

PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

4th Grade

John Walton Spencer School No.16
2020-2021 School Year

Our Goals

Our goals for this school year are:

- To help each child learn successfully the skills required of 4th graders.
- To individualize our educational approaches in order to best meet the needs of each student.
- To create a learning environment which focuses on cooperation and respect to and for each other.

About Our Day

During the day, your child will participate in a variety of learning experiences. These will include Readers Workshop, Writers Workshop, Math Workshop, Science, Social Studies. Additionally, your child will be scheduled for “specials”. These include Gym, Music, Library, and Art. We will follow an ABCD day schedule. Specials will be according to letter day rather than the day of the week. It is crucial that your child be in school **everyday** in order to keep up with all that we will be doing.

The 4th grade students will be participating in a unique learning model that allows mobility throughout the day, and to work with teachers who specialize in specific areas of academics. The 4th grade team will be departmentalizing throughout the day in order to provide students with a variety of learning experiences. Mrs. Hall will focus on the ELA curriculum while Mrs. Gauvin will focus on the Math curriculum. Students will be organized in classes that will best meet their academic needs. Students will be working with both 4th grade teachers. Mrs. Hall will work on the Writer’s Workshop using *Being a Writer*, Mrs. Gauvin will focus on the Science and Social Studies in her room. We are very excited for students to take part in this model this coming school year.

What You Can Do To Help

Several parents in the past have expressed an interest in helping out in the classroom. Many parents have also asked what they can do to help at home. If you are ever interested in coming into the classroom to volunteer, please do not hesitate to let us know!

At home, here are some suggestions:

- Check homework over nightly. Homework is given as a weekly homework packet in at least 1 subject area.
- Sometimes we will send homework that may be challenging for your child. Please help them complete the work and understand what the assignment is asking to the best of your ability. If your child seems to have a **very hard** time with the work, don’t make them finish it. Instead, please write a note so we know how to help.

- Make sure that your child attends school regularly. An excessive amount of absences results in lowered performance. There is so much to do and so little time!
- Contact us with any problems at home that you think we should be aware of. If there are situations that may cause your child to have problems at school, it helps if we are aware of these circumstances.
- Attend all scheduled conferences, and feel free to initiate a phone conference or a face-to-face meeting. It is important that we discuss your child's progress and we want to help in any way possible. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule
- Make sure that your child reads **every** night for at least 20 minutes. This is the most important factor in helping your child become a successful reader. You can either read out loud to your child, read along with your child, listen to your child read, have your child read to a brother or sister, or have your child read to him or herself.
- Help your child find opportunities to write every day. Students can write a summary of what they read that day, they can write in a diary, make a shopping list, or 'To Do' list, write a letter or thank you note, or write a poem or story.

Food

Drinks are encouraged during hot weather, but they **must** be water. Water that is put into a **plastic** container at home must be in a container with a screw-on lid to help prevent spills. Types of drinks that are **not allowed** include soda and juices that are mainly sugar.

Breakfast will be served daily in the classroom. Lunch will be served daily in the cafeteria.

If you would like to help celebrate your child's birthday, please call and schedule a time with your child's "home room" teacher. We would like to be able to set aside this time in order to recognize his or her special day!

If your child has any allergies to food, please inform us **immediately** since we may participate in some food based activities throughout the year.

Being Prepared for Specials

Children are required to come prepared for their "Specials" class. The only special that your child must make special preparation for is their Physical Education class. Students should wear shorts and sneakers on days when we have PE class scheduled. **Please have your child wear shorts underneath his or her regular clothes on PE days. It takes a considerable amount of time away from our day if we need to wait for children to change clothes.**

Without the correct clothes and shoes, children are not allowed to participate in PE and must sit out during that time period. This can affect their grade in this subject.

PBS/SOAR

Our school is following an initiative called PBS. The students will be expected to follow the behavior matrix. Our saying is SOAR. SOAR stands for:

Be Safe
Be Organized
Be Accountable
Be Respectful

From the beginning of the school year we teach this matrix and use it as part of our classroom rules. All behavior choices are taught in terms of whether or not it meets the expectations of classroom rituals and routines. Students will have many opportunities to earn Eagle Bucks which will be used for various school wide rewards. We will track each student's weekly behavior choices and use this information to help determine who will participate in special weekly reward activities.

Positive Discipline/Character Education

The primary focus in using positive discipline in the classroom is to create a classroom climate that is nurturing to both self-esteem and academic performance. This process is like putting together parts of a puzzle. The parts include:

- Establishing clear rules and expectations of all students
- Holding regular classroom meetings and peace circles, through which students learn to help one another by solving problems together
- Creating an atmosphere of caring based on kindness, firmness, and dignity
- Learning the tools of mutual respect, cooperation, and collaboration
- Holding parent/teacher/student conferences to communicate progress and find ways to encourage students
- Helping students learn self-discipline, self-control, problem-solving strategies, personal responsibility, and making good choices.

Rewards/Consequences

In our classrooms, we have worked hard to create a fair and equitable system of rewards and consequences for the students. Our goal is to teach them that it is realistic to expect that rewards follow good life choices and certain consequences follow poor choices. In order to help children learn this valuable life lesson, we will utilize a system of rewards and consequences within the classroom. Children receive rewards for working well independently, working well with others or in their "team" and for working well together as an entire class.

Students also receive consequences for poor behavior choices. For violations of the behavior matrix **that do not disrupt instruction or harm anyone**, students are a limited amount of verbal reminders. After that, the following is a list of the escalation of consequences that we will be using in our classrooms to diminish poor behavior choices:

1. Loss of certain classroom privileges
2. Stage 1 – time out (in the room)
3. Stage 2 – time out (in another classroom – "Buddy Teacher")
4. Stage 3 – Phone Call home and or lunch detention
5. Possible visit to the Eagles Nest for a period of reflection
6. Possible visit to administration, which may result in time in ATS

7. Meeting with principal, teacher, parent and student

If your child engages in behavior that is a serious disruption to instruction, or that harms another person, reminders **are not** given. In a case where the student is believed to pose a danger to himself/herself or another child, the student is removed from the classroom immediately.

Homework

Your child will be provided with a homework packet weekly. The homework will consist of reading, writing, and math practice. All homework assignments are expected to be turned in at the start of our day Friday. If your child is **missing** a homework assignment, he or she will have to make it up during PAT (preferred activity time). **Please check your child's homework over every night.** Any information regarding homework that you would like to share with us can be written in a quick note.

We do understand that at times situations occur that are unforeseen and uncontrollable. If by any chance your child cannot return the homework on time on a particular day, please write a note so we do not mark it against them.

Conferences

We would like to meet with every parent and student at least twice during the year if possible, once at the beginning and again in the middle of the year. We would like to use three-way conferencing (student, parents, and teachers) so if there is something you would like to discuss privately, please let us know.

Intervention Plans

We would like to make sure that all parents know that we are deeply committed to the academic, developmental and behavioral growth of each student that we work with. Whenever we have a child who is experiencing difficulties, we will make every attempt to notify the parents immediately. Additionally, there are several ways that we can work together to help your child work on grade level. It is important that you are aware when there are difficulties at school that could jeopardize your child's ability to progress.

If we notice that your child is having difficulties, we will attempt to contact you by phone or letter to discuss ways we can help your child. We may also ask you to come in for a brief conference. It is our goal to work with you and your child to establish a plan that will intervene and help your child before more action is needed.

Chromebooks

Please send your child's Chromebook and charger to school as soon as possible. Chromebooks/chargers will remain in school and used daily. In the future Chromebooks will travel back and forth to school daily. More information will come as the year progresses.

Class Dojo

We will be using Class Dojo as a way to communicate with families. Please be sure to check often for updates.

Conclusion

We are looking forward to learning with your child this year. Please do not hesitate to call whenever you have a question. We have voicemail boxes at school and will return your message as promptly as possible. The number at school is **235-1272 to reach Mrs. Gauvin or Mrs Hall**. During school hours, the office staff will put you directly to our voice mail boxes. We are also available for texting between the hours of 9:00 - 4:30, or please leave a message on Dojo. Mrs. Gauvin's number is (585)568-7386 and Mrs. Hall's number is (585) 237-8576. Our class websites are updated regularly as well.

We look forward to working with you to ensure a rewarding year in 4th grade for your child. It is important that we are working together to provide the best possible education for your child. With your support, your child will have a successful school year. Thank you for taking an active interest in the success of your child's schoolwork.

**Sincerely,
The 4th Grade Team
John Walton Spencer School #16**

Please sign below that you have read through the handbook, and that you understand and support the above information concerning your year, or your child's year in 4th Grade!

Student name

Student Signature Date

Parent Name

Parent Signature Date