

Garden School

**Upper Division Student/Parent/Guardian
Handbook**

2020-2021



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Welcome

August 2020

Dear Garden Families & Students:

This handbook outlines many of the procedures and expectations for members of our community. This year promises to be unlike any other and for this reason we ask you take time to review our comprehensive re-opening manual that was emailed to families earlier this month. Within this document, any specific changes for academic year 2020-2021 have been **BOLDED** for your further perusal.

This is a living, breathing document that will grow and adapt to our evolving environment. Most of the points contained are practical in nature. Please pay special attention to these notes, as they represent important shifts in our day-to-day operation.

If you have any questions about this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone or email. I welcome your feedback.

Respectfully,

Brad Battaglia
Upper Division Head

Garden School Mission Statement

Garden School, in the Independent Tradition, affirms the primacy of learning. We empower every student in our educationally diverse community to meet responsibly the challenges of everyday life by promoting academic achievement, personal development, and social involvement. We further believe that by recognizing each students' individual identity, Garden School fosters the self-worth necessary to succeed.

Valuable Things to Know

The School Day

Upper Division classes begin at 8:34am and conclude at 2:40pm. All students should report to their assigned homeroom no later than 8:15am.

There are eight forty-two-minute periods each day, with one class having a “double” period per day on a rotating basis. All students are required to attend all classes, homeroom and morning meetings. As you might expect, student movement from class to class will be limited this year in light of the pandemic.

Unlike past years, lunch will not be eaten in the dining room. Instead, meals will be delivered to classrooms. Unfortunately, given the nature of the pandemic, we cannot allow 11th and 12th grade students to leave Garden for the purpose of lunch or free periods. If circumstances regarding the pandemic change, we may revisit this policy.

Student Clubs

Students at Garden are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of clubs and activities through the school’s extra-curricular offerings. Last year, top clubs in the upper division included Student Council, Yearbook, Model United Nations, Amateur Radio Club, Diversity Club, The Daniel Webster Society (Debate), International Club, Japan Club and Key Club. We welcome the creation of new clubs by interested students.

Athletics

Presently, all fall athletic programs are canceled. It is not yet clear if the ISAL (Independent Schools Athletic League) will allow winter sports. We will make families aware of any such decisions as soon as they are made.

Garden School has a vigorous athletic program that includes 11 teams in the Independent Schools Athletic League (ISAL) and in the Girls Independent Schools Athletic League (GISAL). While we are committed to an open team policy, we do need parent permission and health forms for team eligibility. Please note, a student may NOT participate in a game if he/she/they have not attended school that day.

Class Trips

Presently, we are not conducting school field trips for the fall of 2020. If conditions regarding the pandemic change, we may revisit this policy.

While it is unclear if we will be able to run an international trip over February break, as we do annually, we will prepare for a trip until it is clear one is not possible.

Field trips may be scheduled by teachers throughout the school year to supplement and enrich the classroom curriculum.

- Parents/Guardians will receive information in advance of the trip date and be required to sign a permission form.
- When paying for a class trip, please send in cash or a check made payable to Garden School.
- If a child will require medication during a class trip, the parent/guardian is asked to contact the school nurse in advance.
- During trips, the classroom is “mobile” and students must follow school rules.
- For class trips that extend beyond the regular school day, arrangements must be made to pick up children at school at the designated arrival time.
- The specific places that classes visit dictate how many chaperones are needed. Interested parents/guardians should speak with the classroom teacher. When more parents/guardians volunteer than space permits, names will be randomly chosen.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Garden School PTA is a parent organization that works alongside teachers and administrators to foster a sense of community through regular communication and activities. The Association and its committees exchange ideas, disseminate information, support fundraising, sponsor activities, and serve as an important advisory resource to the administration and the Board of Trustees. Regularly scheduled PTA meetings provide an opportunity for reporting ongoing activities.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the school. Trustees may come from the alumni and current parent body as well as from the outside community. Trustees receive no compensation and are expected to donate time and money to the school. The main responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are to hire and evaluate the Headmaster, to oversee the financial and budgeting process, and to set long term direction for the school.

Volunteering

At Garden School, parental support through volunteering is essential to our success. We encourage all parents to give of their time when possible to support teachers, classrooms, fundraising activities, off-campus events and the like. If you wish to volunteer, speak with the President of the PTA (Nicole Adams) or the two Division Heads (Bill Vogel – Lower Division Head; Brad Battaglia – Upper Division Head) to learn how you can get involved.

Walk-A-Thon

The Annual Walk-A-Thon, held each May, is one of Garden School’s biggest fundraisers. Student walkers collect pledges from family and friends to support their participation, and the PTA reaches out to corporate and individual sponsors for the event. But beyond the necessary fundraising, it is also a chance for students, faculty, families, and friends of the school to come together to work and walk toward a common goal and share it with the Jackson Heights Community. The Walk-A-Thon lasts approximately an hour and a half, during which students

walk from Garden's campus to Junction Boulevard by way of 34th Avenue and then back to campus. Roads are blocked off from regular traffic to ensure safety.

Curriculum Night

Presently, we anticipate holding our fall curriculum night virtually. We will be in contact about a date and time for curriculum night in September 2020.

Several weeks into the new school year, parents/guardians are invited to meet with teachers and learn about the curriculum, class goals and academic plans for the year. The night starts with brief remarks by Chris Herman, Head of School, in the gymnasium followed by participation in an abbreviated version of the daily schedule. Unlike Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences, Curriculum Night is not a time to discuss individual students and their work, but rather an opportunity to showcase each year's academic opportunities and goals, and bring parents/guardians together with Garden's staff and faculty.

Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences

Presently, we encourage families to call the school to discuss highs and lows they are experiencing within the community. From such conversations we may mutually decide to set up a virtual meeting to provide greater time to handle any such matters at hand.

These programs are scheduled twice per year in the upper division and provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to hear about their children's progress and review their classwork. If a child is experiencing difficulties, parents and guardians are encouraged, at any time, to contact the classroom teacher and the grade advisor to discuss concerns. Teachers and/or grade advisors will reach out to parents/guardians if there is something special to discuss.

Lockers

Students will NOT be assigned lockers for the 2020-2021 academic year. Students will need to bring their backpacks to their classroom each day.

Lockers are assigned but not all students choose to use them. If a student chooses to use a locker, we recommend the use of a combination lock to secure her/his/their possessions. Please note, all lockers are property of the school and are subject to inspection on request by authorized school personnel. The school cannot be responsible for any missing property.

Lost & Found

Every day, our staff collects loose/lost objects and places them in a central location. Jewelry, keys, glasses and phones, however, are held in the main office. Unclaimed items are donated to charity periodically throughout the year. To view lost items, please inquire at the main office.

Safety & Security

For the 2020-2021 academic year, students will be assigned one of three entrances to access the building. At their designated entrance (78th Street, 79th Street, 79th Street Gym Door), all students will be temperature checked and then escorted to their assigned homeroom.

Parents will not be allowed to access the building at morning drop off to limit the number of people congregating in and around the school.

One component of an effective learning space is a safe building. Our front gate is locked throughout the day, and visitors entering the school on 79th street must be buzzed in. We also observe all entrances and main areas via camera. Our back gate is open weekdays between 8am and 8:30am, after which it is locked and cannot be opened unless someone has the key or is recognized and allowed in by Garden staff. Both entrances are under 24-hour camera surveillance as are most public spaces in the building. Members of the maintenance team are also positioned at the 78th and 79th Street entrances. Garden School's safety plan includes periodic fire drills and maintenance of an emergency plan. Our building has an interior fire alarm and multiple carbon monoxide alarms. We also possess three AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) devices on site.

School Procedures

Attendance (Absences & Lateness)

We will be updating to an electronic attendance system for the 2020-2021 academic year. We will also be introducing a web-based temperature screening system that will streamline morning check-in for arriving students.

We understand students will miss school from time to time for various reasons such as illness and family emergencies. In any case, all students are required to make up missed work in a timely fashion.

Regular attendance is critical to academic success, as the foundation of our work is done in the classroom via lecture, discussion, problem sets, labs and the like. Repeated absences, and late arrivals, regardless the reason, will negatively impact a student's ability to learn material being presented, leading to academic struggles. Therefore, excessive absences will most certainly adversely impact a student's course grade. The same can be said regarding excessive lateness.

Students who miss class due to lateness or absence are responsible for making up all assignments. Students absent from school on the day of a game, concert, play or dance may not participate in that activity. In the event of excessive lates and absences, the administration reserves the right to remove students from sports teams and other extra-curricular activities.

If a student is ill or cannot come to school for any other reason, or must necessarily be late, the parent is asked to call the school by 9:00am. A call from a student is not sufficient, and absences or lateness must be verified by the parent by telephone call or note. Absences or lateness not corroborated by the student's parent or guardian will result in disciplinary action.

Absence

Course credit may not be given in the event a student misses 15 or more classes in a semester, or 25 or more classes for a yearlong course. If a student has an extended illness, however, and arrangements can be made to continue coursework at home, an exception can be made. The faculty and administration will make every effort to work with students under these circumstances.

Lateness

For the 2020-2021 academic year, we will not conduct detentions. If conditions surrounding the pandemic change, we may revisit this policy.

Students who are more than ten minutes late to any class will be considered to have cut that class. Cut classes will result in a detention for the student the following day at 7:45am in Mr. Kruczek's room. As class participation is important to academic success, a student who cuts class can expect to see his/her grade impacted.

Seniors may attend college meetings without consequences if they have received prior permission from their teachers to join class late. Students with doctors' appointments etc will not be considered to have cut class. Oversleeping is NOT a valid reason for lateness.

Late arrivals and absences for the current year will be listed on senior transcripts sent to colleges.

Bake Sales

For the 2020-2021 academic year, we will not be conducting bake sales. If conditions surrounding the pandemic change, we may revisit this policy.

Bake sales are regularly held in the main hallway to raise money for charities, school clubs and the like. Garden notifies parents of lower division students up through grade 3 about upcoming bake sales, typically by way of hallway flyer, a flyer placed in a student backpack or an email. Most food goods cost between \$1-3 dollars per item.

Leaders of student organizations are responsible for seeing no student misses a class or other assigned responsibility to work on a bake sale or other fundraiser without the specific permission of the Upper Division Head.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Students are not to smoke cigarettes in school or within a 2-block radius of Garden School, or at any school-sponsored event or trip. Students are not to use, be under the influence, or be in possession of alcohol or drugs in school or at any school function. Violation of any of these rules is a serious offense and may lead to expulsion from the school.

eCigarettes, Juul's and Vape Pens

Garden School considers eCigarettes, Juul's and Vape Pens to be on par with alcohol and other drugs. For this reason, students are not to use, be under the influence, or be in possession of

these items in school or at any school function. Violation of these rules is a serious offense and may lead to suspension or expulsion from the school.

Dress Code

In recent years, we have made changes to our dress code. It is ultimately every student's responsibility to come to school dressed respectably each day. In an effort to not over prescribe what that means, please use the notes below as a general guide. **The following items are inappropriate for school.**

- Excessively torn clothing, whether intentional or through wear and tear.
- Tank or spaghetti-strapped tops; midriff-exposing or low-cut tops.
- Excessively tight clothing.
- Any item of clothing with inappropriate text or logos (sexually suggestive, alcohol related etc.)
- Students may wear baseball hats, hoodies and headphones to school. But these items must not be worn during class or in between class.
- Students may wear clothing specific to their religious affiliation and in observance of their religious beliefs (ex: head scarves, burkas).
- Note: If what you are wondering or unsure about a particular outfit or item of clothing, it is best to ask a parent/guardian or not wear it that day and instead snap a photo of it and seek guidance from your advisor.

Phone Policy

Smartphones are not permitted in class unless specifically allowed by the classroom teacher. ***Continuing in 2020, teachers will begin each class by collecting phones at the front of the room. Students refusing to comply will face disciplinary action. Headphones are also not permitted in class.***

Online Behavior Outside of School

While the school cannot be expected to monitor all internet activity of students outside of Garden, students should still maintain a sense of our core values of Respect, Kindness, Honesty and Civility. **The school has the right to investigate personal attacks against the Garden community and against an individual within it.**

Detention

For the 2020-2021 academic year, we will not conduct detentions. If conditions surrounding the pandemic change, we may revisit this policy.

Faculty detentions may be assigned for a variety of reasons, such as cutting class (which will always result in a detention), poor behavior during class, excessive dress code infractions or inappropriate behavior outside of class (in the hallways, during lunch etc.). Students assigned a detention must serve his/her/their detention the following morning at 7:45am in Mr. Kruczek's room (25). The detention will last 30 minutes, after which time the student will go to her/his/their assigned homeroom. Students who miss a detention without notifying the school

in advance, will be seen as cutting detention, which will result in a second detention. A student who repeatedly violates school rules will have his/her enrollment at the school reviewed by the Upper Division Head and the Headmaster.

Suspension

Suspensions are given to students for serious offenses, such as fighting, academic dishonesty, social cruelty, etc. Suspensions are served at home and can range in length from one day to one week. A student who accrues multiple suspensions will have her/his enrollment reviewed by the Upper Division Head and the Headmaster.

Dismissal from School

Possession or use of alcohol or drugs, weapons, theft, flagrant dishonesty or any kind of behavior deemed threatening to the community is grounds for immediate expulsion/dismissal from the school. Garden School reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time or withhold a re-enrollment contract for the following year whenever it is deemed in the best interest of the school to do so.

Academic Procedures

Grade Advisors

Grade advisors oversee the academic and social progress of an assigned class within the upper division. Grade advisors meet with the Upper Division Head regularly to discuss the class and devise plans to help the group achieve its highest possible level of success. The grade advisor assignments for the 2020-2021 academic year are as follows.

7 th & 8 th Grade:	Nancy Massand
9 th Grade:	Sarah O’Sullivan
10 th Grade:	TBD
11 th Grade:	Marlene Dapice
12 th Grade:	Richard Kruczek

Guidance

In planning their schedules, students have the assistance of a number of people; the Grade Advisor, the Director of College Counseling and the Upper Division Head.

If a student’s academic or social progress is of concern to her/his grade advisor, a meeting may be scheduled with the student, their parents and the grade advisor or the Upper Division Head in an effort to improve the situation.

Finally, the Upper Division Head is always available to meet with students about any concerns.

Grades

Grades are given four times per year: first quarter, mid-year, third quarter and year-end. Grades are sent home with comments at the conclusion of each quarter and need to be returned the following day with a parent's signature. It is important students and their parents/guardians review comments as well as grades whenever report cards are sent home.

Mid-year and year-end report cards include semester grades, exam grades and final course grades, as well. Semester grades are based on the two quarter grades and the examination grade, the latter counting no more than 15% of the semester grade. The year grade is based on the two semester grades. The transcript that goes to colleges shows year-end grades only.

Incomplete grades may be given in the case of illness or another unforeseen circumstance at the discretion of the subject teacher. Students who receive an Incomplete for a course must make up the work according to the schedule outlined by the student's teacher(s). If the work is not completed in the designated time, the grade will be adjusted accordingly.

Grading Scale

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Value</u>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	65-69
F	Below 65

Failing Grade Policy

When a student fails a test or does badly on a major assignment, he or she will receive a failing grade. These Fs will be assessed as 50s, at minimum, regardless of the actual score the student receives (rationale for this policy . . . if a student scored a 25% on an exam it might be so damaging to a student's grade point average that it would make it impossible for the student to repair his or her performance even with substantial effort.) The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students don't harm themselves irrevocably by a single lapse in their performance.

On the other hand, if a Garden student commits an act of academic dishonesty, his or her test/project/homework/lab/report/paper, etc, will receive a grade of zero. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying answers from another student, packing calculators with information against the specific instructions of a teacher, or anything

else that falls into this category. Multiple instances of academic dishonesty will result in the student's enrollment at Garden School being reviewed.

Honors and High Honors

Each quarter we recognize students who have achieved great success in the classroom. Recognition for high honors is earned when the student's GPA is a 3.7 or above in the 5 major academic subjects, with no grade below a B. Recognition for honors is earned when the student's GPA is 3.3 in the 5 major academic subjects, with no grade below a B-. Please note, Honors classes (always designated on the report card) and AP (advanced placement) classes receive a .3 bump to the quarter grade, meaning a B+ in AP Biology would be calculated as an A-.

Thinkwave

The upper division uses an online system called Thinkwave to document student performance online. From this site, students and families can monitor homework assignments, test grades and the like. Incoming upper division students and parents will be briefed on Thinkwave at the beginning of the school year.

Homework

Upper division students can expect regular homework. Students should use Thinkwave to clarify assignments and find out work assigned in their classes during an absence. They should also check in with their teachers. Students should not email homework to their teachers or have someone place their assignments in a faculty mailbox unless this has been previously agreed upon with the teacher.

Extra Help

If a student is having difficulty with a course, she/he should avail themselves of the extra help that is offered by all Garden School teachers. This may be a one-time visit or a regular program if necessary. Students should plan to approach their teachers to ask about extra help.

Semester Exams

Students will be formally assessed at the end of each semester. While most assessments will be in the form of a traditional test, teachers may choose to assign a major project or paper instead. In general, students should expect to have two exams per day during exam week. Exams will account for 15% of the semester's grade.

College Counseling

Garden School has a proud tradition of preparing students for acceptance to top colleges and universities. First and foremost, our goal in college counseling is to help students find institutions that best fit their academic, personal, and extra-curricular goals. Our curriculum has continually evolved to meet the requirements of increasing admissions standards and we work with all upper division students and families in selecting courses best suited for their needs. Each fall, we offer practice standardized exams for students in grades 9-11, which can be used

as an entry point for discussions about the college process. We also encourage any and all families to reach out to the counseling office – run by Brad Battaglia – with any questions they might have about our approach regardless of their child’s grade. We welcome your engagement!

Beginning in the eleventh grade, each student receives personal help in selecting and applying to appropriate colleges. The process combines weekly classes, several class wide meetings and individual family conferences. Students receive essay assistance, advice on applications and attend a weekly college seminar that runs the spring semester of their junior year and the fall semester of their senior year. Additionally, the school supports each applicant with two teacher recommendations and an administrative recommendation. Also, roughly 40 colleges and universities send admissions representatives to Garden School each fall to meet with prospective students. Recent graduates have enrolled at Columbia, Wesleyan, Cal-Berkeley, UCLA, Princeton, Brown, Barnard, Connecticut College, NYU and Fordham to name a few.

Drills & School Closings

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held, as required by law, under the supervision of the Division Heads and the Head of School. Upon hearing the alarm, students follow the exit plan posted near the door of their particular room, follow the instructions of their teacher and maintain calm.

Shelter-In Drills

Shelter-In drills are conducted twice per year with the goal of saving lives in the unlikely event of a building intruder. During such drills, students should remain silent, move to their room’s safe wall and ensure no electronic devices can be seen/heard.

Weather Related School Closings

Whenever Garden School is closed due to severe weather or other emergency, information will be announced through emails and a posting on our website.