



# THE ELLA BAKER SCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK

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**2019-2020**

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# 01 WHO WE ARE

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## OUR MISSION

At the Ella Baker School we collaborate to create a dynamic and joyful learning community. Our curriculum provides students with a strong intellectual foundation across multiple disciplines, and daily opportunities to construct deep understanding through inquiry, self discovery and experiential learning. Continuing the legacy of the progressive education movement, the Ella Baker School prepares students to be informed, courageous, and compassionate people, who trust and respect one another and in turn, help to shape a more equitable and sustainable world.

## OUR BELIEFS

Our work at Ella Baker is driven by a set of shared beliefs about children, learning, and community.

- *Children are curious by nature. They thrive in environments that nurture and sustain their innate passion for learning.*
- *Each child is unique and learns at different times, in different ways, and expresses understanding in different ways. Instruction must be considerate of these differences and accommodate them.*
- *Children learn best when challenged by high expectations.*
- *Children learn best in environments that encourage autonomy and agency, allowing them to make choices about the topics they explore, the materials with which they work, and the processes they develop.*
- *Children learn from talking about their work and working collaboratively.*
- *Children learn best in physically and psychologically safe environments.*
- *Children's learning is integrated and moves across curricular boundaries.*

## WHO WAS ELLA J. BAKER?

Ella Josephine Baker (1903-1986) was often called “a leader behind the scenes” in the movement for civil rights. She was instrumental in actively organizing, creating and expanding the range of many organizations, among them the National Association

for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). However, she did not seek the spotlight. Indeed, she felt it was important that organizations avoid struggles for personal leadership and that “strong people don’t need strong leaders.”

Ella Baker believed in three principles of what she described as Participatory Democracy:

### **EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE AT THE GRASSROOTS**

“People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves.” Ella Baker believed in the power of local organizing to bring about social change. She worked from the ground up in organizations to give people at all levels of society a voice.

### **GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP**

Ella Baker spoke out against leadership derived from status or charisma, especially where authentic community involvement was lacking. “In government service and political life I have always felt it was a handicap for oppressed peoples to depend so largely upon a leader, because unfortunately in our culture, the charismatic leader usually becomes a leader because he has found a spot in the public limelight.”

### **DIRECT ACTION**

Ella Baker saw non-violent collective action as a means to change, but more importantly as a way to combat apathy, hopelessness and fear. Her ultimate goal was always empowerment of people.

Ella Baker’s emphasis on involvement, participation, and critical analysis was invaluable to young organizers of the 1960’s – 70’s. It also legitimized a voice for the African American community in a wide range of government decisions.

Ella Baker never intended to be a teacher, but through her life’s example of listening to the needs of people, helping to foster their leadership, and promoting their decisions to act, she became the model of a great teacher.

## STAFF LIST

TEACHER	GRADE	ROOM
MILANA KAGAN	PRE-K	229
MARICELA LEPKOFKER	PRE-K	238
GRISELLE ORSORIO	PRE-K PARAPROFESSIONAL	
TAZ AZAD	K	227
MALVEDY FERNANDEZ	K PARAPROFESSIONAL	227
LIZ SANTIAGO	K	234
ELEANOR VENO	1 <sup>ST</sup>	322
LASHAWNA WESTON	1 <sup>ST</sup> PARAPROFESSIONAL	322
ELI URAGA	1 <sup>ST</sup>	228
DEANNE GREEN	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup>	324
LIZ MALERBA	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup>	326
ILAN WEISSMAN	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup> SPECIAL EDUCATION	326
JACKIE KIRKLAND	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup> PARAPROFESSIONAL	326
SARA EDWARDS	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup>	325
TASHA FULLER	2 <sup>ND</sup> / 3 <sup>RD</sup> PARAPROFESSIONAL	325
REGINA GALLAGHER	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup>	328
DELLA CANNON	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup> PARAPROFESSIONAL	328
ELIZABETH O-FERRALL	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup>	330
LAURA NUSS-CANEDA	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL EDUCATION	330
	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup> PARAPROFESSIONAL	330
KERRI MANSON	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup>	332
CHRISTINE WANG	4 <sup>TH</sup> / 5 <sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL EDUCATION	332
MARLEE ROSEN	6 <sup>TH</sup> HUMANITIES	329
CARRIE MASSEY	6 <sup>TH</sup> HUMANITIES SPECIAL EDUCATION	329

## STAFF LIST (CONT.)

TEACHER	GRADE	ROOM
NINA CIATTO	PRE-K	327
MICHAEL PAOLI	PRE-K	334
JENNIFER JOHNSON	6 <sup>TH</sup> HUMANITIES SPECIAL EDUCATION	334
ROBERTO SOTO	ART	114
VIVIAN GARCILAZO -RODRIGUEZ	DANCE	318
LUIS FLORES	SPANISH/PHYSICAL EDUCATION	334/GYM
NICOLE BERNADETTE	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	GYM
NAOMI AVADANEI	THEATER	B4
KATHY BROWN	SETTS	319
CALLEY BITTEL	INSTRUCTIONAL COACH	334
MARCELLA SCUDERI	PAYROLL SECRETARY	232
MIA HERNANDEZ	BUSINESS MANAGER	232
SUSAN AMARO	SCHOOL AIDE	232
GORDIEN NDIZEYE	SCHOOL AIDE	334
VALERIE KIRK-KAMALI	PARENT COORDINATOR	232
JOSHUA SATIN	PRINCIPAL	339
BETSY SCHNECK	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL	239
KIRA HAMMOND	GUIDANCE	321
HIBA BARAKAT	SPEECH THERAPIST	319
KATHY BROWN	SPECIAL EDUCATION (SETTS)	319
REBECCA ASARNOW	SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST	319
SEEMA BOOKBINDER	PHYSICAL THERAPIST	319
DEBRA STRASHUN	OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS**

- Manhattan Youth - including sports, swimming, the arts, adventure programs and homework help (See details under After School Programs below)
- Waterproofing Swimming Program, Asphalt Green
- Harmony Violin and Chorus Program
- New York City Ballet
- S'cool Sounds Recorder and Percussion
- Disney in Schools
- Christodora Foundation for Environment Studies
- Morningside Center
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
- Central Park Zoo

## **ELLA BAKER PRACTICES**

### **MULTI-AGE CLASSROOMS**

Learning to appreciate and honor diversity is a huge part of the work we do at Ella Baker. Each child's emotional, social and cognitive development occurs at his or her own pace. Therefore, classrooms in which there are children of different ages provide children with the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace, without feeling the pressure of having to measure up to a grade-level norm.

For this reason, most classes in the school are comprised of children at two different grade levels. In a multi-age classroom, older children model for younger children through their work, interests and behavior, allowing them to be leaders in their classroom community. Multi-age grouping also allows teachers to stay with the same students for two years, allowing them to know their students well and address their needs across a longer span of time.

### **TOWN MEETING**

Town Meeting is a time for the entire Ella Baker community to come together to share and celebrate the work we do each day in our classrooms. Every other Friday morning, we all gather in the auditorium to sing together, share successes, and hear from selected students as they present projects, writings, dances, songs, etc. Town Meeting is a joyous Ella Baker tradition that allows us to continue to grow as a community, have fun, and learn from each other. Parents are welcome to attend. Look for information by email from your child's teacher about when the class is presenting at Town Meeting.



## **ELLA BAKER PRACTICES (CONT.)**

### **READING BUDDIES**

Ella Reading Buddies are time honored Ella Baker tradition that builds community, leadership, friendship, and literacy engagement. Lower grade teachers partner with upper grade teachers and pair up individual students for regular reading experiences together. Most often the older child reads a favorite picture book to the younger child. In addition, reading buddies sometimes meet up for Town Meeting, a picnic, or during an ice skating trip.

### **STUDENT VOICE COLLECTIVE**

SVC gives students a forum for discussing concerns, initiating projects and having a say in school decision-making. Representatives from classrooms meet twice monthly (with an adult coordinator) to engage in a democratic process with the goal of taking action to improve life at Ella Baker for everyone.

### **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS**

- Middle School Advisory
- Restorative Circles
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Peer Mediation

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication between home and school is extremely important and primarily electronic, so please be sure that our Parent Coordinator, Valerie Kirk Kamali ([vkirkkamali@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:vkirkkamali@schools.nyc.gov)), has your correct email address. We will occasionally send home paper notices with students by backpack, but these will also be sent by email. In the early grades, we ask that you check your child's backpack daily for forms and other communication from the classroom teacher(s).

You can expect to receive family letters from your child's teacher on a regular basis. Additionally, you will find important information on our website ([ellabakerschool.org](http://ellabakerschool.org)), in our monthly newsletter, and through topic-specific letters from Josh. If you wish to speak to a teacher, please email the teacher or call the office: (212-717-8809) and leave a message. The teacher will call/email you back to schedule a time to talk or meet.

Family conferences are held twice a year, once in November and then again in March. These are opportunities for the child, parents/guardians/caregivers and the teacher to talk about the child's progress. We ask that children be present at these conferences. If you have questions or concerns at other times in the school year you may ask to schedule a conference with the teacher.

## ELLA BAKER PRACTICES (CONT.)

### PTA

The Ella Baker community is lucky to have an active and robust Parent Teacher Association. We encourage all families to get involved to support the school, gain information, and have fun. Our PTA consistently works to foster community and raise funds for important programs in the school, including the arts, sports, teacher professional development, and other enrichment programs. Anyone who has a child in the Ella Baker School is automatically a member. You will find dates for monthly general membership meetings, workshops, and special events posted on our website and on the Ella Baker Calendar (sent by backpack in September). Check it out and mark your calendars! Participation in the PTA is the single best way to support Ella Baker School. The PTA sends out a family survey in June in order to collect reflections and impressions about the current year, as it comes to a close, as well as to collect ideas and suggestions for the upcoming year.

This year, our co-presidents are Mary Shay and Tamara Troadec. You can reach them at [ellabakerpta@gmail.com](mailto:ellabakerpta@gmail.com). The current Executive Board of the PTA is made up of two Co-Presidents, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Board members work on a variety of PTA events, projects, and committees. Elections for board positions are held in May for positions beginning in the fall of the following school year.

## 02 SCHOOL PROCEDURES & POLICIES

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### FORMS

The Department of Education and our own internal systems require parents to complete a number of forms at the very start of the school year. You can help us greatly by turning in the following forms early, legibly and in full.

**BLUE CARD** This card is very important as it provides us with your contact information in case of an emergency. We will only release your child to individuals who are listed on the blue card as authorized to pick up your child. It is also of utmost importance that any health issues/allergies are listed on the blue card.

**LUNCH FORM** All families must complete a DOE lunch form, even though lunch is free for all students. You may also complete the lunch form online through this link:

<https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>

**WALKING PERMISSION FORM** This form allows us to take your child on any trip during the year that is walking distance from the school. For any trips that require bus or subways transportation, teachers will send home an additional form.

## FORMS (CONT.)

**MEDIA RELEASE** With this form you either allow or prohibit the use of your child's image in any of Ella Baker's printed materials or online presence for this school year. Cell phone policy. Please read carefully the policy outlined later in this handbook. Students and their parents in grades 6-8 must sign and return.

**HEALTH FORMS** New York City Department of Education policy requires that every student have a health form, signed by a physician, on file in school. It is extremely important that immunizations are up-to-date.\* Children must have proof of immunization before they can be registered for school. If children are not up to date with their immunizations, they may be excluded from school. Health forms must be legible with the series of vaccines complete, including TB test results that are clearly indicated with dates. Help us minimize the need to repeatedly ask you for corrected records. Please help us by bringing in a copy of your child's immunization record whenever your child receives a new immunization. Updated forms can also be faxed to the office. If information is missing, please call your doctor to notify them of this and ask them to fax us a correct copy of the form to 212-717-8807.

## CHANGING STUDENT INFORMATION

Please be sure to notify the office immediately of any changes to your family information, including address, email, phone number, emergency contacts, and those authorized to pick up your child. If you are not receiving Valerie's emails, please be sure to check with her to have your email address added or corrected. Any orders of protection, custody changes, or other family issues should be shared with the school immediately through Kira Hammond, our guidance counselor.

## CELL PHONE POLICY

Teachers, administrators, counselors and parents at Ella Baker have invested many hours problem-solving around issues related to student use of cell phones and electronics--including cyber bullying, addictive behavior, distraction, social isolation, miscommunication, peer conflict, and fatigue. Some studies suggest that excessive use of electronics can even impair brain readiness for learning. For these reasons, and in order to ensure an optimum learning environment for all, we have established the following cell phone policy. Please read it carefully and support us in upholding it.

Students may bring cell phones, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems to school, but they may NOT be turned on or used at school in **ANY** location, which includes bathrooms, the cafeteria, the yard, stairwells, or classrooms at **ANY time of the school day, including after-school activities.**

**Phones will be collected in classrooms as soon as students enter.**

**Prior to that, inside the building (including the lobby, elevator, cafeteria, hallway, gym, bathroom), if a student's phone is out, it will be confiscated at that time and turned over to the student's classroom teacher.**

## CELL PHONE POLICY (CONT.)

- Cell phones, computing devices and portable music and entertainment systems may **NOT** be turned on or used during fire drills or other emergency preparedness exercises.
- Cell phones, computing devices and portable music and entertainment systems may **NOT** be turned on or used on field trips and/or any off campus school-related activity.
- The school is not liable for lost, stolen, and/or damaged cell phones, computing devices, and portable music and entertainment systems.

If a student uses their cell phone or has it visible at school, they will be asked once to put it away. If the student does not put the phone away, or is found with it out thereafter, we will ask to keep the phone and return it at the end of the school day. In addition, the teacher or administrator notify parents of the issue and work with families to make a plan for the student's compliance with school cell phone policy. Should the violations become chronic, the school will carry out guidance interventions and disciplinary responses set forth in the NYC DOE Discipline Code.

We recognize that cell phones provide a crucial tool for communication within families. If you require that your child notify you upon arrival at school, they **must do so before entering the building**. Any other calls to parents during the school day need to be made from the main office phone. If you must contact your child during school hours, please do so through our main office: 212-717-8809.

## STROLLERS & SCOOTERS

Parents must fold and park all strollers and scooters in the Stroller Parking Lot located beneath the steps on the first floor, Stairwell Bank D (near classroom 114), in order to comply with regulations established by the New York Fire Department. All strollers and scooters must be labeled with the child's name. We are not responsible for lost or damaged strollers or scooters.

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

### ARRIVAL - ALL STUDENTS

Our school day begins at 8:30 a.m. All students are required to enter through the main entrance on 67th Street. Staff personnel will begin taking students up to the fifth floor cafeteria beginning at 8:00 and until 8:30 a.m., where students can eat breakfast and later be escorted to their rooms by their teachers. Please note that 8:00 is the earliest drop off time that we can allow. Students on school premises before 8:00 am are not officially under our care nor the care of JREC School Safety Agents. We ask that parents and caregivers say a swift goodbye on the ground floor, and avoid coming up to the second or third floors, or lingering in classrooms at the start of the day.

# ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL (CONT.)

## BREAKFAST

Children who eat breakfast at school need to arrive by 8:10. A hot breakfast is served in the cafeteria until 8:25. A cold breakfast is available in Pre-K classrooms beginning at 8:30.

## ARRIVAL GUIDELINES FOR PRE-K & KINDERGARTEN FAMILIES

We cannot allow strollers on the 2nd floor at any time. Please wait with your child on the first floor by the Ella Baker mural (outside the art room) until a staff member comes at 8:25 to escort the children up to their classrooms. If you arrive late, or you wish to walk your child up to their classroom, **please leave your stroller on the first floor in the designated space at the bottom of the stairwell.**

## DISMISSAL

To ease congestion in the lobby at the end of the day we will be staggering dismissal and location.

GRADE	DISMISSAL TIME	LOCATION
PRE-K	2:45	Classroom
KINDERGARTEN	2:45	First floor by mural
GRADES 1-5	3:00	Eastside Alley*
GRADES 6-8	3:00	Eastside Alley*
AFTERSCHOOL	3:00	Afterschool will pick up students from the classrooms
BUS RIDERS	3:00	Auditorium
GRADES 1-8, In the event of severe weather	3:00	Ella Baker Lobby Look for classroom signs

*Please leave strollers on the first floor. If you arrive early for pick-up, please wait on the first floor by the mural until 2:45.*

*\*Eastside Alley is located between the school building and the school yard.*

**Family members or sitters who pick up children are asked to be on time. Only in the case of an emergency are children brought back to the office to wait for a late pick up.**

## CHANGES IN PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS

If your child has a special pick-up arrangement on any one day, please communicate your request by phone or email to the main office by 2:00 PM. Susan Amaro: [samaro2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:samaro2@schools.nyc.gov) and Mia Hernandez: [mhernandez13@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:mhernandez13@schools.nyc.gov). If your child's dismissal routine changes, the office must receive a written description of this change so that we may note it for the long term. Children will not be released to any adult other than a parent or guardian unless authorized by written permission on the child's Blue Card.

## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL (CONT.)

### EARLY PICK-UP

If you or another authorized caretaker are planning on picking up your child prior to early, you must report to the main office (Rm. 232) and sign your child out in the Early Dismissal Book. Office staff will notify your child's teacher that you are waiting in the office.

### AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Our after-school program is offered by Manhattan Youth After-School Program housed within the Julia Richman Educational Complex, providing a variety of elementary school enrichment courses as well as a **FREE** middle school program, 6th through 8th grades.

In Manhattan Youth's After-School Program, your child will participate in project-based activities, homework assignments, and get physical exercise every day. Manhattan Youth works closely with parents, teachers and school administrators to provide the sports, arts and enrichment activities necessary to give your child a well-rounded education.

The program is open every day (including half days) from school dismissal until 5:50pm. Parents can customize their after-school schedules, from one day to five days per week, one class to two classes per day, in any configuration. Manhattan Youth also runs full-day camps during summer vacation and school holidays (separate registration required).

### HOW IT WORKS

At the end of the school day, classroom teachers dismiss all students registered for our program directly to the MY staff, who greet students with a healthy snack and a smile. Students eat and socialize with friends, decompressing from the school day and gearing up for after-school.

### SPORTS, ARTS AND ENRICHMENT CLASSES

MY provides a wide variety of sports, arts, and enrichment activities for every age group. The classes that you select when enrolling your child in the program are taught by certified teachers, teaching artists and activity specialists.

### HOMEWORK & CHOICE TIME

Before and after classes, students choose from a list of structured and free play activities, led by our counselors. Choice Time activities include: Study Hall, Gym Sports, Yard Play, Indoor Games, Arts & Crafts, and more. You may choose to replace daily Choice Time with an additional class as an "add-on."

### SUPER-SIZE YOUR SCHEDULE

You can "add-on" a second class to your child's schedule! After-School includes one Class and one Choice Time activity per day. You may choose to replace daily Choice Time with an additional class as an "add-on." Tuition is based on your child's total number of classes per week.

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS (CONT)

### Financial Aid and Sliding Scale Tuition

Working parents with limited income in need of after-school childcare may apply for reduced tuition between July 1 and September 31.

Manhattan Youth After School Program offers their Middle After-school program free of charge. MY has partnered with Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development providing a broad menu of extracurricular activities Grades 6th through 8th at EBS thanks to the newly established publicly funded middle school programs. Manhattan Youth has worked closely with the principal and faculty of EBS, and assembled a program that supports the EBS culture and curriculum. M.Y provides a complete extracurricular program, including interscholastic sports teams, literacy and arts enrichment activities as well as daily homework support.

Please direct any questions you may have to The Ella Baker Elementary School Site Director:  
Joann Boisseau

[joann@manhattanyouth.org](mailto:joann@manhattanyouth.org)

212-766-1104 x268 (Office)

646-841-3600 (During After-School Hours)

We also have students attending Lenox Hill Neighborhood House 212-744-5022, as well as The Vanderbilt YMCA 212-756-9600.

## LATENESS, ABSENCE AND ILLNESS

### LATENESS

Students arriving to their classrooms after 8:30 will be marked late by their teachers. All students coming late need to go to the main office (Room 232) and pick up a late pass to bring to the teacher. Without this pass, our staff will not know that your child is in attendance and may mark your child absent.

### ABSENCE

Attendance is reviewed carefully by the Department of Education (DOE). A “reason-code” is required for the DOE system for all absences. A doctor’s note must be provided if a child has been absent for three days or more. **If your child is going to be absent, and/or to make changes in going-home or afterschool arrangements, please call the Ella Baker Office at (212) 717-8809.**

### EXCESSIVE LATENESS/ABSENCE

Chronic lateness and absenteeism hinder academic progress as well as admission to the city’s best high schools. If we notice a pattern of tardiness or absence, we will do the following to support families in getting their children here, on time.

## LATENESS, ABSENCE AND ILLNESS (CONT.)

- Emails with updates on attendance data, resources and reminders
- Phone call from guidance or administration to discuss the situation and generate strategies.
- Meeting with student (grades 6 and up).
- Family meeting at school to review progress and generate strategies and supports.
- Home visit from our DOE Attendance Teacher.
- If your child is going to be absent, and/or to make changes in going-home or afterschool arrangements, please call the Ella Baker Office at (212) 717-8809.

### ILLNESS POLICY

We ask that parents follow our illness policy in order to protect all of the families and children we serve. Fever, vomiting and diarrhea are signs of a virus and children must stay home. Children are required to be fever-free for 24 hours (without use of medication) before returning to school. If your child becomes ill at school, we will notify you and ask that you pick up your child within one hour. In case of accidental injury, the school will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent or guardian. If we cannot reach you, we will follow the instructions given on the blue emergency card.

Please keep your child home or bring them to the doctor when they are displaying one of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees and up
- Persistent cough
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
- Eyes with colored discharge
- Persistent tugging of ears that could indicate ear infection
- Nose with excessive mucus that requires constant wiping
- Complaints of body aches and pains (or when pain is evident)
- Constant itching of head or body (which may indicate lice)
- Swollen glands

If your child has suffered from any of the following illnesses and is ready to return to school, we need to receive a written statement from a doctor saying that your child is displaying no symptoms and is not contagious:

- Ear Infection
- Strep throat
- Bronchitis
- Chicken pox
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Pediculosis (head lice)
- Influenza
- Ringworm
- Mumps
- Measles
- Rubella
- Impetigo
- Coxsackie virus (no blisters or open sores)
- Croup
- Hepatitis A



## MEALS, FOOD AND NUTRITION

Every day, three meals are served at school, free of charge:

**Breakfast:** 8:00-8:25 am, in the cafeteria and in Pre-K classrooms

**Lunch:** in shifts between 12:10 pm and 1:20 pm. Pre-K and Kindergarten students eat lunch in their classrooms.

**Supper:** 3:15-3:45 pm, for those students registered with Manhattan Youth

In addition, we provide a snack for students participating in Ella Baker after school programs (such as Harmony Violin, talent show in the spring, etc.)

You can view menus by school here: (We follow the High School Lunch Menu) <http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/MenusDailyDisplay.aspx>

**Ella Baker is a TREE NUT FREE SCHOOL.** A few of our students have severe allergies to peanuts and other nuts. Therefore, any tree nuts are strictly prohibited from the building. Please adhere to this guideline for the health and safety of all students. We suggest sunflower seed butter as an alternative to peanut butter.

### A Word about Sugar

We ask that families help us in carefully monitoring and limiting children's intake of refined sugar. Studies have found that high sugar consumption can interfere with children's concentration, energy regulation, mood stability, and even produce addictive behaviors.

**We do not permit candy at school.** Please do not send your child to school with sugary snacks, but instead provide them with protein, fruits, vegetables and other nutritious foods. And please discourage your middle schooler from buying and drinking soda as part of their breakfast.

## BUS TRANSPORTATION

Age, distance, and in some cases IEPs, determine whether you can receive school bus services. Children cannot ride an NYCDOE school bus until they are five years old. The school bus picks up and drops off the children at various times depending on the route. Currently, the DOE busses coming to Ella Baker are known as the "West Side bus" and the "East Side bus." The "Queens bus" is a private bus, financed and coordinated by parents and guardians of some of our students residing in Queens. All buses have seatbelts and all children are required to wear them. There are no chaperones on the busses, with the exception of a matron on the Queens bus (again, privately funded by parents).

We do not hire the bus drivers and have no control over their performance and reliability. We are unable to help you with complaints about the bus but will be happy to give you the phone number of the Bureau of Transportation or the bus company that has the contract for the route. For questions and other information about bus service, please contact Mia Hernandez ([mhernandez13@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:mhernandez13@schools.nyc.gov)).

## METROCARDS

Metrocards are available for those students who live more than a half mile from the school. The age of the student is also a factor and determines whether you receive a full or half fare card. The Bureau of Transportation of the Department of Education decides whether the child receives full or half fare Metrocards. The school has no control over these decisions. More information about NYC DOE issued metrocards is available through this link: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/metro-cards>, or you may speak to Mia Hernandez (Rm. 232).

## FIELD TRIPS

Trips emerge from curricular connections, as well as the interests and questions that arise in our classrooms. This is real class time – we expect all children to attend trips. We plan many follow-up curriculum activities and it is important that children have all the information that they need to do their assignments.

Each class will take several trips throughout the course of the year, ranging from walks around the block, to visits within the community, to performances and excursions both in and outside of the city. Classes may travel on foot, by school bus, or by subway depending on the destination. Teachers will notify you in advance about upcoming trips and request permission slips and parent volunteers to accompany the class and assist in supervision. (See Guidelines for Class Trip Chaperones below.) To ensure the safety of everyone involved in class trips, the following procedures must be followed. Permission slips must be received for every child on each trip using school bus or public transportation, so please return them in a timely manner.

Any student who cannot attend a school trip will be accommodated in another classroom for the duration of the trip time.

## GUIDELINES FOR CLASS TRIP CHAPERONES

We are very grateful to parents and guardians who are able to help out by serving as trip chaperones. Below are some guidelines to ensure that each student is safe and that the trip goes smoothly.

- Learn the names of the children who will be in your group. Keep your group together at all times.
- Help the children follow the teacher's instructions.
- Help children keep up with the line.
- Help the children cross streets quickly, silently and efficiently. Let the teacher decide when and where to cross.
- Please assist children with their coats, shoes, lunches, etc. if necessary.
- If on a school bus, assist teachers in monitoring usage of seatbelts, designated seating, noise level, and safety entering and exiting the bus. All children under the age of four are required to have a car seat on a school bus.

## GUIDELINES FOR CLASS TRIP CHAPERONES

- Children that wish to use the bathroom or visit the water fountain must be accompanied by an adult
- Do not leave the group of children without notifying the teacher.
- It is our policy to prohibit individual children buying anything in gift shops, vending machines or cafeterias on trips– even if they are accompanied by a parent.
- Children must not be allowed to converse with strangers.
- Children may not eat or drink on any public transportation without the teacher’s permission.

## SAFETY DRILLS

To ensure the safety of all, and as required by the NYC DOE’s Emergency Readiness General Response Protocol, the school is required to carry out the following types of drills a few times a year:

**Evacuation Drill** (commonly known as a “fire drill”): Everyone in the JREC building exits in an orderly fashion, leaving behind belongings, except for coats in cold weather. Teachers are trained to facilitate this smoothly, take roll, and observe school safety protocols. Ella Baker students line up on 68th Street extending to First Avenue.

**Shelter-in** - All students and staff are kept inside the building and conduct business as usual. Exits are secured by school safety agents, Building Response Team members and floor wardens.

**Soft/Hard Lock Down** - Students are trained to move out of sight and keep silent. Teachers are trained to check the hallway outside of their classrooms for students, lock classroom doors, turn off the lights, move out of sight and keep silent.

## SAFETY COMMUNICATION

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building for an extended period of time, parents will receive a text with pertinent information about evacuation location. We will also email all families as soon as possible to share information. Please note that the school is not permitted to release communication with families until it is approved by the DOE. This can take time and is beyond our control. We appreciate your understanding and patience.

## OUR SCHOOL SAFETY AGENT TEAM

At JREC we are fortunate to have an experienced and committed team of school safety agents who know our school and our students well. We are grateful to each one of them for the care they provide daily to our community. Please do not hesitate to call on them for assistance.

- Mrs. Lemon-Newton,  
*Head of Security*
- Ms. Knights
- Mr. Mack
- Ms. Hollman
- Ms. Bradford
- Mr. Morrison
- Ms. James

# DISCIPLINE

We envision our school as a learning community where children and adults treat one another with respect and kindness. We see our graduates taking their places in the world as empowered adults who can make good choices in their lives, good changes in the world, and work well with others in their occupational and social communities.

Thus, we define discipline as helping children to develop self-regulation, empathy, and a desire to contribute positively to a physically and emotionally safe community for all. We work to maintain an environment where youngsters and adults can ask questions, take in information, reflect, take responsibility, learn, change, adapt, and improve their choices.

Ella Baker Values - As issues and challenges come up, our consistent message is that problems are inevitable, yet they must be solved through non-aggressive means. Although each person brings family and individual values to school as part of their identity, we have shared school values, consistent from class to class, which we uphold and reinforce.

*Treat people kindly.  
Act peacefully.  
Speak truthfully.  
Take responsibility.  
Seek solutions.*

## Children are also reminded that:

- Their actions affect others.
- They can solve problems through discussion.
- Setting and respecting personal boundaries are important.
- Certain behaviors are not tolerated, including:
  - Teasing
  - Aggressive verbal behavior—cursing and/or other threatening or abusive language to children, adults, or the larger community (including racial, sexual, or other negative comments about one’s identity).
  - Hitting or other physically aggressive acts, including shoving.
  - Behavior that severely disrupts the education of others.
  - Dangerous behavior (hiding in the yard or classroom, running away from adults, climbing bathroom stalls, etc.)
  - Misuse of materials or other people’s property.
  - Stealing or defacing school or personal property.

**Response to Unacceptable Behavior** - In keeping with our values and mission, and depending upon the child’s age, frequency and severity of the behavior, Ella Baker School employs one or more of the following DOE sanctioned practices:

- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Restorative Justice
- [NYC DOE’s Citywide Behavioral Expectations and Discipline Code](#)

## DISCIPLINE (CONT.)

### BULLYING

Ella Baker School does not tolerate bullying. We take immediate and appropriate measures as outlined above in the NYC DOE Discipline Code. We also define bullying accurately, according to the DOE's following guidelines:

#### **Bullying IS:**

- A pattern of behavior over time
- Behavior that is negative, unwanted, deliberate and unprovoked
- Intended to cause harm to the target of the behavior
- Causes harm to the target of the behavior
- Involves an imbalance of power (physical or social)

#### **Bullying IS NOT:**

- A rude comment
- A conflict
- A one-time physical altercation

## SPECIAL EVENTS

A number of events for families and staff will take place throughout the year. A calendar is sent home at the beginning of the school year. Events are also listed on our website: [www.ellabakerschool.org](http://www.ellabakerschool.org). We also send home notices by email and backpack in advance of events.

#### **Special Events Sampling:**

- Fall Festival
- Ella Maker Fair
- Ella Baker Day/December Potuck
- Classroom Celebrations
- Theatre and Musical Performances
- Field Day
- Scholastic Book Fair
- Picture Day
- Ronald McDonald House Kids charity Fun Run

## BIRTHDAYS

All children's birthdays are recognized on our lobby whiteboard every day. Pre-K and Kindergarten, the child bakes a cake in class with the help of a few friends and a teacher. Please communicate with the teacher to be sure about non-allergenic ingredients. For other grades, please check with your child's teacher about their classroom birthday celebration traditions. Overall, we ask that decorations, party favors, goodie bags, gifts and be reserved for home parties. In addition, please do not use the class mailboxes to distribute invitations for home parties, even if the whole class is invited.

## SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AT SPECIAL EVENTS

We enjoy arranging periodic opportunities for families and the school to come together for celebration and performance. These may be in the classroom or a more public space such as the yard or auditorium. For the safety of all, we ask that parent observe the following guidelines:

- Any child attending an event outside of school hours must be accompanied by an adult and be under the supervision of that adult at all times.
- Children may not enter parts of the building that are not in use for the event.
- Children may not run around in the auditorium or play on stage before, during or after a school performance. If school property is destroyed, the parent is responsible for compensation.

## CLOTHING

Young children learn through exploration and play. They will be using paint, clay, sand and water. Please do not send your child to school with clothing that you do not want to get dirty. Clothing should be sturdy and washable. Children should come to school in sturdy comfortable shoes that are appropriate for running and playing during recess and gym. In the lower grades, we encourage children to be as independent as possible when dressing themselves. Clothing that is free of complicated fastenings is most appropriate. Please ensure your child knows how to tie their own shoes; until this skill is mastered, velcro shoes are best. We also request that you send a spare set of clothing for your child in Pre-K/K.

## LOST & FOUND

Please label all of your child's clothing and other belongings (like lunch boxes, bags, etc.). In the event that your child loses an article, we have a Lost & Found on the ground floor by the Ella Baker mural. Please check it in a timely fashion, as its contents are sent out to Goodwill monthly.

## SIBLING ADMISSIONS

### **Pre-K**

Siblings of students enrolled in Ella Baker during the applicable school year receive admissions priority. Families must submit an application through the Department of Education's centralized Universal Pre-k admissions process. For more information go to: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/pre-k>

### **Kindergarten**

Siblings of students enrolled in Ella Baker during the applicable school year receive admissions priority. Families must submit an application through the Department of Education's centralized Kindergarten admissions process. For more information go to: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/kindergarten>

### **Grades 1 - 8**

We are occasionally able to offer spots to older siblings of newly admitted PreK and Kindergarten students. If interested, speak to the Parent Coordinator, Valerie Kirk-Kamali 212-717-8809 Ext 2321.

## 03 ACADEMICS AT ELLA BAKER

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### CURRICULUM

Curriculum at Ella Baker is predominantly teacher-created. In developing our units of study, we consider student needs and interests, state standards, cultural relevance and responsiveness, school philosophy and multiple means of engagement, expression of learning, and representation of material. In addition, we draw from a number of research-based, professionally prepared curricula that we feel align with our pedagogical philosophy, including: Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Pearson Investigations, Britannica Mathematics in Context, Words Their Way, Urban Advantage and the DOE's Passport to Social Studies. For an overview of Ella Baker's academic curriculum, please visit our website. Also be sure to attend our fall Curriculum Night when teachers inform parents about the coming year's curriculum and distribute scope and sequence maps.

### CURRICULUM NIGHT

Curriculum night occurs every fall. This evening serves to: introduce you to your child's teacher, the curriculum for the year, and provide an opportunity to meet other families from your child's class. Here you will learn about and discuss the class curriculum in detail. If you have specific concerns about your child's progress or issues in class, please discuss with the teacher separately during Family Conferences or at a privately arranged meeting.

### PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

At Ella Baker we value depth over breadth, student initiative over teacher control, the thinking process above getting the "right answer." Therefore, we engage students in creating projects where they seek out and utilize knowledge, make meaning for themselves, and reflect on their learning, all within a framework designed and guided by the teacher. In early grades, these are often physical creations they share with classmates. As children move through the grades, writing, research, analysis, and formal presentation become important aspects of final projects. Parents are often invited to attend publishing parties, share days, and performances during which students present their projects and articulate their learning.

Projects serve as an entry point to engagement, a process for actual learning, as well as a means of assessment. Teachers set out learning goals and activities, leaving room for student choice. They assess students against goals for learning that are shared with students. In addition, teachers look for growth in how students revise their thinking, refine their processes, and solve problems. Students self assess, both during and at the conclusion of a project. In collaboration with teachers, they celebrate successes and set goals to carry forward the experience for new growth in the next endeavor.

## WORK TIME

Work Time is a special project time--sometimes standing apart from the set curriculum, sometimes integrated--when children may freely choose an activity they would like to work on. Numerous studies--some extending over decades--show the effectiveness of play-based education that combines hands-on learning with child-initiated play. Work Time is our school's way of incorporating play into each student's experience. Choices vary from class to class, teacher to teacher and grade to grade--but every grade from Pre K to 8th engages in Work Time at some point during their week.

In the early childhood years, Work Time usually occurs daily and may include: blocks, painting, cooking, dramatic play, sand table, water table, mini house, construction, book making, marble ramps, animal and plant care, legos, storytelling, paper airplanes, play dough or dance. Not all of these are offered in one day, of course, but enough activities so two to four children may be working in each area. Teachers are facilitators during Work Time, helping to provision an activity, assist when students get stuck, resolve social disputes or to guide them to the next step. A journal component is added to help older students reflect on their work. Students may respond to questions such as, Where did you go today? What materials did you use? If you got stuck, how did you get unstuck? How will you begin tomorrow? The Work Time journal can be especially helpful with students that struggle with writing, and gives teachers one more assessment source.

## ASSESSMENT & REPORTING OF PROGRESS

Students do not receive traditional report cards or grades (except in grade 7) at Ella Baker School. Instead, teachers write narrative reports and complete checklists about individual student progress. We find that a checklist is useful for indicating progress in terms of skills and curricular expectations, but that narratives are necessary in addition to tell the full story of a child as a learner. We use narrative descriptions to communicate with families about the children's academic learning, as well as social/emotional development, new interests, unique endeavors, and next steps. Class participation, assignments, projects, and schoolwide assessments are used to determine mastery of individual skills. In cases where students are missing important assignments, we work with students to assure that they complete the work and acquire the skills intended by the curriculum.

Whether writing narratives or completing checklists, teachers review their classroom assessments, school-wide assessments, conference notes, observations, student goals, projects, written work, and self-evaluations in order to reflect on the child and how to best provide for her/his continued growth and development. Teachers also provide suggestions on how families can help their children's learning and development. Depending on the grade level and time of year, either a narrative, a checklist or both may be provided to parents. At the end of the school year, grades of Pass or Fail will be entered into NYC DOE STARS system for the four major subject areas: ELA, Math, Social Studies and Science.



## ASSESSMENT & REPORTING OF PROGRESS (CONT.)

GRADE	NOVEMBER REPORT	FEBRUARY REPORT	JUNE REPORT
PRE-K, KINDERGARTEN & 1 <sup>ST</sup> GRADE	Narrative & checklist	Narrative & checklist	Narrative & checklist
2 <sup>ND</sup> - 8 <sup>TH</sup>	Checklist only	Narrative & checklist	Narrative & checklist <i>Numerical grade for students in 7th grade</i>

As part of the high school application process for students in grade 7, the teacher will also provide a numerical grade, based on scores for projects, classwork and quizzes. While work habits are also rated in each subject area, content standards are predominantly used to determine the final numerical grade.

WRITING SKILLS	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	CONSISTENT	STRENGTH
Engages in writing to express ideas and learning				X
Word choice, sentence structure & voice strengthen style				X
Organizes ideas into well-ordered paragraphs			X	
Uses evidence to support ideas, elaborates sufficiently on evidence			X	
Revises and edits writing as needed			X	
Applies conventions of grammar, punctuation, agreement, etc.			X	
Writes continuously for extended periods of time			X	
FINAL GRADE:				

## STUDENT SELF EVALUATION AND GOAL SETTING

At Ella Baker School we value and give voice to children’s assessments of themselves as well as goal setting. Twice a year, reflection and communication of goals is formalized across the school, when families participate in student-led conferences. In preparation for family conferences, children reflect on their progress. They consider what curriculum has been important to them and why, what skills they have worked on during this portion of the year, and what areas might be areas for improvement. Teachers and students then arrive at a short list of goals that are shared with parents and guardians during the conference.

## COLLECTIONS

Ella Baker retains for each student a portfolio of selected work, known as a “collection,” which students add to at the end of every school year. At the end of their time at Ella Baker, 8th graders reflect on this work and share their insights with the community as part of a Spring “Collection Share.”

## HOMEWORK

At Ella Baker we do not have a school-wide homework policy, but expect all students to read at home for 30 or more minutes each evening. With other assignments, teachers determine their own requirements and guidelines. Overall, we believe that children need a balanced life. In addition to school children need time for family, play dates, after-school enrichment activities and (screen free) leisure time. Thus, we strive to keep children’s enthusiasm and excitement alive with homework assignments that are meaningful and connected to the curriculum. In the early grades, parents play a bigger role in guiding and participating in homework. For example, reading aloud to children and playing math games. Our wish is for students to grow more independent as they move through our elementary grades and on up to middle school. Also, in keeping with our educational philosophy, the object is not to get it right, but to engage with the work in a thoughtful and meaningful way. All parents can support good homework habits by:

- Providing a regular time and place for children to work
- Promoting independence by asking open ended questions such as (“Ok, so what’s your first step? What could you try?)
- Listening to help children clarify their thinking

## PROMOTIONAL POLICY

Occasionally a child may be struggling and not making adequate progress.

When we are concerned about a child's academic progress, we take the following steps:

- Initiate a conversation between teachers, administration and the family about our concerns.
- The school history of the child is reviewed (the portfolio, previous progress reports, etc.)
- Together we formulate a plan to help the child and provide the scaffolding that the child needs to progress.
- A Pupil Personnel Team (consisting of the principal, teacher, guidance counselor, social worker, resource room teachers) meeting may be convened to look at the need for counseling, small group tutoring or other special services such as resource room or speech. We confer with the previous classroom teacher(s) and other teachers who have worked with the child.

In rare cases, a child's performance and progress is so different from the range of the class that the child is not able to participate fully in the curriculum of the class. In this case, promotion may be a disservice to the child. Parents are notified of our concern in writing no later than the time of the mid-year progress reports.