

Welcome to Room 17!

I am delighted to have your son/daughter in my third grade class this year. We have planned many exciting lessons and activities to help us get to know your child as a learner, as a friend, and as a member of our caring community. I will work hard to provide experiences that are both academically and socially enriching to ensure that your child has a successful third grade year.

Our Teacher / Parent relationship is very important to me. As we work together throughout the course of the year, I look forward to working as a team for your child. I will send home a detailed weekly newsletter via e-mail. This newsletter will inform you of classroom activities of the week as well as upcoming events and reminders. It is my way of providing opportunities for you and your family to have conversations about what your child has been learning in school. I find it to be the most timely and efficient mode of communication. Please check it weekly. You can always contact me via e-mail at Mackey@smmusd.org or reach me by phone: 310-457-9370 x 117.

Sincerely,

Tammy Mackey
Point Dume Marine Science School
3rd grade teacher

Math

We are using the Harcourt-Brace Mathematics program adopted by the school district. This program covers the state and district standards in the areas of number sense, computation, problem solving, critical thinking, algebra, geometry, fractions, probability, time and money. One of the main goals in math for third grade is to memorize the multiplication facts to 12. We will be testing students on their facts starting with 2s and 5s and moving through our 12s. Once the facts are memorized, many third grade skills will require their use. There will also be math games and computer games to support learning.

Language Arts

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. This program will be supported by literature circles in a variety of genres, independent reading with response journal, and writer's workshop. Our reading workshop will focus on the skills of predicting, inferring, questioning, decoding, summarizing and evaluating. We will be using the Words Their Way approach to Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling instruction. This is an active way for students to develop knowledge of spelling patterns, sounds, and meaning through word sorts.

Science

The marine science focus in third grade will be the estuary. We will be taking advantage of our school's science lab and our fabulous science teacher, Sandy Carter, as well as our local Malibu Lagoon to help us learn more about this environment.

We will also study the solar system. We will learn about tides, gravity, the seasons, day and night and about the planets themselves. We will be taking a field trip to the Santa Monica College Planetarium to help support our study. In physical science we will study energy, matter and light. All science will focus on the scientific process.

Social Studies

There are 6 units in social studies that we will cover. Each unit has a specific skill to be learned in addition to the content. In third grade, we will begin with finding our location on Earth. We will learn geography and map reading skills and find out what landforms our earth has. We will then move onto our local history beginning with the Chumash. We will compare and contrast our lives today with those of the Chumash. We will take a field trip to Topanga State Park to learn more about the habitat they survived in. We will next move on to more recent history with a field trip to the Adamson House. The focus skill will be cause and effect. We will then shift the focus to the U. S government and what it means to be a good citizen. We will talk about the skills of main idea, supporting details, and summarizing. We will learn about the three branches of government and what makes our country special. We will learn about some traditional songs, landmarks and national parks in our country. The last unit is Understanding Economics and we will learn the skill of generalizing.

Text Book

In both science and social studies we will be learning how to use a textbook. We will learn about a Table of Contents, index and glossary. We will also learn about captions and headings.

Art/Yoga

We will be engaged in yoga and art activities throughout the year. We will be working with both a yoga and art teacher. 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 of art.

Music

In third grade we will continue working with Julia Holland, our vocal music instructor, singing and learning the basic musicianship skills. In addition, third graders will be instructed by a district music teacher and will begin to learn the basics of reading music. They will also be learning to play the recorder. A big hit in third grade!

Buddies

Every other Friday we will be visiting our Kindergarten buddies. The third graders are excited about being the older buddy for the first time. We will spend time reading to and listening to

our buddies read, doing special projects and holding caring community discussion circles where the third graders can be role models and set examples for the Kindergarteners.

PE

We have PE with Coach Indy Monday through Thursday for thirty minutes. Please make sure your child wears appropriate shoes and clothing for running, jumping and exercising. In addition to participating in learning skills and games, your child will learn to practice good sportsmanship and cooperative learning. Students who are unable to participate in PE must have a note from their parents excusing them from participating.

Cursive

We are using a program called Handwriting Without Tears. Cursive is an exciting milestone for third grade and enthusiasm is high.

Friday Papers

Your child will bring home a packet of their work every other week. Along with this packet, will be a self- evaluation by your child of what has gone well and what they will work on to improve. This allows your child to take ownership of learning and the valuable skill of self – monitoring and gauging their own successes.

Grading – The following marks will be used to evaluate work:

+ Outstanding

√+ Good work, on your way

√Satisfactory, not your best effort

- Needs to improve

The class and I have discussed and agreed upon the following rules and consequences. It is my belief that every child has the right to have a safe and positive classroom environment. The classroom rules are:

BE KIND (Treat Others as You Wish to be Treated)

BE SAFE

BE RESPONSIBLE

Positive reinforcement will be used to help the students feel good about the choices they have made throughout the day. This will consist of praise, privileges, tickets and table points.

However, if rules are broken, students will have the opportunity to learn from their mistake

and understand the consequences of their choices. In our class, students must problem solve and participate in the decision making process. They must be part of the solution in order for all of us to feel connected and a part of our community.

First infraction: Stop and think about it. *How can I fix/solve it?*

Second infraction: Loss of recess. *How can I fix/solve it?*

Third infraction of the same rule: *Teacher discretion and parent notification*

Community Circle

Several times a week our class will hold a Caring Community Circle. We will respect one another by being good listeners. We will discuss topics having to do with good character, problem solving issues that arise in class and on the play ground, and practice giving and receiving compliments. It is my hope that through creating a classroom of students who care about one another, we will have a kind, safe and responsible classroom of students.

Homework

Homework this year will go home on Friday and is due back the next Friday. The bulk of the homework is to keep a weekly reading log with a parent's signature. Research shows that the amount students read outside of school is correlated to their reading achievement. The goal will be to read 75 pages in one week. We will be learning how to choose a "just right book." One way for you to help with this is to have them read a page orally. If there are more than three errors, the book is probably too hard, and they will learn less. Research shows that children learn more if they read a book that is just a bit harder than the last one. If a book is too hard, they spend all their time decoding new words, and they miss out on the comprehension and enjoyment of the story.

In addition to the reading log, there will be a spelling list, vocabulary words and a math page. The spelling is for their review. On Fridays, your child will be given a pretest of the spelling/sorting words. Each week the words will follow a different spelling pattern. As they practice the words they will focus on sorting by this pattern. The bulk of the studying will be done in the classroom. The vocabulary words are for them to define. These words will come from some reading or area of study in the classroom. It takes several experiences with a word before it becomes part of a child's vocabulary. This will allow for more practice with these words and experience with using a dictionary.

There may at times be special projects for your child to complete at home. There will be plenty of time given for completion of these projects. Parents may give guidance with projects, but the finished project should be completed by your child.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are needed and welcome. I will need volunteers for both math and reading groups. Please sign up at Back to School Night or stop by the room to find a time that works for you. 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.

I believe that a good relationship between parent and teachers will provide for a stronger education for your son/daughter. I look forward to working with you to support your child this year.