

**AmPark Neighborhood School  
P.S. 344  
3981 Hillman Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10463  
(718) 548-3451**

**PARENT AND STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
2018-2019**



**Kelly Lennon  
Principal**

Bonnie Durgin  
Assistant Principal

Angie Lebron  
Parent Coordinator

## **Table of Contents**

AmPark School Calendar 2018-2019: Major Dates	Page 2
Principal's Message to Families	Page 3
Mission, Vision & History	Page 4
Organization of the School	Page 5
Ladder of Communication	Page 6
Academic Program	Page 6
Attendance	Page 11
Bus & Transportation	Page 15
School Safety	Page 16
Home/School Communication	Page 18
School Food, Health & Wellness	Page 20
Parents Association	Page 23
Co-Curricular Programs	Page 25
Middle School Placement	Page 26
Confirmation of Receipt	Page 27

### **AmPark School Calendar 2018-2019: Major Dates**

September 5, 2018	School session begins for students
September 10 & 11, 2018	Rosh Hashanah: School Closed
September 19, 2018	Yom Kippur: School Closed
October 8, 2018	Columbus Day: School Closed
November 6, 2018	Election Day: Chancellor's Conference Day (Students will not be in attendance.)
November 12, 2018	Veterans Day: School Closed
November 15, 2018	Parent-Teacher Conferences
November 22 & 23, 2018	Thanksgiving Recess: School Closed
December 24, 2018-January 1, 2019	Winter Recess: School Closed
January 21, 2019	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day: School closed
February 5, 2019	Lunar New Year: School Closed
February 18-22, 2019	Mid Winter recess: School Closed
March 14, 2019	Parent Teacher Conferences
April 19 -26, 2019	Spring Recess: School Closed
May 15, 2019	Parent Teacher Conferences
May 27, 2019	Memorial Day: School Closed
June 4, 2019	Eid al-Fitr: School Closed
June 6, 2019	Chancellor's Conference Day (Students will not be in attendance.)
June 11, 2019	June Clerical Day (Students will not be in attendance.)
June 26, 2019	Last day for students

### **Principal's Message**

Dear AmPark Families,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! We are looking forward to continuing to deepen AmPark's partnership with families and the community. We strongly encourage you to thoroughly read through the family handbook and refer back to it as needed. The handbook outlines important information around school culture, safety procedures, and school commitments. Your cooperation and collaboration are deeply appreciated.

Warmly,

Kelly Lennon

Kelly@amparkns.org

### **Parent Coordinator's Message**

Dear Parents & Guardians,

This school year is going to be an exciting one! There will be many family events throughout the year and hopefully you will join the AmPark Neighborhood School Family in all the fun!

You are your child's first teacher and it's important for you to be involved and stay informed. I am here to help you keep informed and to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

**BE INVOLVED! STAY INFORMED!**

Sincerely,  
**Angie Lebron**

*Parent Coordinator*

*Email:angie@amaprksns.org*

**Mission, Vision & History**

## Mission

AmPark Neighborhood School's mission is to support and nurture our students as they experiment, reflect, make connections, and become active participants in their own learning. Together we instill a commitment to community.

Our curricula reflect themes based on students interests, incorporate the arts, and align to the core standards our students must meet. AmPark embraces the spirit of inquiry: seeking information by questioning, engaging in self and peer assessment, and developing next steps in an effort to grow. Teachers and administrators grow professionally in a collaborative environment where best practices are learned and shared. Parents support our mission by engaging in their children's learning.

## Vision

AmPark Neighborhood School is a school where all children are prepared for college and career through learning experiences that develop the whole child. We seek to ingrain in our students the values of empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility, thus fostering a strong sense of community both in our school and in the world.

## History

AmPark Community School is a small Pre-K to 5 school, established in 2006. AmPark is located within the Amalgamated Park Reservoir Cooperative Housing community in the Bronx, New York. The residents of this community (in existence since 1927) were the co-authors of the proposal to establish this unique learning environment.

Originally located at 3990 Hillman Avenue, the school grew slowly, adding one grade each year. In September 2011, the school moved across the street to 3981 Hillman Avenue, attached to PS/MS 95. It is considered a campus school with PS/MS 95.

## Organization of the School

**Administration**      Principal: Kelly Lennon  
Assistant Principal: Bonnie Durgin

**Parent Coordinator:** Angie Lebron

The Parent Coordinator is AmPark's liaison between parents, students, teachers, and staff. Any questions, concerns or issues can be brought to her attention by dropping in or making an appointment. The Parent Coordinator offers guidance and support and steers families through the proper channels to resolve any situation.

**School Secretary:** Damaris Scott

**Pre-Kindergarten Teachers:** Zoe Kleinmann, Melissa Dyer

**Kindergarten Teachers:** Denise Olivet, Erin Kerley/Joseph Huot

**First Grade Teachers:** Natasha Ciron/Tahese Warley, Priya Cassidy

**Second Grade Teachers:** Matilda Tegnell/Melissa Begin, Jennifer Gross

**Third Grade Teachers:** Kelley Delalla/Casey Burns, Scott Davis, Javier Pacheco

**Fourth Grade Teachers:** Katie Pesature, Kerry Markin/Regina Shin

**Fifth Grade Teachers:** Wandiza Williams

**Physical Education Teacher:** Caitlin Cargill

**Music Teacher:** Josh Joffee

**Art Teacher:** Ina Gallon

**Guidance Counselor:** Ana Veras

**Paraprofessionals:** Tracy Henderson, Audriana Fontanez, Ashley Avila, Irys Tejada, Crystal Santos, Craig Smith, Shey Carasquillo, Lydia Pabon

**School Aides:** Patricia Vera (Supervisor), Maria Alvarez

**ESL/AIS/Science:** Andrea Dudzinski

**School Based Support Team (part-time):**

**Psychologist:** Naomi Reynoso                      **Social Worker:** Cathy Irizarry

**Family Worker:** Sandra Herrera

**Speech:** Sheri Rotenberg, Paige Kelly

**Physical Therapy (part-time):** Heather Cloutman, Kathleen Aparicio

**Occupational Therapy (part-time):** Sarah Lowenthal, Yocheved Wasserman (Evi)

## **Ladder of Communication**

Parents should communicate with their child's teacher first if there are any concerns or conflicts. If mediation is required or requested, contact the Parent Coordinator and set up a meeting. If a resolution or agreement is not met, then a meeting with the teacher, Parent Coordinator, and the Assistant Principal will be established.

## **Academic Program**

### Overview

Our classrooms reflect diversity: ethnically, socio-economically, academically, and developmentally. Students and teachers are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively. Classrooms are organized so that students can work independently or in small groups. Materials are arranged to be accessible to children who learn how to use them safely and appropriately. Time is set aside for review and reflection of shared and independent work. Questions and comments from classmates often inspire students' next steps.

Our program includes physical education, music, and visual arts with our full-time teachers. Our arts program is further supported through our partnership with Inside Broadway. Our proximity to Van Cortlandt Park and other beautiful parks enriches our science studies and includes a partnership with the Audubon Society.

### Curriculum

Teachers design curriculum across all academic and arts disciplines to support individual children's needs and interest, and to provide multiple entry points into each area of study. Curriculum topics are generally broad enough to support, accommodate and encourage varied learning styles, interests, and talents. Ongoing discussions that foster review and reflection are a pivotal part of students' daily routines. Teachers are able to articulate children's progress and development through careful observation, documentation, and compilation of collections of children's work. These practices enable teachers to develop deeper understandings of each child's educational needs. Our efforts are focused on how children work with others, expectations children set for themselves, how each child thinks about work, and how to best support and extend that work. This focus stimulates the staff to continually examine their own teaching practices.

We utilize Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Units of Study for reading and writing instruction. The Units of Study allow students to engage in authentic literacy experiences on a daily basis. Skills are initially modeled by the teacher with opportunities for student practice and then independence. Collaboration with peers is an integral component of the literacy work, as

well as student self-assessment. All students read and write across a variety of genres over the course of the year. Science and social studies content is frequently integrated into the units.

EngageNY is our math platform for instruction in grades K-5. EngageNY promotes multiple ways to approach problems and the use of models to solve and explain complex reasoning. Carefully designed real-world math tasks are also a key component of math instruction at AmPark. “Number Talks” take place across the day in classrooms providing students with opportunities to problem-solve and analyze, as well as to justify their thinking while growing their conceptual knowledge of mathematics.

Science and Social Studies instruction are often integrated into other content areas. Teachers follow the recommended NYS scope and sequence. Teachers strive to make student learning in these content areas interactive and engaging. Students often create projects or prepare presentations to illustrate their thinking and knowledge.

### Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS)

The CCLS define general, cross-disciplinary expectations that must be met for students to effectively prepare for success in college and workforce training programs. By emphasizing required achievements, rather than content, the Standards leave room for teachers to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed. AmPark’s dedicated teachers create a challenging, curiosity-based interdisciplinary curriculum that meets NYS common core standards as well as the social, emotional, and wellness needs of each child. Our teachers are free to provide students with whatever tools and knowledge their professional judgment and experience identify as most helpful for meeting the goals set out in the standards.

### Social and Emotional Learning

At AmPark, we firmly believe in the importance of building a strong community for all members, including students, staff, and parents. Each day, every classroom devotes time to practices that teach students how to express themselves, work alongside their peers, and to positively regulate their emotions. This is achieved through a combination of approaches to social and emotional learning including Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions (PBIS), The RULER Approach, mindfulness practices, growth mindset practices, and the adoption of The Leader in Me for the second year. Staff members model the skills these approaches promote and teach them to students piece by piece across the year.

In each classroom, you will notice a Community Charter that outlines how the students want to feel in the classroom, what they will do in order to have the identified feelings, and how they can address and resolve conflicts. Students also check-in on the Mood Meter with frequency and identify ways to maintain a positive feeling or strategize against unwanted feelings. Students participate in mindful breathing at touchstone points throughout the day, such as before entering the classroom or after recess. Many classes participate in circle conversations, such as STACK



time, or community corner opportunities where students can practice speaking about issues without adult intervention (when appropriate). Families can learn more about the specific practices of each classroom from the teachers during Back to School night.

### State Standardized Tests

Children in grades 3, 4 and 5 all participants in the New York State testing program which is comprised of two exams for grades 3-5; the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Grade 4 also takes the Science exam.

- Test dates vary from year to year. Check the NYC DOE website for details.
- Grading is on a scales of 1-4, with 4 being ‘Exceeds grade-level standards’, 3 being ‘Meets grade-level standards’, 2 being ‘Approaching grade-level standards’ and 1 being ‘Below grade-level standards’.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> grade test scores are submitted as part of a student’s application to middle school. Many of the specialized or SP middle school programs set minimum combined score or level requirements for consideration. Check each middle school’s site for requirements.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conference take place throughout the year, in the Fall (November), in the Winter (March) and in the Spring (May). In the weeks leading up to the conference period, teachers will distribute a sign-up sheet to parents, asking each family to indicate their top time preferences. Parents will then receive a confirmation from their child’s teacher indicating the conference time and date. Each conference is between 10 and 15 minutes in length. If you feel that you need more time than the allotted 15mins, contact your child’s teacher to arrange a meeting outside of Parent Teacher Conferences.

### Academic Intervention and Support Services

AmPark acknowledges and celebrates the wide variety of learning styles that students bring with them, and the school demonstrates its commitment to meeting the needs of all students. General education classes include students who may receive special education/related services, such as Speech Therapy, as well as students who receive the services of a SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) teacher. Students receiving special education/related services receive services that may be “pushed into the classroom” or students may be “pulled out” and serviced in a small group setting, as prescribed by their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Among the support services provided during the school day are: speech and language therapy, occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), counseling, adaptive physical education, and Reading Rescue. Students in need of academic support are given at-risk academic services, in small groups or individually, by a member of the AmPark staff.

AmPark adheres to federal requirements of educating students with IEPs in the least restrictive environment. We have worked to expand our academic programs to offer ICT classrooms,

12:1:1 classrooms, and push-in or pull-out Special Education Teacher Support Services. We strive to ensure that students with IEPs have opportunities to work and play alongside their general education peers whenever possible and appropriate.

Teachers pull small groups of students in all academic areas on a daily basis, ensuring that all students are regularly met with. When students are in need of extra support, teachers may meet with them more frequently. Students may benefit from being met with in a small group by another one of our teachers during a cycle of Academic Intervention Services (AIS). This may occur one to three times per week either in the classroom or outside of it. Please speak with your child's teacher if you have concerns regarding their academic progress.

Our team evaluates students in need of ongoing academic support. The School Implementation Team (SIT) will address the four key strands: Positive Behavior Supports, Access to Curriculum, Transition Planning, and High Quality IEP's. Response to Intervention (RTI) support is put into place for students in need of additional support. If needed, a child may be referred for testing to determine whether or not they are in need of any Special Education services. If it is then determined that the child is in need of Special Education Services, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed. This IEP is reassessed each year at an annual review with the service provider and the student's classroom teacher as well as every three years by the School Assessment Team.

### Back to School Night

Parents have the opportunity to meet their child's grade teacher and the specialty teachers (physical education, music, art) in order to understand each teacher's goals and expectations. Back to School night takes place in September.

### Field Trips

We believe that experiences with the world outside of the school walls hold a tremendous amount of learning. In-school and out-of-school experiences should complement and enrich each other. AmPark field trips may range from the neighborhood walks to trips all around the Bronx and New York City. We value students getting to know nearby communities and developing a sense of all that New York City has to offer. Field trips are an important part of our curriculum, not an added extra. Families of AmPark students are expected to allow their children to participate in all field trips.

You will receive written notification prior to the field trip at least a week prior as a parental consent form, which must be returned in order for your child to participate in an off-site trip. In addition, at the beginning of the year, you will be asked to complete permission slip for neighborhood walking trips. This permission slip will cover any field trips within the walking distance of the school. However, you will still be notified prior to the trip. The teacher will request parent volunteers to assist with the trip, and/or a monetary contribution to fund your

child's participation. We favor field trips that are free for children. Although occasional field trips with a cost may happen, efforts will be made to minimize the burden on families. **For any field trip, no student will ever be left behind due to lack of payment.**

### Classroom Celebrations and Birthday Parties

When celebrating classroom projects, including publishing parties, food is permitted. It is important to consult with your child's teacher to determine the food policy in the classroom. High sugar items such as donuts, cupcakes, cookies, etc., are strongly discouraged. Please share fruit, bagels, or whole grain products along with water.

We recognize the joy of celebrating each child's birthday. In order to ensure fairness for all students and families:

- All of the class birthdays for a given month will be celebrated together based upon a day determined by individual teachers in collaboration with the families of students with birthdays that month.
- Birthday celebrations will be limited to 30 minutes, in the afternoon only just prior to dismissal.
- Treats may include cake/cupcakes or ideally, an alternative healthy treat. Celebrations are after lunch, so additional food (pizza, etc.) will be not part of the celebration.
- We ask that goodie bags not be distributed in the classroom. Candy is not permitted.
- We have adopted the "Water, not Juice" policy promoted by Wellness in the Schools and ask that families adhere to this.
- Sending your child to school with invitations for an outside of school birthday party is not permitted, unless the entire class has been invited.

### Class Assignments

Toward the end of the school year, grade teachers meet to discuss class composition for the following year. They review the students' academics and overall group dynamics as they recommend classes for the following school year. The grade team teachers develop a draft outline of proposed classes which is reviewed by the Principal for final approval. Students will receive their classroom assignments for the following school year by mail over the summer, typically in late August. Staffing decisions are often not finalized until this time, and enrollment continues to change into September.

While you may share your interests in having a particular teacher with your child's teacher, or with our parent coordinator, official requests are not recognized and are discouraged. We can make no guarantee that you will have the teacher of your choice.

## Attendance

### Who Can Attend

AmPark Neighborhood School is a non-zoned school of choice in District 10.

Kindergarten admissions are determined by the Office of Student Enrollment. AmPark administration does not decide who is admitted into Kindergarten. OSE Kindergarten admission policies are as follows:

1. Students living within the geographical boundaries of Van Cortlandt Village area, with a sibling currently attending the school.
2. Students living in any other area of district 10, with a sibling currently attending the school.
3. Students living outside of district 10, with a sibling attending the school.
4. Other students living within the geographic boundaries of the Van Cortlandt Village area.
5. Other residents of District 10.
6. Other New York City residents.

Tours of AmPark begin in January of the academic year are capped at 30 people per tour (adults only, please). Tours are announced through the PA website beginning in December. For more information regarding the registration process, please refer to the “School Announcement” section of the AmPark PA website beginning in the fall prior to the year your child is expected to enter kindergarten (children must be five years old or turn five in the calendar year.) Information regarding admission to NYC public schools may also be obtained by visiting the DOE website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Elementary>.

### School Hours

Monday-Friday 8:15-2:35

### Arrival

7:45-Doors open at Gouverneur Avenue entrance. Breakfast begins.

8:10- Teachers arrive in lunchroom to escort students to their classrooms

8:15- Instructional time begins

Pre-K arrival is through the Hillman Entrance at 8:15.

K-5 students are not permitted to enter through the Hillman entrance prior to 8:15. Students that are late to school must be signed in beginning at 8:15 at the safety agents' desk.

### Dismissal

For the 2017-2018 academic year, our school day will end at 2:35 for all students.

- Grades 3-5 classes will be dismissed at the Gouverneur Avenue exit.
- PK, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes will be dismissed at the Hillman Avenue entrance.
- Dismissal on Hillman-Parents will be able to gather on sidewalk or immediately inside the gate. The stairs and ramp will not be used as waiting areas, in order to ensure safe dismissal of each child to the correct adult. Teachers will dismiss students down the stairs one class at a time.

Conversations with teachers: Dismissal is a time when all school personnel are ensuring student safety. Therefore, conversations with teachers should not take place during dismissal. If a teacher agrees to speak with a parent, the conversation will take place after all children are dismissed and the late pick-up children are dropped off in the office. Teachers complete a check-off sheet at dismissal to record how students go home. Please give teachers the respect and time needed to do so in order to maintain a safe dismissal for all.

### Daily Attendance

Research confirms that the amount of time a student is present in the classroom directly connects to his or her success in school. Students are expected to be at school and on time each day. Families are made aware of this expectation through this Family Handbook distributed to and signed for, by every AmPark family.

Attendance is taken at 8:15 each morning, and collected along with any attendance-related notes. Students who arrive at school after 8:15 must use the Hillman entrance and be signed in as late. If necessary, a member of the school staff will accompany children to their classrooms. Parents are not allowed to escort their children to class.

### Attendance (from NYC regulations)

“Attendance at school is vital to a student’s academic progress and success. School personnel must ensure that appropriate outreach, intervention and support are provided for students who exhibit attendance problems that may manifest themselves as truancy or patterns of unexcused absence or educational neglect. In cases of truancy, school personnel must meet with the student and parent in order to determine needed supports and an appropriate course of action which may include, but is not limited to: guidance intervention, referral for counseling, and/or referral to afterschool programs. The School’s Attendance or Pupil Personnel Committee should review cases of chronic absenteeism and/or truancy and should involve attendance teachers, deans,

guidance counselors, teachers, social workers and other school staff in facilitating a resolution. Cases of suspected educational neglect must be called into the New York State Central Register in compliance with Chancellor's Regulation A-750.4"

### Absences

It is important that a family member communicate with the school to report student absences. This helps keep us informed, and ensures that our documentation is accurate and timely. If a student is absent for any reason, please call the main office at 718-548-3451. Please be sure to include the following information: Child's full name, grade, teacher's name, reason for absence.

In addition:

-If your child has chicken pox, scarlet fever, fifth disease or any vaccine-preventable disease, you should inform the nurse.

-If your child is out sick for 3 days or more, you should obtain a letter of explanation from your doctor. If your child has a doctor's appointment, please make the appointment early or late in the day so that your child may attend most of the day of school.

-If your child is traveling out of town, please include copies of his/her itinerary, plane tickets, etc. with your absence notification. In situations of extended absence, please get in touch with your child's teacher to discuss a plan for homework and assignments missed. The DOE closely monitors student absences and requires appropriate action in cases of excessive leave. Regular attendance is critical to maintain continuity in your child's learning and directly correlates with academic success. Parents are strongly encouraged to keep their children in school on days before or after long weekends or holiday periods. Teachers continue to provide solid instruction on those days. Additionally, your child's regular attendance helps AmPark maintain a solid overall attendance rate, an important factor that impacts our annual School Report Card.

### Checking up on your Child's Attendance

You may go to the ARIS website at [www.arisparentlink.org](http://www.arisparentlink.org) (using your child's OSIS# and your password) to check that your child's absences are properly entered into the system. Please note that although absences due to illness will be flagged as such internally on the DOE system, they will still correctly appear as full-fledged absences on the ARIS parent link website. Contact the parent coordinator if you need your child's student ID or OSIS#.

### Dismissal in Inclement Weather

In inclement weather the children will be held inside the doors and released individually to parents.

### Early Pick Up

Should you need to pick up your child from school early, please go directly to the main office after signing in with the security agent. In the main office, you must officially sign your child out of school. Upon signing your child out, your child's classroom teacher will be contacted and your child will meet you in the main office. All children must be signed out before they may leave the building. Only those individuals whose names are on a student's blue card (a card completed by parents in September) may take that student out of school. **Children cannot leave the school by themselves--an authorized adult must be present.** Please use the Hillman Avenue exit where the security agent is located.

We strongly discourage families from routinely picking their child up prior to dismissal. Calls to classrooms during this time interrupt instruction and can be distracting for students. If there is to be a change in your dismissal plans for the day please call the office at 718-548-3451 no later than 2 p.m.

### Late Pick-up After School

All students must be picked up at the regular dismissal time of 2:35pm. On rare occasions, if there is a delay in picking up a student, please call the main office at 718-548-3451. Students must still be signed out in the main office before leaving the building.

### Half Days

Half days are scheduled several times during the school year for Parent/Teacher Conferences, Professional Development and a variety of other reasons. On half days, students are dismissed at 11:30am from their respective dismissal locations. School buses will run their normal routes. On half days Roads to Success is available for a fee.

## **Bus & Transportation**

### School Buses

Children are expected to observe the following rules while riding the bus:

- Seat belts must be worn at all times
- Voices should be at a conversational tone
- Eating and drinking are not allowed on bus

### Metrocard Passes

The MTA typically provides a Metrocard to children who live within a qualified distance. Please note that this policy may change from year to year. Children with special services are eligible for yellow bus service if they qualify. Please contact the school if you have any questions. When a child is assigned to a bus route, make note of the route number (usually found on the side of the bus) and the bus number (above the front windshield). Please note that bus drivers are legally permitted to drop off children whether or not the child's guardian/parent is present at the bus stop. For the most part the drivers will not do so, especially with young children. It is important to be on time and ensure that a parent/guardian is available to pick the child up from the bus stop. In the event that you are unable to get to the bus stop on time, attempt to call the school in advance so that they may apprise the driver. It is good practice to establish a relationship with other parents at your stop so that they can be responsible for your child in the event that you are late for pickup. Review with your child's bus driver the procedure he/she follows should you be late to the stop to claim your child. Please contact Angie Lebron at 718-548-3451 ext.1024 for all transportation questions. We use Grandpa's Bus Co., and it can be reached at 718-409-4600.



## School Safety

### Visiting the School

All visitors are required to sign in at the School Safety's desk and show valid photo identification. After signing in with security, all visitors will receive a pass that must be worn at all times. This procedure is in place to protect the children. When leaving the building, exit is allowed only through the Hillman Avenue lobby.

### Emergency Closing/ Late Opening/ Early Dismissal

AmPark may experience a closure, an early dismissal, or a late opening due to a situation such as inclement weather. In these instances, AmPark follows the NYC DOE's procedures and only closes or shortens the school day if the DOE has made an announcement for all city schools. AmPark will send an email blast through the [www.amparkpa.com](http://www.amparkpa.com) website to all families to inform them of the closure or time change. Parents are also encouraged to check the DOE website and other local news sources such as Channel 1 news, or AM radio stations WCBS (880) and WINS (1010) whenever there are questions about school closings. Families are welcome to review the complete emergency plan, which is on file in the main office. Please do not call the main office in the morning to see if school is open. During inclement weather days, office staff need to ensure safe opening conditions and classroom coverages if necessary. Calling the office for the information stresses limited resources during these times.

### Fire Drills

AmPark conducts 10 fire drills each academic year. In addition, we will conduct two lockdown drills. During fire drills, students are taught to silently and safely leave the building under the supervision of their teachers. This is an extremely important time for children to listen, and families will be contacted promptly if a child fails to listen to adults during an emergency drill.

### Change of Information

If your address, email, telephone numbers, or any other contact information--including adults who may pick-up your child--changes, please inform your child's teacher as well as the school secretary. Please stop by the main office to update your blue card. You may also request that one be sent home for you to return and complete. In cases of emergencies, it is essential that we be able to get in touch with all parents/guardians.

### Internet Policy

Technology is an important tool available to students in their daily lives. With the help of the Department of Education Office of Technology Assistance, we do our best to monitor and block access to websites that may provide inappropriate content for students at the elementary school level. Students at AmPark are expected to comply with the policies of the website on which they register. This includes age limits. The web should also never be used as a forum for making

disparaging comments about peers or to engage in any kind of behavior that impacts life in school in a negative manner. Students will be held accountable for any behavior that could be classified as “bullying” or behavior that proves to be disruptive to the educational process in school. Should these kinds of behaviors occur, the school will hold such students responsible and the DOE discipline code will be enforced accordingly.

If your child has a cell phone, the school policy is that it is to remain in your child’s bookbag. Cell phone use is not permitted during the school day as it is distracting to other students. It is also helpful in limiting lost or stolen items if they are safely secured in bookbags for the duration of the day.

Electronics/Cell Phones/IPads, etc.

Electronics are allowed in the school building, but must be kept concealed at all times.

## Home/School Communication

AmPark believes that communication between families and staff is crucial to the success of students. This communication happens in various ways, including our school website, phone calls, notes, class newsletters, and meetings. Our **monthly Owl Blog** is posted to our school website every month at <http://www.amparkneighborhoodschool.org/ampark-owl-blog>. The website also contains a **calendar of events** and other key information, so we encourage you to visit regularly for updates and information.

AmPark students will also have Home/School Communication Folders. **Important information, such as permission slips will go out through that folder.** Teachers check the folder every morning for notes from home. Teachers can also be reached by e-mail and will return messages left by phone.

### Monthly Teacher Newsletter

Teachers send home a monthly class newsletter to let family members know what the class is working on. This is an excellent opportunity for family members to talk to their children about the work they're doing, and to support that work at home.

### AmPark's Monthly Owl Blog

Each month the AmPark Weekly Owl will be posted to our school Website. This newsletter includes updates of events and important information. A message from the principal, parent coordinator, and the parent association, are included in the Owl. Please visit our website: <http://www.amparkneighborhoodschool.org> to register and you will receive emails directly communicating that this month's Owl has been posted.

### AmPark Parent Association Website

The AmPark Parent Association Website serves as an important representation of our school to both the public and to AmPark families. Information such as upcoming events, schedules, notices, teacher and staff contact information can be found on the AmPark website.

[\(http://www.amparkpa.org/\)](http://www.amparkpa.org/)

### Weekly Parents Association E-mail Bulletin

Every Sunday, the president of the AmPark Parents Association distributes an email to parents about events of the upcoming week.

### Class Parents

Class parents are an integral part of the AmPark Parents Association, and help facilitate communication to all classroom families. Communications typically take the form of e-mail, backpacked materials or in-class announcements at in-class events such as publishing parties, for

example. For additional information about Class Parents, please see the “Parents Association” section of this Handbook.

### Backpacked Materials

Students are often given handouts to bring home. Be sure to regularly check your child’s backpack. In addition, the AmPark Weekly Owl is distributed on Wednesdays highlighting events for the upcoming week.

### NYC Schools Account

If you want to access your child’s standardized test scores, log into your NYC Schools account. For this you will need an account creation code along with your child’s student ID number (OSIS#). The parent coordinator can provide this information.

### Parents in the Classrooms

In order to ensure that instructional time is honored:

- Any items to be dropped off to students in the classrooms will be delivered by school staff.
- Phone calls to the school may not be transferred to teacher classrooms.
- Meetings with teachers can either take place on Tuesdays during Family Engagement times from 2:45pm to 3:30pm. unless an appointment is scheduled with the teacher’s permission at another time.
- Visits to the school building will be limited to the area identified on the visitor’s pass.

Teachers are not permitted to deliver notes between parents (for example, sending a note a home to another parent in her child’s folder). This will eliminate the possibility of putting the teacher and/or the child in the middle of any correspondence between parents.

### Lost and Found

The Lost and Found area is located on the first floor lobby. Children are encouraged to search through the Lost and Found bins as soon as an item is lost. Parents should label all their child’s belongings, including lunch boxes, backpacks, hats, gloves, jackets and boots. Please encourage your child to check the Lost and Found bins if an item goes missing.

## School Food, Health & Wellness

### Breakfast

Breakfast is served free of charge in the Cafeteria at 7:45am. The Gouverneur Avenue entrance door will close promptly at 8:15am. Children must be finished eating by 8:10am, and prepared to move upstairs to their classrooms. A limited amount of “grab and go” breakfasts will be provided to late-arriving students. If your child arrives after 8:15am, please bring him/her to the Hillman Avenue entrance, where “grab and go” breakfasts will be available until 8:40.

### Nutrition

Wellness in the Schools and AmPark have partnered for the past few years. Wellness in the Schools is a national non-profit that inspires healthy eating, environmental awareness, and fitness as a way of life for children of all ages. Our Cook for Kids program works with schools to “feed kids real food.” WITS Chefs who are trained culinary graduates work with schools to transform the cafeteria menu, train school staff, and provide nutrition education to students. Our daily goal is for students to return to class after lunch and recess ready to focus and learn. A menu will be provided every month and will be accessible in the main office.

As of the 2017-2018 school year, all students are eligible for **free** school lunch.

### Lunch

AmPark has two lunch periods. Students spend approximately 25 minutes eating and the remaining 25 minutes of their lunch period at recess.

### Class Snacks

Children in some grades eat snack in their class each day. Teachers send home a snack schedule with a calendar of each family’s snack day. Families should send in enough snack for the entire class on their snack day. Snacks should be healthy and easy to distribute. These are some examples of acceptable snacks that can be sent in (with suggested amounts).

- Fruit (pre-washed and cut whenever possible)
- Graham crackers (1box)
- Pretzels (1 big bag)
- Ritz Crackers (1 Box)
- Animal Crackers (1 Big container)
- Goldfish crackers (1 big carton or 3 small bags)
- Saltines (1box)
- Baby Carrots (2 big bags)
- Raisins (30 individual boxes)

## Recess

All AmPark classes go to Classic Playground in Van Cortlandt Park for recess. AmPark follows DOE policy when allowing children to go outside for recess. If the temperature is too cold, if it is raining/snowing, students are not permitted to go outside. If the playground is icy or the ground is slippery, the principal will determine if students are allowed outside. Under such conditions, children will have indoor recess where they will play games or participate in indoor activities. Parents should make sure their children are dressed appropriately based on the weather conditions. If a student is not properly dressed for the day's weather, that student will not be allowed outside for recess.

## Health Policies, Requirements and School Nurse

The AmPark nurse is at the school every day and is available to students as needed. Minor injuries are cared for at school. For more severe illnesses or injuries, the nurse will notify parents to have the child taken to the doctor. In emergency cases the school will be required to call for an ambulance. Parents will always be notified of a serious problem. It is critical that parents keep the school notified of any change in address, home/work/cell phone numbers and emergency contacts. The school follows New York City DOE and Department of Health policies and protocols for all health-related issues. For more information about school health policies, please refer to the DOE web site at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/health/default.htm>

## Prescription & Over the Counter Medications

If your child requires prescription medication during the school day, you must fill out a DOE medication administration form (MAF) to be completed by your child's doctor. The form should be provided to the nurse's office along with the medication in its original container with your child's name and the name of the medication on the bottle. Over the counter medication will not be dispensed by the nurse unless a parent or doctor's note is received. A child who feels ill in the middle of the school day will be given a pass from the teacher to go to the nurse's office. If it is determined that the child needs to leave school for the day, a parent will be contacted to take the child home. Teachers are not allowed to administer medication to students, even with a doctor's note. All requests must be referred to the school nurse, per Chancellor's Regulation: <http://schools.nyc.gov/rulespolicies/chancellorsregulations/default.htm>.

## Discipline

AmPark follows the Department of Education's Discipline Code, which can be found at this website:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2942494E-7CD8-4CBD-86FC-E34A14FE1852/0/DisciplineCodeK5FINALforPostingadtdledits4517.pdf>

While a positive approach to behavior management is the first course of action, repeated or high-level misbehaviors may lead to classroom removals or a loss of privileges.

## **Parents Association**

As a parent or guardian of a student at AmPark Neighborhood School, you are automatically a member of our Parents Association (also known as the AmPark PA). We welcome all parents to become active participants in our PA and to check out the PA's informative website for news and events at [amparkpa.org](http://amparkpa.org).

### **Parents Association Executive Board**

The Parents Association Executive Board is the organization's governing body and addresses school needs and policies and determines how PA funds are raised and distributed. Members are elected yearly at the June General PA meeting for the following year. A restructuring of the Board with additional positions may take place after the reprinting of this handbook. However, the core positions will remain the same. The executive board consists of:

- **President/Co-President:** The President & Co-Presidents are the Parents Association's chief executive officers and preside at all PA and the Executive Board Meetings. They meet regularly with the principal and the Parent Coordinator. One of the Co-Presidents serves on the School Leadership Team (SLT).
- **Treasurer:** The Treasurer is responsible for all Parents Association funds and keeps records of PA income and expenses, pays the PA's bills and makes regular reports about the PA's financial condition.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary take the minutes at all Parents Association, Executive Board and General PA meetings, and marks them available to the membership through the school website and upon request. The Secretary is also responsible for communicating announcements to the parent body.
- **Vice President of Parent Involvement**
- **Vice President of Fundraising**

### **Parents Association Committees**

- **Budget Committee:** The Parent Association Treasurer chairs the Budget Committee, which drafts a proposed budget each spring for approval by the membership, in addition to a written review of the prior year's budget. Both are presented for approval at the June General PA meeting.
- **Fundraising Committee:** The Fundraising Committee supervises all Parents Association fundraising activities, in addition to proposing and developing new methods of raising funds. The Fundraising Committee works closely with the Budget Committee to help maintain PA solvency.
- **Parent Involvement Committee:** The Parent Involvement Committee works closely with the AmPark Parent Coordinator, and encourages parent participation, outreach and recruitment for various school events. This committee organizes annual events such as



the Harvest Festival, that bring many generations of AmPark community members together.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Committee: The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Committee is responsible for supporting select activities exclusive to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents are encouraged to actively participate in this committee as their students prepare for 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In cooperation with the fifth grade teachers and administrators, the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Committee organizes field trips, special activities, and the moving up ceremony in June.
- Wellness Committee: The Wellness Committee promotes healthy eating and active lifestyle, in addition to other programs that support the body and mind. The committee works with Wellness in the Schools, and organizes and promotes related events.

### Parent Volunteerism

There are many opportunities to help. Service/time, cash donations, material resources, organizational skills, and ideas are all welcome. Donating to the AmPark Parents Association and volunteering your time are the two main ways to get involved.

### Class Parents

Although Class Parents are not elected members of the Parents Association Executive Board, they are an important part of the PA. They are on the front lines of communication to the parent body. Class parents are self-nominated and selected by the classroom teacher. They act as an important liaison between parents and the classroom teachers. Class parents work closely with their child's classroom teacher and provide services which may include assisting in the classrooms, organizing class publishing parties, accompanying the class on field trips and recruiting other chaperones, coordinating the Auction Class Project and/or other Auction projects, and telephone/e-mail networking. Class parents recruit volunteers for school-wide events and disseminate information on PA fundraisers and programs. If you are interested in becoming a class parent, please speak with your child's teacher as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year.

## Co-Curricular Programs

### After School

The Roads to Success (RTS) program is designed to expose young people to a wide range of creative learning activities in the areas of science, music, sports, performing arts, technology, and much more. Roads to Success emphasizes the youth development practice of the **Circle Of Courage** in all programs; creating an environment of **Belonging**, where young people can build their **Independence**, find and develop their **Mastery** skill, and practice **Generosity** in their communities. At the core of the program is a staff training strategy that enables young professionals to develop extraordinarily meaningful relationships with the young people in their care, becoming **Future Leaders** and positive **Role Models**.

The Roads to Success program offers basic programming from the hours of 2:35pm-6:00pm. Students are brought into the cafeteria and receive a hot meal through School Foods. The students will participate in community events, and then transition into a homework help period. After homework time, students will take part in instructional classes, group time, and an active play period. In addition to the basic program, RTS also offers horizon clubs that run for six to seven weeks. Detailed registration information and class descriptions will be made available through the Roads to Success website.

The program begins in September and ends in June. The program is closed on days when NYC schools are closed, and does offer half day programs. The program is tax deductible as child care. For more information, please contact the after school director at [ampark@roadstosuccess.org](mailto:ampark@roadstosuccess.org) or visit the website [www.roadstosuccess.org](http://www.roadstosuccess.org).

### Supplemental Programs and Activities

AmPark provides a series of diverse and wide-ranging supplemental programs and activities to students throughout the school year. Some of these activities are spearheaded by the teaching, specialty and administrative staff, while others are organized by the school through partnerships with outside organizations that operate these programs in the school. These programs may operate and vary by grade-level, while other programs are school-wide.

### **Middle School Placement**

In October, a meeting will be set up for parents and guardians of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that will review specifics of the middle school application process and provide information on school tours and additional resources. Families will be given an update on middle school choice options, including information on the admissions outcome for current 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and important deadlines (if known).

A Middle School Directory will be provided in addition to information on specialized, and gifted & talented schools. Parents will be notified as of any dates when an information night will occur by both the Guidance Counselor and the Parent Coordinator.

**NOTE:** Attendance records are crucial on most middle school applications. Middle schools take excessive absences/tardiness seriously. Absences/tardiness related to illness, family-situation and special circumstances are excusable. Extended vacations and/or frequent unexcused absences are not looked on favorably. Criteria for admissions varies from school to school, but often includes the 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and Math scores, report cards, and tests/interviews administered by the middle school.

**A PRINTED COPY OF THE NEXT PAGE WILL BE  
SENT HOME TO YOU VIA BACKPACK DURING THE  
FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 2018.  
PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN IT TO YOUR CHILD'S  
TEACHER.**



THE AMPARK NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

*"Creating the extraordinary as ordinary"*

Kelly Lennon, Principal I.A.  
Bonnie Durgin, Assistant Principal  
3981 Hillman Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10463

**Confirmation of Receipt of the AmPark Neighborhood School  
Parent & Family Handbook via  
<http://www.amparkneighborhoodschool.org/for-families.html>**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I have received an electronic version of the AmPark Neighborhood School Family Handbook and understand the information therein. As a vested member in the AmPark Neighborhood School Community, I will work to support the protocols and practices outlined within.

Print name of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_