



# **The Browning School**

## **Lower School Handbook 2017-2018**

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[www.browning.edu](http://www.browning.edu)**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Founded in 1888 as a college preparatory school for boys,  
The Browning School continues its commitment  
to the goals of John A. Browning:  
the pursuit of academic excellence and a lifelong love of learning,  
the belief in the dignity of the individual,  
and the development of personal integrity  
and responsibility to the broader community.  
The Browning boy develops amid these values.  
The Browning alumnus is a good citizen,  
sensitive to the needs of others,  
and respectful of divergent yet informed opinions.  
He is, in the best sense of the word, a gentleman.

## **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The Browning School strives to create a diverse community  
in which all members are safe, respected, and valued.  
We believe that in actively promoting a diverse learning environment,  
we are fostering intellectual, social, and emotional growth for all.  
Recognizing and pursuing diversity, however, are not enough;  
we seek to transcend mere tolerance of differences and aspire to  
a celebration of the varied appearances, abilities, perspectives, and values  
that characterize our community.

*The Browning School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, religion, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-directed programs, or employment practices.*

## **Welcome from the Head of School**

The Browning School offers a community where boys discover and develop their best selves. It is an institution both rich in tradition and eager for growth, as boys are invited to consider the liberal arts through dynamic instruction, self-directed exploration and creative activity. As a college preparatory school, we present an academic program that challenges, supports and inspires its students. The learning experience at Browning vests boys with the skills and dispositions not only to succeed at their next level of education but also to pursue individual talents, interests and questions over the arc of their lives.

Browning is also an intimate place, one animated by an ethos of student engagement and connection. In our comparatively small community, boys are called upon to express their full dimensionality; indeed, Browning's robust arts, athletics and service programs depend upon the enthusiastic participation and leadership of its boys. Similarly, our boys learn to form friendships and attachments which endure over a lifetime and which become the context for developing the virtues of kindness, honesty and respect necessary to live well.

From Kindergarten to Form VI, our boys are guided, encouraged and challenged by talented, dedicated faculty. These women and men teach with wisdom and passion and articulate a school culture which expresses a deep understanding of boys' intellectual and social development. Browning teachers are enthusiastically committed to knowing and developing the whole boy, and in their care our boys learn to appreciate ideas, cultivate meaningful relationships, and build lives of moral purpose.

In 1888 The Browning School was founded to promote academic excellence, personal integrity and responsible citizenship. Today we are proud of the spirited way in which our boys and alumni continue to embody and further these ideals.

John M. Botti  
Head of School

## **Welcome from the Division Head**

The Lower School is a student's introduction to a lifelong love of learning: an integral part of Browning's mission. The goals of the Lower School focus on five areas:

- Building skills, such as literacy, numeracy, social skills.
- Supporting a sense of accomplishment and pride in one's work.
- Creating relationships among peers, among teachers and students, and between home and school.
- Developing a boy's sense of awareness and responsibility for the broader community
- Nurturing an awareness of the diversity of our world.

We recognize the importance of giving a child time to be a child; he needs time to run and to play while actively developing his growing abilities. Through hands-on activities and small group work, the boys enjoy a busy and productive day. Through academic classes, community service projects, field trips and the Encore program, teachers work to challenge a boy intellectually, while guiding him in his understanding of character and social responsibility. The Lower School faculty is a group of dedicated, talented and exceptionally qualified men and women who are focused on the growth and well-being of their students. This commitment to the boys and their families is a hallmark of the Lower School.

Laurie A. Gruhn

*Head of the Lower School*

*Assistant Head of School*

# **General Information**

## **Absences**

Because Browning is accountable to the State of New York for monitoring student daily attendance, it is important that parents notify the school switchboard promptly before 9:00 am to report the cause of any absence whatsoever. Any early departures for or late returns from vacation are discouraged and must be approved in advance by the Lower School Head. It is imperative that parents respect the school calendar and organize family vacations and celebrations accordingly. The Lower School will not accommodate these absences by providing work ahead of time.

## **Arrivals and Dismissals**

Faculty supervision on the sidewalk begins at 8:00 a.m. Boys may not enter the building before 8:00 a.m. If families must arrive earlier than 8:00 a.m., parents are required to remain with their son until supervision is provided. There is an early drop off option beginning at 7:30 a.m. Parents may send their boys to the cafeteria, either for quiet reading or chess practice. This option is only for parents who are not able to wait with their sons. Boys may head to their classrooms beginning at 8:00 a.m, and they are considered late if they arrive after 8:15 a.m. Boys who arrive late are asked to sign in at the front office. All Lower School boys are dismissed between 2:50 and 3:10 p.m., Monday through Friday. To ensure the safety of the boys and their access to buses, those picking boys up after school are requested not to park in front of the building between 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. It is expected that boys will be picked up as soon as their school day is finished. We ask all parents and caregivers to wait outside the school until dismissal, making sure all boys shake hands with their teachers and are checked out before leaving.

If there is a change in the usual way a boy is going home, a written or email note must be sent and presented to the homeroom teacher. Otherwise, the usual dismissal procedure will be followed. When a child is visiting another child, notes must be brought to school by both boys. If there is a sudden change of plans, please call the school office before dismissal so the teacher can be notified. Last-minute changes should be kept to a minimum. All medical and dental appointments should ideally be made before or after school hours. However, if it is necessary for a boy to be dismissed early for an appointment, the homeroom teacher should be notified in writing well in advance so that classwork and homework can be prepared and sent home with him, if appropriate.

## **Assembly**

The weekly Lower School assembly program is a further extension of classroom activities. These weekly assemblies might include a presentation of a special class project, an original play or a performance by a special guest. Parents are invited to attend several assemblies during the year and are sent written notification of the dates and times of these occasions.

## **Awards**

Honors presented include awards for The Lyman B. Tobin Public Speaking Program, the Laura P. Mulfeld Spelling Bee, the Betty Jean Johnson Poetry Award, and the Margery Morse Award for Citizenship in the Fourth Grade.

## **Bake Sales**

During the year, if a bake sale takes place, boys should bring at most \$5.00. All bake sales are nut free.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Boys who are celebrating their birthdays will be honored at the appropriate monthly birthday assembly. Homeroom teachers in Kindergarten should be notified if a boy wishes to bring in a small snack to share with his

classmates. Please note, boys may bring in birthday treats only in Kindergarten! Snacks should be limited to donuts or cupcakes or other forms of finger food that do not require cutting or preparation. These snacks should be left in the kitchen at drop-off. **Note: All foods must be nut-free.** Boys in Grades One and Two receive a tee shirt, which all classmates sign.

We realize that it may not be possible to invite an entire class to a party held outside the School; therefore, please be sensitive to the feelings of the boys who are not attending the festivities. Please invite the entire section or fewer than half. A limited number of openings are available to parents who hire the physical education staff to run their son's birthday party at school. For birthday parties, contact Coach West at [awest@browninbg.edu](mailto:awest@browninbg.edu) or call 212-838-6280. Please book early; most dates are taken by mid-September. Parties can be held on Friday after school, as well as Saturdays and Sundays when available. When birthday parties take place after school at an offsite location, private buses may not pick up boys directly outside the school. A separate location must be chosen and arrangements made to bring the boys to the bus.

## **Change in Home Situation**

Boys will become upset when a change in the home situation occurs. An illness or death in the family, a move, the arrival of a new sibling or the separation of parents are a few examples of changes that will influence the behavior of a boy. Please notify the Head of the Lower School of any such changes as soon as possible.

## **Class Trips**

Trips are scheduled to enhance and extend classroom activity and are announced in advance. A Universal Permission Slip will be sent home in early September. Your child will not be allowed to go on school trips without written permission. Teachers will notify the boys about appropriate attire for trips.

## **Dress Code**

**Formal Dress:** All Browning boys are required to observe the School's dress code. Lower School boys must wear a dark jacket with a dress shirt, khaki or dark pants, and a tie on all occasions when formal dress is required.

These dates will be on the school calendar. In addition, we will notify you in writing several days ahead of time.

**Regular Dress:** A sports jacket or blazer, khaki or dark pants, a red or white Browning turtleneck shirt (with optional sweaters in the same colors), or a Browning polo shirt may be substituted for a dress shirt and tie on those days when formal dress is not required. Browning polo shirts may be purchased through the Land's End catalog. Please contact Christine Bramble at 212-838-6280 for additional information. No boy is allowed to wear jeans, shorts, sneakers or boots to school. Socks must be worn with shoes at all times. All sweaters, etc., must be red or white.

**Gym and Art Clothing:** Gym clothing is distributed in the Lower School during the first week of classes; after the first week of school, individual items may be purchased in the physical education office. Art smocks will be provided by the school. We cannot be responsible for soiled clothing due to mishaps in the art room. ***Please mark all items of clothing.***

## **Emergency School Closing**

In the event that school closes because of snow or other unforeseen circumstances, every attempt will be made by the Parents Association to notify families by phone and/or e-mail in ample time before boys leave for school. The outgoing message on the School's answering machine will also inform callers of any school closing, so parents may call the school directly for recorded information. In addition, the School has contracted with an automatic dialing service which will contact all parents, faculty, and staff in the case of an unusual situation or an emergency. Information will also be available at [www.browning.edu](http://www.browning.edu). In general, The Browning School follows the Interschool and the Board of Education's

decision for closings due to weather on the first day of any such closing. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the School has three locations available. Families will be contacted as to where to pick up their children.

## **Encore**

Encore is the School's extended-day activities program, which typically includes art, music, science, computer, French, Spanish and more. A brochure is mailed for fall, winter, and spring sessions. For more information about Encore, contact Anderson Harp or Susan Kehoe at 212-838-6280. For information about chess, contact Julianne Rowland at (7212 838 6280). For information about Hockey, contact Kirsten Cunha ([Kcunha@gmail.com](mailto:Kcunha@gmail.com)); Mark Cunha ([Mcunha@stblaw.com](mailto:Mcunha@stblaw.com)), Martin Levenglick ([Levenglick@me.com](mailto:Levenglick@me.com)); Reagan Wellins ([reagan.wellins@yahoo.com](mailto:reagan.wellins@yahoo.com))

## **Field Day**

In May, all Lower School boys from Kindergarten through Grade Four participate in track and field events and other activities on Field Day, held on Randall's Island. After the games, families have picnics together by grade.

## **Food Policy**

All Lower School boys are expected to rely on the varied school menu for lunch and snacks. When medically warranted, boys may bring their own meals, but this food must be able to stay fresh in his locker. *The School will not refrigerate or heat food. Note: All foods must be nut, seed, and shellfish-free.*

## **Harassment**

The Browning School is committed to providing a safe environment for all members of the community that is free of harassment of any kind, including but not limited to teasing or verbal or physical bullying. Harassment based on race, religion or national origin is prohibited by law and contrary to the mission of the school. Harassment is considered to have occurred when either verbal or physical behavior (1) unreasonably interferes with the effectiveness of another person's work or (2) creates an intimidating, hostile or degrading environment. We are dedicated to maintaining a community that is a safe place in which to learn and to grow.

## **Health Requirements**

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requires that every boy have a complete annual physical examination. Health and immunization forms are e-mailed to all parents in the spring. It is imperative that these forms be filled out properly and thoroughly by both the parent and the physician and returned to the school nurse, Mrs. Linehan, prior to or on the first day of school. A boy may be excluded from school if these forms have not been submitted to the school nurse. These forms are essential for the safety of your son, for meeting Department of Health requirements, and for insurance purposes. If your son has a contagious disease such as strep throat, chickenpox, impetigo or conjunctivitis, or if he has contracted head lice, please notify the school nurse immediately.

## **Homework**

Homework starts in Grade Two, although a few activities are given in all grades. Homework assignments are given in all grades in order to review work completed in school and to foster a sense of responsibility. Most boys should be able to accomplish the homework assignment without help. The amount and time spent on homework is generally determined by the specific grade level. If the boy has consistent problems in completing these assignments, the parent should contact the homeroom teacher.

When reporting a boy's absence because of illness, parents should indicate if they wish their son to receive that day's assignments. This early notification enables teachers to prepare your son's homework. Arrangements should be made for books and materials to be picked up before 4 p.m. If a boy is to miss school due to family obligations, he is to make up

work he has missed upon his return to school.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parents/guardians are expected to attend the Lower School Parents Night. At this meeting, the boys' teachers will explain the year's activities and curriculum. In addition, parents/guardians will sign up for an individual parent/teacher conference. A second conference will be scheduled later in the year.

## **Rainy Day Dismissal**

In the event of rainy or snowy days, a sign will be posted to signify rainy day dismissal. Boys will be picked up at their homerooms.

## **Reports**

All Lower School boys receive two semester reports a year.

## **The Browning School's Responsible Use Policy (RUP) for Technology**

Browning boys will use its technology facilities in the spirit of Browning's code of conduct and in a responsible, respectful and legal manner, following the rules listed below:

### **Respect**

I will always use computer hardware with consideration and respect for others and myself.

I will not eat food or drink beverages while working on the computers.

I will be responsible for the technology's whereabouts at all times. I will return the technology to its home when I have finished using the device.

### **E-mail & Communication**

I will not use electronic mail until a teacher instructs otherwise.

I will never use abusive or profane language in public or private messages.

I will not access any personal e-mail account, social networking sites, or personal instant messaging software from any school technology.

I will not use others' names or passwords.

### **Safety**

I will keep my online account passwords private.

I will not give out any personal information.

I will not use technology to bully or tease.

I will logout.

### **Software & Applications**

I will use teacher-approved software when given permission at appropriate times.

I will only download apps or change settings when instructed by the teacher.

### **Internet**

I will not visit inappropriate websites. Teachers and administrators will determine appropriateness.



Using technology, whether on or off-campus, is a privilege that may be limited or revoked if I do not use it respectfully. I understand that failure to follow these rules may result in additional disciplinary action. This policy is a living document and may be changed by The Browning School.

## **Summer Work**

Boys in Grades Two through Four complete required summer reading during their summer vacation. The required reading list will be sent home in May. During the beginning weeks of school, required reading will be the focus of classroom discussions and activities. Additional suggested activities will also be sent home.

## **Transportation**

Bus passes are issued by the Department of Transportation and distributed to boys in September and February by their teacher. Treat passes with care. If a bus pass is lost, an additional one may be ordered from Theresa Rodriguez, receptionist at the Front Office, but cannot be delivered until the following month.

Transportation can be provided by the Department of Education. For further information on bus service, please contact Ms. Rodriguez at [trodriguez@browning.edu](mailto:trodriguez@browning.edu)

## **Toys**

The school does not allow boys to bring toys or electronic games or devices from home. This includes but is not limited to Pokemon cards, iPhone watches, Fidget Spinners and Fit Bits. They can be distracting and are easily lost.