

The IDEAL School of Manhattan

*New York's only K-12
independent inclusion school*

**Lower School
Kindergarten to Grade 5**



www.theidealschool.org

**Grades K to 5: 314 West 91st Street
New York, NY 10024**

**Grades 6 to 12: 270 West 89th Street
New York, NY 10024**

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#SchoolCanBeIDEAL



Mission Statement

The IDEAL School of Manhattan is an inclusion school dedicated to creating a diverse community that affirms and accepts the full identities of all people, while inspiring academic excellence, creative leadership, and a desire to build a more just and equitable world.

Lower School Vision

In IDEAL's Lower School, students learn from others, have opportunities to lead, and benefit from a supportive and affirming environment where they are encouraged to take healthy risks, ask questions, and think critically. Small class sizes, low student-teacher ratios, and highly individualized instruction enable teachers to engage students in ways that promote intellectual growth and independence. Project-based learning and interdisciplinary studies encourage students to express their understanding of concepts in meaningful and innovative ways. IDEAL's universal emphasis on social justice develops the social-emotional skills and lifelong love of learning needed to become ethical and empathetic community members.

The IDEAL Difference

IDEAL is dedicated to building a community based on the principles of inclusion, diversity, excellence, acceptance, and leadership. We believe that a differentiated approach to instruction and faculty who know, challenge, and inspire their students in and out of the classroom nurture the growth of critical thinkers, creative and curious learners, global citizens, and confident individuals in our diverse community.

Academics

Instruction at IDEAL is informed by research and evidence-based curricula. Expert teachers plan lessons using resources from the TERC Investigations 3 math curriculum and Teachers College Units of Study for Reading and Writing and incorporate culturally-relevant children's literature and cross-curricular projects across subject areas including Spanish, social studies, and science. Most importantly, teachers plan instruction based on their deep understanding of each individual in their classroom. Through explicit instruction, time for students to practice and apply strategies, ongoing assessment and feedback, and inspiring projects and activities, students move along individual lines of academic growth.

Learning Lab

The Learning Lab provides space and time for students to receive individual and group academic enrichment and support. Guided by a literacy specialist, students may attend the learning lab as an elective or for whole group instruction. Small groups, organized across grade levels and driven by students' skills and interests, explore topics such as literary language, mystery books, reading comprehension, and read alouds. Students needing phonics support participate in an Orton Gillingham-based multisensory program to strengthen their spelling, fluency, and reading comprehension.

Arts

The creative arts are integral to the teaching and learning experience at IDEAL. Through our robust arts curriculum, students explore multiple perspectives. The skills students acquire in the arts strengthen their learning in all subjects, and the creative arts department supports other academic areas through cross-curricular units. Arts events such as the annual Peace and Light Ceremony, ArtBeat, and a Lower School play encourage students to showcase their work and strengthen skill, creativity, and self-expression. New York City becomes our campus as trips to museums and performances expand students' understanding of their world.

Electives

The elective program at IDEAL provides a variety of opportunities to enrich student learning. During the 90-minute elective block, smaller, rotating groups may work with a teacher, attend an enrichment class, or go to a related service

session. Electives vary from year to year and may include visual arts, music, chess, yoga, or library skills. Small group instruction may include guided reading or specialized math groups, writing conferences, or enrichment work.

Differentiation

Differentiation is an educational philosophy that recognizes and celebrates that all students are different and thus bring a unique set of strengths, experiences, and interests to the classroom. At IDEAL, teachers carefully plan objectives and goals for each unit and then design lessons to inspire and support the growth of each individual and to challenge all students to achieve their personal best.

Individual Growth

Collaborative team teaching and small class sizes allow IDEAL teachers to know each student as a learner and an individual and to adapt instruction to their interests and skills. Together, teachers work to foster creativity, interdisciplinary thinking, and problem-solving skills in their students. Skilled counselors and speech, occupational, and physical therapists work with students who need extra support. No student misses whole class instruction to receive these services.

Identity

At IDEAL, we honor the full identity and build upon the strengths of all students. Lower School assemblies feature student presentations and bring the community together around mission-based topics such as cultural awareness and social justice. Assemblies also feature the annual Identity Museum, where Lower School students honor and share aspects of their identities using artifacts, writing, and visual art. Students develop self-confidence, leadership skills, and a sense of personal voice through frequent and meaningful participation in the assemblies.

Diversity Curriculum

IDEAL's annual Civil Rights Museum is a highlight of our Diversity Curriculum and brings the entire school together to learn about and honor civil rights leaders and to develop an understanding of key social justice concepts. Interdisciplinary units in each grade focus on specific historical periods, related social movements, and the activists who effected social change such as Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou

Hamer, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Malala Yousafzai. Projects incorporate the arts, literacy, technology, and research skills, and display students' deep comprehension and perspective-taking. Through interdisciplinary instruction, students understand the many ways to bring about change, learning about the role of photography in the civil rights movement in visual arts class and its songs in music class. At IDEAL, we believe that exposing students to the wide range of responses to injustice, including advocacy and activism, encourages them to become agents of positive change.

Ethics

The Word of the Month focuses on core values such as respect, compassion, peace, and justice that we believe are essential for developing ethical citizens. Teachers build grade-specific curriculum units and service learning projects around these core values and weave these topics throughout their lessons. IDEAL students develop a positive sense of self and know that they are valued and respected in a community that is compassionate and culturally competent. They become active participants in maintaining our mission of inclusion and acceptance for all.

Empathy

Community Time brings students together weekly for age-appropriate discussions about current events and social justice topics, strengthening awareness of the wider world, fostering an understanding of difference, and engaging in healthy dialogue. With the support of their teachers, students consider pertinent social issues in a critical yet developmentally appropriate way.

Life Skills

IDEAL's life skills instruction strengthens the social and emotional growth of our students, building emotional intelligence and increasing self-regulation. Conversations, activities, and projects have been developed for each grade, with a variety of strategies based on the students in the group. Our teachers, as role models, provide consistent support, gentle reminders, rewards for appropriate behavior, and praise for making good choices. Daily family-style lunch, with an adult at each table, presents the opportunity to practice social and conversation skills and to make friends across grade levels in a warm, nurturing environment.

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Inclusion

Inclusion is the full membership of all students in order to create a sense of belonging in school and to prepare them for productive lives in a diverse and global society. A research-based commitment to inclusion education is reflected in every aspect of the IDEAL experience--instruction, assessment, program, enrichment--resulting in academic excellence, individual growth, and an empathetic community.



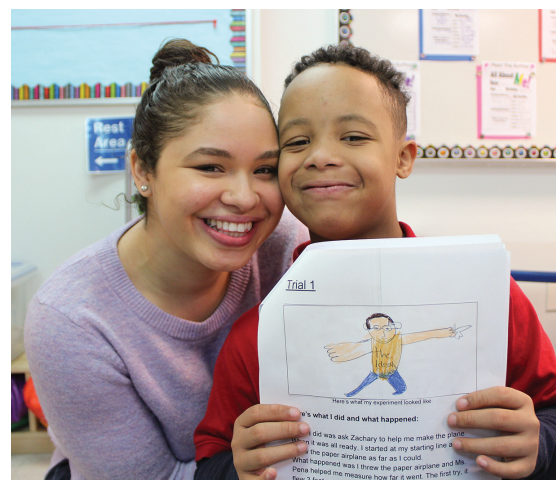
Diversity

At IDEAL, no one leaves their identity at the door. IDEAL's curriculum and programs are multicultural by design and intentionally developed with an anti-bias perspective. IDEAL affirms student differences and fosters positive identity development by directly addressing the impact of stereotyping, bias, and discriminatory behavior and by encouraging cooperative learning and conflict resolution.



Excellence

The IDEAL learning community is a joyful and supportive one in which students have a voice, know themselves as learners, and not only seek excellence for themselves but also nurture the achievement and talents of their peers. Skilled teaching teams consist of a general and a special educator in each classroom equip students with the foundational reading, writing, communication, and critical thinking skills they need for success in school and beyond. Project-based learning, arts and technology integration, interdisciplinary experiences, and electives such as drama, yoga, music, and art studio time deepen students' knowledge, strengthen skills, and foster a spirit of collaboration.



Acceptance

At IDEAL, children learn from one another and from the community we model. IDEAL students value and seek out the perspectives of others and learn, together, to make a positive difference in their community. They possess the self-awareness to advocate for themselves and the compassion to stand behind their peers. They appreciate and seek out difference, understanding that only in community are we IDEAL.



Leadership

In the Lower School, leadership skills are integrated throughout the curriculum. Units such as the kindergarten animal research project, the third grade memoir project, and the Identity Museum allow students to research and explore areas of interest in greater depth and to display and present their interests to their schoolmates. Proposing new initiatives and working in tandem with their peers and teachers, IDEAL students develop confidence and leave their mark on their community.



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