



Please read through this with your child.

2023-2024 ANNUAL PARENT INFORMATION LETTER

WELCOME!

With our return to full-time in-person learning last year, we began the process of getting back to what we do best: providing a rich learning environment where Renaissance students continue to experience a project-based academic curriculum, a full spectrum of art classes, and the opportunity to grow into confident global citizens through experiences that take them outside the classroom and into our great city.

We are pleased to hold a virtual Principal's Town Hall on Thursday, September 14, from 5 pm - 7 pm. **Please do your best to attend as important information will be shared.** In addition to receiving important information about the upcoming school year, you will have an opportunity to meet with Principal Stacey and ask questions. The zoom meeting is linked [here](#).

Below please find a list of announcements, links, and attachments that need your immediate attention. Following that, we have prepared a full outline of your child's educational experience at Renaissance that we encourage you to read and share with your child.

❖ **DARE TO PREPARE DAYS SEPT 7-8 – Required for Middle School/High School students. Attendance will be taken.**

- Grades 6, 7, and 8 - Thursday, September 7
 - 6th grade – 8:30 to 10:30 AM
 - 7th grade – 10:30 to 12:00 PM
 - 8th grade – 1 PM to 2:30 PM
- Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 - Friday, September 8
 - 9th grade – 8:30 to 10:30 AM
 - 10th grade – 10:30 to 11:30 AM
 - 11th grade – 12:30 to 1:30 PM
 - Seniors – 1:30 to 2:30 PM

Students will be dismissed at their grade's designated end time as shown in the schedule above.

❖ ****NEW THIS YEAR!** WELCOME HOURS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILIES SEPT 7-8 Required for families. Families should pick one session. Students do not need to attend.**

- Thursday, September 7 – 9 AM to 12 PM
- Friday, September 8 – 2 PM to 5 PM

Families will drop off supplies, complete school forms, claim their Family Pick-Up Cards for SY23-24, and receive a t-shirt for their student(s)!

**** Please note that our in-person curriculum night will be held on Thursday, September 21st from 5 PM to 8 PM. At curriculum night, families will meet their child's teacher(s), learn about the grade-specific expectations, and more. More information will be shared in separate communications.*

First Day of School for PreKindergarten: Friday, September 8, 2023, from 9 AM to 11:30 AM

The First FULL Day of School for ALL Students: Monday, September 11, 2023.

❖ **Food Service:**

- **Breakfast** will be provided as grab-and-go to all students.
- **Lunch** will be served in the classrooms for PreK and K; the cafeteria will be used for students in Grades 1-12 to provide a greater choice of wholesome meals. Please see below for more information about our outdoor lunch program for students in Grades 7-12.
- **Supper** will be provided as a to-go meal to any student who wants one.
- **Water Bottles** are not provided as part of meals. Please provide a water bottle for your child if desired. Water is the **only** beverage allowed in the building.

❖ **Arrival and Dismissal Information** a detailed document will be provided separately.

❖ **Busing Information** is still being finalized.

❖ **Metrocard** distribution will take place on “Dare to Prepare” student attendance days for those who qualify. Please contact Pat Poljanic at patriciapoljanic@rencharter.org with any questions.

❖ **Update your contact information!**

- **Please remember to update us on any changes to your child’s emergency contact information, address, phone number, email, medical needs, etc.**
 - The best method of updating information is to make the adjustments directly in your [PowerSchool account](#). Alternatively, you can send an email to Michelle Cardona at michellecardona@rencharter.org.
 - Downloadable forms may be accessed [online here](#).

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE BE ABLE TO REACH YOU OR ANOTHER RESPONSIBLE ADULT SHOULD THERE BE AN EMERGENCY WITH YOUR CHILD.

➤ **Please confirm that your email address is accepting our messages!**

- Check that your email address is receiving BrightArrow emails and text messages.
- Check your spam folder and your email settings to make sure your account is not blocking those messages, or that your voicemail is not full and can receive messages.
- Do not **willingly** block our messages as you will miss important information.
- For questions regarding PowerSchool and/or BrightArrow parent information systems, please email Dawn Cahill at dawncahill@rencharter.org.

❖ **Chromebooks** - We want our students to be prepared for possible remote learning at any time during the year. If your student requires a Chromebook, please follow the steps outlined below. **Reminder:** This device is to be kept at home and used strictly for homework or remote learning.

- [Digital Equity & Learning Preferences Survey](#) - Families **must** complete this survey prior to requesting a Chromebook. This survey can be completed on your child's PowerSchool account or over the phone by calling the main office at 718-803-0060 ext.0.
- [Chromebook Request Form](#) - the next step will be to submit a [Chromebook Request Form](#). The completed form may be submitted online or emailed to Omar Rafael at omarrafael@rencharter.org.
- [Chromebook Pickup](#) - lastly, families will be notified individually when their child's Chromebook is ready to be picked up.
- ❖ **Supply Lists and Summer Assignments** are posted on our [website](#) on the [Supply Lists](#) page, located under the [Parents](#) tab.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vaccination continues to be the best mitigation strategy against COVID-19.

- ❖ Currently, approximately 75 % of students eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19 are either fully vaccinated or partially vaccinated. We would like to see that number grow significantly before school begins. If your child is not yet vaccinated against COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to make an appointment for vaccination at vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 311 to find a vaccine site near you.

Please report any positive COVID-19 test results immediately to the school so we can provide the most current school guidance.

- ❖ **Other important things to note:**
 - **Stay home when sick!** Anyone with a fever should stay home until 24 hours after being fever-free without the use of medication, or until their doctor says it is okay to go back to school. Please send a copy of any doctor's notes to the attention of Michelle Cardona, michellecardona@rencharter.org.
 - Staying up-to-date with [vaccinations](#) is required to **avoid exclusion** from school, as per the Department of Health.
 - **Glasses, hearing aids, and any other assistive device** that your child needs **must** be brought **and** worn at school daily to avoid detrimental effects on their learning.
 - Please contact our school nurse, Lorraine Huang, directly to discuss any health issues, or need for based-health accommodations, or medicine at lorrainehuang@rencharter.org.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

- ❖ Our team of mental health care providers is always prepared to provide socio-emotional support for our students and staff.

- ❖ Renaissance continues to provide our staff with professional development to build a common understanding of trauma and resilience, anti-bias and anti-racism training, and culturally responsive teaching.
- ❖ Our school has a robust morning meeting and advisory program that incorporates mindfulness, social-emotional wellness, and empathetic awareness, in addition to academic counseling and stress-relieving tactics and exercises.
- ❖ Our school will continue to offer and expand mental health and safety workshops for our families and the greater community!

IMPORTANT FAMILY INFORMATION:

- ❖ The following information is available on our website:
<https://rencharters.org/trcs-jackson-heights>: Annual School Report Card, School Attendance Policy, Parents Bill of Rights, Discipline and other Policies and Procedures manuals; Charter School Annual Report and other documents of accountability.
- ❖ All families have access to copies of the [Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy](#), the [Dignity for All Students Policy](#), and the [Child Internet Protection Act policy](#) on our Student Support Page.
- ❖ In addition, you can find our [Family Handbook](#) and the [High School Handbook](#). The Policy for Filing Complaints and Grievances can be found in the Family Handbook.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR:

- ❖ **Attendance, updating your emergency contact information, home address, phone number, or email address:**
 - Michelle Cardona, michellecardona@rencharter.org
 - Pierina Arias, pierinaarias@rencharter.org
- ❖ Requesting a Chromebook: Omar Rafael, omarrafael@rencharter.org
- ❖ PowerSchool Questions: Dawn Cahill, dawncahill@rencharter.org
- ❖ Questions about School Food: Ed Pasch, edpasch@rencharter.org
- ❖ Questions in reference to **lower** elementary school **afterschool programming options** (prek-4th), Maria Mero, maria.mero@82ndst.com
- ❖ Questions in reference to **upper** elementary school **afterschool programming options** (5th-10th), Julio Vazquez, julio.vazquez@82ndst.com
- ❖ For any other questions, Carolina Caicedo, carolinacaicedo@rencharter.org
- ❖ For a full list of our school directory, please visit our website at <https://rencharters.org/trcs-jackson-heights/staff-directory/>.

LIFE AT RENAISSANCE!

PART 1: *The School Day*

First Full Day of School for **ALL** students - **Monday, September 11** - students are expected to be ready to learn by **8:18 am**.

Note: Every Monday dismissal takes place at **1:31 pm** for grades K-12.

Arrival and Dismissal Times – 2023-2024 School Year

- ❖ Pre-k arrival begins at 8:13 AM. Students must be escorted by a parent or guardian until the start of class. Families should line up outside the pre-k classroom in an orderly fashion. The start of class is 8:20 AM. Pre-k dismissal will be at 3:10 pm every day.
- ❖ Kindergarten through 12th grade will have a staggered arrival time that will begin at 8:00 am. The school day officially ends at 3:10 p.m., or in some cases 4:00 pm for 7th-12th graders.

A detailed per-grade arrival & dismissal schedule will be provided before the start of the school year.

- ❖ Individualized schedules will be provided to accommodate targeted instructional plans that may utilize 1st period (7:29-8:15 AM) and 10th period (3:13-4:01 PM) for various 7th-12th grade electives, AP, Skills, Gym classes, or for short-term tutoring as needed.
- ❖ **Kindergarten-12th grade** dismissal on Mondays ONLY, takes place at 1:31 pm due to teacher/staff professional development.

Arrival and Dismissal Safety Protocols - 2023-2024 School Year

1. Your child is assigned a specific door to enter the building, according to grade level
 - a. PreK parents may escort children to their classrooms - only 1 adult per family may enter the building.
 - b. All other grades will be escorted by school staff.
 - c. Parents, during dismissal, you will be asked to come in and out of the building quickly. Please refrain from engaging teachers in conversations at arrival or dismissal. Please [email your teacher](#) to set up a time to meet if you have concerns that need to be addressed.
 - d. ***If your student is late for Arrival***, you will be required to wait until all students have entered the building. This is when we will have staff available to escort your child. All late arrivals are required to enter via the main entrance on 81st Street.
2. During Dismissal:
 - a. **ONLY adults with Family Pickup Cards will be allowed into the building.**
 - b. *If you arrive late to pick up your elementary school child*, please go directly to the 3rd-floor stage area on the elementary school side of our building. PreK parents may have to wait for their children to be escorted upstairs.
 - c. *If you arrive after 3:20 PM*, please go directly to the main office.

Note: You are expected to pick up your child **ON TIME** every day. Late pick-ups should be a rare event. Consistent late pick-ups are **NOT** acceptable.

After-school programs will be available starting at dismissal time. See below for more information on After-School Programming.

Please note that 1st and 10th-period programming may change throughout the year based on the academic needs of each student. If your child is scheduled for 1st or 10th period, it is a mandatory part of their school day. Your 7th-12th-grade child may be dismissed at 3:10 pm on some days and at 4:00 pm on others. You will be promptly notified of any changes.

Food Service

1. All school meals are prepared and cooked on-site!
 2. We are pleased to inform you that Renaissance has been approved to implement a Community Eligibility Meal Program for the current school year, which means that ALL enrolled students are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast, lunch, and supper at **no charge** to your household. To sustain the program, each family must submit a completed [CEP form](#) at the beginning of each school year. We are also pleased to announce that this year, we have been provided funding to provide fresh, seasonal, and healthy fruits and vegetables to your child. You can find more information on our website available in English and Spanish, on the [Food Service](#) page.
- ❖ **Outdoor Lunch Program (Grades 7-12th).** Outdoor lunch privileges are for students in grades 7-12 and require parental consent and good citizenship in regards to behavior, academic standing, good attendance, and little to no tardiness to school.

Part 2: After School

PK-4 After-School Center: Our long-time after-school partner, [82nd Street Academics](#), will again run early childhood and lower elementary after-school programs off-site at their location. These programs will begin at the start of the school year, and require pre-registration. The program operates on Monday from 1:45 PM and on Tuesday-Friday from 3:10 PM, until 6:00. Please visit [82nd Street Academics](#), email Maria Mero at maria.mero@82ndst.com, or call 718-457-0429 ext. 0 with questions or to register. **These programs are fee-based; details may be found by contacting the program directly.**

Upper Elementary through 10th grade: Students in grades 5-10 are eligible for **free** after-school programming provided by 82nd Street Academics and supported by The After School Corporation (TASC), The Renaissance Charter School, the New York City Council, and NYC SONNYC. The program features homework help and enrichment activities taught by a group of carefully selected 82SA staffers and outside teaching artists and specialists. This program begins on **Monday, September 18th**. Please note that there are separate forms for [Grades 5, 9, and 10](#) and [Grades 6-8](#). Please refer to our [website](#) for more information and contact Julio Vazquez at julio.vazquez@82ndst.com.

* **Note:** seats are limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Remote Learning Expectations - only if our school is unavailable for in-person instruction.

The school will only implement remote instruction due to reasons that require our building to be inaccessible. Snow days may continue to be remote-learning days, as they were last year.

Should remote learning become necessary, we will ask you to go over the attached [student remote-learning expectations document](#) with your child. Although we do not anticipate having to revert to remote learning for long periods of time, we are prepared to bring the best practices learned from last year's remote learning program to best accommodate all learners. Your child will receive a schedule that will mimic the school day as it would happen inside the building.

PART 2: "Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York"

The Renaissance Charter School Mission Statement

"The Renaissance Charter School is based on the conviction that a change in the destiny of a single individual can lead to a change in the destiny of a community, nation, and ultimately humankind. Its mission as a PreK-12 school is to foster educated, responsible, humanistic young leaders who will through their own personal growth spark a renaissance in New York. Its graduates will be global citizens with an abiding respect for peace, human rights, the environment, and sustainable development."

Towards accomplishing this goal The Renaissance Charter School also referred to as 'TRCS', has built a culture of community, cooperation, and collaboration. Its core belief is that a dynamic learning environment that prizes friendship and deep respect will open both hearts and minds of students. In this type of environment, students will meet all standards as a matter of course.

In a small, village-like atmosphere, teachers team-teach, classes are arranged in clusters, and parents play a central role. The school operates under a collaborative governance model in which all constituencies have a voice. TRCS reflects the spectrum of the different ethnic backgrounds, talents, and abilities that exist in New York City.

The study of New York is the central curricular theme of TRCS. Traditional subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social studies are related to the study of geography, history, economics, culture, and the people of New York. Rooted in their community, as they advance, students engage in community involvement activities and work on individual and small group projects to prepare them for the work of the 21st century. Since the arts are so central to New York, students take classes in dance, music, fine arts, and drama.

The spirit of leadership can best be transmitted through example. TRCS staff members model collaborative leadership which is characterized by compassion and responsible dialogue. Through this process, wise decision-making emerges. TRCS is committed to graduating competent individuals, powerful thinkers, engaged citizens, and life-long learners who will create the renaissance of New York.

Advisory Program

All students in grades 6-12 have an advisory period, and all PK-5th students have a structured morning meeting time to support community and relationship building, social-emotional skill-building, academic advising, study skill development, and community service. These areas connect to our school's mission of humanistic global citizenship and leadership.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Our students have experienced what will probably be the most challenging time of their lives these last few years. We will continue to bear that in mind as we maintain expanded mental health services for our students in every grade.

Under any circumstances, our students need support, understanding, caring, and trust to move forward academically, emotionally, and socially. We believe that all people want to succeed and that if they can do it, they will do it. Our strategy has always been to support positive classroom cultures and strong expectations for how students conduct themselves and treat others. This year is no different; we will continue to support our student's growth and success through preventative and educational efforts. As always, we need your help to make this work.

How to Support Your Child

Speak with your child to ensure they understand that we are here to help and support them in their learning and their mental, emotional and social health. If your child is struggling with any aspect of her or his school experience, please make sure he or she lets us know. If he or she is hesitant to let us know, please reach out to us yourselves. We will be most successful in helping each other through this difficult time by working together.

It is also important that your child(ren) understand that their classmates struggle right alongside them during the pandemic and in many cases, on an ongoing basis and that everyone needs acceptance, support, care, and understanding. Teasing, excluding, name-calling, or any other mistreatment is not acceptable and will result in mandatory collaboration efforts between school personnel and parents and/or guardians. Our community stands up for each other, shows we care about one another, works through our differences, and problem-solves together. Let's support our students' resilience with encouragement and strength.

Please help your child be prepared to engage in meaningful participation, equipped with assignments, supplies, knowledge, and open minds. Help them understand and abide by community standards, recognizing that rules help communities function for the benefit of all. Make sure they know you expect them to take responsibility for missteps and be prepared to learn from their mistakes. Let's strive to recognize the efforts of our young people with compassion and empathy, encourage their growth, and support them in working through the sometimes difficult process of growing up. Please, have a look at our detailed expectations in our [Student Code of Conduct](#) document.

Parent Support

Renaissance believes that parents are full partners in the education of their children, and as such, we welcome parent input and collaboration in their child's academic success and in living the mission and vision of our school. Parents are encouraged to become active members in the school Parent Association (PA) and are encouraged to serve on the Collaborative School Governance Committee (CSG) or as the parent-representative on the school's governing Board of Trustees (BOT). We rely on parents to bring their talents and expertise to support our school.

In return, we provide parent workshops on a variety of subjects, in partnership with the PA and other organizations. For example, we have held workshops on Remote Learning, Social-Emotional Wellness during the pandemic, organizing workspaces at home, talking to your teen, fixing kid-friendly nutritious meals and snacks, and others. Our Parent Coordinator, Carolina Caicedo, carolinacaicedo@rencharter.org, is here to help you.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is **NOT** permitted inside the building. This includes during transitions, lunch, and in the classroom. Headphones are **NOT** allowed without prior teacher approval, for instructional use only.

If your student is found to be in violation of these policies, the electronic device(s) will be confiscated. The device(s) will then only be returned to a parent or legal guardian **at the end of the school day**, from 3:10 pm to 4 pm. Note: If the device cannot be picked up during this time, it can be picked up the following day during all school hours.

If you need to reach your child, please call the school at 718-803-0060 ext. 0. If your child needs to contact you, the parent or guardian, they can use the phone in the main office.

Bullying Prevention Policy

The Renaissance Charter School's commitment to creating humanistic leaders of its students means that bullying is not tolerated within our walls, online in the digital classroom, or on social media. **We define bullying as the repeated exposure, over time, to intentional, negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, in which the subject of the treatment has difficulty defending themselves.**

Our community's rules about bullying are:

- (1) We will not bully others;
- (2) We will try to help others who are being bullied;
- (3) We will include others who are being left out; and
- (4) We will tell an adult at school and at home if we witness bullying.

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance will be taken first thing in the morning. In addition, all 5th-12th graders will have their attendance taken at each period class.

TRCS strives for student excellence at all levels. We consider academic achievement, character development, and social responsibility integral facets of success. Maintaining excellent attendance and being on time for school are critical elements in demonstrating and/or supporting these. Students should only be absent for illness, family emergencies (such as a death in the family), or for other valid reasons that prohibit the student from coming to school. These are considered excused absences. We do not consider well-care doctor or dental visits to be valid reasons for absence. These visits should be scheduled during the days and times when school is not in session whenever possible. **Additionally, family vacations should not be scheduled during times when school is in session, including *Rensizzle Week*.**

All absences must be documented by a parent phone call/email/note. Parents are also encouraged to contact the main office when their child will be absent. In many cases, Renaissance staff may call your home to verify your child's absence. Students who have excessive absences (attendance below 95%) are considered to be at-risk for attendance which is one component of class grades and promotion.

You will be contacted by email each time your child is marked late or absent. In the event your child is absent, it is your (and your child's) responsibility to obtain and complete make-up work. We encourage you to establish contact with other students and families in your child's class to help with this process.

Chronic, unexcused lateness and absences are considered educational neglect. As mandated reporters, we are obligated to notify the Administration for Children's Services in case of educational neglect. It is a parent's responsibility to work with school staff to help their child maintain excellent attendance.

If you anticipate a problem with your child's attendance, please contact Michelle Cardona at (718) 803-0060, ext. 117, or via email at michellecardona@rencharter.org immediately so we can work with you and your child before this becomes a serious issue. We are here to help you!

PART 3: Student, Parent, Teacher, Staff Collaboration; How We Communicate

Renaissance prides itself on an active and involved parent body. There are opportunities to make real contributions to the community through involvement in the PA, attending Parent-Teacher Conferences, participating in the CSG, attending public Board of Trustee meetings, or just getting involved in one of the many volunteer opportunities. There are many ways to stay connected and involved in your child's education. If you would like to meet with any staff member, you must **make an appointment** by email or phone by calling the main office at 718-803-0060 ext. 0.

School-Wide Communication

Communication starts at the most basic level, between students and teachers. Remember to contact your child's teacher as the first step to getting information or resolving an issue relating to your child's education.

Our carefully developed communication protocol ensures that you are getting the most timely and accurate information. It is imperative to follow the steps listed below to ensure a prompt response. Neglecting to do so may result in a delay.

1. Talk to your child's teacher;
2. if the issue is not resolved, talk to the cluster leader;
3. if the issue is not resolved, talk to the respective Assistant Principal;
 - a. Cluster one: Suzanne Arnold, suzannearnold@rencharter.org
 - b. Cluster two: Daniel Fanelli, danielfanelli@rencharter.org
 - c. Cluster three: Victor Motta, victormotta@rencharter.org
4. if the issue is not resolved, contact the Principal, Stacey Gauthier; and finally,
5. an issue can be brought before our Board of Trustees.

Additional Contact Information and titles can be found on our website at <https://rencharters.org/trcs-jackson-heights/staff-directory/>.

If you are unsure who to contact, feel free to email our Parent Coordinator, Carolina Caicedo, at carolinacaicedo@rencharter.org.

****Important--Please Note**** Do NOT reply to a Notification BrightArrow@ email or text. The system is not set up to get a message to school personnel in a timely manner.

Our website, [The Renaissance Charter School | \(rencharters.org\)](http://The Renaissance Charter School | (rencharters.org)) is packed with information for parents and friends of Renaissance. Please take some time to explore the site, especially the [Parents](#) pages which include [Notices and Events](#) for the most timely announcements, [Supporting Your Child](#), [Food Service](#), [Parent Association](#), [Student Support](#), and [After-School](#). Please check back frequently for updates.

Parent Information and Notification

According to state and federal law, TRCS is required to annually notify parents and guardians as to their rights of access to their child's educational records. To read The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy please access our [Policies and Procedures Manual](#), p. 3, on our website. FERPA affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights regarding the student's education records. Please note that school staff can never divulge information about a student's record, including discipline records, to the family of another student.

The [Parents Bill of Rights](#) regarding data privacy and security for our students is on our Parents page.

TRCS participates with the US Department of Education and **National Student Clearinghouse**, which provides information on high school graduates' college performance for us to better understand how to tailor our program to prepare our students for college. If you are concerned about privacy, please see the [Clearinghouse's Privacy Commitment](#). For TRCS to collect data and information needed for the study, we will be sharing certain "directory information" which may include names, addresses, grade levels, and dates of birth of students, among other

information. To see what constitutes "directory information" please refer to the FERPA policy in our Policies and Procedures Manual linked above. For TRCS to do this, federal law regarding student privacy requires us to provide you with notice and an opportunity for you to instruct TRCS not to release this information. You may opt out of the program by completing the form on page 2 of your Student Emergency Contact form.

For those students with an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**, you are also entitled to review this document and any supporting reports and documents. Upon **written request by email** to the attention of Michelle Cardoña, Student Records Coordinator (michellecardona@rencharter.org), you may obtain copies of your child's cumulative record. **Written requests by email** for special education records should be directed to Liz Perez, Assistant Principal of Special Populations, lizperez@rencharter.org.

Accordingly, TRCS maintains all of your child's educational records in a highly confidential manner in the main office. All instructional support evaluations, IEPs, and other records concerning the provision of special education services are secured in a separate, secure file housed in the Instructional Support office. Federal law requires that TRCS also annually notify you as to your right of access to information concerning the certification and qualification of your child's teacher(s) and paraprofessional(s).

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