DREAM CHARter SCHOOL

FAMILY GUIDE 2016 2017
Dear DREAM Families,

Welcome to the 2016 – 2017 school year! I am beyond excited to embark on another year full of memories, laughs and of course lots of learning and growth for our scholars.

As I reflect on what it takes for each one of our scholars to succeed and become the new generation of learners and leaders here in East Harlem, I come to terms with the idea that this work is not easy. Our scholars’ paths to college and the life of their dreams is full of obstacles. In East Harlem, the stark reality is that only 18% of children graduate from high school and are college ready. That is why it is critical now more than ever that we work together to support our scholars at every step along the way.

Your participation in your child’s education is the key factor that will make the difference for your child, and our community. It takes a village to raise a child, and there is no other village, and no other people, that I would rather be in this work with.

I hope that you will use this guide as a menu of options for your family to become involved or stay involved here at DREAM. Whether you become a family leader with our DREAM Family Action Council, attend a family workshop, volunteer for a special event, or work with your child at home to be the best scholar that he or she can be, you hold the key to your child and our community’s future success.

With my sincerest gratitude and respect,

Janice Northia
DREAM Family Engagement Manager
Cell: 917.627.5375
jnorthandia@dreamschoolnyc.org
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FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS

Your scholar is on the road to college, success, and realizing their dreams, but they can’t get there without your support.

STEP 1: ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD COMES TO SCHOOL ON TIME EVERY DAY

The leading cause of academic failure is absenteeism. In order for your child to succeed academically, they must be in school, on-time every day for learning. To help your child succeed:

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Talk with your child about the importance of arriving to school on time everyday and help them plan a route that will help them arrive on time.
- Monitor your child’s attendance record to ensure that they arrive on time everyday.
- Ensure that your child goes to bed in time to get at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Help your child get in the habit of laying out their clothes and packing their backpacks every night.
- Plan all medical and dental appointments and trips when school is not in session.
- Allow your child to stay home only when they are truly sick.
- Contact your child’s teachers and the school social work team if your child seems anxious about going to school for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.

STEP 2: MAKE SURE YOUR SCHOLAR READS AT HOME EVERYDAY.

Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor
of high school graduation and career success. Yet every year, more than 80 percent of low-income children miss this milestone. To make sure your child reads on grade level:

- Ensure that your child reads every single day (even on the weekends!)
- Make reading fun by helping your scholar pick books that interest him/her and are appropriate for his/her reading level.
- Ask questions to help boost your child’s understanding of what he/she is reading. You can ask:
  - What is the plot of the book?
  - Where is it set?
  - Who are the main characters? How would you describe them?
  - What was funny/sad/exciting in the book?
  - Would you recommend the book to a friend?
- Reach out to your child’s teacher for more tips on how to support a struggling reader.

**STEP 3: ESTABLISH A DAILY HOMEWORK ROUTINE**

Homework gives your child a chance to practice the important skills that they learned during the day’s lessons. It also helps teachers understand which concepts scholars grasp and which concepts may need to be retaught. Homework can help you understand more about what your child is learning in school and help your make important connections at home. To help your child excel:

- Schedule a consistent time each day for your scholar to do homework.
- Talk with your child about the importance of homework
- If you have a Middle School scholar, review your scholar’s school
planner with them to ensure that they write down and complete all assignments and meet all deadlines.

- Ensure that your child has a comfortable and quiet place to complete their homework free from distracting noises from the TV, cell phone, etc.
- Praise your child when you see that he/she is giving his/her best effort.
- Sign your child’s homework log everyday.

STEP 4: BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN YOUR CHILD’S LEARNING

Family involvement is a greater predictor of a child’s success than a family’s income. Children earn higher grades, higher test scores, and have higher self-esteem when their families are involved in their learning. To help your child reap these benefits and achieve their dreams:

- Set and uphold high expectations for your child that include that he/she will graduate from college.
- Check your child’s homework folder on a daily basis. Read and respond to all school communications in a timely manner.
- Attend all Family Conferences so that you can understand your child’s academic progress and support your child’s learning at home.
- Stay in touch with your child’s teacher. Reach out to the school should you have any questions, comments, or concerns.
- Contact the school’s Family Engagement or Social Work teams should you experience any difficulties that might prevent you from being involved in your child’s learning.
- Participate in family workshops, family nights, and other school activities designed to provide you with opportunities to play an active role in your child’s education.

STEP 5: SUPPORT YOUR CHILD’S SOCIO-EMOTIONAL GROWTH
You are your child’s first and most important teacher. Your child’s success depends on your ability to model, reinforce, and praise the kind of great behavior that leads to success. Some ways you can do this are to:

- Help your child understand what is expected of him/her by being clear about your own expectations, setting limits, and being consistent.
- Encourage your child to take risks and view mistakes as opportunities to learn.
- Let your child know that you are there to listen to and support them. Dedicate time and space everyday to actively listen to your child.
- Help your child to identify and explore their passions and interests by taking them to museums, concerts, sports games and other activities.
- Encourage your child to make friends and involve them in activities with other children his/her age.
- Support your child’s ability to cope with and solve problems.

Being a Parent/ Caregiver is not easy, but there are lots of people who can support you along the journey! Reach out to the DREAM Family Engagement Dept. should you ever need a helping hand.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

DREAM welcomes family members to attend our Elementary / Middle School Community Gatherings. At Community Gatherings, DREAM previews the upcoming academic units (middle school), builds connections, and reflects upon our shared values as a community. Scholars are awarded special recognitions, and classes engage in interactive activities designed to promote their learning. This year Community Gatherings will take place on the following dates at 8:05 a.m.:
DREAM FAMILY CAFÉS
Following monthly Community Gatherings, DREAM families are invited to have coffee with our Principals to hear the latest school news, share thoughts and concerns and build relationships with school leadership. This year Family Café will take place on the following dates:

PRE K
- Wed, September 14th
- Wed, October 19th
- Wed, November 16th
- Wed, December 14th
- Wed, January 18th
- Wed, February 15th
- Wed, March 15th
- Wed, April 12th
- Wed, May 17th
- Wed, June 7th

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- Mon, September 12
- Mon, October 24
- Mon, November 14
- Mon, December 12
- Mon, February 6
- Mon, March 6
- Mon, April 24
- Mon, May 22
- Mon, June 5

MIDDLE SCHOOL
- Tue, September 6
- Wed, October 5
- Mon, November 7
- Mon, December 5
- Mon, January 30
- Mon, February 27
- Mon, April 3
- Mon, May 1
- Mon, June 5

DREAM CHARTER ADVOCACY
DREAM families work to promote the rights of charter school students and families by participating in charter school advocacy events including an annual trip to Albany to visit state legislators.
CLASSROOM CAPTAINS
Classroom Captains are family volunteers who serve their child’s classroom by communicating important information to other family members and recruiting family volunteers to enhance school-wide and classroom events.

DREAM FAMILY AMBASSADORS
DREAM Family Ambassadors assist our school at school recruitment and enrollment events, serve as school tour guides, and represent our school in the community.

RAISING READERS (PK-5th)
DREAM invites family members into the classrooms to read a book with scholars in an effort to promote literacy and show our scholars that we are a community of readers. This year, DREAM Raising Readers will take place on:

- November 10th
- January 20th
- April 21st

DREAM FAMILY FRIDAYS (PK-5th)
Throughout the year, DREAM invites families into their children’s classrooms to observe classroom learning and participate in reading, math, and other interactive classroom activities. This year DREAM Family Fridays will take place on:

PRE K
- September 23
- October 28
- November 22
- December 21
- January 27
- March 2
- March 31
- April 28
- May 26
- June 16

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- September 30
- December 2
- March 10
DREAM FAMILY ACTION COUNCIL (DFAC)

DREAM Family Action Council (DFAC) is a group of DREAM family leaders who work to ensure that every family at DREAM has a voice in our school. DFAC meets on the third Tuesday of every month (see monthly calendar for dates and times). DFAC supports DREAM Charter School by developing an active and involved family body and also serves as an avenue of communication between families, administration and faculty. Throughout the year, DFAC members develop fun school activities, family projects and fundraising opportunities. DFAC meetings are great places to get the latest school news, provide feedback on important school-wide decisions and take an active role in planning and carrying out school events. DFAC is open to all DREAM families.

Yoselin Flores, President
My name is Yoselin Flores. I am a very proud parent of two scholars at DREAM Charter School. My daughter is 9 years old and she’s going to 4th grade & my son is 4 years old and he’s going on Kindergarten. I am currently DFAC’s President. It has been an honor to be trusted as the voice of all parents at DREAM. It has been a great experience and I am so excited to working with all families this year!

Wagner Mattarita, Vice President
Hello, my name is Wagner and I am the father of Nicolle who is in the second grade at DREAM. I’m the DFAC Vice President and am very involved in different activities in the school. My goal is to help my daughters and all the children achieve their academic success. I look forward to collaborating with all of you in hopes to make growth and help our children become better citizens for this city. I especially look forward to showcasing all of the great talents that come from our beautiful neighborhood.

Natashia Veras, Treasurer
My name is Natashia and I am the proud mother of two DREAM scholars: Vladimir, 8th grade and Eden, 2nd grade. I have served as a Parent Representative on DREAM’s Board of Trustees, as a Classroom Captain, as DFAC President and chaired numerous DFAC events. I have a degree in Literature and am passionate about exposing our scholars to the power that a great education brings. I am excited to continue working with and building relationships with our amazing DREAM families!

Cindy Alier, Recording Secretary
My name is Cindy, I am the mother of two Dream Scholars. Jayden is in the 5th grade & Ava is in the 1st grade. I am the recording secretary of DFAC and have volunteered in many events here at DREAM. I look forward to having a positive and productive school year and getting to meet new scholars and families.
Jacqueline Ortiz, Communications Secretary
My name is Jacqueline Ortiz, I am the communications secretary of DFAC. I have been a part of DREAM since they first opened back in 2008. My eldest son was part of DREAM’s first graduating class of 2016 and my second is now in the 1st grade. Throughout the years I have met a lot of wonderful families and look forward to meeting more of you!

DREAM FAMILY WORKSHOPS

Family workshops are interactive opportunities for families to learn new information and skills, share best practices with others, and form stronger support networks in the school and community. Every year, DREAM offers a variety of workshops based on families’ interests and needs. Current workshop offerings include: (Please check the school monthly calendar for workshop dates.)

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR CHILD STARTS KINDERGARTEN
Kindergarten is an exciting time full of changes as your child adapts to new schedules, new friends, and new routines. Learn how to help your child have a successful entry into Kindergarten and develop a positive attitude about school and learning.

ESTABLISHING HEALTHY Routines FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS
Have you ever struggled to get your child out of bed on a school day? Is getting your child to do their homework like pulling teeth? Get practical tools and tips on how to set your child up for success by establishing healthy routines for school success.

HIGH SCHOOL 101
Learn from DREAM’s Senior Manager of High School Placement about the process for applying and getting accepted to high performing high schools. Find out what you and your child can do now to prepare for a successful high school transition. Learn how to pick the school that best fits your child’s needs and talents.

HOW TO RAISE A READER
How can you help your child learn to love reading? How can you make sure that your child is reading the right books for his/her reading level? What are some strategies to make reading fun?
THE TALK: HOW TO TALK ABOUT PUBERTY AND SEX WITH YOUR ADOLESCENT
Have you struggled to find ways to communicate with your child about their changing body and the importance of healthy relationships and safe sex? Learn from Harlem RBI’s years of experience working with teens around these issues, and get practical tips that you can use today.

SPECIAL EDUCATION 101
What is an IEP? What is the CSE? How can you learn more about the services that your child qualifies for without all the confusing abbreviations? Meet DREAM’s service providers, and find out more about how to navigate your child’s journey through the special education system. Learn more about your parental rights and how to be your child’s best advocate.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW YORK STATE TEST AND HOW TO HELP YOUR SCHOLAR SUCCEED
Join DREAM’s instructional leadership team for a workshop that focuses on the 3rd - 8th grade New York State Exam. Learn what DREAM is doing to prepare scholars during the school day, and what you can do at home to ensure your scholar’s success.

CHARTER SCHOOL 101
Find out what makes a Charter School different than a public school. Learn about your rights as a Charter parent, and get involved in the fight to protect your child’s right to an excellent education.

COLLEGE SAVINGS 101
Learn about the costs of college, and how you can start preparing now to finance your scholar’s college career!

CYBERBULLYING: PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE
Learn best practices about how to set limits with your pre-teen when it comes to technology, and get concrete strategies to use to prevent cyberbullying.

NUTRITION AND WELLNESS WORKSHOPS
Learn how to promote healthy eating and exercise in your household and reduce the presence of diabetes and obesity in our community.
FAMILY EDUCATION CLASSES

At DREAM, we know that our combined success depends on our ability to build a community of learners, invested in continuing our search for knowledge and growth. That is why in addition to offering classes to scholars and staff, DREAM also offers classes to families, based upon families’ interests and needs. (The ability to offer classes depends on the number of families interested. Please contact the Family Engagement Office if you are interested in participating in classes during the 2016-2017 school year.)

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)
Would you like to improve your English to better communicate with your scholar’s teachers, help your child with their homework, and have better job opportunities? DREAM provides families with resources to access English classes to scholar’s caregivers.

FINANCIAL LITERACY
DREAM partners with Harlem RBI and the Neighborhood Trust to offer free financial literacy courses that help families identify their credit scores, create financial plans, and more.

THE PARENTING JOURNEY
DREAM partners with Harlem RBI to build safer, stronger families by offering the Parenting Journey workshop series designed to help parents build the inner strength, resources, and social networks necessary for success.

DREAM CHARTER SCHOOL LEGAL CLINIC
DREAM partners with Volunteers of Legal Service and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom to provide on-site, one time, free legal consultations to DREAM families dealing with housing, immigration, public benefits and other legal issues throughout the year. Legal clinics take place the last Tuesday of every month at 8:05 a.m. To register to attend the free legal clinic fill out and return the legal clinic intake form with the Family Engagement Dept.

DREAM FAMILY SPECIAL EVENTS

CURRICULUM NIGHT & BACK TO SCHOOL PICNIC (PK-8TH)
Thursday, September 22 – 4:20 PM
Visit your scholar’s classroom and learn from your child’s teachers about what your child will learn throughout the year, how your child’s
work will be assessed, and what you can do to help your child succeed at DREAM. Then join your child’s class on the Field of Dreams for a fun filled Back to School Picnic!

**HARVEST FEST (PK-5th)**
Thursday, October 20 - 5:00 PM
Harvest Fest is an annual DREAM Family event where DREAM scholars and their families play harvest games, make harvest arts and crafts and enjoy a wonderful time with fellow DREAM families and friends.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL CULTURE FAIR (6th-8th)**
Thursday, November 17 – 5:45 PM
As part of their unit on culture, Middle School scholars explore their families cultural backgrounds and give presentations to the larger community about a specific topic of interest.

**WINTER POTLUCK (PK-5th)**
Thursday, December 8 – 5:45PM
The Winter Potluck is a time for DREAM families to gather with DREAM staff to share a delicious meal and build a strong school community.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY CELEBRATION (PK-8th)**
Friday, January 13
At this celebration, DREAM community reflects upon the life and dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and how we can all work together to keep that dream alive today.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL POETRY NIGHT (6th-8th)**
Thursday, March 9 – 5:45 PM
As part of their unit on identity, Middle School scholars write poetry and create art to express who they are. Families are invited to visit the Middle School gallery where scholars’ works will be exhibited, and sip a cup of hot cocoa during our scholars’ open mic night.

**FAMILY LITERACY NIGHT**
Wednesday, April 12 – 4:20 PM
Every year DREAM develops fun-filled Family Literacy Nights designed to promote the joy of reading and create life-long learners! Past Family Literacy Nights have included Reading Zoo, Travel back in time, Solving the Mystery of the W.I.N. Drum, Dress Like Your Favorite Literary Character, and Camp Out With A Good Book.

**DREAM DAY (PK-8th)**
Tuesday, June 20
DREAM Day is a day full of fun water games, and team-building activities for the entire DREAM community! Families are invited to join scholars and staff at Manhattan College for this annual event!
FAMILY CONFERENCES
DREAM holds three mandatory Family Conferences a year for families and an additional Academic Progress Conference mid year or select scholars in need of extra support. Family Conferences are important opportunities for families to connect with teachers to receive the latest report card, discuss academic growth, and develop strategies to support learning at home and in school. Families are encouraged to remain in communication with teachers throughout the year, and can request additional meetings via email or phone at any time to discuss their child’s progress.

- Tuesday, November 8 (All Scholars)
- Thursday, January 25 (Select Scholars)
- Wednesday, April 5 (All Scholars)
- Monday, June 19 (All Scholars)

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FAMILY CONFERENCES

1. Talk with your child before the conference about how things are going at school.
2. Share information with teachers about your child’s strengths and interests.
3. Ask Questions:
   - What will my child be expected to learn this year?
   - Are there standards in place that will help measure my child’s growth?
   - Can you show me an example of my child’s work?
   - How will my child be evaluated?
   - How will I be made aware of my child’s progress?
   - What can I do to support my child’s learning at home?
4. Create a plan with your child’s teacher with specific steps for how to collaboratively work with your child to ensure your child’s academic success.
5. Follow up with your child’s teacher after the conference to track your child’s progress and revise your work plan.
### WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?

All DREAM Staff can be reached at 212.722.0232.

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Who to speak to at DREAM</th>
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| I have a question about schoolwork, tests, class field trips, homework, and anything that takes place inside of the classroom. I want to know how I can best support my child’s learning at home. | **Your Child’s Teacher**  
Email – First letter of teacher’s first name followed by their last name @dreamschoolnyc.org  
Ex: Ima Teacher – iteacher@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have a question about music and theater, physical education, science, or art at DREAM. I want to know more about a project, special field trip, or other issue within a particular specials class. | **Music & Theater Specialists:**  
Cherelle Hale (K-3)  
chale@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Kristen Frick (4-8)  
kfrick@dreamschoolnyc.org  
**Health & Wellness Specialist:**  
Christine Scott  
cscott@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Ashlee Austin  
aaustin@dreamschoolnyc.org  
**Art Specialists:**  
Erica Jones (ES)  
ejones@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Sophia Spector (MS)  
spector@dreamschoolnyc.org  
**Science Specialists:**  
Alexandra Gwynn (K-3)  
agwynn@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Prince Umegbolu (4-6)  
pumegbolu@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Lisa Killary (7-8)  
lkillary@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have a question about modifications being made to address my child’s special learning needs or questions about my child’s services and supports. | **Student Support Coordinators:**  
Susie Purviance (ES)  
spurviance@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Jacqueline Begnoche (MS)  
jbegnoche@dreamschoolnyc.org |
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| I have a question concerning student enrollment, the lottery, student   | Operations Coordinator: Sharae McDuffie  
| records, school uniforms, transportation, or school lunch. I need to   | smcduffie@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                          |
| advise someone of my change of address/phone number or update my        | Family Support Coordinator: Marilyne Tirado  
| emergency contacts.                                                     | mtirado@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                             |
| I have questions about DREAM University, DREAM’s MS summer program.     | Dean of Students: Brett Fazio  
|                                                                        | bfazio@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                              |
| I have a question about the school’s culture, discipline policy,        | Dean of Students: Brett Fazio  
| behavioral expectations, suspensions or other disciplinary actions. I    | bfazio@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                              |
| want to know how the school deals with bullying.                        | Assistant Dean of Students: Angel Lopez  
|                                                                        | alopez@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                             |
| I would like to discuss an important or sensitive issue that I feel is  | School Social Workers: Jasmin Berrios  
| affecting my child and family. I need help to find a support or program  | jberrios@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                          |
| in the community for me or my family. I have a concern about my child’s | Jenna Berman  
| feelings or behavior and need to speak to someone other than my         | jberman@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                            |
| child’s teacher.                                                        |                                                                                        |
| I have a question about how I can be involved as a family member at     | Family Engagement Coordinator: Marilyne Cartagena  
| DREAM Charter School. I want to know more about DREAM’s legal clinic     | mcartagena@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                         |
| and/or other community resources. I need help with an issue and don’t    | 917-837-2276                                                                         |
| know who to go to for help.                                             | Family Engagement Manager  
|                                                                        | Janice Northia  
|                                                                        | jnorthia@dreamschoolnyc.org                                                          |
| I have a question about Harlem RBI’s after-school or summer programming. | After-School Campus Manager (ES): Emmerson Yaxte  
|                                                                        | eyaxte@harlemrbi.org                                                                 |
|                                                                        | After-School Campus Manager (MS): Jillian Green  
<p>|                                                                        | <a href="mailto:eyaxte@harlemrbi.org">eyaxte@harlemrbi.org</a>                                                                  |</p>
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| I have a question concerning DREAM’s school wide policies and operations including attendance, facilities, and security. | **Senior Manager of Operations:** Andrew Kile  
akile@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have a question about how to choose the high school that is right for my son/daughter. I want to know what my child’s options are. | **Senior Manager of High School Placement:** Hannah Gray Miller  
hgmiller@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have a question concerning the school’s curriculum or instructional approach, report cards, NYS ELA and Math Tests, other school wide assessments. I have spoken to my child’s teacher but still have a concern. | **Academic Deans:**  
Renee Bernardo (K-2)  
bkapten@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Jamie Platzer (3-5)  
jplatzer@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Elizabeth Solaimanian (MS)  
esolaimanian@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have a question about DREAM’s overall performance and goals. I have spoken to the Academic Deans, but still have questions. | **Principals:**  
Christine Wicks (Pre K)  
cwicks@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Kara Brockett (ES)  
kbrockett@dreamschoolnyc.org  
Marjorie Cass (MS)  
mccass@dreamschoolnyc.org |
| I have spoken to the appropriate person, but still have a concern about a DREAM policy, procedure, or staff member that I need help resolving. | **Head of School:**  
Eve Colavito  
ecolavito@dreamschoolnyc.org |
PROCESS FOR SHARING CONCERNS AND FINDING SOLUTIONS

STEP 1
Request a meeting with the staff person involved at a mutually agreeable time to directly communicate your concern and resolve the situation.

STEP 2
If you feel that your concern has not been resolved after this meeting, request a meeting with the School Principal.

STEP 3
If after meeting with the School Principal, you wish to seek further assistance, you may request to meet with the Head of School. Your request should be directed to the Manager of School Administration who will schedule a meeting.

We are at all times models for our scholars and school community, and ask that all parties model DREAM’s values of diversity, respect, effort, enthusiasm, mindfulness, and teamwork at all times, especially when sharing concerns and finding solutions.

The Family Engagement Department is available to answer questions and assist families throughout this process.

Janice Northia
917-627-5375
jnorthia@dreamschoolnyc.org