

Clarke Caregiver Handbook

2026-2027



Clarke teaches children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear families:

We would like to welcome your family to ours and thank you for choosing Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech for your child's education! Clarke is the first and largest organization of its kind, offering a continuum of services for students and their families at home, at sites along the East Coast, in mainstream classrooms and remotely through teleservices. In 1867, the Clarke School for the Deaf was founded in Northampton, MA, where Clarke maintains its home base. Clarke's focus in 1867, and today, remains the same – to provide children who are deaf or hard of hearing with the skills to listen and speak. Our goal is to prepare children to succeed in mainstream classrooms alongside their peers with typical hearing. Learn more about Clarke's history here: <https://clarkeschools.org/about-us/history/>

This handbook provides you with our goals, expectations, policies and procedures. You have the right to inquire, receive and review all of Clarke Schools' policies and procedures. You can contact me at mberger@clarkeschools.org with any questions. You have entrusted us to partner with you to provide the child in your life with the best possible education. As we embark upon a new school year working together as a team, may the spirit of cooperation, support, and encouragement lead to a wonderful and successful year at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech!

Sincerely,

Meredith Berger, MEd. SBL/SDL
Director, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech/New York

Clarke admits children who are deaf or hard of hearing, providing services to our families regardless of race, color, gender, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, or marital status.

Introduction

This handbook has been prepared as an informational guide regarding Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech (Clarke) policies and procedures. It is an important reference to save and refer to throughout the school year. Please review the handbook and discuss its contents with other caregivers involved with your child's education. The handbook is revised in response to suggestions from caregivers and staff while still meeting all regulations from NYS Education Department (Early Learning Guidelines, Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, NYSED regulations) and NYC regulations, including NYC Department of Education, NYC Department of Health and the NYC Department of Daycare, under which Clarke operates. Clarke is a 4410-state approved private school, which accepts students from public sources. As such, it retains autonomy over admission. It is important that caregivers read and understand the information in this handbook.

Please sign and return the Signature Page found in the appendix to the Office Manager, indicating that you, as a member of the Clarke community, have read, understand, and agree to follow these policies and procedures. The school must have on file the completed signature page as a requirement for admission.



Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination

Clarke does not discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. Clarke Schools is required by Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 not to discriminate on the basis of sex in admission, administration of its educational programs or activities or employment. The Senior Human Resources Manager, 45 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060, telephone number 413-582-1155, has been designated as the employee responsible for coordinating Clarke efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 106 to Clarke Schools may be referred to Andrea Harkins or to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, at 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-1100, telephone number 800-421-3481.

Statement of Purpose

At Clarke, we teach children who are deaf or hard of hearing to listen and talk.

Children served by Clarke use advanced technologies, including cochlear implants, hearing aids, and bone conduction systems to maximize their access to sound. We work with children and their families from infancy through their teen years. Our teachers of the deaf, audiologists and speech-language pathologists have the background, training, and experience to prepare children academically and socially for a world of limitless possibilities. Clarke children listen and learn in the classroom, run, and laugh with their friends on the playground, and have lives filled with music, sports, family, and community. Many children who come to Clarke are ready to attend their neighborhood schools by kindergarten. In addition to our work with children, we serve families and adults through a wide range of programs and services. With a comprehensive team of experts, in-person preschool locations along the East Coast, and an Early Intervention program that provides individualized parent coaching and infant-toddler group services, we strive to reach people with hearing loss at key life stages.

We believe that the home environment is the most influential factor in a young child's life. We believe that teachers and families should work together to ensure the safety, happiness and overall development of children enrolled at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

1. We have an open-door policy for caregivers and families and encourage families to be active participants in their child's education. We encourage caregivers to observe class and participate in therapy and school activities.
2. We use various platforms to promote home/school communication, including Class Dojo, and home/school notebook to collaborate with families and other caregivers to ensure ongoing communication across the child's daily environments. We are happy to arrange progress meetings and or phone calls with a child's teachers or the director.
3. Families are encouraged to participate in caregiver-teacher conferences, guided observations, family fun nights and caregiver workshops at Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech.

We believe that educational planning for children who are deaf or hard of hearing must consider the whole child. Educational experiences should support learning across all developmental domains: cognitive development, social and emotional development, motor development and communication development. We believe that children learn best when curriculum is presented in theme-based units, including hands-on experience with the materials and high levels of teacher guidance and interaction.

1. We provide a comprehensive preschool program with an enriched language component. The children's educational needs are addressed in a structured, well-ordered, child-centered, process-oriented developmental curriculum designed to promote the acquisition of age-appropriate conceptual and problem-solving skills.
2. We provide age-appropriate activities and materials that encourage children to explore and build foundations for knowledge in Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and History and Social Sciences, Health Education and Arts.
3. Each child is provided with activities and instruction to promote acquisition of new skills based on their individual level of development.
4. Our classes range in size from a maximum of 11-14 students per class, with 1 teacher and 1 assistant teacher, providing a small student/teacher ratio which allows for ample individual instruction and attention in the classroom. Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physical

Therapy are provided based on each child's IEP. Speech Therapy sessions are auditory based, to support listening and spoken language development.

Our team has extensive knowledge in child development, hearing loss, audiology and speech and language development as it relates to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

1. We have a multi-disciplinary team including teachers of the deaf, speech-language pathologists, audiologist, and occupational and physical therapists. Our staff works collaboratively to ensure that all the children's needs are met.
2. All staff participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Objectives

1. To work collaboratively with each child's family to identify and achieve their goals, including a listening and spoken language outcome for their child.
2. To support the social emotional development, self-awareness, and self-advocacy skills of each student through modeling, guided learning, direct instruction and supported interactions so that each student develops a healthy sense of self, feels confident with their hearing loss, is to explain their own hearing loss and equipment, and develops healthy, positive relationships with others.
3. To ensure students develop a strong academic base by (a) employing a staff that is certified, well-prepared, and knowledgeable on research and current educational best practices for children who are deaf or hard of hearing; (b) continuously updating curriculum to meet the educational needs and prepare students for the mainstream; (c) increasing the literacy skills of all students.
4. To develop the listening and spoken language skills of students throughout the school day through (a) specialized audition, speech, and language therapy sessions, and (b) focused auditory targets embedded into academic curriculum.
5. To provide optimal access in all settings by maintaining the integrity of the hearing technology equipment and ensure the environment is accessible for each child. Individual auditory, speech and language services are also available for children in mainstream programs.

Additionally, each child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is followed to address the goals and objectives for each based on the child's needs.

Program Goals

At Clarke NY, our goal is for children who are deaf and hard of hearing to develop age-appropriate listening and spoken language, which requires:

- The use of hearing aids, bone conduction devices, or cochlear implants provide optimal benefit to hear the full range of speech sounds.
- Wearing of hearing aids/bone conduction devices/cochlear implants more than 10-12 hours per day, *every day*
- Their family and their school team work together to target listening, language, and developmental goals.
- Children to be exposed to a rich language environment at home.

Using a diagnostic learning approach, data is collected throughout the day to inform intervention and planning and to monitor progress. When a child is not making, at least one month's progress in one month of time, the reasons are analyzed, with their families, so that barriers to progress can be removed. If the barriers cannot be removed, or if the child has too little time left at Clarke, other school options will be discussed and recommended.

General Information about Educational Programs

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is a national nonprofit organization that uses a listening and spoken language approach to support children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Clarke's continuum of services includes a Birth to Age Three Program, Preschool/Early Childhood Program, Mainstream Services (Massachusetts and Philadelphia) and teleservices. Services are customized to fit various needs and ages.

Daily Schedule

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech/New York follows the NYC Department of Education calendar to the greatest extent possible. Please see the current calendar for specific information regarding vacations, breaks, holidays, conference days, etc. As the calendar is updated, a copy of the updated calendar is sent home to families and is available on our website.

Current Calendar: [2026-2027 Calendar](#)

Program Dates	First Day	Last Day
Summer 2026	Tuesday 7/6/2026	Friday 8/14/26
Academic/School Year 25-26	Tuesday 9/8/2025	Friday 6/25/2027

For children approved by the DOE for the summer program, children are expected to be in attendance for the entirety of the summer session.

School Hours

Monday-Friday, from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Daily Activities (examples)

- Listening Checks, to ensure hearing aids or cochlear implants are working.
- Morning Meeting: the class gathers for morning meeting to find out what will be happening today.
- Gross Motor/Social time: Weather permitting, children go to Carl Schurz park's playground daily.
- Snack
- Lunch: Food is sent in by parent/caregivers. Clarke cannot reheat food and is a nut free school.
- Rest/Nap time: occurs after lunch, for 30 minutes.
- Work Time: Play is the work of young children, which is what they do currently. Students make a Plan, Do it, and then Review what they did with their teacher. Plan-Do-Review supports the development of executive function skills.
- Using both large group and small group formats daily, students engage in learning activities that target math, science, language, motor skills, knowledge of the world around them, literacy skills, independence, art, music and social skills.

Weekly Activities

- Yoga/Movement
- Whole class Speech/Language activities
- Library: each child will get their own Clarke library card and be able to take out books to bring home, read, and return.

Curriculum

Classroom activities are designed to enhance children's listening, speech and language while supporting their pre-academic/academic, social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative skill development. Children engage in problem-solving, discovery, exploration, reasoning, and experiential activities in a joyful, nurturing environment. Classrooms are designed for the unique acoustical needs

of children with hearing loss, and curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Classes are led by experienced professionals. Classes are taught by master's-level teachers of the deaf who are educated in the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) approach to intervention. All children receive individual auditory speech and language therapy with a speech-language pathologist trained in auditory-verbal therapy and/or listening and spoken language.

Curriculum Goals

- To root the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing in typical development using curriculum and assessment designed for typically developing preschool children.
- To create a learning environment that is intentional, developmentally appropriate, and supportive of each child's needs and strengths.
- To ensure the curriculum, materials, and activities reflect consideration of children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds and those of everyone in our school community and of the city and world in which all students live.
- To establish appropriately high expectations for learning so that each child's cognitive potential aligns with learning and language opportunities.
- To prepare students for the expectations of kindergarten.

Curricular Tools

Highscope is the classroom curriculum, characterized by 5 essential elements, active learning, positive adult-child interactions, the learning environment, which includes the room design, the daily schedule and use of authentic materials, the curriculum (content), and context-based assessment.

Learning Without Tears (formerly known as Handwriting Without Tears) is used to support pre-literacy and pre-writing development. Mat Man is a big part of this and a popular character with students.

Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based social emotional learning and classroom management program that looks at behavior as communication and teaches children how to regulate and manage emotions to make safe and healthy choices.

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Early Pre-Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum is a phonological and phonemic awareness skills curriculum. Students practice blending, segmenting, and manipulating words, syllables, and phonemes each day, giving them learning opportunities with the two best predictors of early reading success-alphabet recognition and phonemic awareness.

Core Early Learning Standards

Learning standards provide the framework for what all children should know and do. Clarke's curricula align with the NYS Education Department's [NYS Early Learning Standards /NYS Early Learning Standards-Spanish edition](#) and [The New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards](#). They provide the expectations of what children can learn and do as a result of instruction that is personalized, differentiated, adapted, culturally and linguistically relevant, and context based.

Auditory Speech and Language Embedded into the Curriculum and Instruction

Students receive intervention and education from master's degree level teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing and ASHA and State Board certified speech-language pathologists. All professionals work to foster the development of age-appropriate listening, vocabulary, and language. All interaction promotes the goals of early childhood education and includes structuring the environment to provide opportunities to aid in each child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Auditory Speech and Language Therapy (Speech Therapy) and Related Services

Auditory, speech and language development and strategies are embedded into the curriculum and instruction in addition to being targeted during speech and language therapy sessions. Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy

Children receive Speech/Language, OT and PT services based on the approved frequency on their IEP. These services are provided individually. While this is typically done outside of the classroom, at times, the therapist may “push-in” to the classroom activity to support carryover of a skill into the larger environment. The goals of the therapy are based on the IEP, individual student assessment results, data collection, and progress monitoring.

Audiology

Clarke recognizes that children who are deaf or hard of hearing need appropriate hearing technology to maximize the use of residual hearing. Clarke audiologists are licensed and certified health care professionals who have training, expertise, and state of the art information about amplification devices for children/students ensuring that hearing technology works optimally. In addition, our audiology teams follow recognized protocols for audiological assessments.

Clarke offers audiological services and support for our birth-through-high-school-age population including:

- Earmolds, batteries, and other accessories (private pay for preschool students)
- Audiology consultation (private pay)
- Screening and assessment (private pay)
- Recommendations for local resources

Educational Audiologist

The audiologist’s role in the preschool program is different than in the EI program. For preschool students, the audiologist is an educational audiology role. All children should have a primary audiologist outside of Clarke. Clarke’s experienced staff and partners support the audiology care of infants and children. In support of preschool students who are deaf or hard of hearing, Clarke’s audiologist:

- Trains staff and provides information on new hearing aids, cochlear implants, and remote microphone technology, including operating functions and troubleshooting.
- Coordinates with the district audiologist to obtain, set up or return FM/DM systems.
- Clarke’s audiologist may, on occasion, conduct a hearing/equipment assessment or middle ear check if there is a sudden change in a child’s responses to sound. Formal hearing evaluations are done by your child’s primary audiologist, every 6-12 months.

Note: Children need to see their primary audiologist when a hearing aid or cochlear implant is having issues that cannot be fixed with simple trouble shooting.

Teachers and SLPs perform listening checks daily in the classroom and in individual therapy. Families send spare batteries in their child’s backpack. HAT (Hearing Assistive Technology) and compatible equipment (e.g., receivers) are provided by the school district, if approved on the child’s IEP. Clarke uses the Roger Sound Field System in each classroom. Each child’s team at Clarke works collaboratively with the child’s primary audiologist.

Maintaining Optimal Auditory Access for Learning

Children should wear their hearing aids or cochlear implants during all waking hours. Research shows that children need to wear their technology (hearing aids, bone conduction devices, cochlear implants, etc.) at least 10 hours per day to develop age-appropriate listening skills. Caregivers are encouraged to discuss wear time with their child's audiologist.

Spare Parts and Batteries for Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids

Families should:

- Send a supply of replacement parts and batteries to be left at school.
- Call or email Clarke in the morning if a child's hearing aid or implant processor did not work prior to the child getting on the bus.
- Notify your child's primary audiologist or implant center when replacement parts are needed. Please have at least one spare for each external component of a child's implant and a three-month battery supply at home.
- Send your child to school with their amplification every day. If your child is sent to school without their hearing aids or cochlear implants, families will be called to bring the device to school immediately or to pick up your child, if not having amplification creates a safety and health concern for your child.
- Provide copies of current aided audiograms and unaided audiograms, at least once a year. This testing should be done by the primary audiologist. For children who use cochlear implants, we also ask that parent/caregivers obtain a copy of the detailed program at the time of each program visit as well as any routine evaluations that are conducted.

In preschool, caregivers are responsible for providing this equipment to Clarke to ensure a child always has full auditory access, especially if not having amplification creates a safety concern for your child.

Library

Clarke's library is located on our lower level and has more than 3000 children's books and parent/caregiver resources. We encourage caregivers to spend time in it! Some of our books are available in languages other than English as well. With parent consent, each student gets their own Clarke library card. Each week, classes go to the library. Children can borrow books to bring home for the week. Caregivers may also check out books at any time and may borrow books for two weeks before returning or renewing. Parents are asked to pay to replace any books that are lost or damaged. We'll continue to add brochures, pamphlets and other materials throughout the year and hope to hear suggestions from families regarding any additional information/resources that should be added. We encourage families to have their children check out books each week from our library. Please help us keep our library in usable, child-friendly shape by cleaning up after you use the library or after your child pulls books off the shelves.

Progress Reports

Reports of students' progress towards IEP goals and general curriculum acquisition are provided to the family and to their public schools on a regular basis according to the school's calendar and regulation. Progress Reports are completed for each child quarterly (Nov/Dec, March, May/June, August) and shared with parents. Progress reports include a child's progress in meeting their IEP goals, present levels of performance in developmental and academic areas, barriers to progress, and whether the student is making sufficient progress to achieve their IEP goals.

Assessment Tools

Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language & Speech (CASLLS): an assessment tool used to monitor and target listening and language needs throughout the day. It was developed for use with children who are deaf and hard of hearing, based on typically developing language development in children without hearing loss.

Reading CASLLS: The Reading CASLLS monitors discrete development in the domains of book handling/print concepts, alphabetic system/phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Work Sampling System (WSS): an observation-based authentic performance tool that assesses children across developmental domains.

Observation and Performance: Anecdotal information is collected through observation of a child during structured activities and informal activities. This may include observing and documenting a child's interactions with other children, the type of play they engage in, their knowledge of certain topics, their ability to perform specific skills, their response to models, directions, and routines, or their response to certain experiences.

Standardized Tests

Standardized tests are administered in the fall and spring as part of the progress report.

Vocabulary: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-5); Expressive Vocabulary Test-3 (EVT-3)

Articulation: Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA-3)

Language: Clinical Evaluation of Language Function-Preschool (CELF-P)

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness: Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL)

*Other tests or tools may be used based on a child's individual needs

Transitioning from Clarke

Transitioning from Clarke to a child's next school is an exciting and anxious time for each child and family. For children who transition from Clarke to kindergarten, the NYC process is known as the Kindergarten IEP (KIP) process. Clarke guides families through the transition process, holding several workshops during the fall and winter of a child's last year at Clarke to support parents, providing step-by-step instructions and offering support and guidance throughout this important time of change. During these early years, the staff will provide a continuum of relevant information to support placement and service discussions and the development of the IEP. Some questions that may come up include:

- What is the best placement for my child?
- What kind of support services will my child need?
- How do we educate our child's teachers and classmates about hearing loss?
- What do we do if something unexpected comes up?

Transportation, Arrival and Departure

We take the safety of all children very seriously. While children are in the care of our staff, they are carefully supervised. It is important for caregivers to follow and enforce Clarke safety rules when picking up their children. Therefore, we ask that when picking up their children, caregivers (or other authorized adults) **supervise** their children once they are picked up. Please do not let your children run around the lobby, scream (even for fun) or participate in other unsafe behaviors. While we acknowledge and encourage socializing among caregivers, we ask that caregivers leave the pick-up area at the earliest opportunity following the hand-off of your child. This allows other caregivers to have sufficient space to pick up their children, and any commotion will not interfere with the remainder of dismissal.

Bus Transportation

For NYC students with IEPs (Individualized Educational Plan), bus transportation is provided by Selby Transportation, contracted by the NYC Department of Education.

Bus Company: Selby Transportation 718-617-7141

Busing: Arrival: 8:30

Departure: 2:30

- The bus company provides Clarke with the lists of children on each bus and the approximate times for pick-up and drop-off.
- Clarke maintains a roster for each route and uses it to note the time of arrival and attendance information.
- Change of address for pick-up/drop-off takes about a week. You can notify us that you are moving or just changing pick up or drop off addresses here: <https://forms.office.com/r/ejw4C1g4pB> It can take up to 2 weeks for the bus company to make a change.
- If your child is absent or late, notify Selby so the bus does not wait in front of your home with other children on the bus.

SELBY Procedure: If a parent or caregiver is not home when the bus arrives, Selby will call the NYC Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT). OPT will provide instructions on what to do. OPT might direct the bus to continue the route, with the student on the bus, to drop off the other students. At the same time, OPT will try to reach the parents/caregiver. If the parent/caregiver cannot be reached, OPT will contact law enforcement. (Don MacNeil, 8/29/21)

Selby does NOT work for Clarke. Selby makes the bus routes. Caregivers will need to address issues about transportation with the bus company and with the NYC Office of Pupil Transportation. Clarke will try to help resolve any issues. Suggested steps to resolve an issue with the bus:

1. Talk to the driver/matron.
2. Call Selby. 718-617-7141
3. Call the NYC Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) and file a complaint: **718-392-8855**

Parent/Caregiver Transport

- Children are expected to be at Clarke by 8:30.
- Children are signed in and out by Clarke staff.
- Parent/caregiver must stay with their child until a Clarke staff member checks them in.
- If late, the caregiver must wait with their child outside until a Clarke staff member is available to check the child in.
- Parent/Caregiver should plan to arrive at Clarke by 2:20 to ensure that they are on time to pick up their child at 2:30.

Important Note: Children with IEPs who are brought to school by a parent/caregiver must be on time. If the child is regularly late for school, the parent/caregiver will have to use the bus service.

Approved Caregivers: Only approved caregivers-those listed by parents/legal guardian on the dismissal form- are allowed to sign a child out. Caregivers should be prepared to show picture identification to pick up a child.

Release of Children from School

Your child cannot be picked up by anyone other than a parent, legal guardian, or bus driver without written permission. Only approved caregivers listed by parents on the dismissal form are allowed to sign a child out. Caregivers should be prepared to show picture identification to pick up a child. Please notify your child's teaching staff or administration if someone different is picking up your child from school.

Family Communication

Caregivers and families are the child's primary educators; therefore, we encourage and promote your involvement during these exciting and crucial years.

Clarke School staff members want to hear from parents and families- often! If there are any changes in your child's life at home, any special events, new accomplishments, stressful situations - anything that might be important to the understanding of your child's moods, feelings, and behaviors - please let us know. phone: (212) 585-3500 FAX:(212) 585-3300

Staff Availability for Individual Discussions

- The best time to speak with a staff member is 7:30-8:15 am or 2:15-4:00 p.m. You may leave a message at any time with the office manager (or on voice mail,) and your call will be returned as soon as possible.
- Teachers and therapists will not leave class or therapy to speak with a parent/caregiver.
- If a message is left early in the morning, after work hours, on weekends, or over vacations, staff will respond to messages when they are back at work. Please be patient and wait for a response.
- Please do not call repeatedly, hang up and call again.

Phone Interpreter

For families who communicate through a language other than English, Clarke uses an interpreter service to call and speak with families or to meet with families at the school.

Email Communication

Consent to communicate via email with parents or other professionals must be given in writing. To ensure that the staff at Clarke School may always reach you, parents must notify the office manager if any phone numbers change. work, home and cell phone numbers change. Let us know when emergency contacts change so that those phone numbers updated.

Blackboard Connect

Clarke sends out text messages, emails and phone calls to families using a mass notification system. Important alerts about weather emergencies, school closing, schedule changes, and reminders for events and activities will be sent through this system.

Class Dojo [How families log in to ClassDojo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjS1U8wiH7A)  (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjS1U8wiH7A>)

Each class has its own class page and there is one for the school. Information on class activities, pictures, special events, reminders, and school closings are shared through Class Dojo. Children whose parents have not submitted the media consent document or who have declined to give consent will not have their pictures posted on Class Dojo, though the parent will still have access to the class and school pages.

Communication Notebook

Notebooks may be used for communication between the parent and speech-language, occupational and physical therapists.

Family Involvement

Parent/Caregiver Custody and Sharing Information

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech is obligated to abide by custody/divorce agreements and court orders regarding the sharing of information with other family members, guardians or court appointed officials. Please make an appointment to discuss the specifics of your child's situation, should there be important information that would help us in working with your family.

Family Visits, Observations, Conferences and Meetings

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are held several times per year. Conferences are scheduled at the convenience of the parents, when possible, with preference given to the afternoon. Parents and/or Clarke School staff may request additional conferences at any time. Parent conferences are always offered to review progress reports.

Parent Meetings and Workshops

Clarke School schedules parent meetings and workshops based on different topics, such as sleep issues, toilet training, transition to kindergarten, etc. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings, as well as make suggestions for meeting topics. More information about dates and times will be sent separately.

Parent/Caregiver Volunteering

There are many ways preschool parents can be involved in the Clarke community. Parent/caregivers can volunteer to read to their child's class, to come in to talk about their culture during international studies or by chaperoning a class trip or by helping with holiday parties and special events. Please speak to your child's teacher about the ways you or your family members can get involved.

Parent/Caregiver Observations

Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech/New York has traditionally had an open-door policy. Parents/caregivers are welcome to come and observe their child. Covid has impacted elements of this open-door policy. To ensure spaces in the school are not crowded and that all visitors are healthy to be in a school setting, observations and participation need to be arranged in advance with a child's teacher or therapist.

- Observations are not scheduled for the first 2 weeks of a child's enrollment, during the time of adjustment and transition.
- Observations typically start after 9:00 to allow the students to transition into the morning routine and end by 2:00. Observations do not occur during lunch or rest time.
- Caregivers are encouraged to participate in a Guided Observation of their child. These guided observations are an opportunity for caregivers to further educate themselves on strategies and techniques to enhance their child's auditory, speech and language skills.

Parent/Caregiver Participation Expectation

- Children whose caregivers are frequent participants in therapy and in the classroom typically make greater progress than children whose caregivers do not. Caregivers are encouraged to observe as often as possible. Please let your child's classroom teacher or therapist know when you'd like to observe. All parents are expected to observe classroom activities and participate in therapy sessions at least once monthly, although more frequent observations are welcome. If a parent's work or home schedule does not allow for 1 x month observations, a family schedule will be worked out.

Building Security

Clarke has a security system in place for the safety of families, staff, and students. Your understanding and cooperation are appreciated.

All visitors, including families, entering the building must sign in and take an identification badge. This allows us to have an accurate count of the individuals who are in the building in the event of an evacuation such as a fire.

All doors are always securely locked. Visitors must be buzzed in by the office manager or another staff member. Video surveillance is maintained for all entrances/exits.

Visitors to the Building

Any visitor to the building other than a staff member must sign in at the entrance and utilize badges that clip onto the clothing. If the visitor is unfamiliar to the staff, photo identification must be shown. This is for the safety of the children and the visitors in the event of an in-school emergency. Caregivers who are dropping off or picking up a child at arrival/dismissal do not need to sign in/out as a visitor.

Some changes started because of covid include:

- Visitors will be limited to those with scheduled appointments only.
- All visitors must complete the Visitor Check-In.

Unauthorized Visitors

Staff are trained to ask unfamiliar adults who they are and why they are in the building.

If a staff member sees an unfamiliar/unauthorized adult in the building, the staff member would approach the adult and escort them either to the lobby to sign in or to leave. In the event the person refused, an alert to shelter in place or evacuate would be called and the police would be called.

Caregiver-Family Rights

Caregivers of children with disabilities from ages three through 21 have specific educational rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These rights are called procedural safeguards. When the caregiver has a concern, it is important that they contact their child's teachers or administrators to talk about their concerns. Caregivers have the right to participate in individualized education program (IEP) meetings about the special education eligibility, assessment, educational placement of their child and other matters relating to their child's free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Some basic rights you have as a caregiver are:

- To have your child receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
- To be a member of the team that develops your child's education program and to attend meetings about that program.
- To understand every document that you are asked to sign.
- To know and understand your rights in the language you understand best.
- To pursue other options if you disagree with your school district's recommendations.

For more information about your rights as they relate to your children, you may refer to Wrights Law: <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Accessing Your Child's Records

- Parents may at any time request to review their child's records. All requests shall be made in writing. For parents who have difficulty writing the request, Clarke will assist in writing the parent's request. An appointment will be made during normal business hours. A Clarke staff member will always be with the family. The appointment will be set up as early as possible but will be dependent on Clarke's ability to provide a staff member for the time the parents have requested.
- Parents may ask for copies of items in their child's file. Typically, there is no fee for making copies of individual reports.
 - If the parent request includes a significant amount of reports, entire files or is requested through a lawyer, Clarke reserves the right to charge a per page fee as allowed by NYS regulations.
- A parent may request to have his or her child's record amended if the parent believes the information contained within the record is incorrect, misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the child.
- Clarke encourages parents to share with us in advance that we will be receiving a request from a lawyer or SSI for records. Since the release sent to us may be of poor fax quality or difficult to read, we may delay sharing information until we have verified that the parent did indeed make the request. All requests to review, copy, or amend records must be made in writing.

Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech receives a request for access.
- Parents or eligible students should submit to the school director a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will plan for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
 - Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Clarke School to amend a record should write to the Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed.
 - If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.
 - Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
 - One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.
 - A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the [School] to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Continuity of Learning Plan

Continuity of learning is an important part of any child's success. It is essential that we are ready to continue to support children's learning in case one or more children must temporarily transition to fully remote learning on an emergency closure day(s).

Metrics for Closing

Clarke will make the decision to temporarily close in person/onsite services and provide classroom lessons and therapy services remotely under situations that pose a health and safety risk to students and/or staff. Emergency closures reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- Directed to close by a city or state agency with the authority to require a closure.
- To reduce or stop a contagious illness from spreading within the school community.
- If the NYC or NYS COVID Data Dashboard indicates high/dangerous community cases such as percent positives, percent positive for children 0-4 years, hospital capacity, and local transmission.
- If busing is not available for in-person learning, such as when a DOE closure occurs or there is a bus driver strike.
- If staff absences impact safely running the program.
- If issues of civil unrest are occurring or expected to occur that affect the safety of staff or students, either in the building or during their commutes.
- Inclement weather.
- Building issues, such as impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, or destruction of a school building.

Communication

Every attempt will be made to notify parents as soon as possible that their child's class will be learning remotely. This will be shared through Class Dojo and through Blackboard Connect.

Eligibility for Remote Learning

Absences not eligible:

- Individual child absences less than 4 days
- Illness: If either the child or caregiver is too sick to participate
- Vacations: absences due to family vacations or trips or other personal reasons for missing school

Absences that may be eligible:

- Closure of a class or program by Clarke
- Extended absences due to covid related quarantine circumstances
- Other unique family situations will be considered on an individual basis.

Remote Learning Plan

Whole Class

If an entire class is remote, the teacher/school will share the schedule, zoom links, and asynchronous learning activities in a letter to each family as soon as possible via Class Dojo. If a child is unable to participate in any synchronous (live, at the time scheduled) lessons on zoom or asynchronous (activities for the child to complete with a caregiver at the time that works best for the family, off screen) sessions, as confirmed by the parent, each day, the child will be marked absent.

Related Services (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy)

The therapist will follow the child's schedule for at least the first day. The therapist will send parents options for scheduling. If sessions can't be scheduled, the child will be marked absent.

Remote Learning Plans for Individual Cases

A remote learning plan may be available for a child who is absent due to covid or another illness resulting in a long absence. If the rest of the child's class is in-person, it will be difficult to provide a remote plan therefore this will be considered on a child-by-child basis.

Expectations for Families of Children with Remote Learning Plans

A parent or caregiver must be with the child for all remote learning sessions. A parent or caregiver is responsible for knowing and following the schedule and signing into zoom 5 minutes before the scheduled time. Parents/caregivers should email or call if they can't make a session, communicate with the teacher about completion of asynchronous activities and communicate with the teacher and therapists about any questions or problems.

Orienting Families to Procedures for Remote Learning

1. Clarke will conduct a technology and device access survey to identify families in need of support.
2. As part of orientation and review of Clarke's handbook, policies and procedures, the Continuity of Learning Plan, including reasons for emergency closures, communication of closures and expectations for remote learning will be reviewed.
3. Families who do not currently have internet access can find no cost or low-cost options:
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/digital-learning/ipads-and-laptops/free-and-low-cost-internet-options>

Health Policies

Smoking/Tobacco

Clarke is a tobacco-free location. Smoking, vaping, and chewing tobacco are prohibited on all school grounds and on and off-site activities.

✓ **Children should only be in school when they are healthy.**

COVID

Due to the serious nature of covid and the high risk of transmission, all symptoms of illness that could be covid are taken very seriously. Parents, caregivers, and staff are expected to follow all policies and procedures for the safety and health of all children.

Your child must stay home if they have any symptoms of illness that could be covid such as:

Vomiting	Sore throat	Headache	Fever	Cough	Muscle pain or body aches
Diarrhea	Stomachache	Fatigue/exhaustion	Loss of taste or smell		Shortness of breath
Nasal congestion or runny nose		Other symptoms			

✓ Children should not be sent to school with other symptoms of illness, such as:

Red, teary, swollen eyes Rash or bumps on skin Scalp itching Pain when eating

✓ If your child is sick, has symptoms of illness, or is diagnosed with a specific illness, be prepared to share details with Clarke. Clarke is required to get from parent/caregivers the specific details.

Clarke is required to report any vaccine preventable illness or illnesses that are highly contagious to the Department of Health. These health policies are part of Clarke's written safety plan, available for review.

Illness at School

If your child starts to show signs of illness or not being well enough to be at school for any health reason, we will phone you to pick up your child ***within the hour***. An emergency contact will be phoned if we cannot reach a parent first. Sick children will be supervised in the isolation room until a parent or caregiver arrives.

Return to School

- In general, children may return to school when they are symptom free for 24 hours and have had no fever, without taking medication.
- A COVID test should be done for a child who has any symptoms that could be covid.
- A doctor's note to return to school is required for illnesses which are highly contagious, such as pink eye. Clarke may also ask for a doctor's note before allowing a child to return to school for other health related situations.
- Following an illness, a child returning to school should feel well enough to participate in all activities and daily routines (including outdoor play and field trips).
- Children must **be fever/symptom free for 24 hours** without taking medication to control the fever before returning to school.

****Children who need to take medication in the morning, such as Tylenol or Benadryl, to be well enough to go to school should not be in school.**

Daily Health Inspections

Staff document any observable health concerns, or any unusual or new marks they observe on a child upon arrival and throughout the day. If a mark on the child is unusual, serious or of concern, staff will contact the family to inquire how the injury occurred. Parents are strongly encouraged to write a note or call and leave a message about any injuries. If medical care was provided, parents should send in a doctor's note.

Lice

Lice is not an illness but is both common and highly communicable in childcare settings. Children with eggs (nits) or live lice are not permitted to be in school. The bus company will be notified, if needed, to allow them to clean the bus. Many times, other family members also have eggs/lice. If everyone in the family is not checked and treated, the lice will re-infect the child. We suggest that parents take their child to specialized salons, such as Hair Fairies or Licenders, to have their child checked. Many of the salons will check the child and other family members free of charge. The pediatrician may be able to prescribe specialized shampoo or treatments.

To return after lice: The parent/caregiver must bring the child to school for a Clarke staff member to check the child's hair. If Clarke staff sees live louse or live eggs the child will have to leave and will not be cleared to return until all live eggs and lice are gone. A doctor's note does not clear a child to return to school.

Annual Physicals

- Each child must have a current physical (under a year old) and up to date immunizations prior to starting at Clarke, and every year after.
- Immunizations and lead testing must be documented and up to date.
- **Hearing Loss Diagnosis:** Make sure your child's pediatrician knows and understands your child's hearing loss diagnosis. Many pediatricians do not mark it or mention it on the Health/Physical form. At times, this does create a problem when a parent is requesting services based on that diagnosis.

Influenza/Flu Vaccine

The NYC Department of Daycare requires children enrolled in Clarke's preschool to receive the flu shot.

- The deadline is 12/31 for children enrolled between September-December.
- Clarke's preschool will be closed that week; therefore, all vaccination documentation must be received by 9 am on the Friday before the December vacation.
- Any documentation received after this deadline time will not be checked until school reopens in January.
- If the documentation is not received by 9 am on the Friday before the December vacation, the child will not be picked up by the bus when school reopens in January or able to attend school until vaccination documentation has been submitted, reviewed, and approved.
- If a parent/caregiver is bringing documentation in January, they must bring their child to school with the documentation and wait until all late documentation is reviewed.
- For new students starting between January-June 30, the NYC Department of Health requires documentation of the flu shot for the most recent season before the child can start.

Exemptions: For a medical exemption, a physician licensed in NYS must certify that a specific immunization is detrimental to a child's health, what the detriment is, and when it will no longer be a

detriment, if applicable. The form is submitted to the NYC Department of Health, who will determine if the medical request for a waiver is approved.

Lead Testing New York State law requires blood lead levels to be tested at ages 1 and 2 and an annual lead risk assessment conducted for all children up to six years of age.

Allergies/Severe Allergic Reactions

Required form: **Individual Health Care Needs Form.**

If your child has allergies, your child's pediatrician should include that information on his/her medical form. In the event of a severe allergic reaction that may require medical treatment, a doctor's note indicating the allergy, possible reactions and course of treatment must be provided to Clarke. With the parents, the doctor and the staff, a plan will be developed based on the child's needs. EpiPens can be used, when prescribed by a doctor, by staff trained in its use. Because Clarke does not have control over all food brought into the building, we cannot guarantee that the building is completely nut free. Children who are prescribed EpiPens cannot be in school with only an expired EpiPen onsite.

Prescription for OT and/or PT Services If a child is approved to receive OT or PT services on his or her IEP, the pediatrician must provide a prescription before these services can be provided. There is a specific form NYC DOE requires to be used for this purpose. This "script" must indicate that the child is recommended for that service and how frequently it should occur, child's name, date of birth, diagnosis code (ICD-10 code), the doctor's NPI #, the doctor's original signature (not a stamp), the type of therapy, and how often/for how long/per week the therapy should be provided.

Medication Administration Clarke is not authorized to administer medication. If a child is cleared by Clarke to be in school but requires medication, the parent can come to Clarke to administer the medication. Clarke will have to document the medication, dosage, purpose, date/time, and the parent's name.

Non-Patient Specific Epinephrine Auto Injectors

- Clarke has non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens) and is required to administer this medication to any child demonstrating signs of severe allergic reaction, even if the child has no previous history of an allergic reaction.
- Parents CANNOT opt out or decline this medication.
- Staff who have been trained in the signs of severe allergic reaction and administration of an epinephrine auto-injector can and will administer a dose of epinephrine to a child showing signs of a severe reaction.
- Either another person or after administering the medication, they will call 911.
- After 911 has been called, the parent will be called and directed to the hospital
- Any child who is administered epinephrine must go to the hospital.

Emergency Medical Plan

- Required form: “**Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment.**”
- This form must be completed before enrollment. The emergency care provided by Clarke staff is limited to simple first aid procedures (e.g., disinfecting cuts and abrasions, applying bandages, placing ice on small bumps and bruises, etc.). Parents will be notified of injuries on the day that the injury occurs.
- For anything that might need more than simple first aid, 911 will be called.
- Clarke does not have a school nurse and will call 911 for injuries or illness that parents might not consider an emergency if it happened at home.
- EMTs are required to take any child 5 years old or younger to the emergency room. If a parent is at Clarke when the ambulance arrives, the parent has the right to refuse medical care. Clarke *cannot* refuse care. An ambulance will transport the child, with a staff member (unless the parent is there) to the nearest hospital. There are several hospitals close by the school-we will request:

NY Presbyterian Hospital (York Ave & 68th Street.) (212)746-5454 525 E. 68th St, Manhattan

A Clarke staff member will stay with the child until a parent arrives. The administrative assistant or director will call the child’s parents; if the parents are unavailable, an emergency contact will be phoned.

Medical and Audiological Appointments

Medical appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible. When not possible, it is strongly recommended that appointments are scheduled early in the morning or later in the afternoon so that children may attend school for part of the school day.

Reminder: Please send a copy of any hearing tests that are done so that your child’s team has the most accurate information to work with your child. Each child must have a current audiogram on file.

Fire Drills and Emergency Procedures

Fire drills, emergency evacuation routes and “alternate” routes are posted within each classroom. Practice emergency procedures will be held periodically throughout the school year. Practiced procedures include scenarios for severe weather emergencies, lockdowns, shelter in place, and evacuation. All drills must be considered an actual emergency, and all people present during a drill or actual emergency are expected to follow the procedures.

Due to the age of our students, explanations about the emergency procedures will be age-appropriate and will be explained to students prior to drills. If the building must be evacuated, all students and staff will report to their emergency location immediately. No one is allowed to return to the building for any reason until the all-clear signals have been given. Emergencies are unexpected, unpredictable and take many forms. No one can be fully prepared for everything that may happen, but guidance and strategies are helpful in any emergency. Clarke’s primary goal is to ensure that our students are safe in any situation.

- Each of Clarke’s two floors has a main entrance/exit and an emergency exit.
- Fire extinguishers, fire alarms and pull stations are located throughout Clarke School.
- Drills are covered routinely, varying the day of the week and time of day.
- Clarke’s written safety plan is available for review.

Emergency Relocation

In the event of an emergency that leaves our building unusable, we would relocate to the Chapin School on East End Avenue between 84th and 85th streets.

Emergency Communication

On occasion, our phone service is interrupted. In the event of a prolonged outage, we would use our fax line to receive phone calls. That number is 212-585-3300. All messages left on our main phone number are sent as email to the director's email. In the event of an emergency or phone outage, leaving a voicemail is still encouraged.

Important Emergency Contact Information

Emergency Medical Personnel/Ambulance/EMT	911
NYPD 19th Precinct 153 E 67th St, New York, NY 10065	Phone: (212) 452-0600
FDNY Engine 22/Ladder 13/Battalion 10	159 E 85th St, New York, NY
New York Presbyterian Emergency Room 525 E 68th St	(212) 746-5454

Storms/Inclement Weather/Emergency Situations

- Clarke follows the NYC DOE's decisions on closing for inclement weather.
- Clarke makes independent decisions on early dismissal based on a variety of factors, such as weather forecast, timing of storm system and availability of caregivers to pick up the child from Clarke or the bus.

Guidelines for Specific Situations

- Thunderstorms: Remain inside. If flooding is forecast, discussion with the bus company about timing of dismissal for safety would occur.
- Tornado warnings: all staff and children would relocate to the lower level, with flashlights, water, and food.
- Hurricanes/Windstorms: Clarke follows emergency instructions from NYC Office of Emergency management and would consider early dismissal, closure, or late dismissal. Children would remain indoors, away from windows.
- Area Floods: Clarke is on higher ground, above the level of the east river. Should the area around Clarke flood, making transportation dangerous, and in consultation with the bus company, and the parent/caregivers, Clarke staff would remain at the school with children until the parent/caregivers could safely pick up their child.
- Snow/Blizzards: Clarke follows the NYC DOE decisions on closures. If schools are open but local roads are unsafe or have the potential to be, parents are encouraged to make the decision to send their child to school or keep them home based on those conditions. In most situations, Clarke will follow a remote plan instead of cancelling school for the day.
- Heat Waves: Clarke's facilities are air-conditioned. Clarke follows the NYC heat/air quality/ozone alert warnings. Depending on the conditions, children might remain indoors, in the air-conditioned building, or take an easy walk in the neighborhood first thing in the morning, prior to the heat of the day. Children would be monitored to ensure water consumption and for signs of distress.
- Citywide emergency: based on availability of information, administration would decide about staying onsite or moving to the relocation site.

Food, Snacks and Nutrition

School Snack

Clarke provides some snacks but asks for parents to send snacks in to share with the class. Your child's teacher will ask for parents to volunteer to provide peanut free, health snacks for the class. Water is also offered to the children.

- ✓ Please remember that **Clarke is a nut-free school**. No snacks or lunch can be sent that have peanuts or peanut butter.
- ✓ Several families keep Kosher or Halal. If you are sending in a store-bought snack to share with your child's class, please check to make sure it is labeled as kosher.

Lunch

- **Clarke is a nut-free school**. This includes almond butter, any tree nuts and Nutella.
- **Preschool children bring lunch from home**. Clarke does not prepare lunch for the students.
- **Clarke does not heat food sent from home**.
- **Lunches must be sent in a lunch box, labeled with your child's name**.



We encourage parent/caregivers to send in nutritious and well-balanced meals. Students' lunches are either stored in their cubbies or in a community refrigerator. Lunches are not heated prior to mealtimes. Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in a thermos. Although many children eat peanut butter at home, Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech/New York is a **nut free zone** due to the high occurrence of nut allergies in young children.

Please do not send lunch or snack foods that contain nuts.

LUNCHABLES are not recommended- the sodium and fat content of these packaged lunches is very high, and they do not provide children with necessary nutrients.

The new food pyramid is the newest version of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Guidance System (replacing MyPlate). The inverted pyramid depicts proper meal portions of the five food groups (fruit, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy), helping Americans build healthy meals.

Supervision of Students

Line of sight supervision is maintained through all activities. Staff communicate verbally to ensure a child moving from one adult/area to another are being supervised by the other adult (s). Staff are trained and review active monitoring and using verbal confirmation strategies. Children must be escorted from their classroom to their bathroom. Class ratio is regulated by the NYS Department of Education and the NYC Department of Daycare.

Playground: Clarke uses the public playground 1 block north of the school, in Carl Schurz Park.

Head count- prior to leaving the classroom, a head count occurs and then again before leaving the building. If the children are going to the playground, they are counted before play, during play and prior to leaving the playground. If a therapist brings a child to the classroom or playground or removes a child, they notify the lead adult to ensure that clear communication about all children occurs.

Lost Child Plan

Should a child be missing, all available adults would look thoroughly through the rest of the playground. The teachers and assistants from the other classes would watch the other children, positioning themselves at the two entrances to the playground and notify the main office/director. The child's teacher and assistant would begin a thorough search of the playground. The director and all other available staff (SLPS, IEP Coordinator, Assistants, OTs/PTs etc.) would immediately report to the playground to help. If the child was not found, the police would be notified, then the parent/caregivers.

- If the child is found after a prolonged search and the child demonstrates signs of shock, trauma or physical interaction, 911 will be called to take the child for an evaluation at an ER.
- If a child is missing from within the building, a code alert would be made, and all available staff would secure exits and participate in the search.

Behavior and Discipline Policy

Behaviors are learned.

Conscious Discipline and the Pyramid Model are used to determine the level and type of support a child may need to develop appropriate social and learning behaviors. Caregivers and other family members play a key role in collaborating with the school team to address behaviors that may interfere with a child's learning. Examples of strategies that may be used include problem solving to work through conflict, picture schedules to support transitions, modeling language of behavior, empathetic listening by identifying how a child feels, making changes to the schedule that support the child in transitioning from one activity to another. At times, for safety, a child may be removed from a situation if there is a concern that the child or others could be hurt. The teacher will communicate with caregivers about general or specific concerns about behavior. Clarke will partner with caregivers to develop a plan to support a child that can be used consistently at home and school. On rare occasions, Clarke staff may call a caregiver to pick up their child if a child's behavior is particularly inappropriate or dangerous or if an immediate meeting is required. Either the teacher or an administrator will let a parent know as soon as possible following a behavior that:

- results in the child, another child or a staff member being injured.
- lasts for a significant amount of time and/or requires the child or other students to be removed from the environment for safety reasons.
- was dangerous, even if no one was injured.

Corporal punishment is not permitted in our school.

Parent/Adult Conduct and Behavior

Clarke's families and staff come from a range of cultures and backgrounds, with different parenting, personal and communication styles. To ensure that caregivers, children, and staff benefit from an environment that is respectful, safe, and secure, Clarke does not allow parents/caregivers to:

- Physically punish or verbal attack a child
- Physically punish or verbal attack other children
- Threaten, harass, or otherwise disrespect staff, other caregivers, or other children.
- Swear, curse, threaten or use obscene gestures.
- Quarrel with other caregivers or staff.
- Make negative or disparaging comments regarding the school, staff, children or other caregivers to staff, caregivers, or anyone other than administration (including outside of school).
- Ignoring school policies.
- Clarke administrators will attempt to resolve any concerns about a caregiver's behavior through direct discussion. On a case-by-case basis, either before or after discussing it with the individual involved, the individual may be barred from entering the building immediately.

Should any caregiver have a concern about another parent or a staff member, they should immediately contact: Meredith Berger mberger@clarkeschools.org

Bullying

The Clarke community is committed to making our school a safe and caring environment for all students and where we treat each other with respect. It is rare that behavior in preschool is bullying. Young children at times may put their own feelings before others, and even the most considerate child will have the occasional outburst due to frustration, anger or over exuberance. We acknowledge that

this is a developmental area that needs to be nurtured and supported and that young children do not intentionally wish to cause hurt. Strategies that are used in our program include:

- Recognizing that young children are not always able to manage their own feelings and deliver them appropriately.
- Clarke staff will assist in this management to support their developmental development.
- Offer support to all children who may be involved and to discuss the issues through play, story times and circle time activities.

Clarke students will do the following things to prevent bullying and ensure their friends feel safe at school:

- Learn to treat everyone with respect and kindness.
- Will not bully others
- Will not let others be bullied.
- Try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out.

Teachers and staff do the following things to prevent bullying and help children feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs of bullying behavior and stop it when it happens.
- Look into all reported bullying incidents.
- Address based on the school social emotional, and behavior supports.

The role of caregivers:

- Caregivers who are concerned or have questions should contact the program director.
- Caregivers are encouraged to support Clarke's policy and actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the Clarke community.
- Caregivers and staff work together to develop their child's social and emotional behavior skills.

Sexual Harassment

There is nothing more important to us than the children we teach and support. We understand that children and youth are not only our future; they are a valuable part of the community today. However, our students are also vulnerable. Sadly, because of their vulnerability, awareness, and knowledge, they can be taken advantage of or worse, become victims of abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that we are proactive in protecting them and in providing safe environments.

We must, as well, protect those who work with our students. Our school personnel need the security of knowing that they are working in a setting where processes and procedures are in place to minimize any possibility of an erroneous accusation. Clarke's Plan to Protect® Policy establishes the criteria for the provision of a safe environment for children, youth, and school personnel.

Special events

Five Reasons to Hold Classroom Celebrations

Classroom celebrations – from semi-formal celebrations that include food and drink, music and even special guests – to impromptu opportunities to play outside – help build connections, target skills development, grow relationships, develop social etiquette and improve academic performance. How does this work? Classroom celebrations help build connections.

- Classroom celebrations help develop social skills.
- Classroom celebrations help build positive relationships with the community.
- Classroom celebrations help children practice and develop social etiquette in real-life situations.
- Classroom celebrations help support academic achievement.

Birthdays

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please notify your child's teacher **several days in advance**.

- ☐ Birthday celebrations are usually held in the afternoon.
- ☐ The party must be reasonable for the school environment.
- ☐ NO: Face painting, balloon art and other similar activities are not permitted due to the potential health risks to children.
- ☐ You can bring fruit, cupcakes or a birthday cake, cookies, ice cream, juice, etc. in limited quantities. Consider bringing a healthy snack containing fruit.
- ☐ No soda is allowed.
- ☐ No nuts of any kind-please check that there are no nuts in or on anything that you bring in, or it cannot be served in the school or sent home.
- ☐ Some parents want to give a goodie bag to the students. Consider giving each child a book instead. Any food/candy items in goodie bags must be nut free.

Special Events/Class Trips

Class Trip Coordinator plans for all aspects of the trip to ensure a safe and fun experience.

- For any trip being considered, the Lost Child Policy for Trips would be reviewed and updated, with staff and parent/caregiver volunteers receiving training before the trip.

Parental Consent/Approval: Parents must sign consent for trip attendance on a form specific to that trip. Children without written permission cannot attend trips.

Research, Fundraising, Publicity and Observation Policies

From time-to-time Clarke participates in research projects with other institutions. When such projects arise, we will seek your permission for your child's participation and will provide detailed information regarding the nature of the research study.

Fundraising and Publicity

Clarke depends on the support and generosity of those in our community, who know how crucial the work that we do with young children is to continue this transformative program. Clarke conducts necessary fundraising and publicity for programs and services. If you would like to become more involved with efforts to support fundraising and Clarke's long-term sustainability, please contact develop@clarkeschools.org.

Observations and Student Clinicians

Clarke is committed to training future professionals, such as teachers and speech-language pathologists, to work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

College students and professionals often visit Clarke for the opportunity to observe and learn more about the work we do. Such observers are not allowed to have direct, unsupervised interaction with any child.

Graduate student clinicians, typically speech/language interns or student teachers - are often accepted for placement at Clarke, as they complete a required component of their professional training. They come from a variety of colleges and universities, such as New York University, Columbia University, Brooklyn College, NY Medical College, and the CUNY schools. All student interns and student teachers undergo the same rigorous background checks that employees go through. You will be notified if your child's teacher or speech-language pathologist will be mentoring a student clinician.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, or any information contained within Clarke's handbook, please contact:

Meredith Berger, Director

MBerger@clarkeschools.org

212-585-3500

APPENDIX

Families in Temporary Housing

Please let us know if you/your child are in temporary housing, such as a shelter. There are special regulations to support your child in enrolling in school and providing more time, if needed, to get some of the health requirements to us.

In addition, there are specific regulations about busing and school zones to protect a family in temporary housing.

We will post community resources, such as food pantries or other social supports, from time to time on Class Dojo. If you or your family are in need of additional resources, please let us know so that we may try to help.

Back to School Forms to be Completed Prior to the First Day of School

- ☐ Enrollment Form
- ☐ Medical Form: documenting current health, immunizations, and special needs. This form must be consistent with the individual health care plan.
- ☐ Plan for Individual Health Care Needs- This is for children with allergies, asthma, cochlear implants, or other health needs. This must be completed in full by a doctor and it must be consistent with the Medical/Physical form.
- ☐ Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- ☐ Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick up.
 - Clarke must have at least 3 contacts to call in case we cannot reach you.
 - No child will be released to a non-parent caregiver if they are not listed on this form.
- ☐ Consent to Obtain/Release Information
- ☐ Permission-neighborhood walks
- ☐ Email Consent
- ☐ Media Release and Consent
- ☐ Video consent

Additional Forms

These are needed for a child to receive services or required by regulation:

- ☐ Family Handbook/Orientation Review Acknowledgement of receiving the orientation and enrollment material, including the Family Handbook and all its information.
- ☐ OT/PT Prescription for any child receiving these services.
- ☐ Assistive Technology Intake Form: This form provides us with information about the technology your child uses and the audiologist your child sees outside of Clarke. It also includes specific consent for data logging.
- ☐ Consent to apply sunblock.
- ☐ Family Directory

First Day of School Checklist

- ☐ All required paperwork must be submitted before your child can start, including:
 - Medical/Physical Form with up-to-date immunizations, including the flu vaccine.
 - Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
 - Plan for Individual Medical Needs (required for every child with allergies, regular medication, asthma, cochlear implants, etc.)
 - Permission slip for neighborhood walks (including going to the playground.
 - Emergency Contacts and Consent to Pick-up
- ☐ Notification about any urgent medical concerns, such as allergies.
- ☐ Backpack-To be brought to school each day. Backpacks should be of reasonable weight. Each child should be able to carry his/her own backpack without assistance. The backpack should fit your child's lunchbox, notebook, and any other necessary items.
- ☐ Lunch in a lunch box (each day). No nut products. Clarke does NOT heat food.
- ☐ Marble bound notebook/Communication Book (This should be checked by parent/caregivers daily.)
- ☐ Three changes of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks), appropriate for the season to be left in school. All items should have your child's name on the tag.
- ☐ Blanket for nap time (will be sent home to be washed every Friday, before vacations or if your child leaves school early because of illness)
- ☐ Sheet for the rest mat if caregiver prefers. Rest mats are the size of a standard crib sheet.
- ☐ Supply of spare batteries for your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant (if disposable batteries are used)
- ☐ A large pack of Pull-Ups for children not yet toilet trained (Pull-Ups with Velcro side tabs are preferred)
- ☐ A package of wipes

The following items are not mandatory but would be appreciated by your child's class:

- ☐ Packages of unopened wipes
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Glue/glue sticks
- ☐ Magnetic tape
- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ New non-toxic, washable markers
- ☐ New, unopened crayons
- ☐ Boxes of unopened, soft tissues
- ☐ Unopened boxes of healthy snacks- animal crackers, pretzels, rice cakes, etc. to share with class (NO NUTS)
- ☐ Cake, muffin or brownie mixes for special occasions.
- ☐ Fresh fruit to share with class for snack

Connect with the Clarke Community and Online Resources

Clarke www.clarkeschools.org

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/clarkeschools>

On Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/clarkeschools/>

Clarke Photos <https://www.flickr.com/photos/clarkeschools/albums>

Information on Hearing Loss and Family Support

🔊 Hearing First <https://www.hearingfirst.org/learn-and-connect/for-families>

🔊 National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM)
<https://www.infanthearing.org/about/>

🔊 Hands and Voices <https://www.handsandvoices.org/>

🔊 A.G. Bell Association of the Deaf <https://www.agbell.org/Families>

🔊 Listening Together <https://www.listeningtogether.com/>

🔊 All Ears- A Hearing Loss Podcast <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/all-ears-at-childs-voice-a-hearing-loss-podcast/id1431015359>

Microtia/Atresia

🔊 The Ear Community <https://earcommunity.org/>

🔊 myFace <https://www.myface.org/>

🔊 All Ears Podcast- Microtia/Atresia <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/19-aural-microtia-atresia/id1431015359?i=1000454299241>

2026-2027 Calendar

Current Calendar: [2026-2027 Calendar](#)

Program Dates	First Day	Last Day
Summer 2025	Tuesday 7/6/2026	Friday 8/14/26
Academic/School Year 25-26	Tuesday 9/8/2026	Friday 6/25/2027



Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech New York 2026 - 2027 School Calendar

ver. 4/28/2026

Clarke 212.585.3500

Please notify Clarke and Selby if your child will be absent.

Selby/Leesel 718.617.7141

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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AUGUST						
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SEPTEMBER						
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OCTOBER						
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NOVEMBER						
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30	31					

JULY
1-2 Preschool break-Preschool closed/EI alternate schedule
3 Independence Day-Clarke closed
6 Summer Session Begins for Staff and Students

AUGUST
14 Moving up/Moving on (graduation!)
14 Last day-summer session
17-31 Preschool break-Preschool closed/EI alternate schedule

SEPTEMBER
1-3 Staff Orientation-No preschool or EI
7 Labor Day Clarke Closed
8 Preschool-First Day of School
21 Yom Kippur-Preschool Closed/EI alternate schedule

OCTOBER
1 Preschool Back to School Night
2 Superintendents Conf Day 1-no EI or preschool
4 Clarke Family Day in Carl Schurz Park
12 Indigenous People's Day

NOVEMBER
3 Superintendents Conf Day 2-no EI or prescho
11 Veterans Day-Clarke Closed
26-27 Thanksgiving-Clarke Closed

DECEMBER
24-31 December break-Preschool Closed

JANUARY
1 New Year's Day-Clarke Closed
4 Preschool reopens!
18 Martin Luther King Day-Clarke Closed
29 Superintendents Conference Day 2-No Preschool or t

FEBRUARY
15 Presidents' Day-Clarke Closed
15-19 February break-Preschool Closed/EI Alternate Schedule

MARCH
9 Eid al-Fitr
9 Conference Day- No Preschool/EI
26 Good Friday-Clarke Closed
28 Easter

APRIL
22 Passover (First day)-Clarke Closed
23-30 Spring Vacation- preschool closed/EI alternate schedule

MAY
17 Eid al-Adha- Preschool Closed/EI alternate schedule
31 Memorial Day-Clarke closed

JUNE
4 Superintendents Conference Day 4-no preschool or EI
25 Last day of academic program
28-30 Preschool break-EI alternate schedule

Clarke Closed
 Preschool Closed/EI alternate schedule
 Conference Day-staff only

JANUARY						
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JUNE						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

¹ If needed, the school reserves the right to make adjustments to the school calendar's scheduled instructional hours

² If the school building is closed due to weather or other emergencies, learning will take place remotely.

To report a complaint or bus issues, NYC Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT): 718.392.8855

FAMILY/CAREGIVER SIGNATURE PAGE

I have read the Clarke Caregiver Handbook. I/we agree to abide by the policies written within.

Please sign and date below, detach and submit to your school's office manager.

Parent or Legal Guardian

Student Name

Date