

## What You Need to Know

**Birthdays** In class, your child will celebrate their birthday on their special day, or as close as possible if it occurs on a weekend or holiday. On your child's birthday we usually: give a class card, a birthday pencil and sticker; sing happy birthday; place a birthday sign over their chair, and ask if they'd like to wear a birthday party hat or tiara. Families often ask if they can donate a book to our classroom library as a birthday gift-the answer is yes, yes, yes. Chances are if your child loves the book, then the class will too!

**Planners and Homework** Students begin to use a planner now in second grade, and will continue to do so in third grade. Over the years, I have found this to be a wonderful informational tool and communication piece between home and school! Your child will be bringing home their planner each night. Each planner entry should include: the day's date, reading minutes homework (building up to 30+ min. per night), the daily math home link, any further homework, and important reminders from school. I often use the planner to remind families of upcoming events, and sometimes as a behavior management tool. Please read your child's planner each night and *sign it!* Our classroom rule is: a planner not signed for two consecutive nights may result in 5 minutes of missed recess. This rarely happens, as the kids are very good about having the planner signed.

**Forgotten Items** If your child forgets their school work or planner at home, please don't make a special trip to school. Remind them to bring it in the next day. The fewer disruptions to our day, the more learning we can accomplish. If your child forgets their lunch, please drop it off at the office- they will call me and I can have your child pick it up on the way to the café. Note: if homework or planners are forgotten on a regular basis, I may have your child call you, to bring attention to the situation.

**Recess** School policy allows us to go outside if the temperature feels like 10° or above. If it isn't raining and is above 10°, we *will* go outside every day for recess. *Please* check the weather for the day before you send your child off to school- we often have many children unprepared for the weather. In the fall, you might just want to have an extra sweatshirt in school that they can keep in their

locker. The classroom and outside temperatures are often unpredictable. Please also make sure your child has a coat that zips and appropriate wear for their feet, hands, and head. I ask children to wear outside whatever you sent them in. If I feel it is too cold for what they are wearing, I might ask them to get something from the lost and found (usually jackets and mittens).

**Toys and Games** Toys and games are not allowed in school, including electronic games, stuffed animals, dolls, and collector's cards of any kind. If your child brings these things for the bus or latch key, I will ask them to keep them in their backpack. Sometimes students find things missing from their lockers, or things become lost, so to head off any problems, please leave these items at home. If this becomes a consistent problem, I will notify you.

**Appointments** If your child has an appointment during the day, I would appreciate a note in your child's planner the day before. If your child has an appointment at the end of the day, please allow enough time in your schedule for them to gather their materials, and get to the office. Your child will be called down to the office by the secretary when you arrive. I know that sometimes appointments are hard to make, but please try to schedule them for the beginning or end of the day if possible.

**Vacations** Due to work schedules, families sometimes have to arrange their vacations when school is in session. If your child is only out a few days, I will not send any type of work except for reading. Please see the school's handbook. Your child will have plenty of time to catch up when they return. If your child is out for an extended period of time (say, longer than 5 days) I *may* send work with your child along with a vacation journal. It is very difficult to send long-term work without the teaching that goes with it. Your child may have some difficulty catching up after an extended vacation, but everything will be done to ensure a smooth return.

**Arrival and Dismissal Times** Parents of third graders should plan on saying their goodbyes outside at the drop off points, or inside by the office. By this time, your child is a pro at getting themselves to their lockers and entering the classrooms by themselves. At the end of the day, please plan on meeting your child outside of the school building. Many parents wait by the benches to the south of our main entrance, by the flagpole between Woodland and Heritage, or in the car loop. I take your child's safety very seriously, and personally oversee their

drop-off at the end of each day- to the office, to the gym for bus pickup, or to the outside waiting area. Usually I ask your child to wait with me until I visually see you before releasing them, unless we've established a different end-of-day routine for your family. Thank you for your help in advance in keeping your child safe.

**Classroom Help** Parent volunteers are welcome in our classroom. A note will be sent home once we settle in asking for volunteers. I may be looking for parents to help out weekly, as well as for short term projects and activities. Also, please consider being our room parent (you can co-chair with a friend). I hope many will be available at least once to see your child's classroom in action.

**Classroom Parties** There will be four parties this year- fall, winter, Valentine's Day, and an end of the year picnic. Each family will sign up for ONE party at Open House. If you don't sign up, I will assign your child to one of the parties. The students plan the parties (with adult help) and volunteer to bring the necessary items for food, crafts, and games. Usually two-three parent volunteers are enough to run each party. The room parent will assist in coordinating as well.

**Snack Healthy** snacks are appreciated. Some foods which have been successful for snack are: pretzels, fresh or dried fruits, fresh vegetables, crackers like Triscuits, Goldfish, Cheezits, cheese cubes or string cheese, granola or fruit bars, or popped popcorn. Food I would like to avoid include: any candy, including fruit snacks, gum, yogurt, applesauce or canned fruits, etc. We *always* eat while we work, and often away from our desks, so it is important to me that your child's snack be healthy as well as portable. Your child may drink as much water as needed throughout the day- they do not need a water bottle. Please send only enough for a day's snack, as critters can become a problem with excess food, and Zip-Loc bags or containers are perfect for snack storage.

**Communication** is the key to a successful relationship, and I love to hear from families. Because the school day is so incredibly busy, the best way to send me a message is through your child's planner. I check them each morning and stamp/sticker/initial them. This is where you can let me know of changes for after school plans, appointments/vacation days, problems with homework, or just to say hi. Please see the separate note about the best way to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Lori J. Black