

PARENT/GUARDIAN & STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027



Ciani Espada, IA. Founding Principal/Projector Director

**Document Disclosure: This document is subject to change as policies, protocols, routines, and regulations are adjusted in accordance with guidance provided by the NYC Department of Education and based on the needs of the school community. In the case of an update to this document, students and families will be notified.*



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Welcome Letter from Principal (Please Complete)

Parent Coordinator Welcome Letter (Please Complete)

Vision Statement

Built on the belief that learning thrives through community, curiosity, and connection, this new school is designed to nurture the whole child through inquiry-driven learning and joyful, inclusive experiences.

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing rigorous, inclusive, and culturally responsive education that fosters curiosity, creativity, and collaboration, while building strong partnerships with families and the community.



Core Values (A.C.E. + LOVE)

The ACE Experience (Agency, Community, Excellence)

At Academy of Cultural Excellence, the ACE Experience is more than a framework; it's the foundation of how we teach, learn, and grow together.

- **Agency:** Students take ownership of their learning by actively shaping goals, making choices, and demonstrating mastery in ways that reflect their strengths and interests
- **Community:** Collaborative planning links student learning to real-world, community-connected experiences.
- **Excellence:** Leaders, teachers, families, and partners ensure every student has access to rigorous learning and tailored supports in all classrooms.
- **LOVE:** The foundation of our system. We practice love by believing deeply in student brilliance and leading with empathy and courage.

I have **Agency** in my learning.

I grow with my **Community**.

I rise with **Excellence**.

I am **ACE**!



NYC Schools Account (NYCSA)

All parents/guardians are required to have a NYC Schools Account (NYCSA). This portal will allow you to access your child's academic and attendance record, as well as access to NYC DOE information, policies, and guidelines. To create a NYCSA, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Eugenia Buckmon, by calling the school at 718-495-7012 or emailing her directly at Genia@bges.education. For more information regarding NYCSA, visit the [NYC DOE NYCSA](#) webpage.

Attendance Policy

Academy of Cultural Excellence operates five days a week, Monday through Friday, beginning on Thursday, September 10, 2026, for all students through Monday, June 28, 2026 (for more school year calendar information, visit the [NYC DOE School Calendar webpage](#)). The school day begins at 8:00 am and ends at 2:20 pm. Daily attendance is expected of all students. Students are expected to arrive at school by no later than 8:00 AM each day. The school building will be open for early arrivals beginning at 7:30 AM daily. Hot breakfast will be served from 7:30-7:55 AM daily in our school cafeteria. We understand that students may miss school for illness, emergency, or religious reasons. However, absences must be reported to the school and medical documentation should be provided when possible. **While these are considered excused absences, they still count towards a student's attendance record. Attendance is closely monitored and any attendance rate below 90% (6 or more school days) places your child in the Chronically Absent category.** Please try to avoid making any appointments for your child during the school day as this interrupts instruction and your child's education. If you are unable to avoid appointments during the school day, please ensure your child attends school prior to or after the appointment to avoid unnecessary absences on his/her permanent record. If you have concerns about your child's regular attendance, please contact our Parent Coordinator for support by calling the school or emailing him directly at (add email address).

COVID-19 Related Absences

If at any time your child is required to miss school due to a COVID-19-related illness or exposure, it must be reported to the school immediately. Remote learning will be made available to any students who are required to quarantine. Additional information regarding COVID-19-related absences will be provided as needed on a case-by-case basis. Please refer to the [NYC DOE Health and Safety webpage](#) for more information regarding COVID-19 policies.

Morning Arrival Policy

The school doors open at 7:30 AM for all Pre-K and K students for Morning Mindfulness. All students will be allowed to enter the building through (insert address). Our breakfast hours are 7:30-8:10 AM. Hot breakfast will be served in our cafeteria from 7:30-7:55 AM. Students will walk directly to their classrooms promptly at 8:00 AM.

Lateness Policy:

All students are required to arrive at school on time daily anytime between 7:30 - 8:00 AM. Students who arrive late will be required to enter the school building via the late door (insert info). **Latenesses will be recorded during morning attendance and will be placed on students' permanent attendance records.**

Parents/Guardians of any student with three or more instances of lateness will be required to complete an intake with our Parent Coordinator, Woodrow Scott. The purpose of the intake will be to identify barriers the student and/or family faces that may cause lateness and develop a support plan for families. If you have concerns about your child's on-time arrival, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Woodrow Scott, for support by calling the school or emailing him directly at (Insert email).

Afternoon Dismissal Policy

Dismissal procedures will begin at 2:15 PM. All students will be dismissed from the schoolyard and families will be able to enter through the school garden to meet with their child between 2:15-2:20 PM. See the Late-Pick Up Policy section on the next page for pick-up after 2:20 PM.

- Bus students will be walked to the bus, followed by the dismissal of walkers to their parents or guardians, then the garden will be opened for family members to enter and pick up their children.
- Students attending after school programs will remain in the school building. Parents/Guardians will receive information from the afterschool program regarding their dismissal policies.
- Admittance to the school building during dismissal will only be permitted through the school's main entrance, where all visitors are required to sign-in. However, students must be picked up from the school yard.
- **To ensure the safety of all of our students, we can ONLY release children to those adults listed on the Emergency Card / Blue Card.**

Walk Home Alone Policy:

Students may be released to walk home on their own or with a sibling. Parents/Guardians must complete a [consent form](#) allowing their child to walk home alone or with a sibling.

Late Pick-Up Policy:

Children must be picked up promptly by 2:20 pm. Children who are not picked up by 2:20 PM will transition into the "Late Room." Late pick-up will not begin until all children have been escorted to the Late Room. Parents/Guardians picking up children after 2:20 PM must pick up their child from the Alabama Ave Exit #5 and it will be entered on our late pick-up tracker. Parents/Guardians of children with frequent late-pickups will be required to complete an intake with our Parent Coordinator, Woodrow Scott. If you have concerns regarding on-time pick-up of your child, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Woodrow Scott, for support by calling the school or emailing her directly at (insert email).

Early Pick-Up

Please make arrangements by calling the school in advance if your child(ren) need to be picked up before the school day ends. Students may be dismissed before the school day officially ends only when a parent or guardian appears in person requesting the student's early dismissal. **The parent must sign the student out from the main office.** Please try to avoid making any appointments for your child during the school day, as

this interrupts instruction and your child's education. If you are unable to avoid appointments during the school day, please ensure your child attends school prior to the appointment to avoid unnecessary absences on his/her permanent record. Office personnel will call for the students while the parent signs them out for the day. Relatives, neighbors, etc. will not be allowed to check out any student unless authorization is on file. (Person's name must be on the blue emergency contact card). In order to further protect your child(ren), please provide the office with a copy of any court orders, protection orders, divorce decree and child custody agreements, etc.. Without copies of these legal documents, the school is legally bound to release the child to any biological or adoptive parent. School officials may require verification of custody or identification from anyone requesting to check a student out of school. These measures are intended to ensure safety for all our children.

COVID-19 Safety Policies

- Brooklyn Gardens Elementary School adheres to the COVID-19 policies set forth by the NYC DOE. For more information on COVID-19 policies, please refer to the [NYC DOE Health and Safety webpage](#)

Lunch Procedures

School lunch is FREE for all students. Students may also bring lunch from home. **ACE strives to maintain a healthy school environment. Please avoid sending your child to school with salty or sugary drinks or snacks, such as candy, chips, or soda. Please do not pack glass containers or soda cans.** Be sure to provide your child with foods that are conducive to school and easy for them to eat independently. For example: nothing that needs to be cut, messy finger foods, etc. **There is no microwave or refrigerator for student use.** Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, and other select classes will eat lunch in the classroom. When at all possible, students will have opportunities for structured play in the (Insert Location). Please ensure your child has a warm coat for cooler days, as outdoor play will take place as often as possible.

Grading Policy

Our goal as educators is to provide all students from grades 3K-5 with the best education available, preparing every child to lead a rich and productive life. Grading is not a number, but instead is an assessment of a student's mastery of the standards in the curriculum being taught. This assessment data is used to inform instruction tailored to your child's needs.

2026-27 School-Wide Grading Policy

How are grades determined?

Grades are determined by each teacher within specific categories, such as:

Assessments (*tests, quizzes, projects, performance tasks, etc.*)

Projects/Homework

Preparedness and Class Participation (*contributing to class conversations; participating in classwork and activities; meeting behavioral expectations; having proper tools readily available such as books, notebooks, pens, pencils, etc.*)

Classwork (*independent work and group work*)

The BGES Four
We **SHOW LOVE**
We keep it **SAFE**
We keep it **CLEAN**
We **LEARN**

When will I be notified of my child's grades?

Report cards will be issued three times per year in November, March, and June. Also, families are invited to meet with teachers on Tuesday afternoons from 2:40-3:20 p.m. to discuss your child's academic and social-emotional progress in school. In addition, you should always feel comfortable to contact your child's teacher with any questions you have throughout the school year.



What do the numbers mean?

We use a 4-point rubric scale to determine level of mastery.

Rubric Level	Description	Percentage Basis Correlation
*4	*Exceeds Grade Standards	*95% and above
3	Meets Grade Standards	75%-94%
2	Below Grade Standards	55%-74%
1	Well Below Grade Standards	54% and below

**Level 4: In cases where sections on assessments include an above current grade level challenge. Please note that our assessments are graded on a standards mastery basis using rubric levels and may be given the 1-4 Rubric Scale equivalent grade when measuring on the percentage scale. (Ex: A score of 85% would be assigned a grade level of 3.)*

What percentage of each area totals my child's overall grades?

Assessments: 40%
Projects/Homework: 20%
Preparedness/Participation: 20%
Classwork: 20%

Overall grades on report cards are determined within the four main categories shown to the left. Each of the categories are weighted within each of the subject areas taught throughout the school year, which consist of, but are not limited to: Reading, Math, Science & Technology (STEM), Social Studies, Physical Education and the Arts. Each subject has additional sub-categories that are considered and differ depending on your child's grade level. These specific sub-categories can be found on your child's report card. Sample report cards can be viewed on the [NYCDOE Report Cards webpage](#).

If you have any questions about our grading policy, please feel free to reach out to your child's teacher for clarification.

Dress Code

ACE has a simple uniform dress code. At ACE, we believe that a formal dress code increases academic achievement by deemphasizing the focus on attire. We believe that our black shirts with the ACE logo increase school pride and our sense of community! Additionally, our families do not have to spend time and money on school clothes shopping. All of our school community members, including the principal and teachers, celebrate school spirit by often wearing the ACEs logo and uniform attire.

All students in grades PreK- K are required to adhere to the ACE uniform dress code policy daily, which includes:

- Shirts
 - Styles: Polo, Sweater, Turtleneck, T-shirt
 - Color: Black, preferably with the ACEs logo (Please visit our main office for information on how to order school uniform attire).
- Dress Pants/Shorts/Skirts/Dresses
 - Color: (Insert color)
 - No sweatpants, yoga pants, workout pants/shorts, or leggings (unless under a skirt or dress) except on designated gym days.

All clothing must be the appropriate size (no oversized or undersized shirts or pants). Shorts and/or skirts must be knee length. Belts need to be worn to keep pants in place (no sagging pants).

Morning & Afterschool Program

Academy of Cultural Excellence will offer academic and social emotional learning programs for targeted students in cycles beginning in October. These programs will be offered daily, Monday through Friday for morning and afterschool. **Admittance into these programs is in high-demand and has eligibility requirements. Not all students are guaranteed to be admitted into morning or afterschool programs.** More information regarding these morning and afterschool programs will be released in the end of September or early October.

Cell Phone Policy

As per the Chancellor's Regulations, cell phones (and smart watches) are permitted in school buildings but should not be visible or in use during the school day. These devices should be given to school staff, and stored in the main office in a safety pouch. Devices can be picked up and signed out at the end of the school day. If any student is found violating these guidelines cell phones/smart watches will be confiscated. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the classroom teacher or another staff member if their child's device has been confiscated and they may have to make an appointment with an administrator to claim confiscated phones. Please note, this also includes other devices, such as tablets, that are used inappropriately within the school building. **Please be reminded that at no time will the school be held responsible for the loss of or damage to a phone or other electronic device when brought to school.** If you have an emergency and need to contact your child during school hours, please call the school at (718) 489-1991 and we will support you in contacting your child or providing them with a message.

Student and Parent Bill of Rights

New York City public schools seek to cultivate a sense of mutual respect among students, parents and staff. City schools also aim to involve students in activities and programs, within and outside the school community, that stress a commitment to civic responsibility and community service. With the cooperation of all members of our school communities, students can reach educational excellence while enjoying a rich learning experience. This document serves as a guide for students as they strive to become productive citizens in a diverse society. Please review the [NYC DOE Student Bill of Rights](#) and the [NYC DOE Parent Bill of Rights](#) to learn more about your rights and responsibilities as a student and a parent/guardian.

Transportation

ACE does not provide busing to scholars for travel to/from school unless required under an Individualized Education Program (IEP). ACE receives full- and half-fare OmniCards from the NYCDOE's Office of Pupil Transportation. These OmniCards are distributed to families for student use only based on the distance between ACE and the scholar's residence. ACE is unable to provide OmniCards to families that do not qualify under the NYCDOE's regulations. If a OmniCard is lost, you can contact the ACE Parent Coordinator to request a new card. OmniCards are not provided for students in Pre-K.

Lost & Found Policy

ACE will make every effort to collect and return lost clothing and other property. It is strongly recommended that families label all personal property with their child's name. We will make every effort to return labeled lost items to students. Otherwise, lost and found items will be kept in the Lost & Found location and students will be responsible for locating their own items in the lost and found. ACE and ACE staff members are not responsible for students' lost personal items. Lost and found items will be donated to a local organization every Friday. Please be sure to check before the end of each week if your child is missing something.

Evacuation & Emergency Drills / General Response Protocol

Emergency Drills

- Schools are required to conduct a minimum of 12 fire drills and 2 soft lockdown drills per year. However, more drills may be conducted.
- Families will be informed of General Response Protocols and drills at our annual School Campus Town Hall. Parents will be invited to attend via ACE app notifications.
- Each classroom must have an evacuation drill exit sign posted.
- Silence is to be maintained until classes re-enter the classrooms.
- Expectations for behavior during fire drills must be discussed and established early in September. Classroom teachers will facilitate evacuation drill and other emergency drill lessons in the first week of the school year. For more information regarding evacuation drills, see the [NYC DOE Emergency Readiness webpage](#).

The General Response Protocol

The **General Response Protocol (GRP)** has been designed to provide all schools with the direction they will take when an emergency Incident occurs. At its core is the use of common language to identify the

initial measures all school communities will take until first responders arrive. In every incident, school administrators will need to assess the unique circumstances that will affect how the GRP is implemented.



LOCKDOWN (Soft/Hard) - *Soft Lockdown* implies that there is no identified imminent danger to the sweep teams. Administrative teams, Building Response Teams, and School Safety Agents will mobilize to the designated command post for further direction. *Hard Lockdown* implies that imminent danger is known and NO ONE will engage in any building sweep activity. All individuals, including School Safety Agents will take appropriate lockdown action and await the arrival of first responders.

“Attention: We are now in Soft/Hard Lockdown. Take proper action.”

(Repeated twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Move out of sight and maintain silence.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Check the hallway outside of their classrooms for students, lock classroom doors, and turn the lights off.
2. Move away from sight and maintain silence.
3. Wait for First Responders to open the door, or until hearing the “All Clear” messages: **“The Lockdown has been lifted”**, followed by specific directions.
4. Take attendance and account for missing students by contacting the main office.



EVACUATE - The fire alarm system is the initial alert for staff and students to initiate an evacuation. However, there may be times when the PA system and specific directions will serve as the alert initiating an evacuation.

Announcements will begin with “Attention”, followed by specific directions.

(Repeated twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Leave belongings behind and form a single file line. In cold weather, students should be reminded to take their coats when leaving the classroom. *Students in physical education attire WILL NOT return to the locker room.* Students without proper outdoor attire will be secured in a warm location as immediately as possible.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Grab a red emergency folder (with attendance sheet and Assembly Cards).
2. Lead students to evacuation locations as identified on Fire Drill Posters.
ALWAYS LISTEN FOR ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS.
3. Take attendance and account for students.
4. Report injuries, problems, or missing students to school staff and first responders using Assembly Cards.



SHELTER-IN

“Attention. This is a Shelter-In. Secure all exit doors.”

(Repeated Twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Remain inside of the building.

2. Conduct business as usual.
3. Respond to specific staff directions.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Increase situational awareness.
2. Conduct business as usual.
3. The Shelter-In directive will remain in effect until hearing the “All Clear” message: “**The Shelter-In has been lifted**”, followed by specific directions.

BRT members, floor wardens, and Shelter-In staff will secure all exits and report to specific post assignments.

Evacuations

- Often, the fire alarm system alerts staff and students to start an evacuation.
- However, there may also be times when a Public Address announcement starts an evacuation.
 - Announcements will begin with “Attention” followed by specific directions
 - They are made two times.
 - Students are trained to:
 - Leave belongings behind
 - Form a single file line
 - In cold weather, students should be reminded to take their coats.
 - However, students wearing exercise or gym clothes will not return to the locker room.
 - Students without winter coats will be taken to a safe, warm location as quickly as possible.
 - Teachers are trained to:
 - Grab an evacuation folder (with attendance sheet and Assembly cards).
 - Lead students to evacuation locations as identified on Fire Drill Posters.
 - Always listen for additional directions
 - Take attendance and account for students.
 - Report injuries, problems, or missing students to school staff and first responders using the Assembly Card method.

Emergency Relocations:

Our emergency relocation sites are located at the following locations:

1. Public School
2. Public School
- 3.

Child Abuse and Maltreatment:

ACE cares deeply about the health, safety, and well-being of our scholars, families, and community. Under New York law all school employees are required to report suspected child abuse, maltreatment, or neglect when they have a reasonable belief that such abuse is occurring or has occurred. Please see [Chancellor’s Regulation A-750](#)

Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying

All ACE scholars are expected to treat ALL members of the community with kindness and respect. Scholars who struggle to display behaviors that show kindness and respect for others will be supported by our staff to self-reflect and change their behavior. If a student still struggles with meeting this expectation, the school will

follow the process described in the discipline code, which can be found in [NYC DOE Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning Grades K–5 guide](#).

Respect for All Week

During Respect for All Week, schools across the city will have the opportunity to highlight and build upon ongoing programs to help students, staff and communities gain a better understanding of diversity. Schools may also start new initiatives that promote respect for diversity and focus on preventing bullying, intimidation, and bias-based harassment. Your child's school is also encouraged to promote acceptance and understanding through theme-based lessons and activities. Suggested themes include:

- Celebrating Kindness/Be an Ally
- Anti-Bullying/ Cyberbullying
- Respect for Diversity, Disability, Religious Acceptance and Racial Diversity
- Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation and LGBTQ Pride and Acceptance
- [National No One Eats Alone Day](#)

Please complete the Parent/Guardian & Student Acknowledgement Form