

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to first grade! I am thrilled at the opportunity to teach your child this year. This will be my fourth year as a part of the Cosgriff community and I couldn't be more excited!

My philosophy toward teaching is simple. I believe all children need to feel they are cared about and given the opportunity to explore and be active members in their own learning. My goal as a teacher is to create a safe and nurturing, faith-filled environment to support the academic, social, and emotional growth of my students.

First grade is a huge year developmentally. In addition to academic development, the social, emotional, and behavioral developmental shifts significantly during this stage. As a result, it becomes a great balancing act this year for us all; helping students enough so that they don't get too overwhelmed and can't progress, while at the same time increasing accountability and independence by placing higher expectations upon them.

Something that we all must consider, including myself, is that not everyone is in the same developmental "stage" at the same time. Essentially, at this age we see a scatterplot of social, emotional, behavioral, and academic skills/abilities that are ever changing throughout this year.

All of this considered, I will do my best everyday to support each student and his/her varying needs and abilities. I do, however, ask in advance for a little patience and understanding on your end as dynamics and student needs continue to evolve and change throughout the year and I work to adjust accordingly.

### **Class Newsletter**

I will be sending out a class newsletter each Monday. The newsletter will provide you information regarding what is happening in class each week, upcoming events to make note of, and any updates I have for you. Please also be sure to read Mrs. Hunt's weekly Principal's Letter on the school website, as it is there that you will find more specific information regarding school-wide events and/or activities.

### **Behavior**

As mentioned above, students in class will have varying needs and abilities; all having an impact on behavior. This may have an effect on how these behaviors are dealt with in some cases. That being said, I expect all students to follow class and school rules and procedures.

In addition to following rules and procedures, students are expected to be kind and respectful to one another. I have a ZERO tolerance policy in regard to malicious behavior. If a pattern of this behavior arises I will ask to set up a meeting with you to discuss how we may move forward in helping the child work toward more positive and appropriate behavior.

### **Communication:**

Please feel free to contact me for information or with any questions or concerns you are having. If you would like to set up an appointment to meet, please contact me in advance to do so. I am typically available to meet Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays before school at 7:30 or after school at 3:30. Other arrangements can be made on a per need basis. In general, the best way to contact me is via email. I will check my email daily before and after school and will do my best to get back to you in a timely manner.

### **Academics**

There are many important skills/topics to be addressed in first grade. The skills/topics we will address this year are based upon the core standards for the state of Utah and Next Generation Science Standards.  
Math

- Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction

- Understand and apply properties of operations and relationships between addition and subtraction
- Add and subtract within 20
- Work with addition and subtraction equations
- Extend the counting sequence
- Understand place value
- Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract
- Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units
- Tell and write time to the hour and half-hour
- Represent and interpret data
- Reason with shapes and their attributes

#### Language Arts

- Literature Standards: Focus on understanding key ideas and details in text
- Reading Standards: Focus on the craft and structure of informational text
- Reading Standards: Focus on integrating knowledge and ideas into informational text
- Reading Standards: Focus on foundational skills for print concepts
- Reading Standards: Foundational skills focusing on phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency
- Writing Standards: Focus on text types and purposes
- Writing Standards: Focus on production and distribution of writing
- Speaking and Listening Standards: Focus on comprehension and collaboration
- Speaking and Listening Standards: Focus on conventions of standard English
- Speaking and Listening Standards: Focus on vocabulary acquisition and use

#### Science

- Waves: Light and Sound - Investigate sound in regard to vibrating materials. Investigate light and beams of light and how they are impacted by various materials.
- Structure, Function, and Information Processing - Investigate plants and animals; growth, development, needs, behavior, parents and offspring.
- Space Systems: Patterns and Cycles - Observe patterns in the sun, moon, and stars, and observe changes in daylight related to the time of year.
- Engineering Design - Investigate how problems are solved through various tools and create models demonstrating how the shape of an object helps it function to solve a given problem.

#### Social Studies

- Culture: Recognize and describe how schools and neighborhoods are both similar and different
- Citizenship: Recognizing personal roles and responsibilities in the school and in the neighborhood
- Geography: Use geographic tools to demonstrate how symbols and models are used to represent features of the school, neighborhood, and the real world
- Financial Literacy: Describe the economic choices people make to meet their basic economic needs

#### Religion

- First graders learn more about the sacrament of Baptism, forgiveness, the rosary, the holy trinity, holy days and seasons, the creation of the world – Old Testament, and an introduction to the new testament
- Prayer: Students will work on practicing the Sign on the Cross, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Angel of God, and prayer before meals. Students will be introduced to Acts of Contrition, Holy Holy, and Lamb of God. Students will memorize the Our Father.
- Saints: Students will learn about Mary our Mother, Joseph, Francis of Assisi, Joachim and Anne, archangel Gabriel, Patrick, and peter

#### **Home-School Folder, and Student Planner, Homework**

The primary source of weekly communication will be through the Home-School folder. Students will need to bring the folder to school each day. On Monday's I will send home in the folder a hard copy of our class newsletter as well as any other additional information for the upcoming week. I may also add things to the folder periodically that should remain in the folder. I will let you know which those items are as they come.

Students will also need to bring their school planner each day. We will use the planner more and more as we progress in the year.

In regard to homework, I am in agreement with the research that less is more. While there may be times I send home worksheets/packets to complete, the primary focus of homework will be more activity/hands on practice based vs. paper and pencil tasks. Generally speaking, I will stick to the general guideline of no more than 10-20 minutes per night, not including reading. That being said, students are encouraged to read and/or be read to nightly. Book Baggy books can be used during this time.

Each week students will have a list of spelling words. These words should be practiced at home throughout the week for our spelling test that will take place each Friday. These words will typically be related to particular units/lessons and High Frequency Words we are focussing on that week. \*Please note: leveled spelling and word work will take place during Power Hour (see below).

### **Book Baggies**

In September students will start receiving their weekly “Book Baggies”. Each bag will contain two books tailored to each individual student’s independent reading level, along with a sheet for parents to initial throughout the week as students read and re-read their two books. Book Baggies will need to be returned each week in order to be replaced with two new books for the upcoming week.

*\*Please note, these books are based on the students INDEPENDENT reading level, meaning they are books that should be fairly easy for the student to read by him/herself and require only minimal support. These books are meant for practice and to increase fluency and are NOT intended to “teach” new skills, only to reinforce and practice skills already learned.*

### **Power Hour**

Power Hour is a program in which students are broken up by ability to work in small groups on reading, writing, and spelling skills. During this time, students will rotate to three different stations to work on these specific skills. Students will work on leveled spelling and writing skills, and also will receive guided support in reading. It is during this time that students will be exposed to more challenging texts on his/her own guided reading level.

### **Procedures**

- Drop Off: Please ensure students are standing outside in our class line by the west facing doors in the parking lot and ready to go by the 8:15 bell each morning. I will meet students outside at that time and escort them into the school. If students arrive and are dropped off at school prior to 7:55am., he/she will need to check into EDP. Students are not permitted to wait outside of the school unattended prior to 7:55am.
- Pick Up: After school, students will be escorted to the back parking lot for pickup. ALL students will be required to use this exit for pickup. Students will stand together as a class outside and wait to be picked up. Individuals picking up students need to check in with me before taking the student. To ensure the safety of all students, please notify me in advance if a student is going home with someone other than who might normally pick them up (i.e., having a play-date and/or going home with a classmate). Please be sure to be on time to pick up students. In the event a student’s ride is running late, he/she will be sent to EDP to wait to be picked up.
- Tardiness: Students are expected to be on time to school each morning. If a student is late to school, he/she will need to check-in at the front office before heading to class. School policies require that I report tardiness directly to Mrs. Hunt if a student is late two or more times.
- Student excused from school early: In the event a student needs to be excused from school during the day, the student will remain in class until they are called down to the office for pickup. Students must checkout with the office before leaving the school and check back in when/if they return to school.

### **Uniforms**

Unless specified on designated days, students are expected to be in complete school uniform daily in compliance with the school dress code. In the event a student is not in uniform, he/she will be provided appropriate uniform attire to change into, or the office may call you to bring the appropriate attire for the student. Unless otherwise specified, students should wear informal dress uniform Monday-Thursday, and formal dress uniform on Friday's. Please refer to school Dress Code Policy 3400 for specific information on formal and informal dress code requirements. Additionally, will need to wear or bring athletic shoes to be worn during PE class. As of now, we are scheduled to have PE on Tuesdays. I will inform you if this day changes.

**Misc:**

- Morning snack: Students will have time every morning for a healthy, easy to eat snack that they must bring from home daily. Please be aware that due to student allergy/health risks, certain foods/ingredients may not be allowed in class. In such a case, I will send out a list of specific allergy restrictions.
- Water bottles: Students are welcome to bring water bottles to class.
- Birthdays: It is NOT required, however, students may bring a birthday "treat" in celebration of their birthday. The treat should be small and easy to share. Please avoid blatantly unhealthy items and consider student allergy restrictions. Non food items are encouraged.
- Emergency packets: Each student needs an emergency packet to be kept in the classroom. This should be in a clearly labeled plastic bag and needs to include: one water bottle, a granola/energy bar, and contact information (which should include one out of state phone number). A small flashlight, family picture, personal note, etc., are optional items.

I look forward to a successful year and working with you all!

Sincerely,

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