The ABC's of First Grade 2014 - 2015 Mrs. Plum's Class Handbook



Dear Families,

Welcome to first grade! My name is Mrs. Amanda Plum. I am so excited to be your child's teacher this year! I am looking forward to working with your first grader this year. First grade is an especially exciting year – so much learning takes place. Your child will amaze you as he/she progresses!

This handbook is designed to let you know how everything works in our classroom. It provides information on the policies, procedures and expectations for the school year. Please keep this in a safe place so you can reference it throughout the school year. This handbook will also be posted on our classroom website (www.mrsplumsclass.weebly.com) for your convenience.

At any time throughout the year if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to send a note with your child, call me at 264-0741 ext. 327, or email me at <u>aplum@madison.k12.mi.us</u>.

Let's work together to make this a super year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Plum



Attendance

It is very important for your child to be at school every day, but if your child will be absent, please call 263-0744 to let the office know.



Birthdays

Your child may wish to bring a simple to serve/eat snack, such as fruit, cupcakes, soft pretzels, cookies, or another similar snack for his/her birthday. Please send anything necessary to serve the treat with, such as

plates or napkins, or cups if a drink is sent. Drinks should be clear if possible, or light colored due to our carpeting. We usually have the treats before lunch for a snack, or at the end of the day.

Birthday Invitations

Please **<u>DO NOT</u>** send invitations to private birthday parties through school unless the whole class is invited (or all boys/all girls), as the feelings of uninvited children are **very** easily hurt. Please use postal mail instead.

Book Orders

Each month, I will be sending home one or two book orders for you to look over and order from, if you wish. These book orders have a selection of quality children's literature at affordable prices. If you ever wish to order a book as a gift for your child, please send a note with the order. I will then keep the book until you can pick it up, instead of sending it home with your child. When paying, please make the check out to the book company, or utilize on-line ordering (log-in and password will be provided with the first order). Online ordering is easy and helps us earn free books for our classroom!

Box Tops

Please save your boxtops, pop can tabs, and Campbell's labels for education. They can be sent to the classroom with your student at any time! We will make sure they are turned in to the correct location.



Communication

Communication is extremely important. If you ever have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by note, phone (263-0741 ext. 327), or email – <u>aplum@madison.k12.mi.us</u>. I will communicate with

parents in the following ways:

- Daily, on your student's homework/behavior log by checking it each morning and having your student share his/her behavior with you

- Monthly, through our classroom newsletter

At your convenience, on our classroom website
(www.mrsplumsclass.weebly.com) and on our class Facebook page
As needed, using texts from Remind101 (if you choose to sign up)



Discipline Policy

My personal belief is that with good classroom management and mutual respect between the teacher and the students, most behavior/discipline problems can be avoided. However, when discipline is needed, it is my feeling that it be handled in a private manner. I like to guide the students to a solution themselves when a problem occurs, or to help them see a better way to handle the situation the next time it arises.

In our classroom, we will be using a combination of strategies to recognize positive behavior, and minimize disruptive behavior. One strategy is "Bucketfilling," a school-wide positive initiative that students will review and utilize again this year. Students are encouraged to be bucket fillers by giving others compliments and treating them nicely. They will receive tickets from staff throughout the school to recognize positive behavior. In our classroom, students can give bucketfiller tickets to each other as well! Students try to avoid being bucket dippers by not saying or doing things that will hurt others. For more information about Bucketfilling, visit <u>www.bucketfillers101.com</u>.

In our classroom we will begin the year using Class Dojo. Students can earn points for good behavior, and lose points for negative behavior. As a class, we will decide which behaviors we want to recognize and encourage, and which behaviors make it difficult for us to learn. Parents can create an account at <u>www.classdojo.com</u> (information will be sent home about how to do this), and view their student's account and point activity. Points will also be recorded on students' behavior/homework sheets daily. All of this is handled privately on a mobile device (iPhone or iPad). As students mature and become accustomed to our routines and procedures, we may decide as a parent and teacher team that Class Dojo is no longer necessary for your student, as they have learned to self-monitor their behavior.

Other options which may be used, depending on the situation include: writing or saying an apology, restitution (correcting the problem or doing a service to make up for the problem), writing a plan for better behavior, student and/or teacher calling the parent/guardian, losing a privilege such as explore time, or discussing a solution in a class meeting. More severe behaviors (see elementary behavior code in handbook) will be referred to our elementary counselor, or the principal if needed.

I am a firm believer in frequent, open communication between parents and teachers. I will call you if I have any concerns about your student, notice any unusual behaviors, or simply to let you know when he/she has had a difficult day. The purpose of my call is to communicate with you and keep you aware of what is happening in the classroom.



Email

My email address is <u>aplum@madison.k12.mi.us</u>. This is the best way to contact me, as I am able to check my email several times throughout the day.

Emergency Card

Please make sure the information and phone numbers on your student's emergency card are always up to date.



Field Trips

We will take several fun and educational field trips throughout the year! If you would like to chaperone a field trip, you must have a current background check on file in the office.

Folders

The DOT (Daily Organizational Tool) folder is a plastic pocket folder that your child will use **every day** to develop organizational skills and learn responsibility. First grade is a foundational year, and it is important to teach children how to keep up with homework, tests, and important notes. This folder is a way of maintaining effective communication between home and school. It aims to eliminate lost notes, newsletters, calendars, and homework, as well as keep parents and students informed of important events and academic progress. Your child will be responsible for bringing his/her DOT folder to school **EVERY DAY**. Please treat this folder with respect and care. I can only provide each student with 1 folder for the school year. If it is destroyed or lost, it will be your responsibility to replace it.

The folder contains the following sections:

- 1. LEFT pocket things to be left at home
- 2. DOT folder explanation page explains each section of the folder
- 3. Word wall word list for nightly practice

4. Homework – student homework/behavior sheets will be placed in the right hand pocket and travel back and forth to school daily

5. RIGHT pocket – things to return to school

6. Back cover – monthly calendar (snacks & events)

DOT RULES

1. I will be responsible and bring my folder to class every day.

2. I will take very good care of my folder. I will **NOT** bend it, tear it, and write on it. It will be used all year.

3. I will **NOT** eat on and around my folder.

4. I will **NOT** take pages out of my folder. I will leave everything in the folder and let my parent/guardian take things out for me.

5. I will show my parent/guardian my folder every day. I will go over any homework or returned work with them.

6. I will put my homework, lunch money, or notes back inside my DOT folder each day.



Gym

We will have gym two times per week. Students will need a pair of gym shoes on the days we have gym (more about our specials schedule later!).



Homework

Your child will be issued a DOT folder (see above) on the first day of school. This folder will be your child's responsibility. It will need to go home and come back to school every day. Any homework will come "Homework" section of the DOT folder.

home in the "Homework" section of the DOT folder.

First graders will have nightly homework. Homework/behavior logs will be sent home on Mondays. Assignments are listed on the weekly homework calendar. Generally, students will have five simple tasks per week on their homework calendars. These tasks are used to review concepts taught in the classroom. Written responses to the tasks (if needed) should be recorded by the student. Each day must be initialed by an adult. In addition, students will need to read with an adult for 10-15 minutes nightly, and record it on their homework log. This reading can be a combination of take-home/back pack books, word wall words, and/or library books, books students own, etc.

The only other type of homework that will be sent home is unfinished work. Students are given time throughout the day to work on their unfinished work; however, all students work at a different pace. Rather than overwhelm a student by allowing a large pile of work to accumulate, unfinished work will be sent home weekly. It is to be completed at home and returned to school by the date written on the work.

Some general guidelines for homework in first grade:

- Homework should take no more that 20 minutes per night. Please let me know if it takes consistently longer than that, or if your student struggles with any assignment.
- Please do not write for your child. Work done in parents writing will not be accepted. Homework is an extension of the day's activities and is important work for your child to complete as independently as possible.
- Feel free to provide guidance, encouragement, and help as needed. Many activities are designed to include parents or other adults in the homework process.
- Encourage neatness with handwriting. Please have students write in pencil (unless otherwise directed for a special activity).
- When reading with your child, encourage your child to point to the words as he/she reads them and to sound out difficult words. Students will learn additional reading strategies throughout the year that will help with reading and decoding, which will be shared with you as we learn them.
- Have materials such as pencil, sharpener, crayons, glue and scissors available. If you need any of these materials for use at home, please let me know and I can assist you with this.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at any time regarding your student's homework. I am here to help!



Important

You are the most important aspect of your child's education! Showing interest in your child and his/her work demonstrates that you value what

they are learning and doing in school.



Jackets

When the weather gets cooler, please make sure your student wears a jacket to school.



Knowledge

Make sure you know what is going on by reading the weekly classroom newsletter, the Trojan Talk, and checking our school website

(<u>www.madisonk12.us</u>) and our classroom website (<u>www.mrsplumsclass.weebly.com</u>).



Lunch & Recess

First graders will have lunch and recess on the balanced calendar schedule from 11:00 – 11:45. Once the traditional calendar students begin, our lunch time will be 11:40 – 12:25. Lunch (and breakfast) will be free for all students

again this year. Milk can be purchased separately for 40 cents.

Library

We will visit the library once a week for a story and to check out books. Students will keep their library books at school in their book boxes.

Lifeskills & Lifelong Guidelines

Our school has adopted a program called HET (Highly Effective Teaching). The program focuses on five life-long guidelines and eighteen life skills that guide student behavior. Our class will learn about and follow these skills and guidelines as the core of our classroom discipline/management program.

The five life-long guidelines are:

- 1. No put-downs To never use words, actions, and or/body language that degrades, humiliates, or dishonors others.
- 2. Personal best To do one's best given the circumstances and available resources.
- 3. Trustworthiness To act in a manner that makes one worthy of trust and confidence.
- 4. Truthfulness To act with personal responsibility and mental accountability.
- 5. Active Listening To listen attentively and with the intention to understand.

We will also address the life skills throughout the year. They include: caring, common sense, cooperation, courage, curiosity, effort, flexibility, friendship, initiative, integrity, organization, patience, perseverance, pride, problem solving, resourcefulness, responsibility, and sense of humor.



Music

We will have music twice per week (more about our specials schedule later!).

Money

Please make sure that any money that is sent to school is in an envelope or baggie and labeled with his/her name and what it is for.



Newsletters

Please read the newsletters that will be emailed monthly. A paper copy of the newsletter can be sent home by request.



Office

Please be sure to sign in and out in the office and get a visitor's badge every time you come into the school. Your student's safety is our priority!



PATT

There are many opportunities to volunteer and help our school by participating in the PATT (Parents and Teachers Together). Watch the

Trojan Talk for meeting dates and times.



Questions

I welcome your questions! Feel free to contact me by note, email, or phone.



Reading

Please read with your child for at least 15-20 minutes nightly.

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home three times a year.



Snacks & Drinks

I encourage students to bring a water bottle to school. Research shows that students who are well hydrated learn better! Please send the water bottle labeled with your student's name to help avoid confusion. Water

bottles <u>must</u> have "non-spill" tops, such as sip caps or sport bottles, and only contain water (no juice, flavored water, Gatorade, or pop please!)

I also allow the students to have a **HEALTHY** snack during the day. I will bring the snack for the first day of school, and each student will have an assigned day to bring snack thereafter. I will create a calendar that you can post to help keep track of which day you are assigned. PLEASE let me know if your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions. Also, if you are unable to participate in the snack rotation, please let me know as soon as possible.

The following is a list of acceptable healthy snacks. <u>If you wish to send in a snack that</u> is not on this list, please contact me prior to your snack day to arrange that. This list is to comply with our school's healthy snack policy.

Healthy Snacks: rice cakes, low-fat popcorn, baked tortilla or pita chips, vanilla wafers, graham crackers, animal crackers (unfrosted), trail mix, applesauce, fruit cups, low-fat muffins or bagels, whole grain cereals, crackers, or granola bars, cereal bars, string cheese, cheese cubes, yogurt, sugar free Jell-o or pudding, any fresh fruit, any fresh vegetables, pretzels, crackers with cheese or peanut butter.

Specials

Our specials this year will be art, gym, music, and technology. During the first four weeks of school, we will attend specials on a rotating schedule (week 1 – technology & gym, week 2 – gym & music, week 3 – gym & music, week 4 – gym & art). Once the traditional calendar begins, we will attend our specials on a 6 day rotation; so there will not be "set" days for each class. It would be helpful if your child could bring/wear a pair of tennis shoes to school each day (or just leave a pair in his/her locker).



Transportation

If your child's method of transportation changes for any period of time, even for one day, **it is our school policy that you must send a note to inform**

us of this change. Due to safety reasons, phone calls are only accepted for emergency purposes. Also, please ensure that the individual picking your student up

is on his/her emergency card, or they will not be released. Without a note, students will be sent home on their usual transportation.



Understand

If you do not understand something that I send home, please feel free to ask!



Volunteers

There are many opportunities for volunteers to work in our classroom. Inside your back to school information folder, there is a survey to provide

parents, grandparents, etc. with choices and activities that are available for helping in our classroom, or at your home. Unfortunately, due to space and school policies, we are unable to accommodate siblings at these events or in our classroom. If you are interested in helping at these special times, please make arrangements for your little ones. Please also be advised that you must have a background check on file in the elementary office to work with students.



r Website

Please check our school website (<u>www.madisonk12.us</u>) and our classroom website (<u>www.mrsplumsclass.weebly.com</u>) often for updates and

information!



EXpect an eXciting year full of educational and fun eXperiences in first grade!



Υου

You are your child's first and most important teacher. I hope that we can work together this year to make your child's experience in first grade successful!



ZZZZZZZ....Please make sure your child gets plenty of rest in order to perform at their best every day!