

1st Grade News

Successful Helps for Parents

Welcome to 1st grade. I am very happy to be working with you and your child this year. Included in this newsletter are some of the procedures in our classroom. This year our theme will be the Iditarod of Alaska. We will incorporate it into our classroom activities and have a ride of a lifetime. Join us as we prepare our teams and get ready for the long journey.

Workshop Way

We will be using a system of human growth called Workshop Way. Detailed information will be on the website in our 1st grade news each week.

The Workshop Way philosophy believes in providing an atmosphere free of fear. We discipline in a positive way. If our talking gets too loud, a bell will be tapped and the children stand, look at the clock and calm themselves down. In 30 seconds they sit and resume working quietly. If a child has to be told more often to be quiet and to get to work, then they are asked to put their initials on the board. There is no punishment for getting their initials on the board. Some children need visual reminders and this helps them. At the end of the day all names are erased and we begin fresh each day. If they do not get their name on the board at the end of the day they get a sticker. This is an incentive for tomorrow. If a child gets a **x** after his/her name, they run or walk the small playground area at recess 3 times to burn off energy and the **x** is erased. If a child receives more than one **x** he/she will write a note home and we will set up a conference time to discuss discipline for your child.

Assignment Sheets

Each night your child will bring home a sheet with the homework assignments on it. You are to sign the sheet after the homework is completed and your child must bring back the sheet **every day** in the home folder. The homework should not take more than 30-45 minutes a night unless your child brings home unfinished work from class (this is work not completed in class when ample time has been given). If your child's work takes more than 45 minutes, **please let me know and we will work on the problem.**

What your child needs for homework!

Your child will need to have pencils, crayons, scissors, glue and a red checking pencil for supplies to be used at home. Having supplies needed for homework is important in helping your child know the importance of homework each night.

We will be putting a memory book together this year and take pictures of your children to put in the book. If you are able to help us with developing of \$6.00 we would appreciate it. Just sign a card with your name and your child's at registration and it will be sent home when the money is needed.

Reading/ Math/ Handwriting

Reading

This is the basis of our first grade program. Your child should read orally each night. Workshop homework will introduce your child to 5000 new words during the year. (explained in homework section) Each week an oral reading chart will be sent home. Your child will receive a 100 if all 7 days are filled in. To receive an A, 5 days need to be filled in; a B for 4 days and a C for 3 days. Reading orally to your child is also important. You can read a page for some of the stories. Specific pages will be listed on the assignment sheet and your child needs to read all of these pages orally. These pages will be put on the assignment sheet and you may put them on the reading chart. The reading chart is to be turned in every Monday entirely filled out and **signed by the parent**. Oral reading of pages assigned is best accomplished if the child reads it orally to a stuffed animal or sibling before reading it to you. Reading the story 3 or more times will help build fluency in the early stages of reading. Once your child can read fluently, it is not necessary to read the story more than once.

Math

Flashcards will be sent home around Labor Day and your child needs to study them every night. More cards will be sent home periodically and need to be added to the stack. It is important to keep up with the flashcards because your child takes a timed test every day. If your child loses the flashcards, they need to make new ones as they will all be used all year. Only on Fridays is the grade recorded.

Handwriting

Handwriting is very important as your child learns to form letters correctly. Only practice will make good handwriting. For every incorrect letter your child makes, it must be made correctly 25 times to break the habit.

Spelling/ Science/ Social Studies

Each week your child will need to know a new set of spelling words. The words with a * are the priority words and will need to be mastered also.

Your child will have activities to do at home each night to prepare for the test on Fridays. (These are listed in the Homework section). After Unit 3 your child will be required to write sentences using the spelling words. Practice at home is helpful. Your child will receive 2 grades on this page: a HW(handwriting) grade and spelling grade. The sentences on the test on Fridays only have words we already know. The spelling tests will be stories with spelling words missing in which your child will fill in the word.

In class your child will be doing activities that will teach spelling strategies to help spell correctly. Each day will be a different activity that will be completed in class. This is part of their spelling grade.

Your child will be using inventive spelling in journal writing unless the word has been a spelling word then it should be spelled correctly.

Science/Social Studies

Your child will be working on units for Science and Social Studies with the Iditarod and Alaska theme. Projects and activities will be in the 1st grade news and a note attached to your child's assignment sheet.

Grading

Your child needs to practice a skill 6-7 times before it can be mastered. Many of the papers your child brings home will not all have grades on them. I will put the number of correct items over the total number of items on the paper. If it is a skill that should be mastered, the paper will have a grade on it (%). The grades used are: A excellent (mastered skill) B-good (working hard to master the skill) C-satisfactory (this is a good grade if your child is doing their personal best) *D-low (needs more work on the skill) *F-unsatisfactory * these grades usually require the student to redo the paper in red pencil. We must remember we are only in first grade and much needs to be practiced before we can master it. If you have questions at anytime regarding grades, please come see me as soon as possible.

Homework Assistance

One of the core parts of homework is the daily workshop reading sheet. Your child will be responsible for returning and reading the homework each morning. This is a slow process for beginning readers, so don't panic! This is done consistently each morning and the idea is responsibility, initiative, and developing self confidence. In the process, they will learn to read a variety of words and phrases that come from the first grade curriculum.

Fluency in Reading is our goal so the children need to read the words quickly. If they struggle with a word, they stop there and work from that point for homework. The students can and should read as much as they can and as fast as they can. Practicing more than once will make this process easier. They will receive the next page when they have read the current page without help and with fluency. Please do not force the children to learn "everything today". We have all year. When a child forgets the homework sheet, he/she will be given a chance to borrow but only a couple of times. Responsibility is an important part of this assignment.

Math sheets will also come home periodically. Please check the sheet and return it each day.

For spelling your child will bring a unit worksheet with the words for the week and an assignment for each night. Please have your child spell correctly on all activities. The directions sheet needs to be stapled to the homework sheets and turned in on Fridays. A spelling test will also be given on Fridays unless there is no school and then the test will be on Thursday. The priority words will be on the test but don't have to be used in the homework assignments.

Homework is numbered on the assignment sheet. Specific reading pages will be put on the sheet for your child to read. They may include these on their reading chart. Please fill it out each night and return it on Monday. Assignment sheets (orange-red sheets) need to be returned every day signed.

I do not give homework on the weekends. You may do the oral reading chart and workshop way if you choose. It is not assigned for the weekend.

Redo's and Corrections

If your child receives a redo on a paper, he/she will be given time to redo the paper to make sure the concept has been mastered. Corrections are to be made in red and returned with parent signature by due date.

Some corrections will be done in class because we need to make sure your child is grasping the concepts so we can reteach when necessary.

Snacks

Your child may bring one snack each day for morning break. Please do not send in snacks for other children because of food allergies and health issues. Snacks must be dry and be able to be eaten at their desks while working. Acceptable snacks: individually packaged snack items, goldfish popcorn, cereal, Teddy Grahams, crackers, pretzels, chips, granola bars, cookies, Rice Krispy treats and any other creative dry items. Please remember this is a snack. Lunch will be served about 1.5 hours later.

Your child may also bring in a water bottle to keep at school on his/her desk. Please don't freeze the water or put ice in it. It becomes too messy and lasts only a short time. We learn better if we are hydrated.

Birthdays and Baptismal Days

We will celebrate your child's birthday as close to the actual date as possible. Your child may bring a treat to share with classmates if you wish. Please send the treat with your child in the morning and we will celebrate sometime after lunch. This will be a small celebration and not a party. Those children celebrating their birthdays during the summer will be given a pretend day so they will be able to celebrate with their classmates. If their birthday is on a weekend you may choose any day during the week that best suits you and your child to celebrate his/her special day.

Cadet of the week

Your child will be assigned a week during the year (usually the week of his/her birthday) to be the cadet of the week. Your child will be responsible for decorating the bulletin board. Papers will be sent home for your child to fill out and return on Monday of the assigned week. It is your child's board for the week and can be added to during the week. This is when your child does his/her sharing. During their week they can bring in their favorite things to show and tell. They will need to fill out a sheet for their memory book during this week also.

Your child's Baptismal day is his/her birthday in God's family. . I will include in the 1st grade news your child's baptismal day. Having their candle lit at the dinner table and sharing that day with them makes them realize that this day is as important as their birthday.

We will celebrate in class with a special prayer service. We will do this when we are studying Baptism in class. I will let you know when that will happen. Your child can bring their baptism candle and share pictures.