**7:30<sup>AM</sup>**      **Entry for school breakfast – free and optional**  
**8:00<sup>AM</sup>**      **Class begins – please arrive by 7:55<sup>AM</sup>**

## MORNING LINE UP

In order to start instruction on time, children should arrive at least 5 minutes before the start of the school day, so they can line up with their teachers downstairs, go up to their classrooms, and start the day together on time. Students are assigned an area where teachers will pick them up to go to class. They are as follows:

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>LOCATION (SEE CHART PAGE 4)</b>
Pre-K	Ramp on Westminster Road (F)
K	Cafeteria (enter through ramp on Westminster Road (F))
1 & 2	Auditorium (enter through door (B) near playground)
3, 4 & 5	Gymnasium (enter through main entrance (A) on Newkirk Avenue)

## LUNCH

All students will be provided a school lunch or may bring a bag lunch from home. No glass bottles are allowed. Students cannot leave the school building to buy lunch at a store. Parents cannot bring food to their children during the lunch period. Parents are not allowed in the lunchroom during lunch for safety reasons.

### **LUNCH (INCLUDING RECESS) PERIODS ARE:**

**3rd lunch period 10:40<sup>AM</sup> – 11:30<sup>AM</sup>**

**4th lunch period 11:35<sup>AM</sup> – 12:25<sup>PM</sup>**

**5th lunch period 12:30<sup>PM</sup> – 1:20<sup>PM</sup>**

Monthly lunch menus can be found online at:

[www.schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/MenusDailyDisplay.aspx](http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/MenusDailyDisplay.aspx)

## DISMISSAL

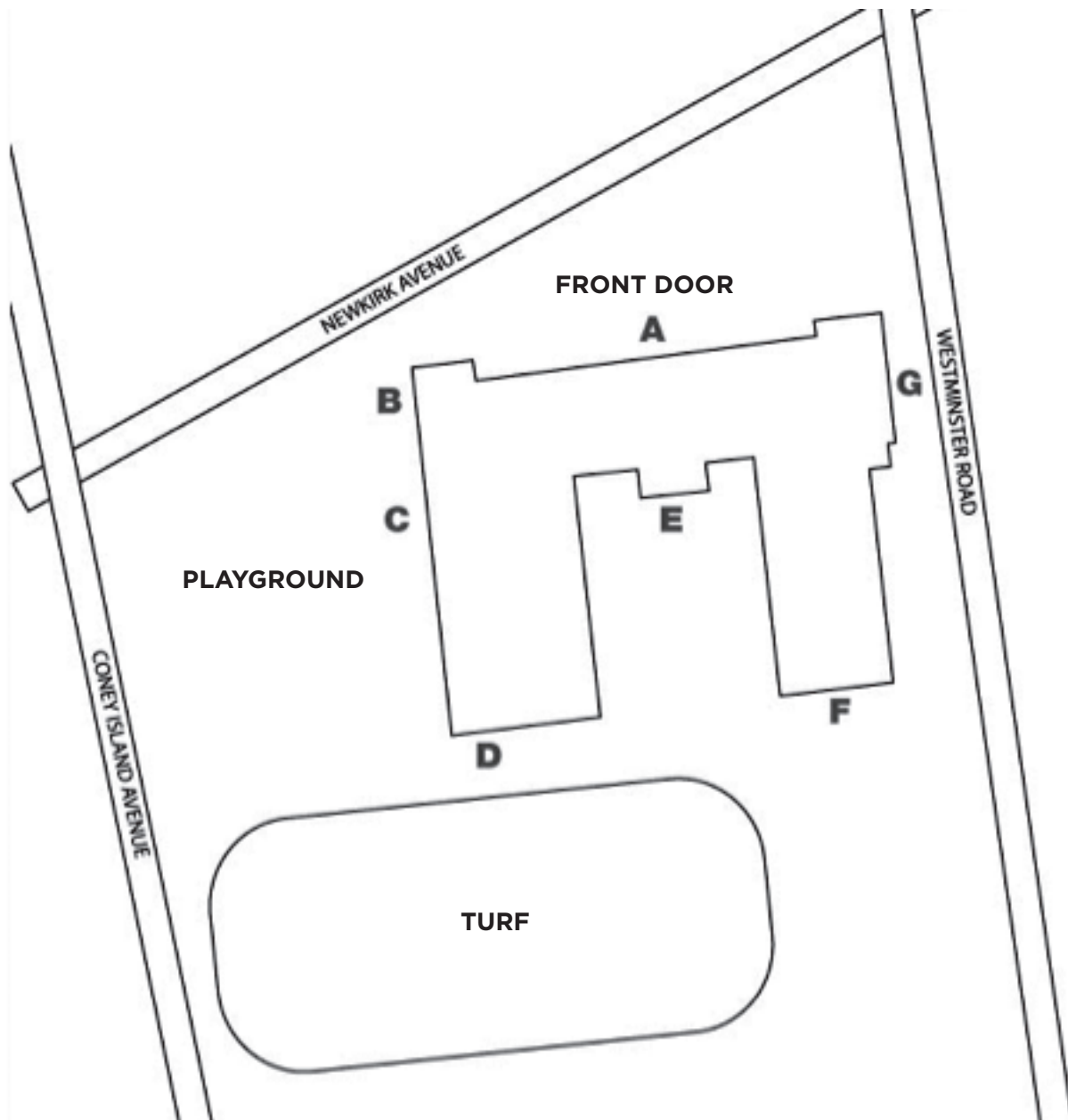
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PLACE (SEE CHART PAGE 4)</b>
Pre-K AM session	10:30 <sup>AM</sup>	Ramp on Westminster Road (F)
Pre-K PM session	2:20 <sup>PM</sup>	Ramp on Westminster Road (F)
Kindergarten	2:10 <sup>PM</sup>	Ramp on the playground (C)
1st grade	2:20 <sup>PM</sup>	Atrium (E)
2nd grade	2:20 <sup>PM</sup>	Ramp on the playground (C)
3rd grade	2:20 <sup>PM</sup>	Turf at the playground track (D)
4th and 5th grade	2:20 <sup>PM</sup>	Westminster Road (G)

\*Bus students dismissal time 2:10<sup>PM</sup>

**All children must be picked up on time after school.** If you are unable to pick up your child at dismissal time, please call the school. Additionally, if someone other than the person who will normally pick up your child is coming to pick him/her up, please send the teacher a note with the name of the person authorized to pick up your child on that day. Anyone who picks up your child **MUST** be on the Blue Card on file in the main office.

On Half Days all students have an early dismissal. Early dismissal is at 11:20AM on half days. On such days, children will exit through the exits they would normally use for a 2:20PM dismissal.

### WHERE CHILDREN ENTER AND EXIT THE SCHOOL



## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Flatbush Development Corporation (FDC), runs an after-school program five days per week housed here at PS 217. It is funded by NYS's Department of Youth and Community Development and free-of-charge to families. If you are interested in finding out more about this program, please contact FDC directly. You can stop by their office at 1616 Newkirk Avenue, or call them at 718-859-3800 and ask to speak to Shaun Kiffin.

PS 217 runs a variety of academic and enrichment after-school programs at various times during the school year. The Magnet After-School Program provides a wide range of classes in the visual arts, music, theater, dance, chess, and physical fitness. When PS 217 after-school programs are open for registration, students will bring home announcements to their parents/guardians. If a child is participating in FDC's program, he/she can still participate in PS 217's after-school programs and will be dismissed at 4:00<sup>PM</sup> directly to FDC.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

The priority of our safety agents, Agent Jack and Agent Louis, is to maintain a safe environment for you, our students, staff and visitors. In order to do so, we all need to cooperate and follow the safety rules.

All visitors, including parents, must bring photo ID and wait to get signed in with the safety agents at the front desk. After signing in, you will be instructed to first go to the main office no matter who you are coming to see.

You will only be allowed to go to a classroom if you have an appointment with the teacher. You can make an appointment by sending a note to the teacher and waiting for his/her reply. You can also email the teacher at his/her DOE account.

We have a very large school and by all of us working together, we can enjoy a safe and happy place for everyone.

## **ATTENDANCE**

There is a clear link between attendance and success at school, which makes it essential that regular attendance be maintained. All families must make every effort to have their children present every day, and arrive at school on time. Please be mindful that student attendance is monitored daily by the school and the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Additionally, excessive absences or lateness will be noted in the child's report card.

When a child is absent, a written explanation for the absences, including religious absences, should accompany the student when returning to school. A note is also required whenever a child is to be excused from school early. The school requests that parents do not make medical, dental, or other appointments for students during school hours.

A student arriving after 8:01<sup>AM</sup> is considered LATE. For safety reasons, parents cannot escort their children to classes. If children are late, they will be taken to class by school personnel.

### **What to do when your child is sick**

When your child can not make it to school, please call the main office and/or send in a note when he/she returns to school.

### **Appointments with doctors/dentists/specialists**

Please make doctors' appointments after school time. It is very important that your child not miss out on any instructional time or disrupt the class by leaving in the middle of the school day. If such an appointment is absolutely unavoidable, it is advisable to make it near the beginning or end of the school day. Additionally, you must notify the school in advance of picking up your child. For example, if your child will be picked up at 1:30<sup>PM</sup> for a doctor's appointment, please write a note to your child's teacher on the morning of the appointment.

When you arrive to pick up your child early, sign in with the safety agents, go to the main office on the second floor and follow instructions to sign your child out.

## **BATHROOM**

While students are permitted to use the bathroom as needed, they are encouraged to use the bathroom after eating breakfast and lunch, so as to avoid them missing any instructional time. If your child has a health condition that requires frequent use of the bathroom, please notify the school nurse with a note from your pediatrician.

## **BIRTHDAY PARTIES**

We are often asked whether birthdays can be celebrated in the classroom. The policies regarding birthday celebrations and treats vary by class. In general, however, birthday celebrations are limited to the last 45 minutes of the school day. If you wish to have a classroom celebration for your child, you must check with your child's teacher to determine how to best handle the party. He/she will alert you to any potential conflicts with the instructional program, and any food restrictions, if any exist, due to allergies children in the class may have.

## **BREAKFAST**

Free breakfast is served from 7:30<sup>AM</sup> – 8:00<sup>AM</sup>. There is school staff to supervise students at these times only. All students are expected to follow cafeteria rules at all times.

## **METRO CARD/BUS INFORMATION**

The DOE provides metro cards for students in grades 2 - 5 who live 1.0 mile or more away from school (K and 1 ride free). Only students with special needs are eligible for school bus services. If you think your child is eligible for a Metro card or bus services, please leave word with the Parent Coordinator, Ute van Sitteren, or call the main office. They will get back to you and let you know if your child qualifies. For more information call the DOE Office of Pupil Transportation at 718-392-8855 or check the website: [www.opt-osfns.org/opt](http://www.opt-osfns.org/opt).

## **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Many factors are taken into consideration when a child is placed with a teacher in a classroom. These include input from the teachers, principal, guidance counselor, and additional staff (art, music, the School Based Support Team, etc.). We also consider parental input, as appropriate.

Every attempt is made to balance classes by considering criteria such as the number of male and female students, range of abilities, personalities, student relationships, students with special needs, learning styles, and other such needs. Please consider that all these factors have been considered before you choose to request that the school reconsider a placement.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

If a child has a problem with another student at PS 217, and he/she cannot resolve it on his/her own, the child can turn to any adult in the schoolyard/building. A child cannot hit another child to resolve a problem. Physical violence, of any sort, is not permitted at PS 217, and will be subject to disciplinary actions, as outlined in the Chancellor's Discipline Code. You can read the Discipline Code online at: [schools.nyc.gov/Parents/Essentials/School+Safety/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Parents/Essentials/School+Safety/default.htm)

## **DISCIPLINE**

One of the most important lessons education should foster is self-discipline. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to health and safety, productive schoolwork, and consideration of the rights, property and safety of others.

Proper discipline is a major part of the classroom teacher's responsibility. If your child has a minor discipline problem, expect that it will be handled by the teacher within the classroom framework. Discipline problems considered chronic and/or severe, however, will be reported to the Guidance Office. In resolving disciplinary infractions, the teacher may contact a student's parents and conduct a conference to help address any discipline issues. In the case of chronic problems, the Guidance Office may do the same.



In accordance with the values of the PS 217 community and the standards for behavior set forth by the DOE in the Chancellor's Discipline Code, (which can be accessed at [schools.nyc.gov/Parents/Essentials/School+Safety/default.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/Parents/Essentials/School+Safety/default.htm)), we expect pupils to treat each other with civility and respect, and we prohibit acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of pupils by school employees, other pupils, or third parties. An incidence of such behavior needs to be reported to your child's teacher immediately. If the teacher is not available, you must speak to the Guidance Office, Parent Coordinator, and/or Administrators - the Principal or Assistant Principal.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students should remember that their clothing choice should not distract attention from learning and should promote safety. Hats, coats, jackets, sunglasses, and other items designed primarily for outdoor wear must be stored while at school. They cannot be worn during the day in school.

Appropriate footwear should be worn for Physical Education/Gym class as well as outdoor recess play.

## **EMERGENCIES (STUDENT) / BLUE CARD**

PS 217 has an Emergency Crisis Plan, which is approved by the DOE. As part of this plan, every parent is asked to fill out a Blue Card in order to provide the information needed should the school need to contact families in the case of emergencies, accidents, or illnesses. Each child must have a Blue Card on file at the school office. Parents need to notify the school immediately if any changes need to be made to the Blue Card.

Parents also need to ensure that their child understands what to do in case of an emergency. As early as kindergarten, parents need to begin helping their children memorize their full name, along with the names of their primary care giver (mother, father, or other), as well as their address and phone number.

We make provisions for every kind of emergency, including cases where our building is not safe for students. These include situations like fire or threats to the building's structural integrity. We can thankfully report that we have never had to evacuate our building. However, rest assured, we are prepared for such contingencies, should the safety of your children and our staff require it.

If the building has to be evacuated, our children and staff will move to the following locations:

First: Ditmas, Middle School

Address: 700 Cortelyou Road

Secondly: P.S. 152

Address: 725 East 23 Street

Thirdly: Midwood High School

Address: 2839 Bedford Avenue



## **FIRE/LOCK DOWN DRILLS**

Safety drills will be held on a regular basis based on the guidelines issued by the DOE. Absolute silence is required during all drills so students may listen for teacher instructions. Talking during a drill may result in disciplinary action.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DAYS WITH CITYWIDE EMERGENCIES, EXTREME CONDITIONS OR MAJOR STORM DAYS**

This section is to explain the procedures PS 217 will follow in case there are citywide emergencies, extreme conditions, or a major storm day. In such cases, the Chancellor will make an announcement, to all public schools in the city, as to whether she will close schools or delay their opening. This announcement is made in consultation with other City Officials, such as the Mayor.

All authorized delayed openings will result in a 2 hour delay. In case of emergency conditions or a major storm day, the decision is announced on the 311 information line, on the DOE website, [www.nycenet.edu/](http://www.nycenet.edu/), and on the following radio stations in the city: WINS (1010 AM), WCBS (880 AM), WLIB (1190 AM), WBLS (107.5 FM), WNYE (91.5 FM); as well as the following television stations: WCBS (Channel 2), WNBC (Channel 4), WNYW (Fox Channel 5), WABC (Channel 7), WNYE (Channel 25), and “NY 1” (Channel 1 on cable television).

When there is an authorized citywide school closing or delayed school opening, all field trips and all after-school programs will be cancelled unless the Chancellor makes an announcement to the contrary. When there is an authorized citywide delayed school opening, school buses will run, but their arrival times will be delayed by two hours. It is expected that when there is a delayed opening, students will be in school until their regular dismissal time. However, if citywide emergency conditions or a storm worsen, the Chancellor may have to announce an early dismissal. The Chancellor will notify bus services of the earlier dismissal schedule.

Please note that you must have listed a relative, friend or neighbor on the Blue Card on file in the main office for cases such as days with city-wide emergencies or major storm days. Schools are not authorized to release pupils to persons not listed on that card, and will not do so. You should make certain that the list is up-to-date. If your child takes a school bus, school staff will remain in school with the bused children until buses arrive for dismissal or until your child is picked up.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Classes are taken on field trips in order to provide outside educational experiences. When trips are planned, the parents or guardians will be asked to sign a permission slip before the trip.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

PS 217 would like to raise every parent's level of awareness with regard to students with food allergies, diabetes, or other food-related health issues. For these students, food can represent a danger and must be carefully monitored. The welfare and safety of all of our students is our top priority.

It is the family's responsibility to notify the school of a child's allergies, diabetes, or other health conditions. The family and school team will then work together to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school day. When all parents and school personnel work collaboratively, they can ease the burden of food allergies for the school-age child.

## **GRADUATIONS**

Parents of students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 5th grade, can expect ceremonies to mark these important transitions. In the case of Pre-K and K, these events are referred to as "moving up" ceremonies. They are organized primarily by teachers, and all parents will be invited.

The 5th grade ceremony is a formal graduation. It is given this distinction because it is the final year at PS 217. The graduation is organized by a designated Parents' Association member and all 5th grade teachers, under the supervision of the Assistant Principal and the Principal. A fee termed "graduation dues" (\$100) will be charged to 5th grade families to subsidize the graduation and other activities/expenses (Sesame Place trip, T-shirt, backpack, yearbook, and graduation party).

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework assigned in school involves students in practice, preparation and extension activities. Practice assignments provide students with opportunities to reinforce newly acquired skills or to apply recent learning. Assignments guide students in obtaining sufficient background information to be prepared for the following day's discussions and other class work. Extension assignments take students beyond the work begun in class and encourage individualized and often creative responses. In addition to assigned homework, students are expected to spend some time each day involved with self-selected library books, reading silently for increasingly sustained periods, reading to others, being read to, or sharing what has been read.

Parents can help with homework by showing a positive interest in it, encouraging their children while avoiding undue pressure, and providing a suitable place and quiet time for work. The number of assignments will vary according to the grade and teacher. Concerns regarding homework assignments should first be communicated directly to the classroom teacher, and not to the child.

## LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for personal property that is lost, stolen, or damaged. Children are encouraged not to bring articles to school that have significant monetary or sentimental value, or that could potentially be dangerous to themselves or others. If students leave anything behind at school, they should check with the main office for valuables like glasses, jewelry, etc. For clothing, backpacks and lunch boxes, please check the cafeteria, as soon as possible. Please remember to label any item of clothing that your child may remove during the school day.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

**Participation:** Students are expected to be prepared for and participate in every physical education class. A doctor's note is required if a student is excused from participation for an extended period of time. Please have your physician forward a statement describing the condition and any limitations for your child to the school nurse's office. The information will be forwarded to the physical education teacher and will assist us in working with you and your child.

PS 217 requires all pupils to wear comfortable physical education attire. Past experiences have shown that success and safety is best achieved if clothing is comfortable and allows freedom of movement without distraction. All jewelry should be removed before physical education class. Additionally, longer hair should be tied back so as not to limit vision. Footwear that is designed for athletic use is best. Sneakers that can be tied or have Velcro are the safest and are required. For safety reasons, we do not recommend elastic, slip-on or zippered sneakers.

## RECESS

Weather permitting, children will be outdoors for recess every day. As the weather drops during the winter months please remember that all students can, and generally will, enjoy recess outdoors. Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Fresh air during the 20 or so minutes recess usually lasts has definite benefits.

Rest assured, a number of factors, including temperature, wind speed, and precipitation, will go into determining whether outdoor play is appropriate. For example, outside play on a sunny, windless day may be appropriate even when the temperature is below 32 degrees. Likewise, it may not be appropriate for children to go out on a very windy day, even if it is 45 degrees.

To ensure the safety of our Kindergarten children, the entire grade will not be allowed to play outside during recess at the beginning of the school year. Until safety rules and procedures are firmly set in place, classes will rotate recess days so that half of the children will be playing on any given day.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Student records are collected, maintained, and used in accordance with state regulations and DOE policy. The school maintains two types of student records. They are the Cumulative Record and the School Based Support Team (SBST) record. Both are available for review by parents upon specific request. Parents should contact the Pupil Personnel Secretary to see the Cumulative Record, and the IEP Teacher to see an SBST record.

## **STUDENT USE OF THE SCHOOL TELEPHONE**

In case of an emergency, students may use the telephones in the school's main office. Elementary students are discouraged from bringing cell phones to school. If cell phones are brought to school, they must be turned off and in the backpack during the school day. If not, they will be confiscated. For more than fifteen years, students have been prohibited from bringing cell phones, iPods, or other electronic communication and entertainment devices to school. Bringing these items to school is a violation of the Discipline Code.

## **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

Candy, games, yo-yos, iPods, MP3s, beepers, cell phones, excessive cash, etc. are not permitted in school. Parents will be notified if their child has one of these items. If notified, parents must come in to collect the item. Please note that the school is NOT responsible if these items are lost.

## **TRAFFIC**

The safety of every child in school is of great concern to all school personnel. The need for safety is not limited to the school grounds. Children are in need of constant reminders from both the school and home to cross at intersections or corners, and to listen to the crossing guards.

When dropping off or picking up your child, please make sure to keep the area immediately outside the exits open, so classes can easily walk out. Additionally, if you pick up your child by car, it is vital that drivers do not double park in front of the school. This can block the school buses, and generally inhibit access to the school entrance.

## **TRANSFER FROM PS 217 AND/OR NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Notice of transfer to another school should be given to the building principal in advance. Parents can do this by completing the appropriate "intent to move" form, available in the main office. Student records are not released to families. The student's academic and health records can only be mailed directly to the receiving NYC public school when that school requests them.

## **VANDALISM**

If a child damages, defaces, or loses school materials or property, his/her family will be asked to reimburse the school for the loss or damage. Parents are asked to help their children learn to take responsibility for the good care of school items.

## **VISITING THE SCHOOL**

Between the hours of 8:00<sup>AM</sup> and 2:20<sup>PM</sup> each day, all side doors of the schools are locked from the outside for security reasons. Visitors must use the main/front door, which is kept open. All parents and visitors to PS 217 are required to report to the school safety agent upon entering the building, with picture identification. This provides protection for the students and avoids disruption of the educational process. Additionally, no parents or guardians are allowed to wait for any period of time, in any part of the building. This includes the periods just before the beginning of the school day, and just before or after the school day ends.

Parents are not permitted to come to the classroom while school is in session, except for scheduled classroom events and celebrations. We have learned that unscheduled visits to a class interrupt the classroom activities. As such, it is unfair to children because they become distracted from the learning process. Items such as books, coats, lunches, and backpacks brought in for children should be left in the office with the school secretary. School personnel will bring them to the child.

Teachers are not available for unscheduled conferences. If you wish to schedule a conference with your child's teacher, leave a message with the teacher in the main office, write a note in your child's notebook, email the teacher's DOE account, speak to the Parent Coordinator or Guidance Office.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION**

By early October, parents/guardians of fifth graders, want to make sure they have a list of Middle Schools they want to visit prior to the application in December. PS 217 will have workshops for parents and children to help you work through the process.

For questions, please call the Parent Coordinator/Middle School Coordinator, Ute van Sitteren 718-434-6960, ext. 1081.

## **ONLINE INFORMATION**

### **[schools.nyc.gov/default.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm)**

When you click on the Parents and Families link, you have many choices. Please check it out. You can find out about Common Core Curriculum, Parent ARIS Link, enrollment, bus routes, breakfast and lunch, etc.

### **[ps217brooklyn.org](https://ps217brooklyn.org)**

Our own school website.

### **[arisparentlink.org/parentlink](https://arisparentlink.org/parentlink)**

ARIS Parent Link

The DOE's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) provides a single place where our educators can go to find and study important information about your child. Principals and teachers use this information to find out how best to help your child.

ARIS Parent Link makes this same important information available for you, so you can work together with your child, principal and teacher to help your child learn. ARIS Parent Link uses secure login procedures to be sure that a child's information can be seen only by authorized members of his or her family.

If you need your child's ARIS password, it must be given to you in person. It can not be given to you over the phone or by email or text.