



Central Park East I Elementary School

December 3, 2019

Dear Families,

Winter has come to CPE1. Last week at All-School Sing, we sang “Skating on the Volga” for the first time this year. Ice skates have started fill up in the bottom of cubbies out in the corridor. (Volunteers are still welcome on Wednesday to help more children get fitted for the skates they’ll use all winter.) And, this Wednesday evening, we mark the season with Festival of Lights.

Winter celebrations often involve special food, singing, telling stories, and bright lights against the dark sky. Festival of Lights starts with food and candles, then moves on to stories and singing.

Our potluck starts at 5:30 in the cafeteria. Share a dish that means something to your family, and be ready to taste food that is special to others in the community. Then, if you would like, you can be among those telling traditional stories, teaching the community new songs, or sharing your family’s traditions.

Festival of Lights is a beautiful event. We hope you can be there.

Outside in Winter

Study after study shows that being cold does not *cause* colds. In fact, germs spread more in confined air inside than outside of buildings. That’s just one reason to put on warm clothes and leave the classroom. Here is the official guidance from the New York City Department of Education:

Children benefit from vigorous exercise and should be given the opportunity to play outside whenever possible. Unless it is snowing, or there is ice on the playground, or the wind-chill factor is below zero degrees Fahrenheit (-18 degrees Celsius), temperature alone should not preclude outdoor play.

As long as the wind chill is above zero, CPE1 will be outside. We’ll be outside in snow. Fresh air and exercise are part of a healthy childhood.

What Your Child Needs for Outdoor Play

To keep your child playing comfortably on cold days, in snow, and at the ice rink, your child needs warm clothes at school. Your child probably has grown since last winter, so please double-check the fit of:

- Winter coat
- Snow boots
- Snow pants
- Mittens
- Hats
- Scarves

Even experienced skaters sometimes fall while skating in Central Park. Mittens protect fingers from cold and skate blades. Snow pants keep children dry and cushion their falls. Hats and scarves give that extra bit of warmth that lets children skate longer.

Times with Less Play...

Every morning, our cafeteria opens at 7:45, and we head out to play by 8:05. Children with boots will go outside if there is snow on the ground, but if it's raining, we go to the gym instead of the school yard. Going to the gym is a bit tricky.

This year, the middle school of East Harlem Scholars Academy has gym class most mornings at 8:00. Instead of the full gym, we now have only half of the space available. And, as in the past, the gym is never available to us on Friday mornings. If we cannot play outside on Fridays, all children stay in the cafeteria until 8:30.

Your child is always welcome starting at 7:45. But if your child comes early mostly for the exercise, please know that we have a little less on rainy mornings.

Enjoy Festival of Lights on Wednesday.

-Gabriel