

**THE ACTIVE LEARNING  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
PS244Q**

**2010-2011**

**FAMILY HANDBOOK**



*Body, Mind, & Character*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### A. TALES' Mission

The mission of The Active Learning Elementary School (TALES), a PK-3 school, is to foster academic excellence in a safe and caring learning environment, through a partnership of family, staff, and community. TALES strives to meet children's academic, physical, and social needs with the belief that educating the whole child allows for learning at optimal levels. With our rigorous academic curriculum, emphasis on social development, and a focus on health and nutrition, students will receive the foundations necessary to excel academically as well as lead healthy, productive lives. TALES' students will stimulate their minds, nourish their bodies, and develop character.

### B. TALES' Core Values

*The Core Values serve as a guide to our daily lives at TALES as well as our lives beyond the classroom.*

Respect – TALES community members make sure to treat others the way that they themselves would want to be treated. We make sure to value other people's beliefs and ideals even if we don't necessarily agree with them. TALES members always display kindness and compassion to others.

Leadership – TALES community members make decisions to do what is right even in difficult situations. We are people that lead by example and show others the way to act while making a commitment to better themselves through learning inside and outside of school.

Community – TALES community members live in a diverse city with many different cultures and ideals. We learn from people who have different customs and beliefs to help make our community stronger.

Commitment - TALES community members understand that hard work, listening to others around us, and compromise are important in achieving both individual and community goals. We are responsible for each other and must ensure that we grow and develop the community around us.

Nutrition – TALES community members realize that as we grow, our physical well being is important to achieve our highest potential. This means that we must constantly keep health and nutrition in our minds while eating healthy and exercising everyday.

## C. Daily Schedule

### PRE-K

8:45AM-2:55PM

Monday through Friday

- Breakfast will be served in PRE-K rooms promptly at **8:45AM**. Please ensure that your child is on time daily as instruction will begin during the breakfast period. Parents may drop their children off at the classroom door after checking in with the safety agent. After your child has been received by a TALES staff member, you should proceed to exit the building through the main entrance. This drop-off policy will continue until further notice.
- Children should bring a small, **nutritious** snack to eat during the school day. Snack will occur sometime around 10:30AM. Lunch is tentatively scheduled for 12:30PM and will be served in the classroom (we welcome parent volunteers to help serve).
- Children should be appropriately dressed for outside weather conditions as children will experience an outdoor play period on a daily basis. In cases of severe weather, the outdoor play period will occur indoors.
- Dismissal will start at 2:50PM. Parents may pick-up children directly from their Pre-K room. Please make sure your child is picked up no later than 2:55PM. This dismissal policy will be in effect until further notice.
- We are strongly encouraging PRE-K families to volunteer and help in the classroom. Please speak to your child's teacher regarding volunteer opportunities.

### Kindergarten thru 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

8:37AM-2:57PM

EVERYDAY

- Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria beginning at **8:10AM thru 8:25AM**. Parents may drop their children off at the school's main entrance **no earlier than 8:10AM**. Children arriving for breakfast should proceed directly to the school cafeteria and sit at a table. Except for special circumstances (ex. first days of school, children with special needs, meetings, etc.), parents will not be allowed to enter the school building. This drop-off policy will continue until further notice. Any person who enters the building must check in with the school safety agent.
- Kindergarten children who are not eating breakfast may report to the multi-purpose room beginning at 8:30AM. **Morning line-up will begin promptly at 8:35AM**. Children in 1<sup>st</sup> thru 3rd grade will be permitted to proceed upstairs at 8:30AM. **Children who are not unpacked and ready for instruction (items put away, sitting on the carpet as teacher begins lesson) by 8:37AM will be marked late, regardless of whether you are in the room.**
- Children may bring a small, **nutritious** snack to eat during the school day, however, this is at the discretion of the teacher. Children with medically documented dietary concerns will receive appropriate considerations. Lunch periods for this school year are scheduled from 11:37-12:27 and 12:32-1:22.

- **Children should be appropriately dressed for outside weather conditions as children will enjoy outdoor recess on a daily basis.** In cases of severe weather, recess will occur indoors.
- Please note that extended day academic intervention/enrichment classes will be provided on a semester basis to select children. When your child is selected, **these classes are mandatory to attend as important instructional activities will occur\*\*.** Every child will have the opportunity to attend at least one semester (October-December, January-March, April-June) during the school year. The school day schedule will be as follows (again, **this is mandatory during the semester your child is selected**):  
**Tuesday-Friday 8:00AM-2:57PM**  
**Monday 8:37AM-2:57PM**

\*\*Children in self contained, special education classes (K-304 and 2-305) are required to attend the intervention period all year.

\*\*\* Children who are selected for the academic intervention/enrichment program (which all students will for at least one semester during the year) will have breakfast available from 7:45AM-7:55AM. Children in this program must arrive at 7:45AM if they would like to participate in breakfast.

#### D. Important Contact Information

TALES Main Office	718-445-5730
TALES FAX	718-445-5856
TALES Website	<a href="http://www.tales-nyc.org">www.tales-nyc.org</a>
TALES Email	<a href="mailto:talesnyc.info@gmail.com">talesnyc.info@gmail.com</a>

*Email for all TALES Staff can be found at [www.tales-nyc.org](http://www.tales-nyc.org)*

#### E. Common Expectations for All Students

At TALES, all students are expected to:

- Be prepared for each lesson/class (i.e., have the proper tools – paper, pens, notebooks, etc.)
- Follow instructions of all staff the first time they are given.
- Display the behaviors that are apart of Accountable Talk:
  - Maintain a calm body
  - Look at the speaker
  - Participate in classes by asking and answering questions and sharing ideas
- Respect all members of the community as well as visitors.
- Not chew gum, eat candy, or drink any beverage other than 100% juice or water. These will be confiscated by TALES' staff.
- Not bring handheld cellular phones, electronic games, or music systems to school. These will be confiscated by TALES staff. In cases where a communication device is needed for safety, please discuss with a TALES staff member.
- Use appropriate language while on school grounds.
- Be safe and considerate while moving through common spaces.
- Be on time for all activities.

## F. The Active Learning Elementary School Community Contract

### The Active Learning Elementary School Community Contract

Staff, family members, and students are expected to abide by this agreement which details expectations for each constituency. These are the “non-negotiables” of TALES. This agreement will be reviewed at school open houses/orientations or on a 1 to 1 basis as needed. Please review this agreement, as well as the New York City Discipline Code, with your child in order to clearly understand TALES’ expectations:

#### The Active Learning Elementary School Community Agreement

The underlying belief at TALES is that strong teaching in a caring environment combined with an intensive and holistic school day will stimulate the child’s mind, nourish their bodies, and develop their character. Staff, students and parents must each do their part to ensure that this belief is realized.

Therefore,

As a staff member at TALES, I promise to:

- Provide students with a safe, nurturing, environment.
- Hold students to high standards and doing the best work they are capable of.
- Share information and resources with parents that will aid in student learning.
- Have zero tolerance for off task behavior or lack of effort.
- Become an expert in the field of teaching and use the best instructional practices.
- Assess students on a regular basis and work with students and parents to provide the best possible individualized instruction.
- Be direct and respectful in communication with all members of the TALES community.
- Hold myself to behaving in accordance with TALES’ Core Values.

**By signing this statement I am agreeing to uphold these commitments to TALES parents and students.**

Teacher Signature \_\_\_\_\_

As a parent/caring adult at TALES, I promise to:

- Work with TALES staff to support my child’s learning and development.
- Maintain clear and frequent communication with the school including returning all Progress Reports and other signed documents when they are due.
- Attend all required school meetings.
- Support TALES’ behavioral policy, its rewards, and its consequences; work with the TALES staff to make sure that my child is following the school and class rules so as to protect the safety, feelings and rights of other students, staff, parents and him or herself.
- Have zero tolerance for off task behavior or lack of effort.
- Ensure that my child maintains a minimum of 95% attendance and is on time each day
- Check my child’s homework each night to make sure it is complete and done with care.
- Make arrangements so that my child is appropriately taken care of at dismissal each day.
- Come in immediately when it is requested by the school.
- Be direct and respectful in communication with all members of the TALES community.
- Hold myself to behaving in accordance with TALES’ Core Values.

**By signing this statement I am agreeing to uphold these commitments to TALES staff and my child.**

Parent/Caring Adult Signature \_\_\_\_\_

As a student at TALES, I promise to:

- Participate in class.
- Arrive at school on time each day.
- Complete all my class-work and homework with care.
- Respect other peoples’ bodies and feelings.
- Be on task and work hard at all times.
- Take advantage of enrichment opportunities made available.
- Follow school rules and regulations.
- Wear the TALES uniform (when applicable).
- Hold myself to behaving in accordance with TALES’ Core Values.
- Try hard at everything I do.

**By signing this statement I am agreeing to uphold these commitments to TALES staff, my family and myself.**

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## TALES STAFF

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### G. TALES Organization Sheet 2010-2011

Ivan Tolentino, Principal  
Robert Groff, Assistant Principal I.A.  
Lalita Kovvuri, Parent Coordinator  
Bernadette Negron, School Secretary  
Loretta Gong, Community Assistant  
Meenu Sawhney, School Aide  
Anran Wang, School Aide  
Maggie Stratigakos, ESL Teacher/Literacy Push-In  
Rebecca Kaizerman, ESL Teacher/Literacy Push-In  
Christian Ledesma, Science Teacher  
Carmen Acevedo, Language through Movement/ESL  
Kimberly Ilardi, Language through Music/ESL  
Rachel Wolf, Special Education Teacher-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
Sharra Friend, Special Education Teacher-Kindergarten  
Tu Harris, Kindergarten Teacher  
Anna Oliveri, Kindergarten Teacher  
Esther Eng, Kindergarten Teacher  
Stephanie Chin, Kindergarten Teacher  
Jessica Pasternak, First Grade Teacher  
Josie Freeman, First Grade Teacher  
Theresa Goldstein, First Grade Teacher  
Teresa Amore, Second Grade Teacher  
Jessica Navarro, Second Grade Teacher  
LaKethia White, Second Grade Teacher  
Javetta Pierce, Third Grade Teacher  
Merril Miceli, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher  
Charlene Cruse, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher  
Helen Chin, Paraprofessional  
Karen Darrell, Paraprofessional  
Ema Hustea, Paraprofessional  
Leslie Franco, Paraprofessional  
Tsu-Pei Lee, Paraprofessional  
Patricia Taormina, Paraprofessional  
Melling Liu, Guidance Counselor

## H. TALES' Staff-Teachers and Administrators

### **Ivan Tolentino, Principal**

Ivan, a 2000 Teach for America Corps member, is the founding principal of The Active Learning Elementary School (TALES). Prior to TALES, he served as an assistant principal at Future Leaders Institute in Harlem for four years. Ivan began his career in education at The Shakespeare School in the Bronx where he served as a teacher and staff developer. Ivan graduated from Florida State University with a B.S. in Physical Education and has earned 2 Master's Degrees at Pace University (Education and Education Administration).

### **Bob Groff, Teacher-Assistant Principal I.A.**

Bob earned his masters in Public Administration before deciding to go into education as a 2002 Teach for America corps member now entering his 9th year in education. He taught 5th and 1st grade in the South Bronx and Kindergarten in Harlem for 4 years. During this time he also obtained a Masters of Science in Teaching and a Masters in School Leadership at Pace University. He used these experiences to co-found TALES and become its founding literacy specialist. In his off time, Bob enjoys running, biking, triathlons and softball.

### **Carmen Acevedo, Teacher-Language thru Movement/ESL**

Carmen is entering her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at TALES. Prior to becoming a NYC Teaching Fellow, she worked in hospitality and in fundraising. Carmen graduated with a MA in Organizational Communication from the University at Albany. For the past four years, she has been teaching English as a Second Language for grades K – 3 and recently completed a MA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at City College. She enjoys being an active member of her community in Williamsburg-Brooklyn as well as dancing and visiting new places. Carmen has helped design our successful Language thru Movement program.

### **Teresa Amore, Teacher-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

Teresa is enthusiastically joining the TALES team this year. She graduated from Queens College with a B.S. in Elementary Education and Anthropology. She also obtained a Master's degree in Childhood Education specializing in Language and Literacy from Queens College. While attending college, Teresa worked as a teacher's assistant/substitute teacher for Nassau BOCES. For the last seven years, Teresa has taught at P.S.145 in Brooklyn. Her experience has ranged from third grade, to kindergarten, to a dual language gifted program. In continuing her education, Teresa has attended Columbia University to take part in Teachers College leadership groups and Reading and Writing Institutes. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, bike riding, and playing sports. As a mother herself, Teresa understands the value and importance of a family-school connection. She is looking forward to a fantastic 2010-2011 school year.

### **Helen Chin, Paraprofessional**

Helen has worked for the Department of Education for 10 years. Prior to the DOE, she worked for Dow Jones & Co. - Wall Street Journal for 13 years in Manhattan as a Senior Statistician and News Assistant. Helen graduated from Pace University with a B.S. in Marketing.

**Stephanie Chin, Teacher-Kindergarten**

Stephanie is a Flushing native who grew up minutes away from TALES. Stephanie graduated from St. John's University in 2006 with a B.S. in Childhood Education. She continued her education and received a Master's in Early Childhood Education in 2009 while substituting at TALES. Stephanie substituted at many different schools before finding her niche at our school. She is eager to continue teaching in the neighborhood where she grew up. Stephanie is passionate about teaching and also her favorite baseball team-The Yankees!

**Charlene Cruse, Teacher- Pre-Kindergarten**

Prior to joining TALES in 2008, Charlene taught for 3 years in Bed Sty at P.S.309; kindergarten for 1 year and third grade for 2. Charlene is a graduate from Buffalo State College with a B.S. in Early Childhood/Childhood Education. She has completed a Master's Degree in Special Education at Touro College. Charlene is entering her third year at TALES.

**Karen Darrell, Paraprofessional**

Karen Darrell has been with the NYC Department of Education since 2006 working for District 75 Special Education Citywide Programs and now entering her third year at TALES. She served on the Board of Directors of her local preschool as Treasurer for seven years while helping to support their Universal Pre-K program. Karen attends Queens College and is studying Elementary Education and English Literature.

**Esther Eng, Teacher-Kindergarten**

Esther Eng was born and raised in Flushing where she attended the neighborhood public schools. She is excited to be teaching in her community and giving back to a neighborhood which she has cherished all her life. Esther graduated from Barnard College, Columbia University with a B.A. in English and Education. She will be pursuing her Master's in Special Education at Queens College. She has taught first grade at The Early Childhood Center in Richmond Hills. Esther also enjoys practicing yoga, drawing and attending various cultural events in New York City. Esther is entering her third year at TALES.

**Leslie Franco, Paraprofessional**

Leslie Franco has been a special education paraprofessional since 2006 and a Spanish instructor for Kings Borough Community college since 2009. Leslie enjoys her career in the education field and finds it very rewarding. In her spare time she enjoys reading, meditating and learning about different cultures.

**Josie Freeman, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher**

This is Josie's first year at TALES. She taught first grade at PS 165 in Manhattan for five years and middle school EFL (English as a Foreign Language) at a private school in Quito, Ecuador for two years. Josie holds a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Vermont and an M.A. in Bilingual/Bicultural Childhood Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her professional interests include children's literature and multicultural/multilingual education.

**Sharra Friend, Special Education Teacher**

Prior to teaching, Sharra graduated Hofstra University with a B.B.A in Banking and Finance and was working as an analyst for JPMorgan Chase. Halfway through her MBA in Finance at Hofstra, she decided that she missed working with children and joined the NYC Teaching Fellows in 2005. Sharra received a dual Masters of Science in Elementary Education and Special Education from Queens College. She then went on to obtain Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education certifications. Sharra taught Kindergarten and First Grade Self-Contained classes in Whitestone for four years and taught a General Education Kindergarten class in Bayside last year.



**Theresa Gold, Teacher-1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

Theresa has been teaching Kindergarten and First Grade in New York City schools since 2006 and is looking forward to becoming a new member of the TALES community. She graduated from SUNY Cortland with a B.S. in Childhood Education and later earned an M.S. in Childhood Math and Science Education from CUNY Hunter. Theresa believes that life is an ongoing learning experience and that she learns every day from new challenges, experiences, and most importantly, children.

**Tu Harris, Teacher-Kindergarten**

Tu hails from Tacoma, Washington where she grew up with a view of Mount Rainier. As much as she loved the Pacific Northwest, she was always dazzled by big cities and came to New York City to attend Columbia University. She has made New York City her home since graduation and she currently resides in Brooklyn. Tu has been both a classroom teacher and a science teacher (she loves PBS and Channel 13 programs) for the past seven years. She received her Masters in Teaching and Masters in Administration & Supervision from Pace University. When not teaching, Tu enjoys reading, designing clothes, cooking, and entrepreneurship.

**Emma Hustea, Paraprofessional**

Emma graduated from Baruch College in 2003 with a BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration)/International Marketing. As she attended college, she worked at Lag CC as a tutor for students with learning disabilities. Emma recently graduated from Hunter College with a degree in Early Childhood education.

**Kim Ilardi, Teacher, Language thru Music-(ESL)**

Kimberly Ilardi is entering her third year as a TALES teacher. Passionate about languages and the arts, especially music, she is committed to bringing her previous experience and expertise to her work with the students and families at TALES. Prior to joining TALES, Kim lived in France teaching English as a foreign language to elementary students in Paris. In New York, she has worked in arts management, administration and education and most recently served as the School Programs Administrator for The Metropolitan Opera Guild's school partnership programs. A NYC Teaching Fellow for ESL, Kim is currently enrolled in the TESOL program at Fordham University. She graduated from Muhlenberg College in 2001 with a BA in Music and French and also holds an MA in French Studies from Middlebury College.

**Rebecca Kaizerman, Teacher-ESL/Literacy**

Once an aspiring ethnographer, Rebecca studied Cultural Anthropology at Rutgers University (B.A.) and Cornell University (M.A.) before moving to China to do fieldwork in the late 1990s. While there, she taught English part time to supplement her income, and unexpectedly found teaching far more interesting and rewarding than ethnographic research. She then spent several years teaching English in China, to students of all ages and abilities, before returning to Rutgers to obtain an Ed.M. in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Prior to coming to TALES, Rebecca spent five years teaching Kindergarten and first grade ELL's at P.S. 170 in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn.

**Christian Ledesma, Teacher-Science**

Christian Alberto Ledesma was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY and attended NYC Public Schools. He graduated from New York University and received his Masters of Science in Teaching from Pace University. He has taught in the Bronx and Manhattan for 6 years, teaching 2nd and 4th Grades, as well as serving as a Reading Specialist, and a Science teacher. In his spare time, Christian enjoys running, martial arts, learning new languages, and dancing. He currently lives with his wife, Wendy, in Astoria. Christian is entering his third year at TALES.

**Tzu-Pei Lee, Paraprofessional**

Tzu-Pei is from Taiwan where she is a graduate of Fu-Jen Catholic University. She taught English in Taiwan for several years and was a Chinese teacher at Shuang Wen Public School in New York for a year. Prior to coming to TALES she worked as a paraprofessional at PS 394M, a high school for English language learners. She is currently enrolled in the graduate program at Hunter College. Since she loves working with young children and believes that early childhood is the crucial stage of children's development, she is majoring in Early Childhood Special Education. She looks forward to working with the TALES community.

**Merril Miceli, Teacher- Pre-Kindergarten**

Merril began her teaching career as a Peace Corps volunteer while living and working in Kazakhstan. After returning home, she knew teaching was what she wanted to do in life and came to New York in 2006 as a NYC Teaching Fellow. Prior to TALES, Merrill worked as a teacher in the Bronx at P.S. 91. She spent one year as a K-5 ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher and one year as a fourth grade teacher. Merrill attended City College and recently completed her Masters Degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Merrill is entering her third year at TALES.

**Jessica Navarro, Teacher-Second Grade**

Jessica was born and raised in Queens, NY. She graduated from New York University with a B.A. in Politics and Urban Studies and received her M.S. in Urban Education from Mercy College. She joined the NYC Teaching Fellows in 2005, and taught kindergarten, first and second grades at P.S. 126 in the Bronx. Jessica is an avid reader and conservationist and loves motorcycles, sunny days and the outdoors. Jessica is entering her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at TALES.

**Anna Oliveri, Teacher-Kindergarten**

Anna is a passionate educator whose teaching career began in Brooklyn at Ss. Cyril and Methodius. After working there for a few years, she then began her public educational service at P.S.89Q in Elmhurst where she taught kindergarten for ten years. Anna graduated from Queens College with a B.A and an M.S. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. This life long learner continues expanding her knowledge and education by attending workshops and college courses at various NYC universities such as Bank Street School of Education, St. John's University, and Fordham University. Recently, she completed an ESL program and is dually certified by New York State. Anna is entering her third year at TALES.

**Jessica Pasternak, Teacher-1st Grade**

Prior to joining TALES, Jessica worked in Whitestone for 2 years teaching first grade and Fresh Meadows for a year teaching various grades from pre-k to fifth. Jessica graduated from SUNY Cortland with a Bachelor's of Science in Education. She has her Masters from CW Post in Literacy. She loves teaching and is entering her 2<sup>nd</sup> year with the TALES family, fifth overall with the NYCDOE.

**Javetta Pierce, Teacher-3rd Grade**

Javetta Pierce is a 2003 New York City Teaching Fellows member. Prior to becoming a teacher, she graduated from Indiana University Bloomington with a Bachelor of Science in Business Marketing in 2002 and migrated to New York City to work in apparel merchandising management. While in New York, she joined the New York City Teaching Fellows in 2003 and has been in teaching bliss for 7 years and looking forward to many more years in the field of education. Javetta began her teaching career at P.S. 9 The Ryer Elementary School in the Bronx as a 3rd

grade teacher. She has taught 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades over time while obtaining a Master's in Elementary Education at Mercy College and a Master's in Educational Leadership at the University of South Florida. Javetta is a newcomer to the TALES team as the teacher for our first 3rd grade class.

#### **Maggie Stratigakos, Teacher-ESL/Literacy**

Prior to joining TALES, Maggie served as a first grade teacher at P.S. 197, An Early Childhood School, in the Bronx for three years and taught 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at TALES for 2 years. Maggie, a strong believer in the integral role that families play in their child's education, served on her school's multicultural committee to strengthen the family-school connection. She continued the work in her classroom by conducting monthly parent-child activities and leading parent workshops. Maggie graduated from Queens College in Flushing with a B.S. in Elementary Education and Psychology, and later earned a Master's degree in Children's Literature. She recently completed a TESOL program (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) so as to better serve the needs of English Language Learners. Maggie joined the TALES staff as a founding teacher.

#### **Patricia Taormina, Paraprofessional**

Patricia Taormina has been a paraprofessional with the NYC Department of Education for ten years. Her love for education began when she became a "Learning Leader" at her daughter's Elementary School. She served as a PTA Co-President there where she implemented the "Student of the Month" Award. She continued on to become Co-President at her daughter's Junior High School, while working as a special education paraprofessional with severely handicapped students in District 75. At the same time, Patricia worked to obtain her B.A. from Queens College, and then continued her education by receiving her Masters of Science in Education from Touro College. Patricia is new to TALES, and is happy and excited to work here.

#### **Rachel Wolf, Teacher-Special Education**

Rachel was born and raised in Howard Beach-Queens until she moved to Long Island at the age of 10. She knew from a very early age that she was destined to work with children. She attended Cornell University in Ithaca, NY to receive her undergraduate degree in Human Development. Rachel then returned to her roots in NYC where she received a Dual Masters in both Childhood Education and Special Education from Teachers College at Columbia University. After beginning her teaching career in South Ozone Park, she is excited to be entering her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at TALES. She is passionate about music and theater and hopes to share that love with her students.

## **I. Contacting Staff**

Parents can call the main office number and leave a message for a staff member. Please note that TALES staff members will likely be working with children so their availability during the school day is limited. You may also contact staff via e-mail.

Meetings with staff are by appointment only. Please call **718-445-5730** if you would like to schedule an appointment to discuss your child's progress. You can also reach us via e-mail ([talesnyc.info@gmail.com](mailto:talesnyc.info@gmail.com)) or child's teacher via email.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

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### J. Absences

Students are expected to maintain 95% attendance throughout the school year. Please alert the school if your child will be absent by calling the following phone number: [718-445-5730](tel:718-445-5730). Please make sure to identify yourself, your child, the class your child is in, the reason for absence and his/her birth date. You may also email us at [TALESabsent@gmail.com](mailto:TALESabsent@gmail.com) with the same information. The email must be sent from the email we have on file for you. Please note we may call you to verify the authenticity of your email.

In the event that your child is absent 3 consecutive days or more, the school will require written documentation concerning the absences.

**The school may call you to verify any information regarding absences, as well as discuss the circumstances around your child's absence.** Students and their families are responsible for making up all missed assignments while absent. Students will have two days for each absence to make up any work missed.

### K. Appointments

Teachers are available for meetings. However, **appointments need to be made in advance**. Our secretary can help you schedule an appointment. Parents/Guardians may also request appointments to sit in and observe classroom lessons in their child's class.

The principal is available for **appointments but they must be made in advance**. These can be scheduled with the school secretary.

### L. Breakfast

Breakfast is served from 8:10AM-8:25AM. Children will be escorted to the multi-purpose room/their classroom at 8:30AM. At approximately 8:30AM, the principal or their designee will begin morning lineup procedures. By 8:37AM, kindergarten students will be escorted to their classrooms by teachers.

Children who are selected for the academic intervention/enrichment program (which all students will for at least one semester during the year) will have breakfast available from 7:45AM-7:55AM. Children in this program must arrive at 7:45AM if they would like to participate in breakfast.

### M. Cellular Phones, Electronic Devices, & Toys

The use of cellular phones, electronic devices, and/or toys by students is prohibited at TALES. Cell phones or other electronic devices that are on and/or being used will be confiscated. Call the main office to schedule an appointment to retrieve confiscated items.

## **N. Copies of Student Records and Face to Face Letters**

Student records will be copied with 72 hours advance notice on business days. Face to face letters, and any other requested documentation, will be printed within 3 business days.

## **O. Discipline**

TALES follows the New York City Department of Education *Discipline Code*. Please ensure that you have a copy of the NYC *Discipline Code* and have reviewed it.

## **P. Dismissal**

**Parents need to inform classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year about how student pick-up will be handled. (i.e. babysitter picks up student, family member, after school program, etc.). Any adult who picks up your child must be listed on the emergency contact card.**

- Dismissal times are as listed above in the “DAILY SCHEDULE” section
- Parents/Guardians of students in **Kindergarten thru 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade** must wait in the designated dismissal areas or arrange for an adult (who is listed on the emergency dismissal card) to pick the student up. This is to ensure the safety of our students so that the dismissing teacher sees and acknowledges the pickup person.
- Dismissal for **Pre-K** will start at 2:50PM. Parents may pick-up children directly from their Pre-K room. Please make sure your child is picked up no later than 2:55PM. This dismissal policy will be in effect until further notice.
- Parents should arrive at the school at least 5 minutes prior to dismissal in order to ensure a timely pick-up

**Please Note: Students will only be dismissed early to a guardian or an adult (all must be 18 years or older) listed on the emergency contact sheet who arrives in person for pick up only -no exceptions will be made. This person must have proper identification.**

Students that are not picked up immediately upon dismissal will be brought to the school’s main office or a designated classroom for late pick-up children. **Families who fail to observe the school’s pick up policy consistently may be referred to the school’s social worker/attendance teacher for follow-up.**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that after-school centers pick up on time each day. In addition, if your child is in an afterschool program where the child is picked up directly from the school, TALES must have written notification from the family.

If you know you are running late to pick up your child, please contact the main office to inform us.

## **Q. Dress Code/Uniforms**

Please refer to the NYC Department of Education regulations regarding student dress code. The school will make available for purchase school spirit wear which may be worn to school as parents wish.

## R. School-Home Communication

Students will receive a communication folder at the beginning of the year. This folder will be used to send homework, periodic reports, and other notices home to families. **It should be checked on a daily basis by an adult caregiver.** All forms requiring caregiver signatures should be returned to school within 2 days.

The school's website will post all school notices that are sent home. Please check our website ([www.tales-nyc.org](http://www.tales-nyc.org)) frequently to ensure you are receiving all notices.

## S. Late Arrivals

As morning lineup begins promptly at 8:30AM, kindergarten through third grade students should arrive by **8:30AM**. Children arriving after 8:37AM will be marked late and may need to obtain a late pass from the main office depending on time of arrival.

## T. Field Trips

Students will be taking many field trips this year. In order to be able to attend trips, students must be able to follow the directions of *all* adults who work at TALES at *all* times, as any one of the adults may be responsible for their safety. If we feel that your child poses a safety concern due to difficulties in following adult directions, he/she will not be permitted to attend trips (the option of an adult family member attending with the child may be discussed).

If you are a trip chaperone, please understand that your child/group must meet the same behavioral/work expectations on the trip as all TALES students, and should not have special privileges, including trips to gift shops, food vendors, etc. **You must be an active participant in helping supervise children on the trip.**

## U. Grading

### **Grades K-3**

There will be end of unit assessments in each unit of study in every subject area. Assessments will be graded on a level 1—4, meaning 1- beginning (beginning to meet standard), 2-developing (approaching standard), 3-consistent (meeting standard) and 4-exceeding (exceeding standard). Parents may ask to see assignments at report card conferences or by appointment.

## V. Homework (*Grades K thru 3*)

Homework at TALES is designed to reinforce learning in the classroom and provides teachers with an opportunity to assess students' independent mastery of material that has been previously taught. It can also provide students with an opportunity to preview material that will be addressed in class in order to help them build background knowledge prior to learning. Due to this, homework is an essential part of the teaching and learning at TALES. Our expectations for homework are outlined below:

Student's Responsibilities:

- To complete all assignments on time
- To ask teachers for help when needed

- To make your best effort to complete the assignment fully and correctly
- To read independently every night (when appropriate)

Parent/Guardian's Responsibilities:

- Ask to see daily homework assignments and insist that the assignments are completed
- Encourage students to read on a daily basis
- Ensure that there is a quiet time and place where your child can work on their homework
- Contact the school when there are questions or concerns, or to check on your child's progress

Homework grades (given on Periodic Report) will be assigned based on the following scale:

1= beginning; beginning to meet standards

- Homework is not close to being thorough or done with care

2= developing; approaching standards

- Homework shows some effort, but is not entirely complete or correct. Quality or content can be improved

3= consistent; meeting standards

- Met all criteria of assignment; quality work

4= exceeding; exceeds standards

- Met all criteria of assignment; high quality work consistent throughout the entire homework piece-exceptional work is evident

**Homework will be assigned in a weekly packet, given out on Mondays, in the child's Communication Folder.**

Parents and/or students are responsible for getting missed assignments when students are absent and have 48 hours to submit completed assignments upon return to school. Parents and/or students are also responsible for getting help from teachers or other families when questions occur.

### **W.Student Action Plans (formerly Periodic Reports)**

Student Action Plans (SAP's) are a communication tool. They are a means of letting TALES families know whether or not students are meeting expectations on a periodic basis, as well as provide goals for students.

SAP's will be sent home on a monthly basis beginning in October.

- These reports should be signed and returned within 2 days. Families may add comments to the report.
- A letter explaining periodic reports will be sent with the first report.

## X. Report Cards and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Report cards are issued three times each year, at the end of each term. Report cards are designed to provide parents and guardians with a detailed picture of their child's progress in all areas taught as well as their progress toward TALES' Core Values.

Individual Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for each student at the end of Terms 1 and 2. In Term 3, conferences are scheduled for parents of students who have been identified as holdovers. Report cards are distributed and discussed at these conferences and parents/guardians have an opportunity to see and discuss student work. Please refer to the above calendar for dates of report card conferences.

## Y. Promotion Criteria for Grades K thru 3

The Principal makes final decisions on all promotions and retentions, and can, in specific situations make exceptions to the protocol below if she/he deems fit.

### ***Grades K-3***

Promotion for students in grades **Kindergarten thru 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** will be based on meeting two out of three of the following criteria:

- a. Maintains 90% or higher attendance (**please note, this is the minimum criteria for promotion purposes, the school expects a minimum 95% attendance rate.**)
- b. Meets TALES' curriculum grade level standards as determined by class work and homework.
- c. Meets social development standards as determined by Periodic Report scores and teacher anecdotes:
  - Follows classroom and school rules appropriately.
  - Makes age appropriate decisions.
  - Forms age appropriate relationships.

Promotion for students in **Grade 3** will be based on meeting three out of the following four criteria with one exception (students that meet criteria b, but have one score of level 1, and meet criteria c and d but do not meet criteria a will not be promoted):

- a. Meets TALES' curriculum grade level standards as determined by class work and homework.
- b. Maintains 90% or higher attendance (**please note, this is the minimum criteria for promotion purposes, the school expects a minimum 95% attendance rate.**)
- c. Scores level 2 or higher on at least one of the following standardized tests\*:
  - NYS ELA
  - NYS Mathematics
- d. Meets social development standards as determined by Student Action Plan scores and anecdotes:
  - Follows classroom and school rules appropriately.
  - Makes age appropriate decisions.
  - Forms age appropriate relationships.

**\*Children who score at level 1 on NYS ELA and/or MATH exams may be required to attend NYCDOE Summer School to determine promotion status.**



## **Z. Illness and Medication**

Students who are not feeling well can notify their teacher and may be sent to the main office if they appear ill. Students may be allowed to rest and return to class. If they are seriously ill, parents/guardians will be called to pick the child up from school. Emergency contacts will be called if a parent/guardian can not be reached.

**Students will only be released to adults who are listed on the emergency contact card.** In case no adult can be reached, the school may make the decision to seek medical care for your child. **A child may not come to school if they have an illness that may be contagious.**

Students are not allowed to have medication with them at school. If a student has a prescription or other medication that needs to be administered during the day, parents/guardians need to inform the school and an adult from your family (who is listed on the emergency contact card) must come to school and administer the medication. Unless the proper medical forms (504 form) have been submitted, no staff member may administer medication to a child.

## **AA. Lost and Found**

A lost and found bin will be kept in the main office for any materials that children lose and are found in the school building.

Please label your child's clothing. If your child has lost an article of clothing at school, come in to check for it the same day or the next day at the latest.

## **BB. Lunch Payment**

Students who consume school lunches and do not qualify for free/reduced lunch will be receiving monthly bills indicating the amount of payment due to the school. It is expected that payment will be received in a prompt manner.

## **CC. School Closings and Delays**

TALES will follow all New York City Department of Education decisions on school closings and delays. Please monitor local media outlets for school closings/delays information. In addition to providing you with TALES' yearly school calendar, reminders will be sent home when upcoming off-days for students are nearing. The school's website ([www.tales-nyc.org](http://www.tales-nyc.org)) will be updated whenever possible to relay critical information. As well, you may check the NYCDOE website at [www.schools.nyc.gov](http://www.schools.nyc.gov).

## **DD. Special Education**

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires appropriate services to be administered in the "least restrictive environment." Students with IEP's are included in the classroom to the fullest extent possible and teachers are obligated to make accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of the child. Additionally, students with 504 Accommodation Plans which detail specific accommodations for the regular education classroom are included in this process.

The responsibilities of teachers in this regard are:

- To be aware of which students have IEP's or 504 plans

- To be familiar with the accommodations listed in IEP's and 504 plans
- To provide the appropriate modifications and accommodations.
- Attend and be an active participant in IEP meetings.

Students can only be referred for special education testing after staff have attempted to provide intensive differentiated instruction within the regular education program. Because staff can individualize instruction for students, TALES has a design that helps meet all student needs, including struggling learners.

### **EE. Telephone Use**

Students may only use a phone with teacher permission. Teachers will use their discretion when allowing students to make calls. Parents/Guardians will only be allowed to talk to students in emergency situations. Otherwise, a message will be taken and given to the child by a TALES' staff member.

### **FF. Visitors**

For safety reasons, no visitors are allowed to go to any room other than TALES' main office without a pass obtained in the main office.

### **GG. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that The Active Learning Elementary School, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, The Active Learning Elementary School may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with school procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow The Active Learning Elementary School to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- An annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for basketball, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local education agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories -- names, addresses and telephone listings -- unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.<sup>1</sup>

If you do not want The Active Learning Elementary School to disclose information from your child's education record without your prior written consent, you must notify the school in writing by September 30, 2010. The Active Learning Elementary School has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

<sup>1</sup> These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-110), the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002* (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces.

## **HH. New York City Department of Education Regulations**

As a New York City Public School located within District 25 of the City of New York, The Active Learning Elementary School, PS244Q, adheres to the Chancellor's Regulations as published by the New York City Department of Education.

**THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY. UPDATED VERSIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE, [WWW.TALES-NYC.ORG](http://WWW.TALES-NYC.ORG).**

## **PARENT INVOLVMENT**

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### **II. Parent Involvement Policy**

The Active Learning Elementary School, PS244Q, believes that all parents and families want the best for their children and strongly supports research showing that children do best when parents are enabled to play four key roles in their children's learning:

- (1.) Teachers - Helping children at home
- (2.) Supporters - Contributing their skills to the school
- (3.) Advocates - Helping children receive fair treatment
- (4.) Decision-makers - Participating in joint problem-solving with the school at every level

TALES recognizes parents/guardians are full partners with teachers, administrators, and the whole school community to achieve the best possible learning experience for each child. A strong program of communication between home and school must be encouraged, continually evaluated and maintained so the school and community are connected in meaningful and productive ways.

### **JJ. School Leadership Team (SLT)**

School Leadership Teams (SLTs) are school-based organizations composed of an equal number of parents and staff. They meet at least once a month, and determine the structure for school-based planning and shared decision-making. The core responsibility of each SLT is to develop the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) that is aligned with the school-based budget. SLTs are strongly encouraged to solicit input from various school community constituencies in order to ensure that all voices are heard regarding the needs of students. Functioning in a collaborative manner, SLTs also help to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's educational programs and their impact on student achievement.

### **KK. Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

TALES has formed a Parent-Teacher Association ("PTA"). The PTA has three major purposes: 1) To be a link between the school leader and the TALES parent and teacher community, and 2) To receive and communicate issues of concern or importance to the TALES community and 3) To further the mission of The Active Learning Elementary School.

The PTA is made up of parents, elected by the parents, and staff members, elected by the staff. They meet once a month, at a time decided by the PTA. The PTA also gathers and communicates information about what is happening in the school, including parent programs, past and upcoming school activities and events, and other items of importance to the TALES community. Elections for the PTA occur at the end of each school year.