

P.S. 44 MARCUS GARVEY

Magnet School of Engineering & Design



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026–2027

 ENGINEER Ask • Imagine • Build	 BELONG Every family matters	 DREAM Create what is possible
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OUR FAMILY PROMISE At P.S. 44, school and home work together so every child feels known, challenged, supported, and excited to learn.

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P.S. 44 Marcus Garvey Magnet School of Engineering & Design • BUILD Home First

Family Handbook at a Glance



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PLEASE KEEP THIS HANDBOOK HANDY

School-specific schedules and dates may be updated during the year. When a current school notice or monthly calendar differs from this handbook, follow the most recent school communication.

1. Welcome & BUILD Values



Dear P.S. 44 Families,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at P.S. 44 Marcus Garvey Magnet School of Engineering & Design. Whether you are returning or joining us for the first time, you are an important part of our school community.

Our work is grounded in the belief that every child brings brilliance, creativity, identity, and the capacity to lead. We want students to read deeply, think critically, solve meaningful problems, communicate with confidence, and see themselves as designers of their own futures.

This handbook brings together the routines, policies, learning expectations, supports, and family opportunities you will need throughout the year. Strong family-school partnership is essential to student success, and we look forward to building alongside you.

Warmly, LaTisha Cotton Principal

Our BUILD Core Values

 B elonging	 U nderstanding	 I ntegrity	 L eadership	 D are to Dream
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	BUILD HOME FIRST We create the conditions for children to thrive by building trust, belonging, consistency, and partnership first.
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2. Mission, Vision & Engineering/Design Identity



P.S. 44 Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that develops the talents of all students through collaborative planning and innovative teaching practices. We prepare students to communicate effectively, think critically, and create in a world that continues to change.

Principal Cotton’s Vision for P.S. 44

Equity & Excellence — every student receives high-quality learning that honors culture, voice, identity, and potential.

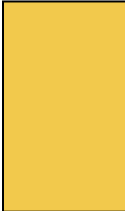
Innovation & Inquiry — students engage in hands-on engineering, design, STEM, and problem solving.

Arts Integration — creativity, expression, and imagination are part of how students make meaning.

Community Partnership — families and community partners are essential to student success.

What Engineering & Design Looks Like

 ASK Notice & question	 PLAN Imagine & sketch	 BUILD Create & test	 REVISE Learn & improve
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	MARCUS GARVEY LEGACY Our school identity honors leadership, empowerment, unity, and the belief that children can imagine and build a better future.
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3. Important Dates & School Calendar



Families should use the current P.S. 44 monthly calendar and NYCPS school calendar for school closings, conference dates, assessment windows, celebrations, and special events. Dates may change during the year.

2026–2027 Schoolwide Dates	Date
Students return	September 10, 2026
Families First Fridays	Monthly — Last Friday of the month: 9/28; 10/30; 11/20; 12/18; 1/29; 2/26; 3/26; 4/30; 5/28;
PTA Meetings	Monthly — dates announced by the PTA
Parent-Teacher Conferences	See current NYCPS/P.S. 44 calendar
State assessments	Official windows shared with families

STAY CURRENT

Check ClassDojo, school email blasts, the monthly calendar, teacher messages, and school notices for the most current dates and schedule changes.

4. School Hours, Arrival & Dismissal



School Day

Breakfast begins at 7:45 a.m. in the cafeteria.

The instructional school day is 8:20 a.m.–2:40 p.m.

3K and Pre-K families should follow the early-childhood entrance/sign-in procedures communicated by the school.

Kindergarten–Grade 5 students use the designated Madison Avenue student entrance unless the school communicates a temporary change.

Dismissal

Kindergarten–Grade 5 students follow the school’s designated dismissal plan and pickup locations.

Children are released only to authorized adults when adult pickup is required.

Late pickups are brought to the designated school location/main office; the authorized adult must sign the late-pickup log when required.

Do not rely on a child to communicate a dismissal change. Notify the teacher and main office through the approved school process.

	ROUTINE CHANGES REQUIRE A NOTE Send written communication when your child’s normal dismissal or after-school routine changes, when another authorized person will pick up your child, or when contact information changes.
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5. Attendance, Lateness & Early Pickup



Daily, on-time attendance is essential. Students learn best when they are present for the full instructional day and connected to classroom routines.

If your child will be absent, contact the school at 718-834-6939 and communicate with the teacher.

Send appropriate documentation when requested for illness, medical appointments, religious observance, court/social-service appointments, or extended absences.

If your child is contagious or has symptoms that require them to remain home, follow current health guidance and notify the school.

Students arriving late must follow the main-office late-arrival procedure before going to class.

Repeated absences or lateness will result in family outreach and may lead to an attendance support meeting and plan.

Avoid early pickup whenever possible; schedule appointments outside school hours when you can.

ATTENDANCE SUPPORT

If transportation, health, housing, family circumstances, or another barrier is affecting attendance, contact us. The attendance team’s role is to problem-solve with families and connect you to support.

6. Blue Cards, Visitors & Emergency Procedures



Blue Emergency Card

Complete a Blue Emergency Card every year.

List current phone numbers, custodial arrangements, emergency contacts, and all adults authorized to pick up your child.

Update the card immediately whenever a phone number, address, custody arrangement, or authorized pickup person changes.

In an emergency, students will only be released according to verified school procedures and authorized contact information.

Visitors

Visitors enter through the main entrance on Monroe Street.

Photo identification is required. Sign in with the School Safety Agent, receive/wear a visitor pass, and report to the main office.

Appointments are strongly encouraged so staff can be available to meet with you.

Visitors should not go directly to classrooms or meeting locations before checking in.

Safety Drills & Emergency Relocation

P.S. 44 conducts required emergency drills so students and staff know what to do during an emergency. Families will be notified if a real emergency requires a change in dismissal or relocation.

7. Meals, Lunch & School Nurse



Breakfast, Lunch & Snack

Breakfast and lunch are available to students as part of the school day.

Students may bring a packed lunch or receive a school meal.

Please avoid candy, soda, energy drinks, and snacks high in sugar during the school day.

For safety, send beverages/food in appropriate non-breakable containers.

The current grade-level lunch schedule is shared through school operations and may be adjusted during the year.

School Nurse

P.S. 44 has nursing support during the school day. Sick or injured students are referred to the nurse/health office.

Accurate Blue Card information is essential so families can be reached quickly.

Medication, including over-the-counter medication, cannot be administered without the required current NYCPS medical authorization and parent/guardian permission.

Medication must be provided according to school/NYCPS health procedures and in the required original container.

8. Learning Expectations & PS 44 Reads



2026–2027 INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS

Strong Tier 1 instruction • Student discourse • Differentiation • Push and clarifying questions

Core Learning Programs

Literacy: Expeditionary Learning (EL); Foundations in K–2; independent reading and classroom libraries.

Mathematics: enVision in K, 1, 2, 4, and 5; Illustrative Mathematics in Grade 3.

Science: Amplify Science and engineering/design experiences.

Early Childhood: developmentally appropriate learning connected to Creative Curriculum studies.

Students also engage in social studies, arts, physical education/movement, technology, character development, and magnet experiences.

PS 44 Reads

Students should read every day at school and at home.

Classroom libraries should help children choose books they can access successfully while also building knowledge and interest.

Teachers use reading data, classroom observations, assessments, and available readers to match students with appropriate independent-reading texts.

Families can ask: What are you reading? What is it mostly about? What evidence supports your thinking? What new word did you learn?

WHAT FAMILIES SHOULD SEE

Clear learning targets, grade-level work, students doing the thinking and talking, purposeful small groups, teachers checking for understanding, and children explaining how they know.

9. Student Progress, Assessments & Promotion



How We Share Progress

Report cards and written feedback

Graded classwork, projects, and assessments

Parent-teacher conferences and individual meetings

Teacher/classroom communication and school reporting tools

Progress updates connected to intervention, IEP, ENL, or other student supports as appropriate

Assessment & Progress Monitoring

P.S. 44 uses classroom assessments and schoolwide progress-monitoring tools to understand what students know and what they need next.

Grades 3–5 participate in required New York State assessments according to the official annual testing calendar.

Grade 5 participates in the required science assessment.

Students identified as English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners participate in NYSESLAT according to state requirements.

Families receive testing dates and preparation information before major assessments.

Promotion

Promotion decisions follow current NYCPS policy and consider multiple measures of student learning and progress. Attendance, classroom performance, assessments, work products, participation, intervention response, and other applicable evidence may inform support and promotion decisions. Families will be contacted when a student is at risk of not meeting grade-level expectations.

10. Homework & Home Learning



Homework and home learning should reinforce classroom learning, build independence, and help families understand what children are working on. Assignments should be developmentally appropriate and connected to current learning.

Students are expected to complete assigned work and independent reading.

Families should create a consistent place and routine for home learning.

Encourage your child to attempt the work independently before providing help.

If an assignment is consistently confusing or taking an unreasonable amount of time, communicate with the teacher.

Teachers provide feedback and use homework/home learning as one source of information about student habits and understanding.

Helpful Questions at Home

 CLARIFY What is the task asking?	 PUSH What else can you try?	 EVIDENCE How do you know?	 REVISE What would you change?
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READ EVERY DAY Independent reading is part of home learning. Read, talk, retell, wonder, and enjoy books together.

11. Field Trips & Middle School Transition



Field Trips

Field trips extend classroom learning into museums, cultural institutions, performances, community spaces, and other educational settings.

An official written permission form is required before a student may participate in a field trip, including walking trips when required.

Permission cannot be given only by phone.

Families interested in chaperoning should follow school volunteer/chaperone procedures.

Grade 5: Middle School Application

The middle school application process begins during Grade 5. Families should review current NYCPS admissions information, explore schools and programs, attend tours/open houses when available, and meet all published deadlines. The Grade 5 team and guidance staff will support families throughout the process.

START EARLY

Middle school admissions timelines and procedures can change from year to year. Use the current NYCPS admissions timeline and P.S. 44 Grade 5 communications rather than prior-year dates.

12. Student Support, Belonging & Restorative Practices



We teach behavior with the same clarity and care we bring to academics. Students need predictable routines, respectful relationships, opportunities to reflect, and support to repair harm and make better choices.

Students are expected to be safe, respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.

Adults use BUILD language, restorative practices, and social-emotional learning to strengthen community.

Families are contacted when concerns are repeated, significant, or require a collaborative plan.

Students may receive academic intervention, counseling/social-emotional support, ENL services, special education services, or MTSS supports based on need.

IEPs and other student plans are implemented in partnership with families and appropriate school teams.

 BELONG Known & valued	 RESTORE Repair harm	 LEAD Make responsible choices
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13. Family Communication & Parent Coordinator



How We Communicate

- ClassDojo and schoolwide email blasts
- Monthly school calendar and principal communication
- Classroom newsletters/messages
- Parent-teacher conferences and individual meetings
- Family workshops and school events
- School website and posted notices

The Role of the Parent Coordinator

The Parent Coordinator is part of the school team and helps create a welcoming environment for families. The Parent Coordinator connects families to school information and resources, supports family engagement, works with the PTA and School Leadership Team, helps families navigate questions and concerns, and supports workshops, events, and volunteer opportunities.

WHERE TO START

For a classroom learning question, begin with your child’s teacher. For a family resource, schoolwide question, or help navigating whom to contact, the Parent Coordinator can help connect you.

Family Access to Staff

Families may request appointments with teachers, support staff, the Parent Coordinator, Assistant Principal, or Principal. Staff will work with families to identify a mutually available time that protects student instructional time.

14. PTA, SLT, Volunteering & Family Events



Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The PTA strengthens collaboration among families, teachers, and school leadership and supports school activities and fundraising. All families are encouraged to participate. Meeting dates, elections, officers, and annual plans are communicated by the PTA.

School Leadership Team (SLT)

The SLT brings together parents and staff to share ideas and participate in school planning, including development and monitoring of the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). Membership includes required school and parent representatives along with elected members.

Family Involvement & Volunteering

- Volunteer for classroom or school events through approved school procedures.
- Serve as a Class Parent when opportunities are available.
- Join and participate in the PTA.
- Participate in SLT elections and meetings when applicable.
- Support trips, showcases, STEM/engineering experiences, literacy events, celebrations, and family workshops.

Family Engagement Traditions

- Families First Fridays — monthly opportunities to engage with classroom learning.
- Chat & Chew / principal family conversations — scheduled opportunities for families to raise questions and share ideas.
- Family workshops — learning sessions connected to academics, attendance, student support, technology, admissions, and other family needs.

FAMILY VOICE MATTERS

You do not have to be in the building every day to be an engaged family. Reading with your child, responding to school communication, attending meetings when possible, and sharing your voice all matter.

15. Student Dress, Electronics & Daily Expectations



Appropriate Dress / School Uniform

P.S. 44 is a uniform school. Families should follow the current school uniform guidance shared for 2026–2027.

Students should dress appropriately for weather and school activities.

Students should wear comfortable, safe footwear and sneakers on physical education days.

Label jackets, sweatshirts, coats, lunchboxes, backpacks, and other belongings with your child’s name.

Electronics-Free Learning Environment

 DEVICES May come to campus	 SCHOOL HOURS No student use	 CONTACT Call main office	 STORAGE School procedures
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Personal electronic devices must follow the school’s current electronics policy. Devices may be brought to campus when permitted but may not be used during the school day unless specifically authorized for an instructional, medical, or other approved purpose. Families can always reach students through the main office. Students must follow the school’s storage and collection procedures.

	SAFE + FOCUSED The goal of the electronics policy is a safe, focused learning environment where students are present with one another and engaged in learning.
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16. Quick Family Reference & Checklist



Need	Start Here
Academic question	Classroom teacher
Attendance / lateness	Teacher • attendance team • main office
Social-emotional concern	Teacher • guidance • social worker
IEP / special education	Teacher • special education team • administration
Language support	Teacher • ENL team
Family resource / event	Parent Coordinator
Blue Card / address / pickup change	Main office
Dismissal change / early pickup	Teacher + main office using approved procedure
Schoolwide concern	Assistant Principal / Principal
Emergency contact	Main office: 718-834-6939

Family Checklist

My Blue Card and contact information are current.

I know my child's teacher and how to communicate with the classroom.

I know the arrival and dismissal routines.

I have a plan for daily, on-time attendance.

I know how to report an absence or early pickup.

I know the school's electronics and uniform expectations.

I have a daily reading/home-learning routine.

I know how to request academic, social-emotional, language, health, or special education support.

I check ClassDojo/email and the monthly calendar for current dates.

I know how to participate in PTA, SLT, Families First Fridays, and family events.



BELONGING • UNDERSTANDING • INTEGRITY • LEADERSHIP • DARE TO DREAM

BUILD HOME FIRST

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