

**Mrs. Nickerson's Fifth Grade “Surf Lessons”**

Fifth grade is a big step for your child, and I feel privileged to be a part of your family for this milestone. Below is some general information that should help you “surf” the pre-tween waves, at least with regard to school! ☺

**Character Development**

In preparation for middle school, our mantra this year will be PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. I will use a similar discipline program to that of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade to help with this goal. This 3-strike-and-your-out system is color coded, starting with green, then yellow, then orange, and finally red. Students begin each day on green and will move their clip to the next color for each warning or negative behavior. However, students may also move up to purple (Cowabunga!) for displaying one of our hang-ten habits (You can Google 7 Habits of Happy Kids by Sean Covey for more information on these character skills.).

In addition, we will discuss aspects of the Essential 55, a program by Ron Clark, which highlights important manners that sometimes seem to get lost in the rush for educational excellence. And, of course, our class family will continue to focus on Imagine’s Shared Values of Integrity, Justice, and Fun.

**Homework/Projects**

Homework is assigned daily and is always due the next day unless noted differently in the agenda. You can anticipate about 30-40 minutes of homework/studying per night, as well as an additional 30 minutes of nightly reading. Tuesdays and Thursdays will be light homework so that students can use these nights to practice study skills, a crucial skill for middle school. Here’s the tough part: If homework is not turned in on the day it is due, students may complete it and turn it in the next day for ½ credit, but students will move their color clip down due to not being prepared. Students **may not** call parents to have them deliver any assignments left at home. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all items are packed and ready to go before arriving at school.

However, there are times when we all need a little extra grace. Thus, each student will be issued two homework passes a quarter to use as they see fit.

**Testing**

Math quizzes or tests will be assigned as needed, but I will typically try to have these land on Wednesdays. Language Arts quizzes or tests (spelling, grammar, reading, vocab) will fall on Fridays. Science quizzes or tests will be every one to two weeks on Fridays, but I will give enough notice so as not to overwhelm students with too much testing on any one day. Social Studies will be more project based, so very little formal testing will take place in this subject.

**Communication**

I may or may not have a class website this year; I’m still tinkering with a few ideas and will keep you posted on my decision. However, I do send home a weekly newsletter every Friday in the Take-Home section of your child’s Homework Folder. Along with the newsletter, this folder will contain a print out of your child’s current grade level in each class and any failing or missing assignments in those classes as well as all recent graded work. Parents and students must sign this grade report and return by the following Monday.

In addition to the paper newsletter, I also email a copy weekly. I’ve been known to be a bit email happy (as in, I like to send out emails frequently), so please be sure to regularly check the email account that you have provided me.

The agenda is another form of communication our class will heavily rely on. Your child is required to record all homework and EQs as assigned. The EQ (essential question) will be the focus of our lesson in that subject each week and is a good way for you to gauge your child’s attentiveness during our lesson. We also record behavior colors in the agendas daily. Please be sure to check your child’s agenda nightly and initial.

**Snacks/Lunches**

Hot lunch is available and is payable to Gullett School (check, money order, or cash is allowed). PLEASE, please, please be sure to keep up with your child’s lunch balance by sending in money ahead of time. Students are allowed to have water bottles in the classroom, but they must have a lid that closes and can ONLY be filled with water. Flavored waters, juices, or sodas can only be consumed during lunch in the cafeteria.