

All About First Grade 2017 - 2018

Dear Parents:

I feel privileged to partner with you in your child's academic, social, and spiritual development. I hope this note will give you a sense of how the year will unfold and the expectations I have for the children. Please keep this and refer to it throughout the year. I will also have this document on my classroom homepage on our website www.stnicholasrupert.org. Please be sure you are registered on the website so you get regular updates and information from the secretary and check my classroom page daily for homework and other information about what's happening in First Grade! Also, please make sure you have completed the Safe Environment Workshop and favorably passed a background check.

First grade is a foundational year. It is a time to build confidence in their skills that will set a tone for learning in the years to come. This year focuses on the skills to become fluent readers and possess solid math skills. We also have Science, Social Studies, Computers, Religion, Writing, Arts & Crafts, Music and P.E. You are bringing your child to St. Nicholas School....that tells me you place a high value on their education and I am counting on our partnership to ensure your child succeeds. Please make time in your family's schedule for homework so your child gets this additional skills practice time. I also ask that you read at least 20 minutes with your child each night. This is CRUCIAL to helping them build a foundation in reading that will help them to succeed academically in all areas and for years to come.

St. Nicholas Catholic School is using a new math curriculum this year called Eureka Math. There will be an adjustment period for all of us. We will start out slow and there may not be much Math homework initially but I will keep you informed and as we start a new section or module I will send home Parent Tip Sheets so you know what we are working on. These tip sheets also give great ideas and games you can play with your student to help them learn new concepts.

It's going to be a GREAT year in First Grade. Thank you for sharing your child with us. Sincerely, Mrs. Cofer

Now for some details...

Accelerated Reader – St. Nicholas has an Accelerated Reader (AR) program. The program entails students reading a library book, taking a computerized comprehension test, and earning points toward prizes for every passed test. Students do not receive a grade for AR, but progress is tracked and goals are set.

On the school homepage there is a link to Accelerated Reader that you can reach from your home computer or smart phone so your child can test anywhere. You can see your child's progress by opening a Parent Account. You can help your child read the questions and answers on the tests. Encourage your child to look back in the book to find any answer he/she is unsure of. This is a great way to gauge your child's comprehension. Of course, please refrain from giving your child the answer to a question.

To give children a wider reading choice, they can earn reading points from any library book, classroom book, or book at home that is in their reading range. Most books will have a test in AR. However, if a book does not have a test, your child can write a three sentence summary of the book. Have your child write the sentences on a piece of notebook paper, along with the title and author, and turn it in to me. I will then assign points to your child. A typical first grade book is worth a ½ point.

Your child earns points for every test that is passed. Students will have rewards throughout the year if goals are met. In addition to the specific homework assigned, please have your child read from a book every night.

Assessments – In the first half of the Reading curriculum, your child will be assessed on letter sound recognition, and blending and segmenting words. The year will end with your child having vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension assessments. In addition, math assessments occur periodically in the curriculum.

Most Language Arts assessments are on Fridays! Your child needs to be prepared to take the missed test the first day back from being gone.

Restroom/Drink breaks – Children get drink and restroom breaks many times throughout the day and are expected to use those times. I encourage your child to have a water bottle at school as well. The bottle is for water only. I allow them to fill it as often as needed. In an emergency, children may use the restroom during class time if necessary but are encouraged and expected to use the designated breaks. Because restroom breaks during non-designated time disrupts class, I ask children to wait, however, I know there can be emergencies and if they say they need to go I allow them. Please talk to your children and let's work together to avoid taking unnecessary time away from our learning by using the designated breaks given. If it appears children are abusing 'emergency' privileges, they will give up recess time for

using the bathroom during class. This usually weeds out the emergency from non-emergencies. However, if there is a concern or issue I need to know regarding your child's restroom needs, please let me know as soon as possible.

Birthdays – Your child will sit on the birthday pillow all day as birthday recognition and receive a small treat from me they may enjoy after school. Birthday children also sit at the birthday table during lunch with all other students having birthdays that month. **We do not have a class celebration in class so please do not send in treats.** As a reminder of school policy, party invitations may only be passed out at school if the entire class is invited. (Or all of the boys or all of the girls.) If the party is right after school, please notify the office of a change to your child's or their classmate's normal pickup schedule.

Christmas Party – The school has a birthday party for Jesus in celebration of Christmas. A birthday cake is shared during lunchtime. There is not a separate Christmas party in the classroom.

Classroom Discipline – All children have a right to a positive and peaceful learning environment. Parents and children are asked to review and sign the code of conduct at the beginning of the year. The school has a discipline policy based on three verbal warnings (I say strike 1, 2 And 3), on strike three the child will spend time on the wall at recess. Parent Notification or Citation will be given if the behavior continues or if the infraction requires immediate Principal or Parent notice. The notification is to be signed and returned the following day. For serious offenses, a citation will be issued. Notifications are a way to keep parents aware of inappropriate or disruptive behavior before it gets out of hand. I will contact you if necessary to discuss any issues and it's my goal to work with you so children are getting the same information from both the school and home. Please see page 15-16 in the family handbook for the school policy on discipline.

A citation-free activity is planned every month for those children without a citation, or those children who do not have three Parent Notifications during that period.

Communicating with Me - Emailing is the quickest way to reach me about a non-emergency. bcofer@stnicholasrupert.org I will do my best to reply within 24 hours, but my hope is to reply by the end of the day. If it's something that needs my immediate attention, please call the school office at 436-6320.

All Hallow's Eve (Halloween) - For you early shoppers, remember please NO scary or violent character costumes, including all witch costumes.

Fall Auction & Gala Project – The Fall Auction and Gala is our biggest fundraiser of the year. I already have a plan for this year. It's going to be spectacular....I think! ☺

Homework – A typical night's homework consists of Math, Language Art or a reading activity in addition to 20 minutes of reading with or to your child. This 20 minutes of reading every day in addition to the reading we do in the classroom is crucial to your child's success. Please encourage your child to read more than the assigned reading when possible. Children will be able to bring home library books in addition to the 'de-codable' paper homework books. Soon you will see a reading log in your child's homework folder, please fill it out nightly and return it to the school so we can track your child's reading progress on our Super Star Reading chart. Keep in mind that it is still important to read out loud to your child when you can. They need to hear the rhythm of words and how they are pronounced correctly, so read together whenever you can.

The purpose of homework is to practice the concepts taught during the day. This practice is paramount to your child's success. Please be positive when talking to your child about homework. We encourage you to look over your child's completed work and have him/her redo any incorrect answer. Homework is due the day after it's assigned and is expected to be turned in first thing in the morning. Since you have read the Family Handbook you know that you can expect up to 30 minutes of homework each night (Monday through Thursday). I do not assign homework on Friday or over a weekend.

If your child does not turn in an assignment, a Parent Notification is sent home. This Parent Notification is to be signed and returned the next day. (As stated above, if a child receives three notifications - for any reason - during a one month period, he/she loses the citation-free activity privilege for that month.)

Homework Assignments – **Check the classroom homepage daily for homework assignments and information.** As the year progresses, spelling words will also be posted here. Remember www.stnicholasrupert.org, then on the main menu click on CLASSROOMS, then FIRST GRADE.

iPads- First Graders will have their own iPad to use in the classroom. iPads are not sent home. They are used to enhance reading and math skills and for taking AR tests. They are a supplemental tool that will be used along with all of our other teaching tools. Please send in a pair of earbuds/headphones for your child to fully use the apps with sound.

Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) Assessment – Students will take a Fall and a Spring IRI assessment. The IRI is a 10 minute assessment to give teachers guidance on students’ strengths or weaknesses in critical reading skills

Makeup Work – Work missed due to an absence will be due two (2) days after returning. For planned absences, please see me ahead of time to get the work.

Mass – Mass will be Wednesday each week at 8:40 am unless otherwise noted on the calendar. Please have your child wear a **RED** school shirt for Mass. **Boys may not wear shorts, and girls may not wear shorts or capris.** Please refer to your school handbook for more dress code information. You are always welcome to attend Mass with us. We welcome you to sit with your student.

Non-Uniform Day – Approximately once a month the school schedules a Non-Uniform Day, to receive this privilege we ask for \$1 that is donated to our paper fund or it may be a canned good that will be donated to our Parish’s food room, or it might be something else depending on the year or service project. Please refer to the Dress Code section on Page 16 of the Family Handbook to make sure dress is appropriate.

Parent Teacher Conferences/Progress Report – A face to face conference for parents of all students will be scheduled during the first trimester. You will receive a written progress report at that time. Conferences are also scheduled in January and April. Some conferences will be on an as-needed basis. Throughout the year, I will talk with parents on any immediate concerns I may have.

Popsicles Sales – Once a week, the school sells popsicles for 50 cents. The proceeds go to class accounts for the teachers to buy crafts, posters, and other supplies. You can purchase for the whole year through the office

Report Cards – Report cards go home November, February, and at the end of the year.

Service Project – Each class has service projects throughout the year. The first grade class decorates placemats for residents at Long Term Care at Minidoka Memorial Hospital. We will also make cards for Idaho priests and seminarians.

Supplies – **THANK YOU** for purchasing the supplies for your child. As the school year progresses, I will send a note home when your child is running out of a school supply or if I find there is something else we might need.

Tardy – Your child is tardy if he/she is not in the school when we finish our morning opening. If your child is at school on time, they are required to be in the morning opening meeting at the 8:10 am bell.

Toys from Home – **Please leave them at home! We ask that students follow the rules posted in the Handbook. Toys from home, unless a ball for the playground during recess, need to stay at home.**

Valentine’s Day – All classes have a Valentine’s Day party. The school orders pizza for the classes and students are encouraged to bring in valentines for their classmates. Parents are welcome to donate money towards the pizza to serve as volunteer time.

Volunteering – School policy asks that each family volunteer 15 hours to the school. The school **DEPENDS** on volunteers to fill needs that might otherwise have to be paid for. Volunteering is one means of keeping tuition costs low. The Gala, Maintenance Day, Carnival, etc. all **DEPEND** on volunteers to make them happen. Please contact me or the school secretary to see how you can help. If the Volunteer Coordinator calls you, please respond by saying **YES** to helping. You will be billed for un-fulfilled volunteer hours but the truth is we don’t want your money, we need your help to make our events a success.

Website – Make sure you have your account set up on our website, www.stnicholasrupert.org and that you have notifications set up to receive emails. This will allow you to get the lunch menu, school activity calendar, and all the happenings at school emailed directly to you. Of course you can always check the calendar directly on the website or visit my classroom page. Please see the school secretary if you need instructions on how to register and correctly set up notifications on the website. Please be sure you register an email address that you check regularly so you have current information. We are pushing to go paperless, so check the site daily.