



Gold Material School  
**Universal Pre-K**  
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# Universal Pre-K Parent Handbook

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The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize parents and guardians with guidelines and protocols to follow in our Universal Pre-k program. This handbook provides useful information on policies and procedures as well as other important aspects of our program. We want you and your child to feel comfortable and get the most out of our program. It is very important that you read this handbook and keep it handy for reference. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

**Important:** If for any reason you lose this parent handbook, it will be available on our website. All important documents and consent forms will also be available on our website.

**[www.montessorischoolnyc.com](http://www.montessorischoolnyc.com)**

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## Mission Statement

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Thank you, for choosing our Universal Pre-K program at Gold Material School. We are honored and eager to work with you and your child. It is the job of both parents and teacher to work collaboratively together to meet the needs of all children, socially, emotionally, physically and academically. UPK is designed to help children to be prepared for kindergarten and to learn the skills they need to be successful in school and the real world. Our mission is to provide all students with age appropriate educational experiences that promote language development, early literacy skills, cognitive, physical, social and educational skills.

Our teachers are here to provide a fun and safe learning experience that meets the needs of each child. The program has a focus on building positive self-esteem and a love for learning. The program does not discriminate against a child's learning style. The primary focus is to ensure that all children, including children with disabilities, students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and English Language Learners (ELL) are provided with a rich, positive learning experience to help prepare them for college readiness.

Our school will be following the New York State Pre-Kindergarten Common Core, that is organized into five broad developmental and interrelated domains. The underlying principle of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) is the importance of play and social skills. As children explore their surroundings, using different tools and materials, and role play, they learn. Play is an important part of a child's development. Play stimulates a child's creativity; it becomes a means of expression to them, both verbal and nonverbal. Play promotes opportunities for students to draw on their past experiences and are encouraged to experience and learn new things. A brief description of each domain appears below:

- **Domain 1:** Approaches to learning - How children become involved in learning and acquiring knowledge.
- **Domain 2:** Physical development and Health - Children's physical health and ability to engage in daily activities.
- **Domain 3:** Social and Emotional Development - The emotional competence and ability to form positive relationships that give meaning to children's experience in the home, school and larger community.
- **Domain 4:** Communication, Language, and Literacy - How children understand, create, and communicate meaning.
- **Domain 5:** Cognition and Knowledge of the World - What children need to know and understand about their world and how they apply what they know. This domain is a direct reflection of the content competencies and knowledge of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Thank You,

Gold Material Administrators and Staff

## **WHAT IS UNIVERSAL PRE-K**

The term Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) means that this program is available to all eligible children in our community. Funding is provided entirely from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) UPK grant. We are grateful for the grant, and are committed to following all UPK regulations. For more information, go to: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/regulations.html>.

Research has shown that children benefit enormously from pre-school education, both short term and long term. Students will develop skills that will be needed for the journey through education. They will be exposed to opportunities that promote social and emotional development, cognition and knowledge of the world around them, communication skills, literacy, language, cognitive thinking, as well as activities that promote physical development and self-monitoring. Teachers are facilitators in the classroom, they provide activities that promote curiosity, exploring through play, and socialization.

## UPK DAILY SCHEDULE

### How a typical day in UPK is organized?

- 8:00 – 8:25** (25min) Drop-off and welcoming of the children; wash Hands (upon entering), Breakfast Attendance, Choice of books, puzzles, or Manipulatives
- 8:25 – 8:35** (10 min) Music & Movement- Songs, Finger Plays and Nursery Rhymes
- 8:35 – 8:55** (20 min) Morning Circle Time- Greeting, Morning Message, Calendar/ Weather, Introduce/Review Theme, Word Work, Shared Reading
- 8:55 – 10:00** (1 hr 5 min) Center Time #1- Theme related activities in Centers (i.e. Dramatic Play, Blocks, Reading, Listening, Computer, Manipulatives, Math, Science, Art, Sand & Water, Writing)
- 10:00 – 10:15** (15 min) Read Aloud
- 10:15 – 10:30** (15 min) Clean-up, Wash Hands, Bathroom
- 10:30 – 11:30** (1 hr) Recess- Outdoor/Indoor play (weather permitted)
- 11:30 – 12:30** (1 hr 10 min) Center Time #2- Theme related activities in Centers (i.e. Dramatic Play, Blocks, Reading, Listening, Computer, Manipulatives, Math, Science, Art, Sand & Water, Writing)
- 12:30 – 1:00** (30 min) Wash Hands, Lunch
- 1:00 – 1:10** (10 min) Music& Movement- Songs, Finger Plays and Nursery Rhymes
- 1:10 – 1:25** (15 min) End of the Day Meeting
- 1:25 – 1:55** (30 min) Rest time
- 1:55 – 2:20** (25 min) Prepare for dismissal- Pick up, Line up
- 2:20 pm** Dismissal

## **ARRIVAL, ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE AND DISMISSAL**

- **Arrival:** The school day begins at 8:00 am for all children. We ask that you attend school on time in order to avoid interruptions to classroom instructions and learning process. It is important that your child is here on time, so they do not miss out their learning experience. Your child will be dropped off to Gold Material Staff at the front door and they will escort your child to the classroom.
- **Attendance:** The academic day begins at 8:00 am, please be on time and try to limit absences unless needed. In order for your child to grow academically he/she needs to attend school on a frequent basis. Students are required to attend school on time and on a daily basis what is required by the Board of Education. Please, note that all attendance and lateness will be recorded into a data basis.
- **Absences:** If a child is absent for any reason, you must bring in a letter stating why he/she was absent. If child absence is due to injury or illness, a letter from doctor must be brought into school on the day the child is returning to school. Please, advise administrators and/or teachers for any alarming illnesses.
- **Dismissal:** Families are required to submit child pick-up authorization form. If for any reason there will be someone other than a person listed down on child pick-up authorization form, you must submit in writing or email giving that person permission to pick your child from school. You must submit a copy of their I.D. to verify who they are. Children will not be released to an adult that shows signs of consumption of alcohol or drugs. Your child's safety is very important to us. Please be one time to pick up your child, for every minute after dismissal you will have to pay \$2.00 a minute. This can also become emotional stressful for your child.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Young children have powerful feelings and need our help in learning to express them appropriately. We see problems and conflict as learning opportunities and view discipline as a way to guide children to respect themselves and others. Here at Gold Material we partner with families to explore how to best help your child manage their behaviors and feelings and become a friend to others.

### **Our discipline goals include:**

- Helping children establish internal controls. The ultimate goal is self-discipline;
- Helping children recognize, name and verbalize their feelings and needs rather than withdrawing or acting them out physically;
- Helping to foster a comfortable and safe environment.

### **Some positive discipline strategies:**

- Setting clear, consistent rules helps children learn what is expected of them (i.e. “Blocks are for building, balls are for rolling”).

- Using short, simple phrases helps children to focus on what is important (i.e. “inside voices,” “Chairs are for sitting”).
- Establishing reasonable, predictable routines helps children to feel secure and to begin to manage their own behavior (i.e. “First we clean up the activity and then we can read a story”).
- Giving limited choices supports children’s independence and can reduce power struggles (i.e. “Do you want to put your coat on by yourself, or do you want me to help you?”).
- Too many choices can be overwhelming and actually increase frustration for young children.
- Using natural consequences helps children better understand cause and effect relationships (i.e. “If you throw sand again, you will need to leave this activity”).
- Arbitrary consequences can lead to resentment rather than learning.
- Teaching children problem-solving skills supports their creativity and independence (i.e. “I see two children who both want the same toy. What can we do? , maybe we can find another toy!”).
- When adults model these skills by thinking aloud, children can be encouraged to make suggestions and to thus begin to learn how to solve problems by using their words.
- Acknowledging children’s feelings can help to defuse conflicts and develop empathy (i.e. “Hitting hurts. I can see that you want the truck, but I can’t let you hurt Aaron.”).
- A good rule of thumb is to limit behaviors not feelings.
- Addressing the behavior, not the child, helps children learn what is and is not acceptable without damaging their self-esteem (i.e. children are never “bad” even when a particular action might not be appropriate).

## **HEALTH**

Our staff at Gold Material, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Social Services and National Center for Disease Control, is committed to keeping your child safe and healthy. The following is a list of situations in which you may **NOT** send your child to school:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 or greater)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea within a 24 hour period
- Excessive coughing, sneezing, sore throat, or runny nose
- Any illness or disease that prevents, or may prevent your child from fully participating comfortably at school.
- Has a suspicious or contagious rash, or illness
- Has pink eye
- Has head lice ( Children will be sent home if there is evidence of living bugs)

All students are required to have filled out a physical examination form, updated and signed by the doctor. It is important that you keep up with your child's sick and well doctor's appointment and receive vaccinations when needed. It is also important to take your child to the dentist every 6 months and have their eyes checked if you notice signs of issues with their sight.

## MEDICATION

Our school does not have a nurse on site therefore, we are not allowed to administer any medication to your child. Only parent's are allowed to administer medication. If your child requires medication during the school day, in accordance with doctor's note that your child is allowed to attend school, then you must come to the school and administer prescribed medication.

## ILLNESSES

### **Your child should stay home if:**

1. The illness, or child's reaction to it, requires more care than staff can provide or compromises the health and safety of other children.
2. Signs and symptoms of possible illness such as: low grade fever (99-100), unusual lethargy or irritability, unusual clinging, persistent crying, constant runny nose, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, persistent abdominal pain, lack of appetite or other signs of illness which require a higher level of care than staff can provide in a group setting and/or which compromise the health and safety of staff and other children.
3. Child has persistent diarrhea (3 or more in last 24 hrs or if uncontained in diaper or underpants.
4. Significant fever as defined below, until evaluated and approved for inclusion by your child's pediatrician.
5. Bronchitis: Bronchitis often begins with hoarseness, coughing and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough is usually dry and painful.
6. Impetigo: Impetigo is a rash that shows up as red pimples, which eventually become blisters surrounded by a reddened area. This rash occurs usually in moist areas of the body, such as the creases of the neck, groin, underarm, face, hands, or the edge of a diaper.
7. Strep Throat: Strep throat is very contagious, if a child complains of a sore throat accompanied by any of the following: headache, aching belly or feeling nauseous. Fever often, but not always, accompanies this common illness. You must take your child to a doctor to get a strep test. If the results are positive, your child will be placed on antibiotics. They must have a full 24 hours of antibiotics before they can return to school.
8. Child has a new, onset, undiagnosed rash with or without fever and/or behavioral change.
9. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) until symptoms have resolved, or until 24 hours after medications have been administered, and approved for inclusion by your child's pediatrician.
10. Untreated infestations, such as scabies or lice; child must be free of nits before returning to our School.
11. Vomiting two or more times in a previous 24 hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms of dehydration or other signs of illness.
12. Contagious stages of chicken pox, until six days after the onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted and only with a note from child's pediatrician approving the return of the child to the school.
13. Obvious Illness without Clear Cause: Your child may occasionally seem ill without any clear cause. For example, you child may be unusually pale, irritable, tired or passive. You as parents know best when your child is "out of sorts."



## **SAFETY**

Our fire extinguishers, alarms, sprinklers and fire exits are checked frequently. Fire drills are held monthly in order to teach our students how to exit the building safely, quickly, and calmly. In the beginning of the school year we will have several fire drills in a month. We have a camera that is setup at our main entrance to view who is exiting and entering the building. The front entrance is constantly locked to ensure all students safety.

If a child sustains an injury during school time, the parent or guardian will be notified. If the injury is serious, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately. If the injury is minor, verbal and/or written notification will occur at pick up time.

## **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Gold Material School has developed an emergency plan and procedures that will be in effect in the event of a disaster or other problem affecting the care or safety of the children or staff of our School. There are 2 possible evacuation scenarios that Gold Material School is prepared for:

1. In-place or on-site Evacuation: Movement of children and staff members out of portion of buildings affected and relocated to other areas on premise or property. Keeping children and staff members in place but securing location for the emergency at hand. Example: hurricane, chemical release, partial flood of some classrooms, broken glass/windows;
2. Off-site evacuation, Major Disasters or Emergencies: Movement of some or all children and staff members off campus to another designated area. If due to the hazardous situation the return to the school is impossible or undesirable then once at alternative location head classroom teachers will contact the parents and inform them about emergency situation. Parents will be asked to pick-up the children from alternative location.

### **The off-site evacuation locations are the following:**

#### **First Alternative Location**

Receiving Site Name: **PS 682K**

Receiving Site Address: **50 Avenue P, 2 nd floor, Brooklyn, NY 11204**

Receiving Site Telephone Number: **(718) 621-2730**

#### **Second Alternative Location**

Receiving Site Name: **Edith and Carl Marks Jewish Community House**

Receiving Site Address: **7802 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11214**

Receiving Site Telephone Number: **(718) 331-6800**

## CHILD ABUSE AND REPORTING

In accordance with provisions of Section 432 of New York State Social Services all staff at Gold Material are mandated reporters to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment register and are mandated to report any signs of suspected abuse. **If you suspect child abuse, you may call the NYS OCFS hot line number 1-800-342-3720.** It is a teacher's or administrator's legal obligation and responsibility to ask about the nature or cause of any injury on a child.

## FIELD TRIPS

As part of the curriculum, we will have field trips throughout the year. Families will be sent home consent forms prior to trips, that will need to be signed. More information about field trips will be distributed by teacher or email prior to trips.

## DRESS CODE

Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing, this can have an impact on their learning experience. We recommend that you dress them in clothing and shoes on that are easy to put on and easy to remove, this encourages your child to become independent and dress themselves. **All clothing, boots, umbrellas etc., must have your child's name on it.** Please dress your child with adequate outdoor wear, because students will have time to play outside. For safety reasons, any type of heels, platform sneaker or shoe, backless shoes or clogs are not permitted.

## SUPPLIES NEEDED

- **A clean pair of shoes to wear in school (mandated):**Our school does not allow teachers, visitors, or students to walk around school with outside shoes on. As we know, there are a lot of germs on our shoes when we walk outside and our students sit on the carpet throughout the day. Therefore, we kindly ask if you can send shoes that have never been wore outside or you have cleaned the bottoms. These pair of shoe will stay in school for the entire year and will be returned at the end of the year. When your child enters the school he/or she will changed from their outside shoes into their inside shoes.
- **An extra pair of clothing and underwear that should be changed seasonal (optional):** Young children often have accidents that they may feel embarrassed about and it can cause them to become uncomfortable in the classroom. We want your child to feel confident and comfortable at all times. If for whatever reason this is an issue, please let the teacher or administrator know. This is optional and not mandated, but recommended.
- **Please send your child with a cup that is safe and has a cover on it (mandated):** At our school we do not have water fountains but have a water filter machine. We will continuously fill up your child's cup throughout the day. It is important that your child stays hydrated through his/her day at school. Please, do not send a cup made out of glass, or a cup that can be dangerous to your child or others. The cup must have a cover and must be labeled with your child's name.

## **ROLES OF FAMILIES**

- You are your child's first teacher. You can make their learning experience more meaningful if you work collaboratively with their teacher. Education is not just done in school it also continues in their home. Learning never stops! Therefore, we encourage you to work with your child at home.
- Find out how their day was, what did they learn, what did they not understand.
- Let your child know you are interested and that you are there for them through their learning process.
- Find out If there any issues with your child that may be bothering them or how can you help, feel free to ask.
- Please keep open communication with your child's teacher and/or administrator.
- Attend parent-teacher conference when given throughout the year, find out about their progress and growth.
- Please, read to your child every night and ask questions about the book.

## **ROLES OF STUDENTS**

- Students have to arrive at school on time.
- Leave personal items such as toys and games at home.
- Complete homework if given.
- Take turns and share with their friends.
- Take responsibility for their own behavior and actions.
- Clean up after themselves.
- Report to the teacher or an adult about any bullying or mistreatment going on with them or with a classmate.
- Do not bring candy or gum to school.

## **SCHOOL PHOTOS AND VIDEOS**

During the school year, your child will be in photos and videos, that will take place during classroom activities and used as a form assessments and to show progress. You will be given a consent form that you must sign, that will grant the school permission to take photos of your child. It is mandated by the Board of Education that you sign this form. Your child will be photographed on a daily basis, this is required by the Board of Education.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Communication with Gold Material Staff:**

It is very important that parents converse with teachers about their child's progress in the classroom. It is also important that you make the teacher aware of any changes that may have recently occurred with your child in order to assist your child effectively in the classroom. Building of relationships between parents and staff is an essential foundation for the child's experiences at school. The more familiar and aware of your child and your the family, the more supportive, helpful, and understanding we can be.

**It is crucial that you report to the school about any changes in your address, phone number, work number, or emergency contact information. It is also important that your child's medical record is kept up to date and that you let us know about any allergies, illness, asthma conditions, etc....**

We often communicate with parents through emails; please, verify with school that we have your email on file to ensure that you receive all notifications and answers to your concerns from our school.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

There will be at least 2 parent teachers conferences per year. We strongly recommend that all parents or guardians attend. Parent-teacher conferences are a time for you to share information about your child, set goals, and talk about their progress and growth. We will have all parent-teacher conferences times and dates posted on our website. There will also be reminders of parent-teacher conferences sent to you prior to the meeting.

Please, attend all parent-teacher conference, so we can work together to prepare you child for the real world and college readiness.

## FOOD

Your child will be served Breakfast and lunch at our school, free of charge. Please, let the school know about any food allergies that your child has. Safety and health is very important at our school. If you would like to send your child their own lunch, you may do so. Please, arrive to school on time for breakfast.

- Breakfast will be served at 8:00 am (school day begins)
- Lunch will be served at 12: 25 pm

If you provide your own lunch, then please follow these guidelines:

- Foods should be pre-cut so that children can easily feed themselves.
- Portions should be suitable to the size of your child and fixed so he/she can manage the containers or the wrappers. Self-sufficiency is stressed even at mealtime. We encourage you to use containers that are easy to open and are reusable.
- Children will be asked to take uneaten food home. This will help parents determine how much their child is eating at school.

- Candy and soda is not allowed in school.

**All containers MUST BE LABELED with your child's first and last name. Any food allergies MUST be communicated in writing and marked on your child Health Form.**

## **ALLERGIES AND FOOD SHARING**

Please, be aware that some children do have allergies, and other children may have allergies that their parents and school are unaware of. Foods of any unknown source should never be given to any child, and food in general, should not be shared because of the dangerous risk. We prefer that your child does not share any of their food with their classmates, to ensure the safety of all our students.

## **NAPS**

Each child will have nap for 30 minutes. Nap time will be conducted at 1:30 pm until 2:00 pm. Your child is not required to sleep, but are required to rest quietly, or can engage in quiet activities. Students will be supervised by a certified teacher and teacher assistant during the entire nap. Naps are essential for young children, this is the time they can store new knowledge into long term memory.

For more information, please, check NYC Department of Education link below: <http://schools.nyc.gov>

## **BIRTHDAYS**

If you will like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, you are allowed. However, please speak to the teachers about what you would like to bring to share with the class, in order to prevent a dangerous situation from students that have certain food allergies. Birthday celebrations are not mandated, they are optional.

## **OUTDOOR/INDOOR PLAY**

Our school does not have access to a backyard. Therefore, our students will walk and have their outdoor play in Seth Low Park. All students will walk together as a class with teacher and assistant on a rope that they can hold on to. Teacher will draw a line, where students are restricted to stay for their safety. Our school has used this approach of outdoor play for years, we are glad to announce that all children were safe at all times. However, sometimes the weather is unpredictable. In this case, we will then enjoy indoor play.

## **THREATENING WEATHER POLICY**

When there is severe or threatening weather, the New York Public School Severe Weather Closings will be followed. Information can be found on the local news channels and on our website.

## **BATHROOM**

All UPK students will not be denied entry to or removed from any Pre-Kindergarten program, if they have not yet mastered all of their developmental milestones. This is required by the state and will be followed as directed.

For further information please check this link below by NYC Department of Education  
<http://schools.nyc.gov>

## **AFTER-SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

After school is not mandated nor is it free of service. If you would like your child to stay in the after school program, you will have to complete an enrollment form and also have to pay for this service monthly.

<b>Length</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Cost</b>
5-days	2:20 – 6:00	\$505
3-days	2:20 – 6:00	\$303
2-days	2:20 – 6:00	\$202

## **NON DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Gold Material does not discriminate on the basis of: race, creed, sexual orientation, color, origin, religion, ancestry, age, language, disability, marital status, or income in any aspects of its operations, policies and procedures including but not limited to; enrollment, hiring, termination, educational policies or any other school administrated programs.