

COMPASSNYC

Comprehensive After-School Program of New York City

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FRIENDS OF CROWN HEIGHTS #2
[671-675 Prospect Place]

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

Motto: A well informed parent is our best partner!

Developed and produced by *George C. Olukpe*

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1.0 Introduction

The *Comprehensive After School System of New York City (COMPASS-NYC)* program (commonly known simply as “after-school”) is a free program administered by the New York City *Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)*. The program provides safety, recreation, academic enrichment, civic education, etc. for youngsters.

This booklet is devoted to the Friends of Crown Heights’ program site at 671-675 Prospect Place.

<i>Program site</i>	<i>Site Address</i>	<i>Where to get more information</i>
Friends of Crown Heights #2	671-675 Prospect Place Brooklyn, NY 11216	671-675 Prospect Place Brooklyn, NY 11216 Tel. (718) 638-8686 <i>Ask for: Mr. Oluikpe or Mr. Davis</i>

In this handbook and other written documents, the words, *participant* and *student*, are used interchangeably to refer to a student attending the COMPASS-NYC program. Likewise, *counselor* and *teacher* are used interchangeably to refer to the adults in charge of the students.

The meanings of all abbreviations and acronyms, such as *COMPASS-NYC*, used in this booklet are presented in *Appendix A*.

2.0 Main Feeder Schools

During the school year (September to June) COMPASS-NYC staff members at Friends of Crown Heights #2 pick up participating students from three near-by locations, namely,

	<i>Name of feeder school</i>	<i>Address of feeder school</i>
2	P. S. 316	750 Classon Ave
3	P. S. 705	443 St. Marks Avenue
	Exceed Charter school	

2.1 Transportation from main feeder schools

At dismissal, teachers at feeder schools (P. S. 705, Exceed Charter School and P. S. 316) take students who attend Friends of Crown Heights COMPASS-NYC program at 671-675 Prospect Place to a designated area, such as the cafeteria or the gymnasium. COMPASS-NYC staff members pick up the students from such designated areas. COMPASS-NYC staff members do NOT go to classrooms searching for students.

- COMPASS-NYC staff members arrive at the feeder school within 5 minutes of announced dismissal time to pick up students. They try their best (short of searching the classrooms) to gather all the students.

- On regular days, our COMPASS-NYC teachers must leave the feeder school to return to Friends of Crown Heights after a grace period of 10 minutes of announced dismissal time.
- On days when the particular school has ‘extended day,’ (usually up to 3:30 p.m.), our COMPASS-NYC teacher must leave to return to Friends of Crown Heights by 3:40 p.m.
- Once the COMPASS-NYC teacher leaves the feeder school after the grace period, he or she will **not** return to pick up any student.
- If a student is detained for any reason -- by a teacher, nurse, social worker, etc. -- past the grace period stipulated above, Friends of Crown Heights will **not** be responsible for that student. It will be the feeder school’s responsibility to arrange to bring the student to 671-675 Prospect Place, not later than 4:30 p.m. Alternatively, the feeder school may call the student’s parents.
- If a feeder school dismisses later than 3:30 p.m. for any reason, Friends of Crown Heights cannot send any staff member to return to pick up students.

2.2 Transportation from other schools

Friends of Crown Heights does not provide motorized transportation. It is parents’ responsibility to arrange for transportation from schools other than those listed above.

Parents who are interested may enquire about other parents who already have transportation arrangements with private bus drivers for their children so they can pool together.

3.0 Cost of Service

The COMPASS-NYC program is completely free. It is funded by the DYCD. When participants go on an educational trip free transportation is provided and they do not pay admission fees for events and activities pre-selected by the teachers. However, parents are free to give their children some “pocket money” to purchase souvenirs and to participate in extra age-appropriate activities with teachers’ permission, if time permits. See also *Section 27.0* for more clarifications.

4.0 Admission

To be admitted, a student must be

- a) in kindergarten or a higher grade but no higher than fifth grade AND
- b) enrolled in a school in New York City – public, private, charter or parochial.

A child who is in kindergarten but less than 5 years old may be admitted provided that he or she will turn 5 by December of the year of admission.

5.0 Enrollment Periods

- Friends of Crown Heights does not accept walk-ins. That is, all participants must be properly registered for the program till the end of the current enrollment period (described below).
- There are two separate enrollment periods, namely, school-year and summer session.
- The school year runs from September of one year to June of the following year (for example, from September, 2018, to June, 2019).
- The summer session begins in July and usually ends in August of the same year. [The exact dates are announced before the beginning of the program.]
- A separate registration form must be filled out for each enrollment period. **Enrollment for one period does not automatically carry over to the next.**

6.0 Multiple Applications

A parent/guardian who is applying for service for two or more children must submit a separate, complete registration for each child: all pertinent information must be entered in each application.

7.0 How Applications are Processed

Applications are processed in the order in which they are received, assuming that they were fully completed to begin with, with all necessary signatures and dates. Regardless of the date on which an incomplete application was initially submitted, it will be pushed to the back of the stack until it has been fully completed. **It will not be placed back in its original position.**

Enrollment is done strictly online and, once the contracted capacity is reached, all subsequent applications will be placed on the waiting list, if possible.

8.0 How to Avoid Rejections and Delays

We urge parents/guardians to exercise care in completing the enrollment/application form to avoid delays and rejections.

8.1 Care in completing the enrollment/registration form

Parents/guardians are urged to take care in filling out the form. Please note the following.

- The application must be filled out in ink (black, blue or blue-black).
- The application must not be filled out in pencil. An application filled out in pencil will not be accepted.

- The application must be filled out in legible hand writing. Telephone numbers, in particular, must be entered legibly. An application with illegible entries will be consigned to the back of the stack.
- Soiled or mutilated registration/enrollment forms will not be accepted.

8.2 Consistency in name spelling

Some names can be spelled in more than one way. For example, *Heywood* and *Haywood* are probably variant spellings and so are the sets a) *Oparah*, *Opara*, *Okpara* and *Okparah* and b) *Jalloh*, *Diallo* and *Jallow* (depending on the region of origin). Legally, however, each family or individual bearing such a name must **use one spelling consistently in all official documents.**

Each name (parent's, student's, etc.) in the application/enrollment form must be spelled consistently in one way – as it is spelled in official documents, such as birth certificates and passports. We appeal to parents/guardians to adhere to this requirement.

If the name that is spelled in more than one way in an enrollment/registration form is that of the parent/guardian:

- a) the application will be placed at the back of the stack and
- b) the parent/guardian will be required to submit one or more documents to verify his or her identity and legal name. Acceptable documents for this purpose are a) state-issued photo (driver or non-driver) ID, b) national passport, c) current school ID and d) current job ID. A social security card or birth certificate will only be accepted if it is supported by one of the photo IDs listed above.

Please note that documents such as medical records and club membership cards will not be accepted in lieu of official identification.

If the name that is spelled in more than one way in an enrollment/registration form is that of the student:

- a) the application will be placed at the back of the stack and
- b) the parent/guardian will be required to submit at least one document to establish the student's name and identity. Acceptable documents for this purpose are 1) birth certificate, 2) national passport, 3) current school ID and 4) social security card.

Please note that documents such as medical records will not be accepted for this purpose.

In either case, the parent/guardian will be required to make the necessary corrections in the application and the just-established 'official' spelling must be used consistently in all future documents and correspondence.

The same rule applies if the spelling appearing in the enrollment/registration form is different from the one used in another document (such as the birth certificate or medical records) for the same individual.

Please note also that the rule for variant spellings also applies to shortened or ‘transfigured’ names, such as *Mike* for *Michael*, *Kate* for *Catherine*, *Bill* for *William* and *Al* for *Albert*, *Alfred*, *Alfonso* and *Alan*! One spelling must be used consistently.

9.0 Health Matters

The COMPASS-NYC program has an obligation to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for both participants and staff members. To this end, we take certain preventative measures to stem the onset or spread of communicable diseases.

9.1 Health forms

Health Department regulations require that we obtain and review medical records before admitting any student into the program.

Each application package is accompanied by a blank medical form. **Parents must fill the front of the medical form and have a licensed physician complete the reverse side.**

9.2 Communicable diseases

Like other educational institutions, we are required to observe and act on signs and symptoms (both visual and auditory) of communicable diseases in the program. Here is a small sample of communicable diseases that parents can help us keep away from the program.

- chickenpox • measles • lice • scabies • smallpox • whooping cough
- influenza • mumps • ringworm • shingles • tuberculosis

A parent whose child exhibits symptoms of any communicable disease must immediately take that child to the pediatrician for evaluation and possible treatment. Depending on the nature of the suspected disease, staff members are mandated to report such a case to the Health Department. If the parent does not act voluntarily, the participant will be suspended until he or she has been cleared by a physician to return to the program. Please note that, in the case of skin diseases, merely covering up an infected area does not necessarily protect other people who come in contact with the participant.

10.0 Required Minimum Attendance

Participants will be considered either full-time or part-time participants, as shown below.

- a. Participants who attend the program at least 4 times per week are considered as ***full-time***.
- b. Participants who attend fewer than four times a week (not counting sick and emergency absences) are considered ***part-time participants***.
- c. Full-time students will be enrolled before part-time participants.

- d. Part-time participants will be kept on the waiting list, when possible, until spaces become available.
- e. A participant admitted as full-time will be converted to part-time status if his/her attendance drops below the stipulated minimum for three consecutive weeks.
- f. A participant who is absent for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or a total of more than twelve (12) days in a three-week interval, without prior discussion with, and approval from, the program director will be considered withdrawn from the program.
- g. To be readmitted later, the parent/guardian must reapply and the participant will be placed on the waiting list until space becomes available. **Re-admission is not automatic.**
- h. During the school year (September to June), if a participant does not show up **two weeks** after enrollment and notification, the application will be considered abandoned. To be admitted later, the parent/guardian must reapply and the participant will be placed on the waiting list until space becomes available. **Re-admission is not automatic.**
- i. During the summer, if a participant does not show up **one week** after enrollment and notification, the application will be considered abandoned and destroyed. To be admitted later, the parent/guardian must reapply and the participant will be placed on the waiting list until space becomes available. **Re-admission is not automatic.**
- j. If a parent takes a student out of the program without notifying the program administration, and then decides to return the participant later, this parent/guardian must reapply and the student will be placed on the waiting list until space becomes available. **Re-admission is not automatic.**

11.0 Pick-up Schedule

There are two pick-up schedules, one for regular school days and another for the summer months and other full-day programming.

11.1 Definitions

A *regular school day* is a day when the public school is open and the after-school program starts as soon as the public school dismisses, whether it is the typical hour of 3:00 p.m. or early dismissal (11:30 a.m. or 12:00 p.m.).

A *full-day session* is a session starting from 8:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. Full-day sessions include summer (July and August), school breaks (winter, mid-winter or spring recess) and one-day public school closings (such as “Professional Development” days).

11.2 Pick-up schedule for regular school days

The pick-up schedules for regular school days (September to June) are as follow:

Earliest pick-up time on regular school days: 5:45 p.m.

Latest pick-up time on regular school days: 6:00 p.m.*

**Note*

- If you arrive before 5:45, you must wait until 5:45 p.m.

11.3 Pick-up schedule for summer and other full days

The pick-up schedule for summer (July and August) and other full days is as follow:

Early pick-up window on full days: 4: 30 to 4:40 p.m.*

Final pick-up time on full days: 5:45 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.*

Latest pick-up time on full days: 6:00 p.m.*

**Notes*

- If you arrive before 4:30, you must wait until 4: 30
- If you arrive after 4:40, you must wait until 5:45 p.m.
- If you arrive before 5:45, you must wait until 5:45 p.m.

11.4 Penalty for frequent premature pick-ups

Reminder: Based on overwhelming research and anecdotal evidence of the benefits of a high-quality after-school program, the City of New York, through the DYCD, invests tens of millions of dollars on out-of-school-time opportunities for our children. As such, the COMPASS-NYC program cannot be used as a baby-sitting, casual shelter.

Besides the ‘dollar value’ of the program, we must also note that early pick-ups are very disruptive and unfair to the participants who stay to take full advantage of the program.

We do not dispute parents’ right to pick up their children whenever they wish to. However, if a participant must be picked up frequently before the scheduled time, this participant will not benefit much from the program activities. The space must immediately be made available to another child who will take full advantage of the opportunity.

We may occasionally remind a parent of the policy, but will resist arguing with a parent who decides to pick up a participant before the scheduled pick-up time. However, we keep a log and,

if a participant is picked up prematurely repeatedly, the child will be dropped from the program. [Early pick-up on account of emergency will not count against a participant, provided that the parent voluntarily presents a case of a real emergency, as defined in Appendix B.]

11.5 Late pick-up

It is absolutely necessary that all participants be picked up no later than the times indicated in sections 12.2 and 12.3. Here is a summary:

Children must be picked up no later than 6:00 p.m.

Parents are allowed a maximum of **10 minutes per month** in late pick-up. This 10-minute grace is the total, which may be accumulated in a variety of ways, for example, 1 minute late ten times a month or 10 minutes late one time in a month, counting from the first day to the last day of each month.

If a student is picked up more than a total of 10 minutes in any given month, the parent will pay a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute after the monthly allowance.

This fee must be paid within a time stipulated by the program director. *The participant will not be accepted to the program until the fee has been paid.*

If the late fee does not discourage late pick-up, a participant may be suspended or expelled from the program altogether.

Furthermore, even if the parent is willing to pay the fee, if a student is not picked up by 6:45 p.m., he or she may be taken to the precinct. [The staff member will leave a note on the door specifying the location where the parent/guardian would have to go to pick up the student.]

11.6 ‘Signing out’ a participant

An escort who picks up a participant must sign him or her out. In this particular context, ‘signing out’ does **not** literally mean drawing a signature. We require the **ESCORT’S FULL NAME** – first and last. Anything short of a clear print of a full name is unacceptable. We must have a clear record of the identity of the person who picks up a participant.

11.7 Penalty for failing to ‘sign out’ a participant

It is absolutely necessary to ‘sign out’ a participant. Here are the penalties for failure to ‘sign out’ a participant:

- a) The penalty for a first-time failure to properly ‘sign out’ a participant is a two-day suspension from the program, plus applicable late pick-up fee.**
- b) The penalty for a second occurrence of the infraction is outright termination of service.**

Please note that common excuses like “I am double-parked,” “I have to pick up another child,” or “I forgot” will NOT be accepted.

11.8 Condition for exemption from the penalty

The only obvious condition for exemption from this penalty is an emergency, such as fire in the building or shooting, requiring that the building be evacuated immediately.

11.9 Penalty for putting the wrong time

It is mandatory to record the exact time of pick-up, with a three-minute error allowance. Our staff members are instructed to observe the times written by escorts. **They must cross out any incorrect time entry and write the correct time above it.** To discourage the practice of escorts putting an incorrect time in order to evade late pick-up fee, the following penalties apply.

For i) a one-time wrong entry of 10 to 19 minutes or ii) multiple wrong entries totaling up to 19 minutes, a warning letter will be issued to the parent.

For a one-time wrong entry of 20 to 30 minutes the participant may be suspended for two (2) days.

For a one-time wrong entry of over 30 minutes the service may be terminated.

Please note that

excuses like “It was a mistake/oversight” or “I looked at my watch/cell phone” will NOT be accepted.

11.10 Applicability of penalties

It is important to note that

the penalties for a) premature pick-up, b) late pick-up, c) failing to properly ‘sign out’ a participant and d) recording the wrong pick-up time apply whether the offending escort is the participant’s parent or a delegate (including bus driver and baby sitter).

12.0 Multiple Enrollments

We recognize that parents have a right to enroll their children in any after-school program of their choice. In the past, some parents whose children were enrolled in the Friends of Crown Heights DYCD-COMPASS-NYC program have also chosen to enroll them simultaneously in another after-school program sponsored by an outside agency. **This will not be accommodated; parents must decide which program they really want and stay with it.**

If it is discovered that a participant who is enrolled in Friends of Crown Heights COMPASS-NYC program is also enrolled in another after-school program, that participant will immediately be de-enrolled from the Friends of Crown Heights after-school program.

13.0 Cut-off time to Accept Students to the Program

The cut-off times to accept students to the program are outlined below.

13.1 Cut-off time for regular days

On regular school days (3:00 to 6:00 p.m.) the cut-off time to accept students who are not escorted in by our COMPASS-NYC staff is 4:30 p.m.

13.2 Common cut-off time for full-day sessions

The cut-off time for admission to full-day sessions is 9:30 a.m. Children will NOT be accepted after this time. The exception is only if the student has had to visit a doctor that morning, *provided that*:

- (1) a COMPASS-NYC staff member has been informed in advance, unless it is an emergency situation, as defined in *Appendix B*.
- (2) the student arrives no later than 11:00 a.m. **and**
- (3) a trip is not scheduled to leave before 11:00 a.m.

Note that **all three conditions must be met.**

13.3 Cut-off time for trip days

- If a trip is scheduled, the cut-off time for admission to a full-day session may be earlier than 9:30 a.m., depending on the scheduled departure time. The departure time and, hence, the cut-off time, will be announced at least 24 hours before the trip day.
- On trip days there is no provision to accommodate any student arriving late for any reason.

13.4 Sign-in on full-day sessions

On full-day sessions, every participant must be signed in and/or properly handed to a COMPASS-NYC staff member by an adult. Friends of Crown Heights will not take responsibility for a student who walks in unescorted by an adult.

14.0 Special Allowances: Regular School Days

There are special provisions for students who either:

- a) need additional help to prepare specifically for city- or state-wide tests
- or
- b) are at risk of failure and, so, need immediate academic remediation.

At the request of the school principal and/or the student's parent(s), such students may be excused from the COMPASS-NYC program, subject to the following conditions.

1. The additional help (supplementary or remedial) must be administered by the feeder school itself (such as P. S. 316, P. S. 705, P. S. 9, etc.), in the school building, for a specified period (in weeks), as specified in the next paragraph.

2. Regardless of the day school students attend (public, private, charter, parochial), they may only skip the COMPASS-NYC program a maximum of three afternoons a week for the purpose of attending a feeder school-administered academic program (supplementary or remedial). They must be present for the COMPASS-NYC program for the remaining two days of the week.
3. The latest arrival time at Friends of Crown Heights #2 is 4:30 p.m., regardless of which day school they attend.

Please note that

there is absolutely no allowance for students to skip the COMPASS-NYC program to participate in a non-core academic activity, such as dance, chess, piano, violin, practice for a show, etc., regardless of who is sponsoring such an activity.

15.0 Special Allowances: Summer Camp

Charter schools and some private schools are in session during part of the Department of Education's summer holiday. COMPASS-NYC participants who attend such schools during this period will be allowed to join our summer camp after school dismissal, provided that trips are not planned.

Please note that, on days when Friends of Crown Heights Summer Camp has a trip, there will be no staff member left to keep late-comers and those attending other programs. Parents must make alternative arrangements for those days. Trip schedules are distributed in advance. If we schedule a trip that is not on the schedule, parents will be informed as soon as possible.

16.0 Discipline

Our staff members do their very best to work with every participant, including 'slow learners' and those with minor discipline problems that can be contained in a normal classroom setting. We appeal for parental cooperation in dealing with the latter cases. However, we do not have the resources to help children who repeatedly engage in activities that are potentially dangerous to themselves or to others, for example, repeatedly stirring up or engaging in fight, somersaulting down the staircase, running around the premises and wandering into the street or excluded areas.

As a policy, we cannot allow any participant to repeatedly deprive others of the chance to participate in, and benefit from, the learning activities which we provide, for example, by a) assaulting or threatening other participants, b) engaging in disruptive behaviors or c) refusing to move during necessary transition from one physical location to another.

We do not have the resources to deal with a student whose behavior requires physical restraint or handling.

Any participant who repeatedly engages in dangerous activities or, in any way, deprives others of the opportunity to benefit from the program will be expelled.

17.0 Policy on disciplining methods

COMPASS-NYC Staff observe the following policy:

- Corporal punishment and humiliating methods of control and discipline are not permitted in this program.
- Food, rest or isolation shall not be used as a means of punishment.
- Denial of use of toilet or water fountain is not permitted in this program. However, if water is available in the classroom, participants will not be allowed to go to a water fountain outside the classroom.

18.0 Foul Language/Obscene Gestures

As an educational institution, the program must set and maintain the right standards of conduct and decency at all times. The program particularly maintains a strict policy regarding the use of foul language and obscene gestures, among both children and adults.

18.1 Issues involving participants

As noted earlier, the program draws on all available resources to help children with minor discipline problems. However, **any participant who uses foul language and/or makes obscene gestures on the premises, or anywhere else in the presence of program staff, will be appropriately disciplined.**

- A first-time offender may be reprimanded and counseled to refrain from such behavior.
- A second-time offender may be suspended for up to two days.
- Any participant who continues to use foul language and/or make obscene gestures after being suspended for a similar behavior may be expelled from the program.

18.2 Issues involving adults

We expect parents and guardians, as well as staff members, of course, to serve as positive role models for children in this program. **Appropriate action will be taken against any parent/guardian who flouts the rules of common decency and civility.**

- The first time a parent/guardian
 - (a) verbally assaults or threatens a staff member or another person's child,
 - (b) uses foul language or
 - (c) makes an obscene gesture on the premises (even if the obscene language or gesture is directed to his or her own child),

this parent/guardian will be barred from the premises for a period of at least one week. [In this case, the participant may continue to be served but somebody other than the offending parent/guardian will have to escort the participant to and from the program.]

- If a parent/guardian repeats the same or similar offense, the services may be terminated.

19.0 Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution

There are proper ways to resolve problems between parents and staff, and between/among children. Proper procedures are outlined in the following subsections.

19.1 Problems between participants

There are basically two common-sense rules to observe regarding conflicts between children:

1. We appeal to parents to refrain from encouraging their children to “get even,” as this often (a) promotes conflict, (b) escalates discipline problems and (c) may even endanger the children’s own well being.
2. If a problem arises between your child and another participant, and you are not satisfied with the counselor’s handling of the matter, **do not confront somebody else’s child**. Instead:

Contact the program director (see contact information on page 3), who will then try to resolve the matter.

19.2 Problems between a parent/guardian and a staff member

If a serious misunderstanding arises between you and a staff member and you sense that temper is high (yours or the staff member’s or both), **do not confront the staff member**. Instead, take the matter to the director in charge of the program.

Note: If the issue arises at the 443 St. Mark’s Avenue site, take the matter to the COMPASS-NYC site director (George C. Oluikpe), as stated in *Section 4.0* of this booklet, or his assistant, **not the school principal**.

19.3 Verbal threat

If a parent/guardian threatens a staff member or another person’s child, one of the following actions will be taken, depending on the seriousness of the threat:

- **The parent/guardian may be barred from the premises for a period of at least one week.** [In this case, the participant may continue to attend the program but somebody other than the offending parent/guardian will have to escort the participant from the program.]

OR

- **The services to the offender may be terminated.** [In this case, the parent/guardian will have to seek after-school care for the participant elsewhere.]

19.4 Physical assault

If a parent/guardian physically assaults a staff member or another person's child, one or both of the following actions will be taken.

- **The services to the offender may be terminated immediately.**

AND/OR

- **Legal action may be taken against the offending parent/guardian.**

20.0 Bullying

Bullying is not tolerated in this program. Our staff members do their best to prevent and discourage bullying. The following actions should be considered as illustrations, **not a comprehensive list**, of what constitutes bullying.

- Teasing, taunting, name calling and other forms of verbal abuse, even if under the pretext of playing.
- Physical attack, such as hitting or kicking, even if under the pretext of playing.
- Snatching objects a) from the rightful owner or b) from the person who has permission to use or keep the object.
- Hiding or damaging somebody else's property, even if under the pretext of playing.
- Creating a condition that could potentially cause injury to another person, such as snatching a chair from under another person, setting a trap or putting foreign substances in somebody's food or drink.
- Creating a condition that could potentially damage somebody else's reputation or cause somebody to be punished unfairly, such as by telling false and malicious tales.

We define bullying as the act of one person taking advantage of another person who a) is (considered) physically/mentally weaker or incapable of self-defense, b) has a rather peaceful demeanor or c) is shy or afraid of being punished for retaliating or complaining.

Please note that, if either

a) acts of bullying (in one form or more) are repeated by an offender against one or more victims,

or

b) a single incident of bullying results in serious injury – physical or psychological -- to the victim,

the offender will be suspended or expelled from the program.

21.0 Permission to Walk Home

The *enrollment/registration* form which every parent fills before the participant is accepted gives parents the choice to permit children to walk home at dismissal. However, the minimum age for a participant to be allowed to walk home unescorted is 15 years. Since this is above the maximum age for our program, it means that

no participant is allowed to walk home unescorted, even if a parent checks the permission box in the enrollment form or writes a special letter requesting an exception.

22.0 Regular Escorts

To pick up a participant from the program, an escort must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The escort must be at least 15 years old (for sign-in and pick-up).
2. The escort's name must be on the escort list provided in the application or added subsequently.

In addition,

3. The program staff and/or the school safety agent (at 443 St. Mark's Avenue site) may demand a valid state-issued photo ID.
4. If a substitute escort (somebody whose name is not on the escort list) has to pick up a participant, the parent must give **written, signed authorization** clearing this substitute escort.
5. The program staff and/or school safety agents (at 443 St. Mark's Avenue) may refuse to release a participant to anybody who, in their best judgment, is unfit to safely take a participant home. [For example, if the escort appears to be too impaired to protect the participant, COMPASS-NYC staff will not release the participant to him/her.]
6. Listing a name of a proposed escort in the application does not mean that it has been/will be approved, even if parents/guardians have not been individually informed of the rejection.

23.0 Trip Escorts

Participants go on trips frequently, especially during summer time and public-school closings. These trips are free to COMPASS-NYC participants.

23.1 Definition

- A trip escort is a person who accompanies an enrolled participant on a trip, whether voluntarily or as a condition for the participant to go on a trip.

- A trip escort may be required as a safety precaution if a participant is persistently uncooperative and/or is considered a high risk to himself/herself or to others.

23.2 Conditions for acceptance as a trip escort

- A trip escort (voluntary or required) must be at least 18 years old. The only exception is when the escort is the participant's biological parent or legal guardian.
- If the trip escort is not the participant's biological parent or legal guardian, he/she must officially be listed as an escort.
- If the trip escort is not listed as a regular escort,
 - the parent/guardian must send a note, **written legibly and signed in ink**, requesting that the person be permitted to escort the participant on the trip and
 - the escort **must** present a valid state-issued, picture ID.

24.0 Dialogue with Parents

Please note that

our contract is solely with the parent (mother, father or legal guardian) who formally registered the student and signed the documents. We can only honor decisions and (reasonable) requests from the person who registered the child.

Here are the implications of this policy.

- Ideally, parents of a child should speak with one voice. We **must not** be subjected to angry outbursts stemming from internal disagreements or misunderstandings between parents.
- During orientations and other opportunities, we do our best to describe and explain program policies and rules and any other concern to a) the individual who registered a participant, b) a parent-appointed (orally or in writing) representative or c) a group consisting of (both parents).
- Thereafter, we **cannot** entertain arguments and demands from any party who was absent from the relevant meeting. For example, we cannot entertain an argument from a father or grandmother who claims a right or special privilege to intervene on behalf of the person who actually registered the participant. (This has created too many conflicts.)
- If a duly-appointed (orally or in writing) representative signs a document on behalf of the person who registered the participant, we **cannot** entertain any subsequent claim of not having received the document or message or not knowing/hearing of it.

- If the person who registered a participant leaves out a particular name (father, mother or other family member) from the pick-up or emergency contact list, whether by mistake or intentionally, we cannot release a participant to the person whose name was left out. **This applies to father, mother, grandparent, etc.**
- The person whose name was left out must deal with the situation without involving or taking his or her anger out on after-school program staff. This is purely an internal matter.

Please parents, help us devote more time to serving your children instead of wasting time on unnecessary paper work.

25.0 Court Orders

Once a person is listed as an escort or emergency contact person and qualifies, as described in *section 23.0*, that person will be allowed to pick up a participant until one of the following conditions emerges:

- a) The escort's name is removed **in writing by the person who registered the participant in the program.**
- b) A **signed court order** is presented **by the person who registered the participant in the program,** prohibiting a particular individual (including a biological parent) from picking up or coming into contact with the participant.

Please note:

- **A standing court order overrides a pick-up permission and request for such.**
- **Once a court order is in effect, we cannot release a participant to the target of the order until we receive an official cancellation of that order.**

26.0 Cost of Trips

Trips are free to friends of Crown Heights' COMPASS-NYC participants only.

26.1 Cost to program participants

- Program participants do NOT pay admission or transportation fees.
- However, a parent is welcome (but not required) to give his/her child pocket money for things like souvenirs or snacks, if available at the location.
- Children who are not enrolled in the program are not accepted on a trip, unless:
 - the parent is accompanying an older sibling who is enrolled in the program,

- the child is no more than two years old, and
- the child sits on the parent's lap while in transit (on a bus), unless empty seats are available.

26.2 Cost to adults

- Each adult (parent/guardian or escort) accompanying a participant on a trip must pay a fee. The amount of fee is established on a trip-by-trip basis. This fee may include transportation and admission costs.
- The adult fee applies whether the escort is traveling voluntarily or as a condition for the participant to go on the trip.

27.0 Homework

We provide homework assistance for a specific length of time (generally 45 minutes to one hour). We understand that this may not always be sufficient time for every participant to complete his/her homework. But, please bear in mind that:

- We are mandated also to engage participants in other educational/enrichment and recreational activities which must be balanced with homework assistance.
- Our counselors encourage every participant to take out his/her homework at the scheduled time and they do their best to assist every participant. However, if a participant insists that he/she has no home work, our counselors are **not** permitted to search the participant's bag for homework or anything else.
- If a participant refuses to do his/her homework, counselors **cannot** make him/her do it. However, counselors have an obligation to notify parents of a participant's repeated refusal to do his/her homework.
- Counselors are not at liberty to extend homework time as a practice. However, under special circumstances (for example, to help a struggling but willing participant), counselors may extend the time by no more than 10 minutes.
- Our counselors **assist** (with explanations and appropriate examples/demonstrations), but **CANNOT** and **MUST NOT** actually do the homework for participants.
- Sometimes participants bring homework that a) appears to have been dredged from the Internet, b) comes with no instructions/ambiguous or confusing directions or c) requires reading materials which our counselors have no access to. In such situations, our counselors cannot help; parents are advised to call the day school teachers for clarifications.

28.0 How We Keep Parents Informed

We do our very best to inform parents of program activities, events and so on. However, note that:

- we do **not** call parents on the telephone with announcements or requests, unless it is an emergency.
- we do **not** fax enrollment forms home (or office).

Instead:

- we send information with participants.
- we give verbal messages or hard copies of notices directly to parents/escorts as they pick up participants.
- we make presentations (when invited) at orientation and parent-teacher meetings.
- we place materials on a table at the lobby or other pick-up point.

We direct information to the parent/guardian who actually filled out the enrollment/application form; we cannot send information to any other party. **If one parent receives information but does not share it with the other, we cannot be held responsible for the omission.**

Note also that

we mail materials to the mailing address supplied in the enrollment/registration form or subsequently provided. **If the mailing address in our record is incorrect and/or we are not made aware of changes, we cannot be held responsible for undelivered mail.**

Please see also *subsection 30.2*, below.

[In the near future, announcements and other pertinent information will be placed on Friends of Crown Heights' website also. The web address will be publicized.]

Parents, we strongly urge you to do your part. For example:

- periodically (at least once a week), call our counselors to find out whether any new materials have been distributed and if there is something you need to know about. Do this more frequently if your child has a habit of not carrying information home.
- encourage your child to take responsibility for bringing messages home to you.
- ask your child (at least three times a week) whether counselors have given him/her something to bring home.
- check your child's bag daily, both for homework and for other materials that may have been sent home.
- when you receive information, read it immediately; do not toss it aside planning to read it later.

- when you receive information, do not assume that it is something you had seen before. We generally do not send the same information repeatedly, unless there is an important update.

29.0 Summary of Parental Obligations

It must be reiterated that parents have several rights as well as obligations. Here is a summary of some obligations that have not been (fully) addressed in the preceding sections.

29.1 Basic responsibilities

A parent has an obligation to:

- inform program staff of planned and emergency absences and to
- respond promptly if called in an emergency situation.

29.2 Contact information

A parent is expected to:

Provide reliable contact information It is absolutely necessary for us to have **reliable** contact information at all times, including mailing address and telephone number(s). If contact information changes, please inform us promptly.

Provide reliable emergency contact information We must have **reliable** emergency contact information at all times. Emergency contact information must include the **full name and telephone number(s)** of each person. Remember that an emergency contact name without a telephone number is useless in the event of an emergency. Ideally, the information should also include the person's relationship to the student.

An emergency contact person must be a mature individual at least 18 years or older. This person must be mature enough to pick up and/or accompany the child to a hospital, if necessary.

29.3 Program identity

A parent must know the name(s) of the program(s) his or her child is enrolled in. Two or more separate after-school programs are often held within the same building. A parent must know the **name(s)** of the program(s) in which his or her child is registered, such as Friends of Crown Heights' COMPASS-NYC school program, Wingspan After-School program, and so on. These are entirely independent entities and Friends of Crown Heights staff members are not responsible for incidents and activities that go on in other programs.

A parent must also distinguish between events that occur during regular school hours from those that occur when students are in Friends of Crown Heights' after-school program. **FOCH staff members must not be held accountable for incidents which occur in regular school settings.**

29.4 Providing clear information for escorts

A parent must provide, at least, the following basic facts to an escort – both regular and emergency:

- a. the **address** of the program site. [In the past many escorts have gone to the wrong address.]
- b. the specific program (if there is a chance of multiple programs being held in the same building) the child is enrolled in,
- c. the **full name** (first and last) by which the child is registered in the program, *not a nickname or pet name*,
- d. the child's **age**, and, if possible grade and
- e. the **parent's full name and contact telephone number**.

It is also a parent's responsibility to clearly brief an escort on the policies and rules, including drop off and pick-up times, as well as 'sign-out' requirements.

Parents are responsible for ensuring compliance with every rule, whether the escort is a biological parent/grandparent, relative, bus/van driver, a friend or a volunteer. Please note that

excuses such as, "I didn't know," "The mother didn't tell me" and "I am just a van driver" will not be accepted.

30.0 Snow Emergency

The COMPASS-NYC program follows the Department of Education's (DOE's) rules regarding snow emergencies. Generally, schools dismiss early during heavy snow storms and schools are cancelled when a heavy snow is expected.

30.1 Unanticipated heavy snow storm

If a heavy snow storm sets in while school is already in session, the DOE may order early dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities. This generally means that the after-school program is also cancelled and parents are urged to pick up their children early. Here are (alternative) steps for parents to take to take.

- a. Watch weather announcements on television, especially *The Weather Channel*, for DOE's announcement regarding potential early dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities.
- b. Listen to pertinent radio stations, such as *Win-Win 10*, for DOE's announcement regarding potential early dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities.
- c. Check your e-mail for messages from the DOE on potential early dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities.
- d. Check your telephone(s) for voice or text messages from the DOE or your child's school for potential early school dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities.
- e. Call the City's 311 hotline for information.

- f. Ask friends, relatives, other parents and colleagues whether they have heard of early dismissal announcements. If so, verify the validity of the information, say, by calling your child's school.
- g. If it is verified that the DOE has announced early dismissal or cancellation of after-school activities,
 - assume that there will be no after-school program for that day and, so,
 - arrange to pick up your child from the regular school.

30.2 Anticipated heavy snow storm

If a heavy snow storm is anticipated, the DOE may cancel classes altogether. This means that the COMPASS-NYC program is also cancelled. This announcement may be issued as early as 24 hours before and as late as one hour prior to regular school time, depending on data available to the meteorologists and advice to the City.

Here are (alternative) steps for parents to take whenever a heavy snow storm is in the forecast.

- a. Watch weather announcements on television, especially *The Weather Channel*, for DOE's announcement regarding potential school cancellation.
- b. Listen to pertinent radio stations, such as *Win-Win 10*, for DOE's announcement regarding potential school cancellation.
- c. Check your e-mail for messages from the DOE on potential school cancellation.
- d. Check your telephone(s) for voice or text messages from the DOE or your child's school for potential school cancellation.
- e. Call the City's 311 hotline for information.
- f. Ask friends, relatives, other parents and colleagues whether they have heard of school cancellation. If so, verify the validity of the information, say, by calling 311 or your child's school.
- g. If it is verified that the DOE has announced school cancellation,
 - assume that there will be no after-school program for that day and, so,
 - arrange for an alternative care for your child for that day.

31.0 Birthday Parties

We allow (and encourage) birthday celebrations, within certain parameters, as outlined below.

31.1 Basic Rules

- a. Birthday parties must be held on Fridays only, regardless of the actual birth date.
- b. Birthday parties must be planned and approved in advance – at least by the Wednesday.
- c. Only immediate family members, no more than five, (including adults and children), may attend the party. We must not overwhelm the classroom.
- d. Birthday parties must last no more than 45 minutes, including setting up time.

31.2 Safety

Some children have various forms of allergy and medical conditions. In order to ensure children's safety and wellbeing, certain activities are not permitted. These include:

- a. **Face painting, tattoos and other chemicals applied on any part of the skin.** The only exceptions to this rule are the child who is celebrating, friends and immediate members who are not enrolled in the COMPASS-NYC Program.
- b. **Foods that pose choking hazards.** Candies, popcorn and hotdogs may be distributed in bags, not to be opened and consumed during the party. Children are not permitted to consume any of these or similar items in the classroom, even if parents of the celebrant offer to take responsibility. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS** to this rule, since Friends of Crown Heights is ultimately responsible for activities taking place in the program.
- c. **Greasy/fatty foods and sodas** are discouraged. These may be only be consumed in very limited quantities.

31.3 Other birthday party prohibitions

- a. **Parents will be held responsible for the conducts of people they bring to the party.**
- b. **Scary scenes:** Movies and costumes that (potentially) scare some children, even if it is just one child, must not be shown/displayed. No child should be removed from the classroom in order to accommodate scary scenes.
- c. **Loud music, inappropriate/violent lyrics and other inappropriate language** are not permitted. If the classroom door must be closed in order to hide the conduct, that is a clear indication that something unacceptable is going on.
- d. **Religious biases:** Activities which favor/promote one religion over others or are potentially offensive or disrespectful to some members of the community are prohibited.
- e. **Respect for the classroom environment:** While children celebrate, a celebrant's parents must ensure that the classroom is not turned into a common playground.

- f. Attire:** While we do not legislate any particular attire, sagging pants, revealing clothes and clothing items that are generally perceived as gang-related (such as red head bands) are prohibited.

The above list is not intended to be comprehensive; it must be used as a guide to determine what else is acceptable and what is not. Parents are urged to adhere to these stipulations.

The policy on birthday parties applies to both 443 St. Mark's Avenue and 671-675 Prospect Place program sites. However, in the case of the 443 St. Mark's Avenue site, birthday parties can only be held in the cafeteria and special permission must be sought in advance for a maximum of five (5) party guests (consisting of only immediate family members) to enter the cafeteria for the maximum duration of 45 minutes.

32.0 Program Closings

The COMPASS-NYC program is open during many public school closings and early dismissals. At the beginning of the school year (September), a comprehensive list of holiday openings and closings is distributed and posted to inform parents of these dates. Please note that **our calendar is based strictly on the DOE's central calendar with respect to closings and early dismissals.**

33.0 Toys, Games and cellular phones

Especially because there is practically no down time in the after-school program (the equivalent of recess time in public schools), students are not permitted to bring toys and games to the program and cellular phones may only be used with the permission of teachers.

33.1 Toys and games

We classify all "play things" generically as toys and games. These include mechanical objects, action figures, dolls, animal figures, balls, balloons and playing cards. Apart from being a serious distraction from program activities, these play things are potent with arguments and fights over loss of, and damages to, as well as ownership of, the objects. As such,

- students are **NOT** permitted to bring toys and games to the program.

33.2 Cellular phones

Students are **NOT** permitted to use the cellular phone (display, play games, listen to music, make/receive calls, send/receive messages, etc.) in the classroom (wherever this may be), **regardless of activity in progress.**

Students are permitted to use their cellular phones on the following and similar conditions only:

- a. If a student is brought to the program by a new escort or one that the parent has concerns about, the student may use the cell phone to inform his or her parent of his/her safe arrival.

- b. Similarly, if a student had some health or other serious issue before or during regular school, he or she may need to update the parent on the matter.
- In either case, if the student makes the call before entering the classroom, he or she may not require the teacher's permission.
 - Once the student enters the classroom, he or she WILL need the teacher's permission to make the call.
 - In either case, the call should be made outside the classroom, both to maintain privacy and to respect other students' space.
- c. During a real emergency students may use their phones to contact their parents to report conditions (safety or injury), where the students are located and/or general condition of the program.
- In this case, the student does not require anybody's permission to use the phone, **provided that doing so would not jeopardize his or other student's safety.**

Appendix A

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms Used in this Handbook

<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<p><i>FOCH</i> <i>or</i> <i>F. O. C. H.</i></p>	<p><u>F</u>riends <u>o</u>f <u>C</u>rown <u>H</u>eights [Educational Centers, Inc.]</p>	<p>A Brooklyn-based non-profit organization providing early childhood education, after-school care and related services under contracts and partnerships with several city, state and federal agencies.</p>
<p><i>COMPASS-NYC</i></p>	<p><u>C</u>OMPrehensive <u>A</u>fter- <u>S</u>chool <u>S</u>ystem of <u>N</u>ew <u>Y</u>ork <u>C</u>ity</p>	<p>This is the new, more-descriptive name for the old after-school program. It encompasses services provided after school on regular school days and on days when the public school is closed, including summer, winter and spring breaks.</p>
<p><i>DYCD</i></p>	<p><u>D</u>epartment of <u>Y</u>outh and <u>C</u>ommunity <u>D</u>evelopment</p>	<p>This is the city agency that funds and oversees the operation of the COMPASS-NYC program, including a summer day camp.</p>
<p><i>DOE</i></p>	<p><u>D</u>epartment <u>o</u>f <u>E</u>ducation</p>	<p>As the name implies, this is the city agency that is responsible for education. The DYCD has a special collaborative arrangement with the DOE in the smooth running of school-based COMPASS-NYC programs.</p>

Appendix B

Definition of *Emergency*

We define an *emergency* as an unplanned, unanticipated and unexpected, sudden event, such as the following:

1. Medical exigency (serious injury, sudden illness or worsened health condition, requiring immediate medical attention) in the family.
2. Physical violence in the family.
3. Arrest of primary caregiver (not just anybody in the family).
4. Eviction from residence.
5. A house fire/serious flood in the home.
6. Other serious structural damages requiring immediate evacuation.

Provided that a parent/guardian presents any of the above circumstances as a reason for early pick-up, the incidence will not be counted in the participant's early pick-up statistic.

Non-emergency situations

Circumstances such as the following do NOT constitute emergencies:

1. We are traveling out of town/state.
2. We are relocating.
3. We have a medical (or dental) appointment.

The mere presence of the word, "medical" or "dental," does not automatically make a visit an emergency. Furthermore, the word, "appointment," makes such a visit a planned trip, which is not an emergency.

4. We are going to a wedding/funeral.
5. A family member whom the participant has not seen is leaving.
6. I/we have to go to the airport to pick up somebody.
7. I cannot go home and come back.
8. I have to go to work.
9. I have to pick up another child.

Early pick-up for any of the above or similar reasons WILL BE counted in the participant's early pick-up statistic.