

Frequently Asked Questions

Note: The NYC Department of Education will continue updating this guidance, as we receive questions from families and students.

Are schools required to let students who want to participate go outside? If schools do not want students to participate, can they require students to remain in class?

Middle and high schools will not prevent students from participating in the walkout, even if students do not have parental permission. Elementary school students need to be signed out by parents or guardians if they wish to participate in the walkout. For students of all ages with nurses or paraprofessionals required for safety, parents or qualified staff must be willing to accompany the students if they wish to participate in the walk out. If a parent or qualified staff member is not willing to walk out and accompany the student, the student must remain inside the school. Schools must ensure that the individual needs of each student are taken into account and addressed at all times.

What if a student does not want to participate in the walkout?

Instruction will continue, and principals will ensure appropriate coverage inside the school for students who do not want to participate.

What is the absence policy for students who participate in the walkout without parent permission?

Per our regular protocol, if a student attends at least one class during a day, they are marked present. If they leave for just the 17 minutes, schools will input discipline code B03, which means administrators will talk to the students about their cutting class. If they leave for the rest of the day, it will be marked as an absence for the remainder of classes.

Will students be disciplined? What if students do not return to school after the walkout?

Students will not be disciplined for engaging in peaceful protest, but students are expected to continue to meet behavioral expectations as outlined in the Student Intervention and Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who engage in other conduct that would constitute a violation of such code (e.g., engaging in behavior that harms or poses a danger to others, damaging school property, etc.) will be subject to appropriate discipline. Students will not be arrested for not returning to school, nor will students be physically moved off the school premises. Guidance counselors and social workers will meet with students about

returning to class.

How will you ensure safety and order during the walkout?

Staff will be assigned to monitor the walkout and egress points. School staff will encourage students to remain in staging locations and on school grounds. School staff and safety agents will position themselves around students who are assembled and will have a means of communicating with one another as well as staff inside the building. Students will not be permitted to block street traffic. Schools will also work with their respective precinct commanders if they anticipate needing additional supports from the NYPD.

Are schools hosting events instead of letting student walk out?

Schools may host a civics conversation or lesson inside the school, but may not host a protest. The DOE is providing schools with guidance on facilitating these conversations in respectful and thoughtful ways. As noted above, schools may not prevent students from participating in the walkout.

Can parents come to the school and join the walkout?

Parents may join their students in the walkout, but parents are still expected to conduct themselves appropriately, refrain from disruptive behavior, and treat all members of the school community with courtesy and respect.