



September 16, 2009

Dear First Grade Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! The following particulars will be helpful and we hope informational.

The last few weeks we have been working on getting into a routine. They have taken a big step from kindergarten and are off to a great start! So far the highlight of first grade is having their own desks and supplies. The biggest adjustment is the long day without a rest break.

SCHEDULE: Our morning begins with prayers, the Pledge of Allegiance and announcements over the P.A. Then the calendar person helps with the daily calendar. Following calendar is **Math**.

Following Math is **Language Arts**. This consists of **Phonics, Spelling, Reading, and Handwriting**. Spelling lists began coming home last Monday. These lists are sent home each Monday and a test given on Friday. These tests consist of writing each word and also a few dictated sentences. A vocabulary list containing words from upcoming stories will be sent home also. Please practice these with your child.

Our afternoon begins with **Religion**. This year our theme is Connected with Christ. Each month we will focus on one of the Catholic Social Teachings. This month we are working on Each Person is Sacred. The first graders will also be working on the Christmas Prayer Service. It will be on December 18th.

Next we alternate units of **Science** and **Social Studies**. We began the year with a unit on growing and changing. We are learning about plants, animals, and people.

We have our **specials classes** each morning. We also have **Library** once a month, **Computer** class once a week, and Mrs. Maramba teaches us Spanish twice a week.

Fourth Grade **Reading Buddies** come every Friday afternoon to read to and with the first graders.

We get together with Seventh Grade **Faith Partners** about once a month to do an activity related to our Religion curriculum for that month. The seventh graders also sit with us for School Masses.

INTEGRATED UNITS: Our integrated theme topics will include Bears, Pilgrims, Gingerbread, Mardi Gras, 100's Day, Nutrition, Dr. Seuss' birthday, and many author studies.

HOMEWORK: Every day (except Thursday) your child will bring home his/her **Home** folder with corrected papers, homework, etc. We ask that you review this folder nightly with your child. Please discuss any work that needs to be corrected/completed. Thanks to you, the **Thursday** folder with office handouts has been a successful means of school communication.

According to **M.S.W.'s HOMEWORK POLICY**, students should be receiving 10-15 minutes of homework per grade level. In October we will begin sending home a **Math/Reading Log** to be recorded daily, initialed by you, and returned via the **Home** and **Thursday** folders.

As noted on page 41 of the Parent Handbook teachers are not expected to provide assignments before extended absences due to vacation. All work will be given upon returning to school.

You can help your child on a daily basis in the following way: read with and to your child, practice printing, practice addition and subtraction facts using counters and flashcards, talk with your child to foster language development and to provide emotional support.

REPORT CARDS: Report cards will come out November 20th. Our report card is like Kindergarten's. It is a progress report with the skills we are working on listed. We do not give letter grades and our grades will not be posted online.

TESTS: You will receive tests within a few days of the children taking them. These need to be signed and returned to school promptly in the Test Folder.

COMMUNICATION: Communication is vital between home and school. If a situation arises that might affect your child's performance/behavior at school, please make us aware of this. If you have concerns or questions please contact us. An appointment, phone call, or e-mail will follow.

Thank you for sending notes letting us know when your child is being picked up by someone else after school. We are very careful to see that each child gets to that person.

EXPECTATIONS: Hopefully we have the same expectations for your child: to become more independent and responsible, to have confidence in themselves, and to feel successful. We're here to help your children learn and want them to look forward to coming to school. We are trying to create an atmosphere where students feel safe and show respect for themselves and those around them.

DISCIPLINE POLICY: Students receive verbal warnings. Further warnings result in five minute lost intervals of recess.

- **First Trimester** we will continue to use the stop sign and clip system that students are familiar with from Kindergarten.
- **Second Trimester** we will use sticky notes that students will add tally marks to for inappropriate behavior. This will help students to become more responsible for the choices they make.
- **Third Trimester** we will use a marble jar. Marbles can be earned each day for positive behaviors. A class reward will be earned when the jar is filled. This system will help to encourage teamwork.

BIRTHDAY TREATS: You may send birthday treats and napkins on or near your child's birthday. Please try to be selective and keep it simple. Due to peanut and nut allergies, please avoid any foods containing peanut or nut products. Summer birthdays will be celebrated before the end of the school year.

HEALTHY SNACKS: Students may bring a **small, healthy** snack to school each day. It should be something that students can eat easily while they continue working. Finger foods only please.

UNIFORM CLOTHING: Please be sure to **label gym and school uniforms**. It can get very confusing when children are changing for Gym class.

BOOK ORDERS: We will be sending book orders home about once a month. These are optional. If you choose to order books please either enclose exact cash or make a check out to Scholastic Book Clubs.

NEWSLETTERS: We will be sending home a weekly newsletter every Monday to let you know about the upcoming week. Please read these to look for any important reminders.

Thank you for giving us your time, encouragement, and support to your child's education. Together we can make this year a wonderful learning opportunity!

Mrs. Kristen Alexovich
Ms. Kathy Chilver