

Room 5's

Parent / Student

Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Room 5 for the 2009~ 2010 school year. This year will be filled with learning, laughter, and lots of memories. I am looking forward to getting to know all my students and their families.

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 10th year of teaching and my 6th year at Point Dume Marine Science School. I am married to Andrew Ferguson, who works as a project manager for Burdge and Associates Architects in Malibu. I have a daughter named Ruby Malin Ferguson and she is such a blessing. Ruby will no doubt be the topic of many stories in writer's workshop. I grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with two sisters and one brother. I earned my teaching credential from Clarion University in Pennsylvania and completed my Master's Degree while attending the University of Phoenix in Curriculum and Instruction. My interests outside of school include surfing, tennis, reading, live music, and spending time with my family and friends. Please take a few minutes to look through the handbook and then put it in a safe place so you can reference it throughout the year. Thanks and again welcome to Room 5.

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 Friday Folders. 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. Each week a Friday Newsletter will be sent through e-mail or placed inside the folder if you prefer, to let you know what is going on each week.

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 anytime about your child and our classroom. You can also leave me a message here at school at 310-457-9370x102 or e-mail at jferguson@smmusd.org

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, I will have the times posted at Back to School night that are most helpful to me. 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 contact me as soon as possible 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 before you can start to volunteer. Parents new to the school will need

to participate in a volunteer training conducted by Ms. Kim before you can start in the classroom on Tuesday, September 29, 2009. If you can't make your volunteer time please 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.**

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, and guest reading. 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.

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 opportunities they have to hear fluent, expressive reading.

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.

Writing Workshop

This is the time of the day when your child can express themselves with words. Students are encouraged to work independently and with

their writing partner. Their work is kept in a pocket folder where students will collect their small seed ideas. Students will be asked to take their piece through the writing process (draft, revise, edit, publish). 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 students create a 5-paragraph essay about a topic they love. Towards the end of the year we will read and write poetry. I have had extensive training in writer's workshop in New York and here in Santa Monica. I would rather not have parent volunteers at this time of the day so that it does not interfere with the strategies I have learned. Thank you very much.

Numeracy

We are using a new math adoption this year called Envision Math, which has been 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. Math will be taught during four rotational centers.

1. Direct instruction
2. Practice the skill independently
3. Computer skills
4. Game Table/ Math Tiles

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/multiplication 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 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.

Science

2nd Grade – We will discover magnets, sound, sequential stages of life cycles, and explore the physical properties of different kinds of rocks.

We will also have our organic garden this year. We will meet with our big buddies from fourth grade and work in the garden making observations about the different vegetables and fruit growing. We will learn about pests, weeding, and how to make our own food from the crops we grow.

We will have a marine science focus this year that will include Earth, Life, and Physical sciences as well as Investigation and Experimentation. 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. 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. Second graders will be going on monthly tide pool walks to collect data and observe animals in their natural habitat. For a more in depth list of topics for Science at each grade level you may go to www.cde.ca.gov

Social Studies

2nd Grade - 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 ourselves, our 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. Our goal is to help your child develop into a kind and responsible citizen of a global society.

Music

To be announced once direct donation is at our goal. Music should begin mid October.

Art

Art will not begin until direct donation goals have been met by our school. Art should begin mid October.

In conjunction with the art we do in the classroom, we will be working with Joanne Horton throughout the year. Joanne is a ceramic/fine artist and has founded Creative Fire Studio. Art is meant not only to improve skills and understanding of different media but also as a way to express creativity and improve appreciation for the aesthetics and value of art in each person's life.

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.

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.

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 8:10 AM. 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 cheer. 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.

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.

Magic Circle

This is a wonderful part of the primary learning experience. At the end of each day, students will gather in a circle on the carpet. Students will have the opportunity to tell a story to their neighbor. In fact this is storytelling time. It is important to allow children to have time to tell stories because this affects their writing and gives them ideas for writing. We will learn how to tell a story better and with more detail. After this, each child will have a chance to share their feelings in the circle and reflect on their day at school. Each week someone will be Magic Circle. We will all write something specific and nice about this person and place it in our magic box. I read all of the comments aloud and give them to the person to keep. I tell them whenever they are having a bad day to get these comments out and read them. This will also be a time of the day to relax with some "Yoga for Kids" activities. We were trained in some areas of relaxation through yoga that I hope to incorporate into the circle this year.

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. The school district has

adopted a healthy treats policy for birthday celebrations and parties. If you are bringing in something, please be creative and think of a treat that doesn't have so much sugar. Examples: Zucchini bread, banana bread, veggies and dip, muffins, fruit, etc. Anything towards the healthier side of the spectrum is always appreciated.

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. The school becomes responsible for these activities. Also, please no balloons.

Homework

My focus this year for homework is to make it an enjoyable and thoughtful experience for all. Homework for second graders this year will consist of reading 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 sheet which is attached to the homework folder. 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 on our homework sheet everyday. Check your child's homework sheet to make sure they are writing down the homework. The homework sheet 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.

Weekly Electronic Newsletter

It is important that I receive your e-mail address so that I can communicate with you weekly about what is going on in our classroom. Some weeks will be more eventful than others. I will list

the upcoming homework for you each week so that you are clued in on what is expected of your child each night. Parents in the past have found this very helpful. If you don't have access to a computer, let me know. I will print you a paper version and place in the Friday Folder each week.

5000 Minute Reading Challenge

We have a school wide reading challenge. When your child has completed the 20 minutes of reading homework each night, your job is to sign the homework planner. If the homework planner comes back with your initials or signature and the spelling homework is complete, then I will give them a sticker to place in their homework grid. This homework grid is in their homework folder. Once the grid is filled, your child has then read a total of 500 minutes. Each time your child completes the grid of stickers a bookworm piece with their name on it is added to our worm. The worm starts to grow around our classroom. Their challenge for the school year is 5000 minutes.

Discipline

Students earn paper dollar bills at the end of each day. If they get their clothespin moved, then they do not receive a dollar bill. Dollar bills can also be taken away for unacceptable behavior. The dollar bills can be used at our school store. They can replenish pencils, pens, erasers, and glue sticks there. I also have a huge jar of pretzels for students to purchase. Anything you want to donate to the school store would be greatly appreciated. Healthy snacks are always a good idea.

Then I have an auction at the end of the school year for students to save their dollar bills for. These are items at the 99cent store or in the past I have had everyone bring in one item from home that they are willing to donate. This could be a book or toy. Please keep this in mind and don't throw anything away at home that could be placed in the school auction. The students love to bid on things, even if they are used! You can donate anything throughout the school year.

Golden Tickets

All Aides, Specialists, Ms. Kim and support staff will be handing out Golden Tickets again - Each month the class with the most golden tickets will be given a \$50 gift certificate to send to the charity of the class's choice - Heiffer, Pennies for Peace, American Red Cross, - any organization that is non-profit and is aimed at helping people.

Supplemental Homework Ideas

Some 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/>

Spelling Activities

1. Write your words in ABC order.

Example: apple, bat, cat...

2. Write your words in REVERSE ABC order

Example: zebra, yellow, watch...

3. Write each word on a card. Select a card and read the word; then turn the card over. Spell the word on your paper. Repeat this until you have spelled each word in the list twice correctly.

4. Use the following code, a red marker, and a blue marker to write your spelling words.

Code: RED=Vowels; BLUE=Consonants

5. Use all of your spelling words to create an original story. Look at your spelling words – who can be your main character–setting–problem

6. Write each spelling word and then write a word beside it that has the same beginning sound.

7. Look in a newspaper for your words. Each time you see one, circle it with a marker.

8. Create a crossword puzzle on graph paper. Put your spelling words at the bottom of your graph paper so that someone can find your words.

9. Create several categories into which all the words can fit. Regroup them into different categories.

10. Change the initial or middle consonants to create other words. Or keep the consonants the same and change vowels to form other words.

11. Create analogies using the words. Example: “happy” is to “sad” as “smile” is to “frown”

12. Try to write a sentence using the letters in the word.

Example: bread = Bill runs eagerly at daybreak.

13. Type your spelling words on a computer 3 times each.

14. Classify the words according to their parts of speech.

15. Use each word in a tongue twister.

16. Draw a picture. HIDE your words in the picture.

17. Estimate how much time it would take for you to copy your spelling list; then have a friend time you while you write each word one time. How close was your estimate to the actual time?
18. Write each word 2 times print/2 times cursive.
19. Write a poem using as many spelling words as possible.
20. Write each spelling word. Beside each word write how many syllables it has.
21. Write each spelling word. Draw one line under each long vowel and two lines under each short vowel.
22. Write each spelling word and then write a word that has the same ending sound.
23. Practice writing your spelling words 3 times each with markers, crayons, and/or pen.
24. Cut out letters from a magazine to spell your words.
25. Create a cartoon strip using your spelling words.
26. Make a learning aid to help you learn the spellings.
27. Write the alphabet down the left side of your paper. Beside the letters, write the numbers 1-26 in order. Now predict which three words on the spelling list will have the greatest total when the values of the letters are added. Use a calculator to find out if you predictions are accurate.
28. Write your spelling words in sentences. You can use more than one word in a sentence if it makes sense.
29. Write each word, skipping a line in between. Make an outline around each word. Tell the name of an object that might be in this shape.
30. Write each spelling word. Then write the name of an animal whose first letter is the same as the first letter of your spelling word.
31. Word Ladders

c

ca

car

carp

carpe

carpet

