Welcome Back to School!

2021-2022

Here we are…at the start of another exciting school year. Not much has changed since last year…our class is still the best class in the school!

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I try to really stress independence and responsibility. The students are reminded every day that they are responsible for themselves, their materials, and their actions. Every day the students are required to bring the following:

* Communication book
* 100 Book Challenge paper
* 100 Book Challenge books
* RWS words (sight word folder)
* Homework packet (on Friday)

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Together we discussed rules for our classroom that foster a positive learning environment and build a respectful classroom community. This is the result of our discussion:

Class Rules:

1. Listen to directions
2. Do your work
3. Clean up
4. Give others personal space
5. Help others
6. Be polite
7. Use your inside voice
8. Raise your hand
9. Have quiet hands
10. Sit quietly

Consequences for broken rules:

1. First warning
2. Second warning & poor choice
3. Time out
4. Note/phone call home
5. Lose privileges
6. Visit to the office

The following is a brief outline of some of my class policies and routines:

**Communication Books**

The communication folder is an important tool for information sent between home and school. It will show you what specials your child had, how the day went, reminders, and may contain papers for you to see. Please check them for notes regarding school/homework and initial or sign it every night. The communication books get checked every day, so feel free to write any concerns or questions there.

**Class Behavior Program**

We have a classroom behavior program, where the students decide if they made “good choices” or “poor choices” throughout the day. They put cards in a chart after each period, reflecting their good/poor choices. The students decide for themselves how they have behaved, and the other adults and I reiterate what “good choices” and “poor choices” look like. The students earn fifteen cents at the end of the day if they have made enough good choices. The money goes into each student’s bank. They can spend the money on various things, i.e. getting sugar-free drinks at snack, free time, listening to music, etc. It is my hope that the students will develop an awareness of their own behavior and also that they will see consequences from poor choices.

This year we also are using a “House Point” system with the kids. It is related to our classroom Harry Potter theme—the students were sorted into their “houses” and work with their house teammates to earn points. They can earn points for acts of kindness, completing homework, helping others, etc. The House with the most points at the end of the week earns a prize—free juice, a snack of their choice, free time, a no homework pass, etc.

# **Homework**

I do not believe in giving a lot of homework, but enough for the students to practice some skills at home. During the pandemic, we started giving homework packets out on Mondays instead of individual sheets each night. This seems to work well, as the students have all week to work on it at their (and your) convenience. It should be returned the last day of school that week—usually Friday. If homework is not completed at home, it will be done in class during any free time.

**100 Book Challenge**

Our class has its own 100 Book Challenge program. The students participate by taking 1 to 5 books of their choice home from our class library every night. They can read the books with an adult or by themselves. Then they record the name of the book on their “100 Book Challenge” paper and have a parent sign that they read it. The students move forward on our bulletin board for every twenty books they read. When they reach 100 books, 200 books, and so on, they will get their picture taken. At the end of the year, the students earn prizes based on the number of books they read.

# **Progress Reports**

Progress Reports will be issued four times a year. These will report progress on your child’s individual IEP goals. In the past, traditional report cards were issued that listed grades from your child’s specials classes. These report cards are now available online through the parent access site. You can request a hard copy from the office if you would like.

# **Friday Folders**

The Friday Folders contain class work and homework that your child has done over the course of the week. They may also contain notes or papers from school. The folders will be sent home at the end of every week for you to stay updated on what your child is doing in school. Please initial the sheet inside the folder, check off what your child did over the weekend, and return it empty on Monday or the next school day. The work inside is yours to do with as you wish.

# **Portfolios**

I will be collecting samples of each student’s work throughout the year. The students will choose some samples of their work and I will select others. These samples will go into a portfolio that you and I can use to see your child’s progress throughout the year(s). I believe this type of assessment will be useful in highlighting your child’s strengths, tracking his or her progress, and pinpointing his or her needs. I will send home the portfolio to you upon your child’s graduation from middle school.

# **Community Based Instruction Trips (CBI)**

We are allowed to go on our CBI trips this year! Usually these trips include Redners to buy our groceries, restaurants for lunch, various stores for shopping, and places such as the movies, mall, bowling, etc. for recreation. We may be limited with bussing this year, but we will try to get out into the community to practice the students’ skills as much as possible. I will send home permission slips ahead of time for each of our CBI trips. Your child may not go on these trips without parent permission. If there are any other reasons for your child to miss these trips (ex. Financial, health concerns), please let me know. I will do my best to help. I usually plan several joint trips with the Schweitzer Life Skills class throughout the year, as well as walking trips to our local shopping center when the weather permits.

**Snack**

The students will have time for a small snack in the afternoon. Each student has his or her own water bottle to keep at their desk throughout the day. We always have water and sugar free drinks, such as iced tea or lemonade. We have a variety of snacks for the students to choose from, including fruit snacks, crackers, pretzels, popcorn, and fruit. We appreciate any donations of snacks throughout the year, as I often supply them for the classroom.

**Jobs**

The students fill out “job applications” every other week to apply for classroom jobs. Jobs include sharpening pencils, erasing the whiteboard, changing the weather chart, and putting away dishes. The students mark a check-in sheet when they complete their jobs. They get paid on “Pay Day” for the number of times they have completed their job. They can use this money on non-pay weeks to purchase items from our Treasure Box.

**Cooking**

We make snacks and lunches in our classroom kitchen as often as possible. The students are responsible for planning the meal, executing the recipe, and cleaning up afterward. We guide them through the steps and help them learn to follow directions safely in the kitchen. I will try to send a note home informing you ahead of time when your child will be making lunch in our classroom.

**Holidays/Parties**

Our classroom celebrates Halloween and the December holidays with parties where the students plan and cook the food, make decorations, and send out invitations. I am hoping parents will be able to be invited this year. We also have a Thanksgiving feast for just our class, as well as some celebrations throughout the year with the students from Schweitzer.

**Truman Dances**

Our class is invited every month to join students from other Bucks County life skills classes at the Truman Dances. The dances are one night a month (usually Friday) from 7:00-9:30 pm. The cost is $5 per family. The students have a great time dancing and meeting friends old and new. There is a dj, and drinks and snacks are included in admission. I try to attend as many dances as possible with the students. We always have fun!

# **Contact Information**

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns or information regarding your child. I want us to work together to help your child have a successful year! My number at school is 215-809-7553. I will get in touch with you as soon as possible if I’m not available when you call. You can also reach me by email at kalberts@neshaminy.org . Please check our class website for information at <http://www.neshaminy.org/Domain/612>.

Thank you for your ongoing support and contribution to our classroom!!