



# Welcome to First Grade!

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**Mrs. Johnson**

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Welcome to first grade! I am so excited to have each of your children this year! First grade is a year that you will see many academic, social, and physical changes in your child. Because of these changes, parental support and encouragement is fundamental in the learning process. A huge part of the learning process for children includes the practice they receive at home. Here are a few things that you will need to remember throughout the year.

## Communication/School Security

### ❖ Weekly Newsletter

I will send home a weekly newsletter that has information about the following items: curriculum information, school news, upcoming events, and important dates. Please keep these newsletters in a special place where they are easy to access and will not get lost! You can also check our classroom website (web address is listed above) for additional information about our class!

### ❖ School News

Please check the Ridgeview website on a weekly basis to read Mr. Jefferson's newsletter about things that are going on at school! The link to our school's website is: <http://www.dunlapcusd.net/Ridgeview/Pages/default.aspx>.

## ❖ **School Security**

The most important thing to us is keeping the students and staff at Ridgeview safe! When you visit RES, you will have to be buzzed in to the office from the front door. (Smile, you're on camera! 😊) You will then need to sign in at the office with Mrs. Rohn or Mrs. Johnson and wear a visitor's badge while you are in the school. Thank you for helping to keep Ridgeview a safe place for our students!

# **Classroom Management**

I have a firm, but fair, classroom management approach. I strongly believe that if a student is not following the classroom rules he/she cannot be learning to their personal potential. The purpose of our classroom rules is to keep us safe and to promote a positive learning environment. I never want a student to feel uncomfortable, but I do want to teach students that they are responsible for their own behavior.

## ❖ **Classroom Expectations**

During the first few days of school, the students chose our classroom rules and expectations. We have decided on appropriate rewards for good behavior and consequences for not following the expectations. Our chosen rules are: Raise your hand, zip and flip in the hallway, and stay in your own space. (These are *in addition to* our school rules: Be an active listener and follow directions the first time, help others by using kind words and helpful actions, and manage emotions and behavior.) Please review the expectations with your child on a regular basis.

## ❖ **Monitoring Behavior**

Each student will have their own individual 'Rainbow Chart' at their table. Students will start with their clip on green each day ("Ready to Learn"). Students will monitor their behavior by moving their clip up or down on their Rainbow Chart. For good behavior, they will get to move their clip up. They will move their clip down on the Rainbow Chart for not following expectations. (Each student will receive a verbal warning first; they will move their clip down the next time they are not following the expectations.) I will contact you about your child's behavior when they end their day on "Outstanding" or "Parent Contact". Throughout the day, students will be able to move their clip up or down on their Rainbow Chart based on the choices they make.

Outstanding (Purple)
Great Day (Pink)
Way to Go (Blue)
Ready to Learn (Green)
Think About It (Yellow)
Warning (Orange)
Parent Contact (Red)

# Curriculum

## ❖ Reading/Phonics

Our reading series (“Literacy by Design”) gives us time for whole group instruction, small group work, and individual reading practice. I teach the basic concepts during the whole group time. During small group time, each child is reading with a group of students that will support his/her reading level. When the students have individual work time, they will be working on spelling concepts, writing, and silent reading.

Within our reading series, there are 3 vocabulary words per week (you will see these on the weekly newsletter). These vocabulary words may seem challenging, but we will be studying them and learning about their meanings. (Students will be tested on the meaning of these words, not the spelling of them.) We will even try to use these words in our writing activities!

Our reading curriculum teaches us different comprehension strategies. These strategies are to be used while reading to help us understand the stories better! You will see comprehension strategy pages come home with your child.

There is a theme test at the end of the second week of a theme. Students are tested on the various concepts we have learned throughout the theme, including spelling patterns, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies.

## ❖ Grammar/Writing

In first grade the children are introduced to basic grammar skills, which include punctuation and capitalization. We also work on identifying nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pronouns. We will be doing many activities to promote and encourage the children in their own attempts at writing. If the purpose of a lesson is to get the child’s thoughts

down on paper, I will often purposely overlook spelling errors. We do not want to discourage your child's creativity in writing by correcting every spelling error. We use phonetic spelling, which is writing the letter sounds we hear. This is a natural step in the writing process, so don't be alarmed!

During our writing time, the students have whole group instruction, small group writing, and individual practice. I teach them how to complete an organizer and write a story using that organizer. During their small group time, we review the organizers and work on revising and editing their papers. During their individual writing time, they are working on their story. Writing is a big step for first graders, so your support at home is greatly appreciated!

## ❖ Foundations

Foundations is a curriculum that gives students additional practice with letter sounds, reading words, sight words, vocabulary, and reading fluency. I will be sending home a letter at the beginning of each new unit to inform you of what we will be learning. A test will be given at the end of each unit. A score of 80% or higher is considered passing.

## ❖ Spelling

In first grade, we will learn how to spell a LOT of words! Each week, I will give lists of spelling words and high frequency words in the newsletter. Students will NOT be given traditional spelling tests, but practicing writing and reading these words at home will greatly increase spelling accuracy in writing! We will work on learning how to spell these words during the week.

High frequency words are words that we use in everyday reading and writing. The students will not be tested on these words, but practice of these words is necessary in order for them to feel comfortable using them in reading and writing. (I suggest putting the high frequency words on notecards to use as flashcards to learn the words more quickly!)

We also learn a lot about word families in first grade. These are words that have repetitious patterns (cat, bat, sat, etc.). The purpose of studying word families is to learn spelling patterns.

## ❖ Math

We use the "Math in Focus" curriculum. At the beginning of the year, we review counting. This sounds very simple, but we will be focusing on using a "ten frame" to visualize the numbers. This will help when we start adding and subtracting with mental

math. It is very important to practice math addition and subtraction facts (0-10) at home. There will not be a worksheet for students to complete each day, but please review these pages on the days they come home.

Math concepts that we will be learning about include:

- Comparing Numbers
- Making Number Patterns
- Number “Bonds”
- Addition
- Subtraction
- Shapes
- Ordinal Numbers
- Length

Our math tests assess students on how well they are able to apply the skills we have learned. The questions on the math tests vary in level of difficulty. For example, some questions are simple and some questions show an extension of mastery.

If a student does not ‘pass’ a math test (receive a 75% or higher, depending on the test), they will be given a practice packet to complete and will retake the test.

## ❖ **World Language**

Mrs. Walden will come into our room to teach us Spanish twice a week. Be sure to ask your child what he/she has learned in Spanish!

## ❖ **Second Step**

Second Step is a program that teaches students empathy, emotion management, and problem solving skills. Mrs. Dando is our school counselor and may be in for support during these lessons. I will also put updates in my weekly newsletter about things we will be learning during our Second Step time.

# Homework

## ❖ **Daily/Weekly Homework**

Daily first grade homework includes reading and/or being read to (about 10 minutes each night), and checking over daily papers. A few minutes each night should also be spent reviewing math facts, high frequency words, and spelling words. If your child does not complete work in class, it will be sent home to be completed and returned the next day (this work will be marked with an ‘H’). Please oversee the work, but don’t do it for them. We want students to know that if they work hard in school, they will

finish their work. Later in the school year, I will also send home weekly homework. These pages will include math review or reading comprehension activities. Let them know that all work needs to be complete. Checking folders and completing homework is a great way for children to learn about responsibility!

## Extra Information

### ❖ Snacks

Students are allowed to bring a daily snack to school to have during the morning. The snack that they bring needs to be a *healthy*, **peanut-free** snack (no chips or cookies), and easy for them to eat/clean up on their own. Please see the handout for snack ideas/options.

### ❖ Birthday Treats

Our school policy for birthday treats is as follows: Each item must be store bought, **individually wrapped**, and in the original package. If you wish to send treats for your child's birthday, please let me know in advance. Also, we have 23 students in our class, so please send enough to accommodate each student! Please see the handout for snack ideas/options.

### ❖ Lunch

Hot lunch at Ridgeview is \$2.10. This includes a choice of white or chocolate milk. If your child just needs milk for their cold lunch, they will need \$.45. In order to put money on your child's account, please send it in an **envelope marked with your child's first and last name**. You may also wish to deposit money on the Cafeteria Balance option on the district website. I suggest weekly or monthly deposits. Each time your child eats hot lunch, that amount is debited from the account. When the account is almost empty, a notice will be sent home. Lunch credits are not given. If a child forgets money or does not have money in their account, they will be given a cheese sandwich.

### ❖ Bus Changes

If your child will not be riding the bus home from school, please send a note to school or an email to let me know of the change, as well as who will be picking your child up. This will help eliminate a stressful phone call at the end of the day!

## ❖ Absenteeism

If you know ahead of time that your child is going to be absent, please let me know. Work will be sent home to complete upon the child's **return**. If you will be out of town for an extended period of time, only the basic subject material will be sent home. Due to the nature of our activities, some first grade projects cannot be completed at home.

## ❖ Grading

Daily work that is completed independently by the child will be checked over for accuracy. Any work that is incorrect should be completed at home if it has not been corrected at school. Throughout the grading period, students are graded on their class participation, independent practice, group work, and other daily activities. I will use all of these things, as well as district-wide first grade rubrics to determine a student's report card grade.

## ❖ Report Cards

If your child went to Ridgeview for Kindergarten, the report card format will be similar to the one they received last year. The grades are based on a number system (1,2,3,4), depending on your child's level of that skill at that time in that particular subject area. We will discuss these grades further at conferences.

## ❖ Schedule

Gym: 12:50-1:15

\*Please send appropriate gym shoes. If a child does not bring gym shoes, he or she will not be able to participate.

Art: Thursday 9:25-10:15

Music: Monday and Tuesday 9:55-10:20

Spanish: Wednesday and Friday 12:25-12:50

Library: Thursday 1:20-1:50

\*Please return library books BY Thursday. If a book is not returned, the child will not be able to check out a new book!

Please let me know if you ever have questions about what we are doing in first grade! I look forward to getting to know you and your child this year! We are going to have a great year!

