

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents,

This week begins a brand new school year for all of us, and I'd like to extend a warm welcome to my new students. As always, the start of a school year holds the promise of new discovery and learning, as well as the prospect of personal growth in all areas.

This class handbook includes information to help you and your child become familiar with my expectations for the school year. Take a day or two to read through this information, and then sign below by Friday. (Please make sure you send this handbook to school each day with your child because we will be using it for several class activities.) Then you may want to keep the handbook in a special place so that you may refer to it throughout the year. If you need to contact me, I prefer email if possible. My email address is [myemail@website.com](mailto:myemail@website.com). I check my email each day and I will respond promptly. If you do not have email, you may call the school and leave a message (phone number).

In a few weeks, I will host a parent meeting in the evening so that I can answer your questions and share some ways you can help your child at home. I'm looking forward to an exciting year with my class. Thank you for your cooperation in getting this year off to a great start!

Sincerely,

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_





## Class Newsletters and Weekly Progress Reports

I send home a Class Newsletter stapled to a Weekly Progress Report each Friday, and I ask that you sign it and return it on Monday. I will attach all the graded papers for that week to the newsletter. Please remove the papers, read over the comments on the progress report, sign it, and return it to school with your child on Monday. I will always send home a weekly progress report (or notify you that one will not be sent), so don't accept any excuses for your child not having a progress report on Friday. If you don't receive one, please email me (email@website.com) or call the school (phone number) to let me know.

## Our Class Website

Our class has a home on the Internet! We have a class web page where we display student work and list our honor roll and other awards. Parents can visit the web page to see our weekly spelling word list and keep up-to-date on classroom events. Our web site is located at [www.website.com](http://www.website.com). I only use students' first names and the initials of their last name, and I don't identify students by name in photos. If you do not want your child's picture, stories, or other work on our class web page, please write me a note or send me an email. Be sure to visit our web page before you make this decision! I hope that all students will be able to be included on our class website.



## School Supplies and Materials Needed

Your child will need all of the supplies in the list on the left. We would also appreciate donations of the materials on the other list to our classroom supplies. Please do not send in large book bags or rolling book bags. We just don't have the space to store them. Thanks!

### Individual Student Supplies

- Two 1" view-binder notebooks
- Loose-leaf notebook paper
- Two single-subject spiral notebooks
- Pencils with erasers
- Box of colored pencils
- Box of markers
- Pocket folders with 3 prongs (at least 2 plastic)
- Pack of dry erase markers
- Fiskars scissors (child-size)
- Zippered pencil case (heavy duty canvas)
- Sturdy clipboard (not plastic)

### Classroom Supplies Requested

- Box of tissues
- Hand sanitizer
- Box of baby wipes
- Tennis balls (4 for chairs)



## Attendance and Illnesses

Regular school attendance is critical to the learning process. Our school day officially starts at 8:00 a.m., but since most bus students arrive at 7:30 we begin “morning work” assignments at that time. When your child is absent or tardy, he or she misses valuable instructional time. Please send a written note whenever your child is absent. State law requires us to code each absence as lawful or unlawful. Lawful absences include illness and doctor’s appointments. Unlawful absences include out-of-town trips, missing the bus, and family vacations. Please be aware that the school has a new policy for attendance awards. Students who are tardy or who check out early more than 3 times total in a grading period will not be eligible for a Perfect Attendance award.

Even though the district has strict attendance policies, it’s important to keep your child home if he or she is sick. Because of the recent flu outbreaks, schools are especially concerned about students attending school when they show flu symptoms. The policy states that a child must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school. Thank you for understanding.

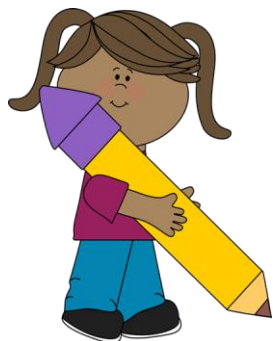
## Cooperative Learning

I wholeheartedly believe in cooperative learning in the classroom. I have placed my students in mixed ability groups so that they may help each other during the learning process. Research has shown that all students do better when they are allowed to discuss and defend their ideas as they learn. Working in small groups also helps students learn valuable social skills they will need throughout life. Parents are often concerned about grades in the cooperative learning classroom. Don’t worry! All grades come from individual assignments and tests. No student’s grade will be raised or lowered based on the performance of others in the group. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the benefits of cooperative learning with anyone who has questions or concerns.



## Homework/Classwork

I believe that homework is necessary for practicing skills that have been learned or for enriching the classroom experience. On the other hand, I don’t believe in overloading students with busywork! In many cases, homework is simply classwork that was not finished. I try to give ample time in class for the completion of assignments, but some students work more slowly and must finish at home.

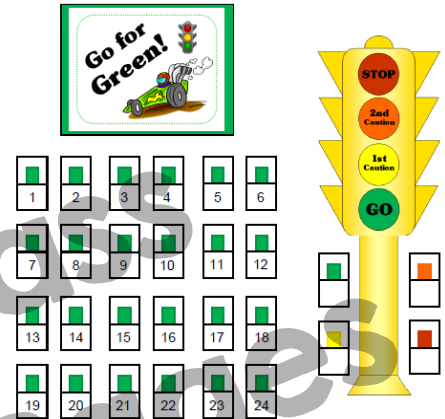


In order to help students get their homework assignments done, students will be given a Student Planner and a homework folder. They will write their assignments in their planner and place any important papers in the folder. After they complete an assignment, they should place it in the front pocket of the folder. The homework folder includes the Home Reading Log which must be signed each evening. I encourage parents to review the contents of your child’s homework folder and planner each night when signing his or her Reading Log.

I expect all homework and classwork to be turned in on time. Late assignments will be graded if they are turned in within a week, but later work will receive a lower grade. Students will not be allowed to call home if they forget their work. They should pack their bookbags at night with all the materials needed for the next day. Organization is the key to success!

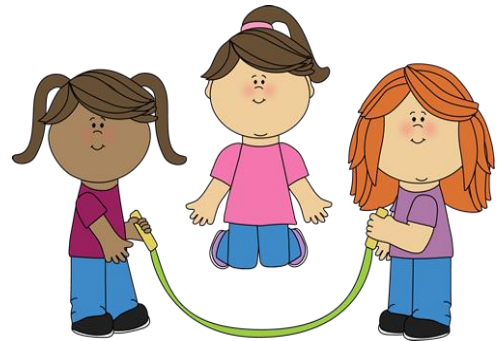
### Stoplight Behavior Management System

I want to explain a very effective behavior management system that I use in my classroom. The bulletin board at the front of the room shows a stoplight with four colors. Each student has a number, and each person's numbered pocket contains a strip of colored paper. Everyone begins each day on green. If a class rule is broken, the color changes to yellow, the first caution. If another behavior problem occurs that day, the color will change to orange, the second caution. Furthermore, the student will have to fill out a Time Out form explaining his or her inappropriate behavior and how the problem will be corrected. Time Out forms will be reviewed by me and sent home to parents to be signed and returned. The color red is reserved for severe discipline problems and results in a phone call home or a trip to the office.



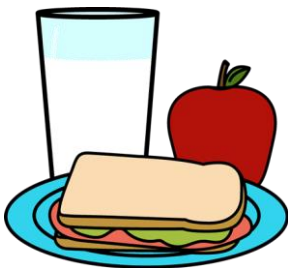
### Physical Education Program

Our class participates in physical education every day. We do exercises, run laps, practice P.E. skills, and play games. Therefore, your child needs to wear appropriate clothing and footwear each day. Students who wear dress clothes or shoes should be prepared to change into appropriate clothing before our P.E. period. Slick shoes or restrictive clothing can be a hazard during physical education activities. If you feel your child should not participate in P.E. on a particular day, please write a note stating the reason. All children will be expected to participate unless they have a note excusing them.



### Lunch Money

As you may know, students who do not receive free lunch must either pay for one or bring their own from home. Each year I have many students who forget their money or lose it before lunch. Lending money to students is very inconvenient and expensive since students frequently forget to pay me back. Having students pay by the week or the month can eliminate most lunch money problems. Our school has a computerized system that effectively keeps track of all money paid in to each child's account. When a student is absent or chooses not to eat lunch, the money remains in his or her account for the next week. Please help me avoid lunchtime problems by purchasing a weekly ticket if you normally pay on a daily basis.



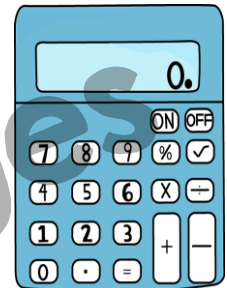
## Daily Math Drills

In my experience, students cannot move on to higher level reasoning in mathematics until they master their basic math facts. In addition to regular math assignments, your child will be performing daily drills until he or she has mastered the basic facts. You can help your child prepare by studying with flashcards or having them spend 15 minutes a day working with an online math fact program or app. You can even call out math facts to your child while driving in the car or waiting in the doctor's office! Mastering times tables is particularly challenging, so when everyone knows their times tables we will celebrate with an ice cream party!



## Math Word Problems and Calculator Use

My students will be learning to solve increasingly complex mathematical word problems this year. It's important for them to learn to use a calculator as a problem-solving tool, and it will also save them time when completing assignments. Students may use calculators to complete math homework problems that involve geometry, fractions, word problems, etc. However, students may not use calculators for skill drills and basic computation.



## Mid-morning Snacks & Water Bottles

I think it's important for students to have a healthy snack in the morning, and I set aside class time for this. Please only send enough for one day, and don't send snacks that need refrigeration. Please do not send in unhealthy treats such as cake, chips, brownies, frosted cookies, or cupcakes. I also permit my students to bring a water bottle to school to keep on their desks during the day and to use at recess. Plain water is the only beverage permitted, and the bottle must have a secure lid. Water bottles should be taken home regularly to be cleaned. The following are examples of healthy snacks that we can enjoy while we continue to work.

- ◆ apples
- ◆ carrot sticks
- ◆ peanuts
- ◆ plain crackers
- ◆ cheese crackers
- ◆ small box of raisins
- ◆ grapes
- ◆ pretzels
- ◆ graham crackers
- ◆ dried fruit
- ◆ peanut butter crackers
- ◆ protein or nutrition bar
- ◆ peanut butter sandwich

## Parent Volunteers

I love to have parent volunteers in the room! You can file papers, staple progress reports together, read with students, help with math, or anything else that needs to be done. I can be a much more effective teacher when I have volunteers to share the load. If you are interested in volunteering, please send a note or email me. It would be great if you could come in regularly on a certain day of the week or at a certain time. Doing so will help me plan activities that need a



helping hand! So if you would like to volunteer, please send a note with the best days and times for you to work in our classroom. For example, you might tell me that you would like to work one morning a week, and give me some possible days. I generally don't need as much time in the afternoon because that's when we have our resources classes and PE. A new guideline for classroom volunteers is that they need to fill out a form and a background check will be conducted before they may work in the schools.

## **Spelling Program**

My spelling program is very flexible and is based on the needs of my students. I start the year by having students learn their classmates' names. We write down their full names, but students only need to learn to spell their first names. We will practice in class, but please quiz your child at home. Because students don't have much time to study, we are going to split the list in half. Students will have a quiz on the first half on Thursday and on the other half Friday.

Next week we will begin our regular spelling program which consists of spelling words taken from student writing samples, topics we are studying, and words they need to know to be successful in this grade. I will send the weekly spelling list home with the progress report every Friday. Students may practice their spelling words by going to [www.spellingcity.com](http://www.spellingcity.com) and searching for our class. The site has games and online quizzes that use the words from our class lists. It's a great website, and if your child uses it regularly, you'll see a big jump in spelling grades.



### **Daily Schedule**

**Academics: 8:30 – 12:05**

**Recess: 12:05 – 12:35**

**Lunch: 12:35 – 1:00**

**Special Classes: 1:15 – 1:55**

- Monday – PE
- Tuesday – Art
- Wednesday – Music
- Thursday – Computers

**Academics: 1:55 – 2:45**