

Room 1's Parent / Student Handbook 2009~2010

Christine Cullen
First/Second Grade Teacher
Point Dume Marine Science School
6955 Fernhill Drive
Malibu, CA 90265
310-457-9370 x101
ccullen@smmusd.org
www.pointdume.smmusd.org

Welcome

Welcome to Room 1 for the 2009~ 2010 school year. I hope that it is filled with learning, laughter and lots of memories. I am excited to be teaching your children this year. I am also looking forward to getting to know all of you and working together to make this year a bright one for your child. I am sure that this year will be an engaging one.

This handbook was created to help you understand some of the activities, routines and norms that are a part of our classroom community. While I have tried to be as complete as possible there will no doubt be additions, deletions and corrections throughout the year. Also, if you have any questions at all don't hesitate to make contact with me at your earliest convenience. My contact information is located on the cover of this handbook.

I would like to share a little information about me. This is my 19th year of teaching and my 11th year at PDMSS. I am married to Brian Winsick, a middle school teacher at Medea Creek in Oak Park. We have four children, Nina, 13, Sam, 8, Colton, 3 and Lila Rose who is almost 2. I grew up in a northwest suburb of Chicago and graduated from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. I earned my CA teaching credential from California State University Long Beach as well as my M.A. in Early Childhood Education. My interests outside of school include yoga, reading, knitting, surfing and my family.

Please take a few minutes to look through the handbook and then put it in a safe place so you can refer to it throughout the year.

Thanks and again welcome to Room 1!
Chris

Independence & Responsibilities

It is never too early to start learning how to be independent and responsible about one's possessions and one's behaviors. Students are encouraged to become more responsible and independent by making choices and then dealing with the positive and negative consequences of those actions. While this may sound very "grown-up", it is in fact a very important part of school and becoming a capable and successful student. Students who have many opportunities to choose which activities they wish to engage in or what subjects they would like to learn about are more likely to be motivated by the tasks in which they are engaged. Being responsible for turning in assignments and projects on time will help reinforce the importance of accomplishing tasks in a timely manner.

Another area that develops responsibility is taking care of supplies and materials. If students are always given a new pencil when they lose or break theirs, they won't truly appreciate the value of the pencil in terms of money and natural resources. Instead a child who has to use half a pencil or a crayon will better appreciate a new pencil the next time they are given one. While some children are not ready for this kind of responsibility, others are and benefit from being held accountable for their behavior and their actions.

Choice Time

When students have finished their work, they are allowed to have some Choice Time in the classroom. This can be a quiet choice at their seat or someplace in the room. This is what I use to motivate students to accomplish their work. Once they are done, then they can choose to do what they want. I am trying to help them to become internally motivated and committed to finishing work that they begin.

Communication

I feel that strong, consistent, two-way communication is extremely important to the success of both students and parents. One way that I will be communicating to you is through the "Room One News that You Can Use" letter. This is also an excellent place to find out what we have done during the week and what is coming ahead. It is also a place to learn some of "why we are learning what we are learning" as well as to find some suggestions for parents to support what is happening at school.

I am a teacher because I love working with children and helping them to get the most out of their time at school. I hope that together we can provide the opportunities for your child to have a wonderful year. Your daily support for what occurs in the classroom and your continued efforts at home will only help to insure that your child reaches her or his potential.

Please feel free to talk to me about your child and our classroom. You can leave me a message here at school at 310-457-9370x101 or email at ccullen@smmusd.org (please note the new email address).

Homework Folder

This is a very important link between home and school. The homework folder will come home every night during the week (Mon-Thurs.) and it will include homework and your child's daily planner. My focus this year for homework is to make it an enjoyable and thoughtful experience for all. Homework this year will consist of reading (or being read to) for 20 minutes, studying math facts and completing spelling word activities. If you feel that you need to supplement your homework with worksheets or other activities there are a list of suggestions near the end of this handbook. I will write the homework in the weekly newsletter for you, so that you are aware of the homework. Don't let your child know this. I want to make the students feel that writing their homework down each night is incredibly important. Each night the homework folder should go home along with the homework planner. The homework should be completed at home and placed back into the folder. I will expect the folder to come back every morning when I collect homework. We utilize and write in our homework planners everyday. Check your child's homework planner to make sure they are writing down the homework. The homework planner is a way to help your child become responsible and organized at an early age. Having students get in the habit of writing down their homework each night will help them in middle school and high school.

Friday Folders

These are a very important link between home and school. They include information from school and the classroom as well as share some of the progress and work that your child has made during the week. Please take some time to go through the papers with your child so that you can make connections together. Have your child bring back the empty Friday Folder each Monday morning.

Thinking Aloud

One of the strategies that I use to help children learn is to think aloud. This is a process where you get a little hokey and actually talk out loud to yourself so others can hear you. By bringing my thinking out of my head I am modeling how I go about deciding what I am going to do. The more children can see and hear examples of how we think the more they will think on their own. Give it a try and see if your child connects to your thinking.

Volunteering

I encourage you to participate in your child's education as often as you possibly can. Whether you can commit to a regular weekly time, want to work on special projects or activities or would like to help behind the scenes please try your best to volunteer.

If working with students is your preference, the times that volunteers are most needed are Mondays through Thursdays 10:20 to 11:50, or Mondays through Thursdays, 12:30-3:00, or Fridays, all morning. If these times don't fit your schedule please contact me and we will work out a time for you to join in on the fun.

If you would prefer to work behind the scenes (copying, putting material together, and word processing) or if this fits your schedule better, there are also things for you to do.

Please sign up at Back to School Night so that I can organize my volunteer schedule and make sure that your time is well spent. Also, don't forget you need to have a valid TB test on file with the school and have participated in a volunteer training conducted by Ms. Kim before you can start in the classroom on September 29, 2009.

If you can't make your volunteer time please try and find a replacement or notify me via email or leave a message as soon as possible so I can adjust what will occur in the classroom. **Please turn off your cell phones or put them on vibrate while you are working in the classroom.**

Calling All Talented Parents!

Do you have an area of expertise or a special interest in case we need information, advice, etc.? OR, is there something that you'd like to come to school and do with the children? We'd love to have you!

SO—this is an open call for artists, architects, storytellers, gardeners, builders, chefs, lawyers, actors, homemakers, etc., etc., etc. to let yourselves be known!

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- an idea for a project you'd like to work on
- an approximate time frame for how long it would take to do the project
- a list of any materials that need to be supplied

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- to be ready and willing to hear what you have to teach us
- to provide a working space (our classroom is all yours!)
- to provide any materials or to reimburse you for materials you've purchased

Please contact me so as soon as possible so we can work out the details.

Tide Pool Info

The following is what your child will learn about our trips to the tide pools. We usually leave right after lunch and return by 2:30. You are encouraged to volunteer to come along and help. If you do choose to come, please be aware of the rules so you can help to reinforce them for all the students in the classroom.

Grayfox Walk Rules

- ÿ There is safety in numbers
- ÿ Walk with an adult nearby
- ÿ Walk on the side of the road but off of people's property (stay off the corner house's rocks)
- ÿ Listen and watch for cars on the road.
- ÿ Students not following rules should hold an adult's hand

Tide Pool Etiquette

- ÿ Touch animals with one or two fingers only
- ÿ Never pick up animals, shells, rocks or other tide pool objects

- ÿ Watch where you step, there are animals everywhere
- ÿ Stay on the rocks and close to the shore
- ÿ Leave the tide pools as you found them

Data Collection Procedure

- ÿ Gather your group of students
- ÿ Find a spot in the tide pool to lay your rope
- ÿ Lay rope in a circle
- ÿ Count and tally the amount of each kind of animal on your sheet
- ÿ Make note of any animals or plants that are not on your sheet
- ÿ Return sheets and equipment to teacher when finished

Literacy

We are using the Houghton-Mifflin Language Arts program adopted by the school district. It is a comprehensive reading and writing program with a variety of components. The program will also be supported by a variety of reading, writing and speaking opportunities such as journal writing, read aloud, sharing, guest reading and writing workshop. Our goal is to empower your child to be an independent, confident communicator who can read, write and speak in authentic situations. One of the most important activities that you can do to support your child's growth in this area is daily reading. 15 to 20 minutes a day spent reading to, or listening to your child read, will help to reinforce what is being learned in school. This time will be increased as the year goes on and your child becomes a stronger and better reader

Read Aloud

Although students are beginning to read on their own and need to practice the skill of reading, they also need to continue to hear good literature. The more that a child is read aloud to, the more engaged they will be in the reading process. For more information about reading aloud to your child and/or recommendations for read aloud books visit Jim Trelease's website.

<http://www.trelease-on-reading.com>

Reader of the Week

Each week a child will be chosen for Reader of the Week. Encourage your child to master a book that he or she will read aloud to the class. They should read the book many times and then practice reading to an audience. The more they read, the more fluent, expressive, and confident their reading will

become. You can help them to project and modulate their voice so that they keep the listener engaged. Your child will read the chosen book on Friday to their peers. On Monday, a list of questions will go home for your child to answer and share with the class on Tuesday.

Writer's Workshop

This is the time of the day when your child can express themselves with words. Students are encouraged to work independently and write using their own spelling. Their work is kept in a folder where one side has finished work and the other side has work that is still being revised. Encouraging your child to write at home like this will only help to reinforce what he or she is doing in the classroom. Throughout the year we will be working on how to generate story ideas, how to add detail, and how to zoom in on our story. We will mainly be writing personal narratives throughout the year. I will also have some students create a 5-paragraph essay about a topic they love. Towards the end of the end of the year we will read and write poetry. All of us here have had extensive training in writer's workshop. It works better to not have volunteers in the class during this time of the day so that it does not interfere with the strategies that I am trying to teach. Thank you!

Math

We are using the Scott-Foresman Envision Mathematics program adopted by the school district. This program covers state and district standards in the areas of the number concept, computation, problem solving, critical thinking, algebra, geometry, spatial relationships, time and money. We also use a program called Bridges that applies mathematical reasoning into games and activities. These programs will also be supplemented with games, activities and projects that I have used over the years to give children opportunities to use what they have learned in real life situations. Our goal is to give each child the confidence and the tools necessary to be successful mathematicians. You can help support your child's mathematical knowledge by giving her or him opportunities to use their skills at home. Playing card games (i.e. go fish, 21, addition war) and board games (i.e. Checkers, Chutes and Ladders, Trouble, Connect Four) will help them with their thinking and counting skills.

Asking them math problems while driving in the car, on a walk or in the bath will help them with their basic math facts. Encourage them to use their fingers or other objects to help them find the answer. Mental math games (i.e. 20 questions, I Spy, estimation) and other activities such as doing puzzles, building objects and cooking will also contribute to helping your child to think mathematically. The more you can get your child thinking mathematically, the better.

Marine Science

We will have a marine science focus this year that will include Earth, Life and Physical sciences as a part of its activities. We will be taking advantage of our school's science lab and our fabulous science teacher, Sandy Carter, as well as our local, natural resources to help learn more about our environment and the many ways that we can help nurture its continued existence and growth. We will also be going on monthly tide pool walks to collect data and observe animals in their natural habitat. Our goal is to give students an understanding, appreciation and a sense of responsibility for the world in which they live as well as teach them the scientific process through investigation and experimentation.

2nd Grade Science & Social Studies

Science – We will discover magnets, sound, sequential stages of life cycles, and explore the physical properties of different kinds of rocks.

Social Studies- We will focus on families, now and long ago (ancestors), the land around us, governing the people, using our resources, people in the marketplace, and people making a difference. We will learn more about our community, the world, and ourselves. We will examine our families and cultures as well as the people and places of other families and cultures. We will also explore the impact that each individual can have on her or his environment. Our goal is to help your child develop into a kind and responsible citizen of a global society.

1st Grade Science & Social Studies Rotations

We will be working with the other first grade classes to maximize our instructional time. Sometime during the week, we will be rotating between the

two classes with Mrs. Calek teaching science, and myself teaching social studies. In science the students will focus on Earth, Life and Physical sciences as well as the scientific process. Our goal is to give the students the tools necessary to ask and answer questions. In social studies, our goal is to give students an understanding, appreciation and a sense of responsibility for the world in which they live as well as teach them more about themselves, their community and the world. We will examine our families and cultures as well as the people and places of other families and cultures. We will also explore the impact that each individual can have on her or his environment.

Technology

The computers in the classroom are used for a variety of purposes. Students type short stories/poems, use word processing skills, practice their typing skills, and refine their searches. Being comfortable with the keyboard and having knowledge of word processing skills are goals for this school year. In the spring, I applied for and received a Model Classroom Technology Grant. Our class will be getting 8 brand new laptops, a wireless slate and new sound system to enrich the curriculum. The students will be using this technology for multi-media projects that tie in with the curriculum.

Art

At this time, art needs to be fully funded by parent donations before classes can begin.

Music

At this time, music needs to be fully funded by parent donations before classes can begin.

Physical Education (P.E.)

We have PE, with the P.E. Coach, Monday through Thursday for 30 minutes. Please make sure that your child wears shoes and clothes that are appropriate for running, jumping and exercising. The more comfortable your child is, the more likely they will be to participate. They will learn new games and skills as well as practice sportsmanship and cooperative learning. Students who are injured or unable to participate in PE must have a note from their parents excusing them from participating.

Snacks

We have snack time at recess (10:00-10:20) every day. It is important to make sure your child has a healthful snack (carrots, apple, half a sandwich, and water) every day even if they are buying a school lunch. Learning takes energy and students constantly need fuel to keep the learning going.

Birthdays

Birthdays are usually celebrated in the classroom right before recess (9:55). If your child would like to share a treat with the class please bring it in before school or just before recess. There is a “no sugar” policy therefore treats leaning towards the healthier side of the spectrum such as fruit, cheese, whole wheat crackers and water are what is expected. Please check with me prior to bringing in a birthday treat.

Another option instead of the treat is to donate a special Birthday Book to the class. A Birthday Book can be any book that your child loves or thinks other students would enjoy. We'll write your child's name and birthday in the book cover and students will enjoy this gift for many years.

Please do NOT bring birthday invitations to class to hand out or put in cubbies. This is school policy. If you would like more information about this policy please ask Ms. Kim.

Book Bags

A Book Bag is a collection of books that your child is working with in school. Your child, as well as the teacher, will choose the books in the bag. If your child has a book at home that they would like to add to their Book Bag please feel free to include it when your child brings their Book Bag to school each day. The purpose of the Book Bag is to increase your child's reading abilities by giving them opportunities to practice their reading strategies as well as learn how to select books of interest and at or slightly above their skill level.

In order to give your child more practice with these books, she or he is being asked to bring home their Book Bag every night and return it to school the next morning. I have explained to your child how important it is for them to be responsible for their Book Bag. I have also emphasized to them how important it is to keep track of all the books in the bag. Each book costs our library and school around \$6.00. Please help your child to be responsible for their Book Bag by establishing a place in your house where your child can keep the book bag and remember to bring it back to school daily. The book bags should be put into your child's desk each morning.

Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation in making our home-school connection as strong as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or stop by the classroom.

Shoes

Students may not wear flip-flops to school.

Lunch

Lunch is from 11:50 – 12:30. If a snack, lunch, or other items are forgotten, it will be your responsibility to drop it off in the office. Students will be allowed to go at their morning or lunch recess to pick up their forgotten item. Lunch on Fridays will be from 12:00-12:30.

Gates

The gates will open at 8:10AM. This will be a time for socializing. At 8:25 the first bell will ring. Student Council will lead the whole school in the pledge and school song. This will only take about 3 minutes. At 8:30 the second bell will ring. This second bell will be the tardy bell and the gates will be locked.

Absence

If your child is absent, please call the absence into the office on that day or soon after with a reason.

Supplemental Homework Ideas

Many parents ask about getting more homework assignments. I firmly believe that children need unscheduled time to play, read, draw, use their imaginations and that MORE homework takes away from that time. I strongly suggest eliminating or severely limiting television and video games (all count

as “screen time”) on school nights and giving your child more time to be a child.

There are other learning activities you can do with your child besides additional worksheets for school. Here are some suggestions:

- Read, read, read, read, read
- Write summaries of the reading
- Write a new ending to a story
- Write a new beginning to a story
- Write a poem or a song
- Write a new title or new chapter names
- Keep a journal
- Compare and contrast characters
- Write letters
- Write fiction
- Write an instruction manual
- Write a new story using familiar characters
- Research an interesting topic
- Make a diorama of a favorite scene in a book
- Draw a picture
- Cook together
- Build something with wood
- Knit, crochet, and sew
- Build with blocks or Legos
- Look up unknown words
- Play a board game
- Write word problems
- Play “21” (Blackjack!)
- Play Scrabble or Boggle
- Make a scrapbook
- Turn off the TV!

Be creative and have fun with your child.

For those parents who feel that their child would benefit from added work at home, we have included a list of places and websites that you can use to obtain practice materials. Please don't hesitate to contact me to discuss what would be appropriate for you to obtain for your child.

Educational Stores:

- Sophie's Education Corner in Thousand Oaks (805-777-0077)
- Lakeshore in West Los Angeles (310-559-1684)

Bookstores:

- Diesel in Malibu (310-456-9961)
- Borders in Thousand Oaks (805-497-8159)
- Barnes & Nobles in Westlake Village (805-446-2820)

Stores

- Ralphs in Malibu (310-456-2917)
- CVS in Malibu (310-456-9645)
- Costco in Westlake Village (818-597-3901)
- Staples in Westlake Village (818-865-9660)
- Target in Thousand Oaks (805-480-9114)

The Internet

- <http://www.kidzone.ws/math/index.htm>
- <http://www.edhelper.com/>
- http://www.mathbuilder.com/math_grade1.htm
- <http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hmr/1/>

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:25	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening	Opening
8:30-9:00	P.E.	P.E.	P.E.	P.E.	Writer's Workshop
9:00-10:00	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Writer's Workshop	Math
10:00-10:20	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess 10:00-10:15
10:20-11:50	Reader's Workshop	Reader's Workshop	Reader's Workshop	Reader's Workshop	Reader's Workshop
11:50-12:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch 12:00-12:30
12:30-1:30	Social Studies & Science	Math Music-1st 12:30-1:00	Social Studies & Science Science Lab-2nd 12:30-1:15	Social Studies & Science Science Lab-1st 12:30-1:15	Reader of the Week 12:30-1:00

1:30-2:45	Math	Art-All 1:15-2:00 Music-2nd 2:30-3:00	Math	Math	Dismissal 1:00 Faculty Meeting or Team Meeting Or Professional Development
2:45-3:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	