



GLOBAL INNOVATORS ACADEMY  
NAVIGATING NEW HORIZONS

# **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

## **2025 - 2026**



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# Who We Are

## History

For years, families in Sunset Park have passionately advocated for a middle school that embraces dual language education - one that reflects their values and meets their needs without requiring long commutes across neighborhoods. In response to this heartfelt demand, Global Innovators Academy was born. Opening its doors in September 2024, MS 428 stands as a beacon of opportunity and inclusion for Sunset Park families.

Led by Founding Principal Cybi Ip, a visionary educator committed to community-driven excellence, Global Innovators Academy is more than a school—it's a place where every child can feel a sense of belonging, growth, and pride. It's a "Home Away From Home," built by and for the community it serves.

## Vision

We envision a community where learners of all backgrounds unite across language, culture, and identity to **think critically, collaborate ethically, and advocate boldly**.

## Mission

We create an inclusive school that:

- Honors every student's identity and heritage
- Delivers rigorous, culturally relevant learning in both English and a partner language
- Builds cross-cultural competence through authentic collaboration, service, and reflection
- Embeds high expectations with compassion, curiosity, and care

## Our Commitments to Each Other

### Core Values: A Culture of Love

We commit to these 6 Pillars of Student Practice:

<u>Pillar</u>	<u>In Practice at MS 428...</u>
<b>Vulnerability</b>	We own our mistakes and seek feedback.
<b>Empathy</b>	We listen to understand before we respond.
<b>Empowerment</b>	We uplift student voice and staff agency.
<b>Flexibility</b>	We adapt, reflect, and stay learner-centered.
<b>Integrity</b>	We do what's right—even when no one is watching.
<b>Trust</b>	We build consistency and transparency in our work.

## Conflict Resolution

### *Restorative Justice Vision*

At MS 428, we believe every student deserves to feel valued, heard, and respected. Through restorative justice, we create a supportive environment where conflicts are resolved with empathy and understanding. Our goal is to build strong relationships, promote accountability, and help students grow both personally and socially. We empower students to find constructive solutions, build a sense of belonging, and contribute to a peaceful and caring school community.

### *Restorative Practices at MS 428*

We use inclusive and safe approaches to address conflicts, including peer mediations and restorative circles. Peer mediations bring together two individuals to resolve issues, while restorative circles involve group discussions to find shared solutions. These practices are led by trained teachers, staff, and students who help guide the process.

## Instruction at MS 428

### Curriculum

**Rigorous Instruction is a core part of our mission at MS 428.** We use NYCPS and district-approved curricula known for their high-quality, research-based classroom instruction. Teachers will deepen and adapt these materials using the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework. Lessons will be modified through scaffolding and differentiation to support the diverse needs of all students.

## **Classes, Courses, and Departments**

- At MS 428, students are placed in grade-level classes and remain with the same group throughout the day.
- Each student is also assigned to one of our school houses, where they will stay until graduation - think *Harry Potter* and the Sorting Hat! The purpose of the house system is to connect students across both language tracks and foster community, culture, school pride, and spirit.

### *House*

**The House system at MS 428 is a meaningful tradition that builds a close-knit community.** We have four houses: Empathy, Flexibility, Integrity, and Trust. Each house includes students from different grades and both language tracks, led by dedicated House Leaders. Students meet and sit with their house every morning and remain in the same house for all three years until graduation.

**House Leaders play a vital role in each student's success.** They provide personalized attention and support to the students - collaborating on leadership development, important conversations, and restorative justice practices.

### *English Language Arts*

**In ELA, we will use HMH Into Literature to inspire your child's love for reading and writing.**

Each unit is guided by an essential question and built around a central theme. Students will explore a variety of genres to strengthen their reading strategies and, most importantly, express their ideas through writing. They will use knowledge and evidence from their reading to support their written work.

### *Math*

**MS 428 uses Illustrative Math as its core math curriculum.** As students progress through each unit, they build both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. The curriculum includes real-world contexts to help students connect math to everyday experiences. Anchor contexts introduce new mathematical concepts, and students are encouraged to make connections between these contexts and the ideas they're learning.

### *Science*

**We use Amplify Science as our core science curriculum at MS 428.** Each unit focuses on a different area of science and begins with a real-world phenomenon that sparks curiosity. Students investigate, discuss, read, write, think, and reason like real scientists and engineers to understand how and why things happen.

### *Social Studies*

**Through Passport to Social Studies, students explore key historical events—from New York State to the United States, and then the wider world.** They examine how cause and effect

shape the history we know today. By understanding the past, students apply their learning to develop service projects focused on local issues.

### *Technology*

**All courses at MS 428 include technology skills to help students explore and grow in proper computer and internet use.** Students also use computers and various programs to create personal projects and express their learning in creative ways.

### *Physical Education*

**Middle school is a time for exploration and discovery.** Being physically active helps students build valuable skills and habits - all while having fun. Our P.E. program is designed to give students the opportunity to try a wide variety of sports and physical activities, helping them discover what they enjoy most.

### *Native Language Arts*

**At MS 428, we believe in offering students a wide range of opportunities to explore their interests in the arts and languages.** We offer dual language programs in Chinese and Spanish for students who participated in similar programs during elementary school. However, other students are required to take a World Language course during middle school.

### *Visual and Performing Arts*

**At MS 428, the visual and performing arts program encourages creativity, self-expression, and collaboration.** Students explore a range of artistic disciplines including drawing, painting, music, dance, and theater. Through hands-on projects and performances, they develop technical skills while learning to communicate ideas and emotions through art. The courses also foster appreciation for diverse cultures and artistic traditions, helping students build confidence and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

### **Grading and Assessment**

The school year is divided into 4 marking periods. The final marking period is an average of all 4 marking periods.

Marking Period	Begin Date	End Date	Report Card Grades Due Date	Report Card – Distribute/Released to Parents/Guardians
1	9/4/25	11/3/25	11/7/25	11/12/25
2	11/4/25	1/12/26	1/16/26	1/23/26
3	1/13/26	3/17/26	3/25/26	4/1/26
4	3/18/26	5/22/26	5/29/26	6/3/26
Final				6/26/26

### **Legend (Explanation of Grades):**

<b>Percentage (%) Scale:</b> 60-100	<b>For inputting comments</b> 90+ – Excels in Standards 80 - 89 – Proficient 65 - 79 – Approaching Standards Below 65 – Below Standards	<b>P-F Scale:</b> P - Pass F - Fail	<b>Other Grades:</b> NS- Insufficient Attendance NL-Recent Admit
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Report Card Grades			
Subjects	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
ELA	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Math	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Science	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Social Studies	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
World Language	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Visual Arts	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Music	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Technology	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Physical Education	P-F Scale	P-F Scale	P-F Scale
Health	P-F Scale	P-F Scale	P-F Scale

### **Grading Policy:**

#### Grading Guidelines:

- Core courses require numeric grades
  - ELA
  - Math
  - Science
  - SS
- Additional courses require numeric grades
  - World Language
  - Visual Arts
  - Music
  - Technology
- 100-65 Considered Passing
- 64-60 Considered Failing

### **Schoolwide Grading Category Weights**

Course Exams/Quizzes: **60%**

Classwork: **20%**

Projects: **15%**

Homework: **5%**

### Makeup Assignment Policy

Students have up to **one week** before the end of a marking period (*but not the 4th marking period*) to hand in any missed or late assignments. Assignments that are handed in within this timeframe will count towards the final grade, though each assignment that is handed in late due to non-completion or an unexcused absence will be docked 5 points. Assignments that are handed in late due to an excused absence will not be docked.



## **Homework Policy**

At MS 428, homework is meaningful and directly connected to what students learn in class. It is designed to extend, summarize, complete, or revise classwork - not to introduce new material independently.

Students should expect about one hour of homework each day: typically 30 minutes of reading and 30 minutes of math practice. However, the amount may vary depending on the student and the time of year, especially when working toward high-quality final projects.

Students are responsible for writing down homework assignments daily in their planners for all classes. If absent, they should check Google Classroom and contact the content teacher to get the day's assignments. Upon returning, students are expected to catch up and speak with classmates about what they missed. If turning in late work, students must speak with their teacher. Teachers may require students to complete missing work during recess and may set deadlines after which late work will not be accepted.

**Use of AI tools to complete homework is strictly prohibited.** All assignments must reflect the student's own thinking and effort. Anyone who violates this rule will use the recess time to redo the homework.

In addition to homework, students are expected to read independently for 30 minutes each night and bring at least one independent reading book to school every day.

## **Special Education, 504s, and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)**

As per city, state, and federal mandates, we implement the supports, accommodations, services, and programs mandated on all students' Individualized Education Programs. MS 428 offers the following:

- Integrated Co-Teaching
- Related Services, including counseling, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech

Teachers have consistent access to and are well-versed in their students' Individualized Education Programs. For questions regarding the implementation of your student's IEP in the classroom, please contact your student's special education teacher(s).

## **English as a New Language (ENL) Instruction**

As per city, state, and federal mandates, we support Multilingual Learners (MLLs) as they expand their knowledge and use of the English language. MS 428 offers the following based on a student's English proficiency:

- Integrated Co-Teaching
- Standalone ENL services
- After School Tutoring (*budget depending*)

# **Student Life at MS 428**

## **Activities**

### ***Afterschool Program - LEAP***

This year, we partnered with LEAP to offer afterschool program for our students. We encourage our students to join and explore the variety of activities they have to offer. The program will be Monday - Friday from 2:30PM - 5:30PM. Busing is not available during afterschool hours. Nevertheless, all students are welcome to join.

### ***Day Trip***

Educational trips will be thoughtfully planned to align with the academic standards and objectives outlined in the content curriculum. These experiences will serve to reinforce classroom instruction by providing students with real-world contexts and hands-on opportunities to deepen their understanding of key concepts. Each trip will be selected to complement specific units of study, thereby enhancing student engagement and supporting the application of learned knowledge in meaningful ways.

### ***Overnight Trip***

Overnight trips are collaboratively planned by our dedicated teachers with valuable support from the Parent Association. These experiences offer students a unique opportunity to strengthen interpersonal connections, fostering healthy and respectful relationships with both peers and adults. Beyond the social benefits, these trips also encourage exploration and curiosity as students engage with new environments, cultures, and learning experiences tied to the destination. Together, these elements contribute to a well-rounded educational journey that extends beyond the classroom.

### ***8th Grade Activities***

The 8th Grade Activities Team is a collaborative group made up of students, parents, and staff who work together to design and coordinate memorable experiences for our graduating class. This team is responsible for organizing a variety of celebratory and community-building events, including school dances, educational and recreational trips, the creation of the yearbook, and the planning of graduation ceremonies. Through their joint efforts, the team ensures that each activity reflects the spirit and achievements of the 8th grade cohort, fostering a sense of pride, unity, and lasting memories as students prepare to transition to high school.

## **Clubs**

MS 428 will offer a wide range of student clubs designed to reflect the rich diversity of our school community. These clubs will be initiated and led by both staff and students, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. The goal is to create welcoming and inclusive spaces where all students feel seen, valued, and engaged. Whether focused on academics, arts, culture, social justice, or shared interests, each club will provide opportunities for

students to connect, express themselves, and build meaningful relationships within a supportive environment.

### **Counseling**

MS 428's counseling program supports the whole child - academically, socially, and emotionally. School-wide initiatives help students build leadership, make positive decisions, advocate for themselves and others, and think critically.

Our proactive approach ensures that all students:

- Feel supported and confident advocating for their needs.
- Can succeed academically and socially.
- Learn and grow in a safe and inclusive environment.
- Are prepared to be independent and set and achieve personal goals beyond MS 428.

Counseling services include:

- Individual and small group sessions
- Lunch groups focused on topics like academics, friendships, anxiety, and problem-solving
- Crisis intervention and support

Families are encouraged to reach out to the school counselor with any concerns. We're happy to help with:

- Meetings with teachers
- Counseling referrals
- Support for academic or emotional needs

### **High School Application Process**

Our school counselor works to ensure that every student has a clear plan for applying to high school. Beginning in 7th grade, and working primarily within House, students receive ample support to discuss the application process, explore the high school directory, and develop a list of at least 12 programs they are interested in applying to.

### **Morning Meeting**

Morning Meeting at MS 428 is a daily ritual that helps center our community and provides a peaceful moment of reflection before the school day begins. During this 10-minute gathering, students sit with their House groups in our gymnasium. All electronic devices are collected prior to the start of Morning Meeting to maintain a focused and distraction-free environment. Once the room is silent, staff members take turns delivering a message or presentation, fostering a shared sense of purpose and connection.

## **Sports**

MS 428 will offer competitive and recreational sports (upon budget availability) throughout the school year. Offerings vary year to year, season to season.

# **School Policies**

## **Attendance Policy**

- **Daily Attendance:** Students must attend school every day. Absences and lateness are recorded on report cards.
- **Excused Absences:** If a student is absent due to illness, emergency, or religious observance, a signed and dated note must be submitted. These absences are excused but still count as absences.
- **Lateness:** School starts promptly at 8:00 AM. Students arriving after 8:20 AM must obtain a late pass at the security and sign in at the main office.
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Attendance below 90% is considered chronic absenteeism. Missing just two days per month adds up to one full month of missed school by year's end.
- **Appointments & Trips:** Please schedule appointments and vacations during school breaks whenever possible.
- **Early Pick-Up:** Should be limited to emergencies or essential reasons. Missing class means missing learning. Students are responsible for catching up on any missed work.

## **Dress Code**

School is a place for learning, and students are expected to dress appropriately. A good rule of thumb is business casual attire for daily wear. Of course, students and families should consider the weather and any scheduled school activities. For example, if your child is going on a field trip, comfortable clothing and sneakers are appropriate for the occasion. During Phy. Ed. class, students must wear their house t-shirt for the period.

In the near future, we will begin selling school merchandise, including t-shirts and hoodies. Families will be able to purchase these items, and students are encouraged to wear them to show school pride.

## **Elevator Usage**

Students are not permitted to ride the elevators in the school building unless they have written permission from school administration.

## **Student ID**

Each student's ID can be found in our school app. Please make sure both you and your child download the app to stay updated and access the student ID.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

In accordance with New York State's new **"No Cell from Bell to Bell"** law, students are **not permitted to use any internet-enabled devices** - including smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, or earbuds - at any time during the school day. This includes classroom periods, study hall, lunch, recess, and all other non-instructional settings.

Students may bring their cell phones for travel to and from school, but **they must remain off and stored during school hours**. Laptops will be provided by the school for instructional use, and teachers will communicate expectations for technology use in their classrooms.

Students who require assistive technology for learning or medical reasons, as outlined in their **IEP or 504 Plan**, are permitted to use those devices.

### **Morning Arrival Protocol:**

- Upon entering the Multi-Purpose Room, all electronics (including headphones and earbuds) must be turned off.
- Cell phones will be collected at the entryway and stored in a secure box in the main office.
- Phones will be returned to students during dismissal and must remain off until students exit the building.
- In case of an emergency, staff will carry the phone box out of the building and distribute devices once all students are safe.

### **Enforcement Protocol:**

1. Staff will collect any device that is seen or heard during the school day.
2. Collected devices are sent to the main office; students must sign in and out to retrieve them.
3. On the third incident, a family member will be contacted to pick up the device.
4. After the third incident, students must turn in their device to the principal's office for a designated period.

**Family Support:** We ask families to support this policy by **not texting or calling students during the school day**. For urgent messages, please contact the main office at **(718) 369-8349** or our parent coordinator at **(347) 873-2239**.

## **Social Media Guidelines**

Middle school students often need guidance as they navigate social media. If you choose to allow your child to use these platforms, here are some helpful tips to encourage safe and appropriate usage:

- **Know who they're interacting with:** Make sure your child can verify that the accounts they follow or communicate with are trustworthy. We've seen issues arise from online "trolling" and "fake accounts" that have led to conflicts in school.
- **Discuss the content they're consuming:** Talk with your child about the types of information and media they encounter online. Many students report seeing racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and other harmful language and images, as well as sexually explicit content—even when they are not actively seeking it.
- **Review privacy settings:** Check the privacy settings on your child's accounts to ensure they are appropriately protected.
- **Refer to our cell phone policy:** Please review our school's device policy for guidelines on usage during the school day.

## **School Procedures**

### **Contact Information and Communication Guidance**

To ensure effective communication, it's important that parents keep their contact information up to date - especially in case of emergencies.

We will be using **DOE GAMA** (Grades, Attendance, and Messaging Apps) as our primary platform for communication between families and school administration. To receive school-related messages and emails, parents must provide an email address in their **NYC Schools Account (NYCSA)**. If you haven't set up your NYCSA yet, our Parent Coordinator is available to assist you.

In addition, individual teachers will use school app, a free app that allows individualize communication between families and teachers, to stay in touch with parents about classroom-specific updates.

### **School Calendar**


You can find the official NYCPS school calendar [here](#). In addition, a monthly school calendar will be sent electronically to families. This calendar will include important dates and upcoming events to help you stay informed and organized.

## Start and End Times

The school day begins promptly at 8:00 AM. By 8:10 AM, all students must be seated with their House groups for Morning Meeting. The doors to the gymnasium will close promptly at 8:20 AM, marking the official start of the instructional day.

**The school day ends at 2:20 PM everyday.** Students will be dismissed from their last period class. Students must leave school unless they have explicit permission from a school staff member or are in the after school program or clubs.

## ***Bell Schedule***

		<h1>BELL SCHEDULE</h1>	
Period		Time	
-		8:00 AM - 8:10 AM	Arrival in Gymnasium
0		8:10 AM - 8:20 AM	Morning Meeting
1		8:20 AM - 9:05 AM	
2		9:05 AM - 9:50 AM	
3		9:50 AM - 10:35 AM	
4		10:35 AM - 11:20 AM	
5		11:20 AM - 12:05 PM	Lunch
6		12:05 PM - 12:50 PM	
7		12:50 PM - 1:35 PM	
8		1:35 PM - 2:20 PM	

## ***Breakfast***

Morning breakfast will be grab and go style. During the arrival, breakfast will be provided by the entrance of the gymnasium.

## ***Half Day Dismissal***

There are **six** scheduled half-day dismissals built into the school year. These early dismissals are designed to provide teachers to have time to either communicate with families about student progress or engage in professional learning.

The exact dates of these half-day dismissals will be announced once they are confirmed by NYC Public Schools (NYCPS). We will share them in our monthly school calendar and through our regular communication channels.

## **Field Trip and Permission Slips**

Teachers regularly incorporate time outside of the school building - visiting museums, local organizations, parks, and other city sites - to extend inquiry beyond the classroom. These experiences are essential for deepening students' understanding of topics within each unit, and attendance on all field trips is required.

During field trips, our top priority is student safety. It's important to remember that even when off school grounds, students represent MS 428 and are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsibly.

Permission Slips:

- Permission slips will be distributed well in advance of each trip.
- Fee for the trip should be paid well in advance in order for our teachers to secure the reservation.
- Only signed paper slips will be accepted as valid permission.
- Other forms of consent (e.g., email, text, phone call) will not be accepted.

## **Metrocards (OMNY)**

Depending on eligibility, students will receive a Metrocard each semester of the school year. Metrocards will be distributed by our metrocard manager, Erin Ma. For more information, see the [NYC DOE's Transportation Eligibility](#) page.

## **Lunch and Recess**

All students must report directly to the cafeteria during their scheduled lunch period, unless they have written permission from a staff member to remain with them for schoolwork, advising, or participation in a lunch club.

Students found in classrooms or common areas without permission will be escorted to the cafeteria, and their families will be notified.



## **School Forms and Sign-Out**

On the first or second day of school each student will receive a packet of forms to review, sign, and return to school. Each family must fill out several necessary forms in order to ensure safety and maximize the potential experiences that will be available to them at MS 428.

- ❑ **Emergency Contact Information** is now filled out through your student's NYCSA account in addition to completing an annual copy of a "Blue Card" which we keep on file in our main office. Only adults listed on your child's account or Blue Card are allowed to sign out a student during the school day. Anyone picking up a student must come to the MS 428 Main Office on the 3rd floor, Room 315A, and provide a photo ID in order to sign out their student. ***Students cannot self dismiss before the end of the school day, which is our school's policy.***
- ❑ **Media Consent Forms** are for our school to be able to post pictures and/or video for related educational activities.
- ❑ **Technology Responsible Use Agreement Forms** are to ensure all parties who use technology in the building are following the [guidelines](#) set forth by NYCPS.
- ❑ **Lunch Form** <http://nyc.applyforlunch.com>
  - *Universal School Lunch: To help reduce the stigma of qualifying for free lunch, our school has been granted Universal School Lunch, meaning that ALL students are eligible to eat lunch for free!*
  - *Filling out the school lunch form helps us remain eligible for Title 1 funding. If you can, please "Go Green" by filling out the application online. In addition to being good for the planet, electronic applications are processed within 24 hours (as opposed to the paper forms that take weeks to approve).*

## **Student Belongings**

We recommend that MS 428 families clearly label their child's belongings with their name. During the busy school day, students may leave items around the building. To help recover lost items, we maintain a Lost and Found bin in the Parent Coordinator Office (Room 316).

Items will remain in the bin until staff decide collectively to donate them. Before donation, all items are displayed so students have a chance to reclaim their belongings. Any remaining items are then donated.

## **School Closing Procedures**

In the case of a day with citywide emergency conditions or a major storm day, the Chancellor will make an announcement to all public schools in the city on whether to close schools or delay their opening. This announcement is made in consultation with other City officials. All authorized delayed openings will result in the regular starting time being two hours later. Please note that all field trips, all adult and continuing education activities, and all other after-school activities will be canceled. Please note the Principal cannot make the decision to close the school.

# Parent Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

## **Parent Association**

All parents & guardians of MS 428 students are members of the Parent Association. The PA organizes fundraising efforts and helps supplement the school budget. In addition, the PA organizes community-building events chaired by PA members like you. To volunteer or to get more information about MS 428 PA please call Candy Jiang at (347) 873-2239.

Our PA meetings take place monthly and usually meet from 4:00 PM - 4:30 PM. We encourage all parents to attend meetings and to think about joining the executive board.

## **School Leadership Team**

Like all NYC public schools, our focus is to ensure that all school decisions are optimizing student needs and that we exceed our school goals. Our SLT helps us ensure that we hear from many stakeholders. With an equal ratio of parents to staff, as well as two student representatives from our 8th grade, our SLT selects and researches projects related to school-wide goals and is consulted on all major decisions. The SLT meets once a month.

## **Family Involvement**

In addition to Student Led Conferences, families join us for monthly Coffee with the Principal, quarterly arts shares, and meetings with teachers on an as needed basis. At our monthly Coffee with the Principal, families have the chance to share coffee, visit their child's class, and discuss what they saw with school administration and other families. The Coffee with Principal helps parents have a window back into their child's school life at a time when their children are becoming increasingly independent.

In addition to these regular opportunities for parent engagement, the MS 428 team will hold frequent sessions related to the high school admissions process and other topics of interest to parents.

Follow us on the Instagram and Facebook for updated news, events, and pictures by scanning the QR code below:





# OUR SCHOOL HAS AN APP!

Make sure to turn on notifications to keep up-to-date with all latest news from MS 428



SCAN HERE



SOLVED



For more info, visit [ms428.org](https://ms428.org)

