

First Grade Handbook

St. Joseph School

York, PA

2009 -2010

Birthdays

At school, First Grade students will celebrate their birthdays in the “School Way.” Children will be recognized to the entire school at morning prayers, and with a small treat in the classroom from the teacher. **We ask that no food treats are sent to school.** A small **non-food** treat is acceptable. Here is another idea!

A Birthday Book Treat is an opportunity for a child to treat his/her classmates to a special book, chosen by the student, and donated to the classroom library. A special book plate will be placed inside the front cover to mark the occasion, and then it will be placed in the classroom library for present and future first graders to enjoy. A list of suggestions is available from your child’s teacher, but a child’s personal favorite is always a hit!

Lunch

First Grade will be served lunch during the first lunch period of the day. At this time, students who are packing will carry their lunches to the cafeteria and place them at their seats, and then all students will go to recess before they eat. Upon returning to the cafeteria, buying students will be called into line to receive their lunches and packing students will begin eating. Student buying lunch will have the option to choose a hot lunch or a cold alternative, usually a sandwich.

All students will be expected to observe the rules of the cafeteria, which include appropriate behavior and good manners. Appropriate consequences will be given if students choose behaviors that are not conducive to a peaceful eating environment.

Introduction

As you and your child begin a new adventure called “FIRST GRADE”, it is hoped that this handbook will serve as a resource to answer some questions that may arise throughout the year.

Contained here is information pertaining to many different activities in which First Grade will take part. And although it may not address every question, hopefully, it will give you something to refer to when your child comes home and can’t quite remember everything that the teacher “said”.

Please be sure to contact your child’s teacher anytime you have questions that are not referenced here.

Mrs. Rutherford
Mrs. Eck

COMMUNICATION

Take Home Folder

Every student will have a folder which he/she brings home each day. It may include work from the day, important information and /or homework items.

It is very important that this folder is checked each night, especially for homework.



Homework

Although homework is limited for First Grade students, there are a variety of activities that you and your child can do **daily** that will support and reinforce the skills and concepts learned at school.

1. **READ! READ! READ!** : Your child will benefit greatly from reading for at least twenty uninterrupted minutes each day. Reading can be done independently or with a partner. Practicing word cards is also very important for improving vocabulary.
2. **MATH FACTS:** The automaticity of knowing addition facts with sums to 20 and subtraction facts with a subtrahend of twenty will allow for easier acquisition of concepts that build from them.
3. **WRITING:** Your child can write as much as possible now that he/she has learned how sound and letters work together to create language. They can write sentences, stories, lists, notes and letters, anything that holds their interest. Remember we

are just learning, so “Kidwriting” is permitted and strongly encouraged.

4. **WORD WORK:** Spelling and phonics are easily done in game format for reinforcement of skills. Have your child play with the sound, spelling and formation of words everyday.

Progress Folders

Each week on Monday, a Progress Folder will be sent home filled with work from the previous week. A short note from the teacher may also be included. Parents are asked to review the work with your child, REMOVE the work, SIGN the folder and return it the next day.

Family Folders

Every Wednesday, the school office will send a communication folder home with the youngest child in the school. The information contained here will need to be reviewed immediately. Sign the folder and return it on Thursday.

Correspondence

Please send all notes, monies, forms, etc. to school in a **labeled** envelope. Most letters sent home by the teacher will be found in the Take Home folder.

Please allow your child to transport information to and from school. It is a great way to develop responsibility in her/him.

E-mails are another way to send correspondence, too. However, if you have an opportunity to have your child handle this responsibility, please do!

Book orders



Approximately once monthly, children are given the opportunity to purchase books at a reasonable price through the various book clubs. A paper will be sent home in the Take Home Folder to be returned by a specified date, in a labeled envelope. This activity is completely **OPTIONAL** and is provided for the benefit of the children.

Report Cards

An official Diocesan Grade Report will be issued to the first grade students three times during the year. It will be sent home in December, March and June. A Parent-Teacher conference will coincide with the December report. Meetings between teachers and parents can be scheduled at any time during the school year.

CURRICULUM

Reading

While assisting your child at home with assignments, it will be helpful if he/she is reviewing the same clues at home that are being taught in school.

The following are the main strategies taught in first grade to help determine unknown words and information.

- Look at the picture
- Look at the first letter of the unknown word and get your mouth ready to say the beginning sound.
- Sound out all the letters.
- Look for words you know.

- Look for little words, or chunks inside a bigger word.
- Skip the unknown word and read to the end of the sentence.

Word Cards

Each student will develop a set of sight and vocabulary word cards to be studied daily. New words will be added during the year as new stories are explored. Word cards are permitted and encouraged to be taken home everyday, but must be available **IN SCHOOL EVERYDAY** for various activities in Language Arts.

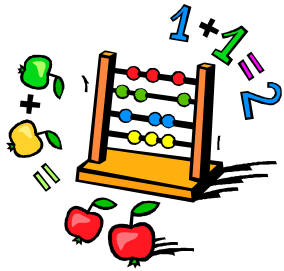
Oral Reading

At the point in the year that the children are ready, we will begin individual oral readings to the class. A schedule will be sent home with each child given a specific date on which to read to the class. The story that your child chooses is best if it is (1) short (5 – 10 minutes in length), (2) easy for the reader, and (3) **WELL PRACTICED**.

Kidwriting

First Grade Students are learning to explore their language. Kidwriting allows young students to express themselves in an **unconventional way** of writing, which allows for daily phonics, spelling and grammar practice. Teacher modeling and mini lessons address needs of learners, and growth is monitored over time. Developing a love of writing and confidence in oneself are goals of the program. First graders will be “kidwriting” everyday.





Math

After first grade has completed the unit on addition, we will begin “Mastering Math Facts”. A list of each fact family will be sent home shortly before we begin. **DAILY PRACTICE WILL BE VERY HELPFUL.**

MATERIALS

Stationery

A \$5.00 fee is charged to each student to be used by the teacher to provide all the materials (pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, etc.) that students will need during the school year. Please send this money to school during the first week of school. Checks should be made to the classroom teacher.

Uniforms

Please refer to the St. Joseph School Handbook for requirements regarding uniforms for first grade students.

All students are expected to follow this policy and will be asked to observe its requirements daily. Parents will be informed of any infractions and asked to correct them immediately. We recognize that young students are not wholly responsible for their appearance and adherence to the uniform code and ask for parental help in assuring that children are conforming to the policy. **Please label you child’s outerwear, gym clothes, or any removable articles with her/his name.** All children will be expected to dress themselves, so please practice zippers, snaps, buttons, ties, etc.

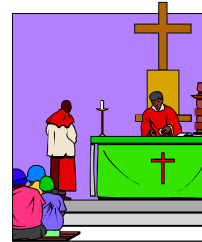
Snack

Students will be permitted to bring a **healthy snack** for a mid-morning break. Nutritious snacks are expected and others which are not nutritious may be restricted by the classroom teacher. Morning snack is optional, therefore, if a student chooses not bring one, he/she will not be provided one by the teacher.



MISCELLANEOUS

Church



First Grade will attend weekly Mass with the entire student body of the school each Friday morning. Our young students will be taught to, and expected to, participate in the celebration of Holy Mass. Please talk to your child about her/his experiences in church and reinforce them at Sunday Mass. As always, parents are invited to attend Friday Mass.

Toys

Children are **NOT PERMITTED** to bring toys to school. If we are going to have a special day requiring your child to bring an item from home, you will be notified in writing through the Take Home Folder.

Toys brought to school will be confiscated and returned at the discretion of the teacher.

