

## 2007-2008 School Year 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Notes

Dear 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Students and Parents,

Welcome to First Grade and Room 101! I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with your children this year as their teacher! What a blessing for me!

Here's a little "All about Mrs. Epperson," the short version: I was born in Maryville, Missouri, on a Halloween evening many years ago. I always considered myself a "treat" for my parents, but my two younger brothers might argue that I was more a "trick" than a treat! My grandmothers, mother, and father were all educators, as are my two brothers and my sister-in-law. I have a BS degree in elementary education from Northwest Missouri State University and a MA degree in Educational Technology from San Francisco State University. I have been married to my college sweetheart for 30 years. We don't have children, but we enjoy everyone else's very much. My husband, Dell, is in the US Navy and works at the Afloat Training Group Middle Pacific on Ford Island. Although we have been on Oahu for the past seven years, before that, we moved regularly to various duty stations approximately 14 times in 18 years (living in California, Virginia, Kansas, Rhode Island, Maine, England, and my favorite - Hawaii!) Last year was my first year at OSLS, and I am excited to be returning. I'm not known for my cooking and my favorite thing to make for dinner is reservations! I love all kinds of sports (especially March Madness), reading, traveling, and tinkering with computers in my spare time. I built my last three home computers, and trust me; it really isn't that hard to do.

I look forward to working with your child this year. We will work hard in the classroom and play hard on the playground. We will learn responsibility for our own actions, and will also learn to support our fellow classmates. Thank you for sharing your child with our aide, Mrs. Renee Fischer, and me! We feel very fortunate indeed!

I hope this will be a positive year for your child as we build on past successes and learn new things this year. I am looking forward to working with you this year. With home and school working together, your child's academic and social skills will become even stronger throughout the year. Below is some important information about our class:

1. School Hours: Our school hours are 7:50 AM - 2:25 PM. Students may come into the classroom at 7:30 AM, and will be considered tardy if they arrive after 7:50. Encourage your child's independence after the first week of school to come down to the classroom by themselves in the morning. Students being picked up after school will be sitting on the bleachers facing the parking lot, and will be allowed to leave the bleachers when the parent/guardian's car has pulled up in the pick-up lane. Students will not be allowed to cross the parking lot to get in a car unless accompanied by the person picking them up. To ensure the safety of students, they will be allowed to leave only with persons who have been listed with the school office, so please think of all people who might be picking up your student and put all the names on the form. This is for the safety of the students, so please plan ahead in those circumstances. Please tell anyone picking up your student that if I don't know or recognize them, I will ask for identification. This is done for the protection of the students. I must have a note from a parent if anything regarding a student's usual after school schedule changes (i.e. not going to after school care, etc.) Put the note in the homework folder, and I'll find it there during the morning.
2. Absences: If your child has been absent, a phone call to the school or a written explanation must accompany students on their return to school. When students are tardy they must go to the office to obtain a tardy slip in order to be admitted into class. In order to ensure maximum educational time, students need to arrive to school on time. If you are requesting homework, please call the office before 8 AM and I will have it sent to the office or sent home with a sibling.
3. Lunch: We will eat lunch from 11:30 AM - 12 noon in our classroom. We do not have any facilities for cooling or heating lunches, so please pack lunches accordingly.
4. Newsletter: I will send a class newsletter home each Friday. Please read it as it will contain important information, such as the upcoming week's memory verse and spelling words.

5. Communication between parent and teacher: Your input is very important to your child and to me. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you as we get to know each other better. Students begin arriving in the classroom at 7:30 AM, and from that point on, my attention is needed in the classroom and focused toward the students. Please understand if I am not able to have conversations of more than a few seconds in length at that time or during the day. We have a phone in the classroom and I have voice mail on it. It usually will not be answered during class time unless our aide is available to do so, but you can leave a message. I must confess, though, that the phone doesn't make sounds or have blinking lights to let me know there is a message on it, and sometimes I don't even notice until the next day that I have a message. So, if you call and leave a message and haven't heard from me by 4:30 pm the same day, please call again or call the school office. My school phone number and e-mail will be printed at the end of these notes. If at any time you want to schedule a conference with me, please contact me, and I'll do my best to do so at a time that is convenient for you. I will be able to read e-mail once or twice during the school day, but I may not be able to reply until after school. If you need to get a message to me during the day, it is best to call the school office and have the call transferred to the classroom. If I have message to send to you I will send a note home in your student's homework folder or I will call or e-mail you. I will not ask your child to verbally give you message. I ask that you not expect your child to verbally deliver an important message to me. Please write a note and put it in the homework folder, call, or e-mail me.
6. Homework: Homework will be given everyday. It is the student's responsibility to complete and return all homework, as well as read (or be read to) for 15 to 20 minutes a day. Please return the homework folder each day and reading logs each Friday. No homework will be assigned on Fridays or over breaks. Reading with or to your child is one of the best ways of developing your child's reading skills, as well as enhancing their love for literature. **Special note:** Please refrain from the urge to "do" your first grader's homework or allow an older sibling to do it for them. If your first grader struggles with a homework assignment, please write a note to me, and we'll give extra help at school. Encouragement and explaining directions are needed at this age, but please make sure the homework is done by the student.
7. Weekly Progress Reports: You will be given weekly progress reports. On Tuesdays or Wednesdays, your first grade student will come home with an envelope that contains all the work that was completed in class or as homework during the previous week. A progress report summarizing the week's academic and behavioral achievements will be attached to the outside of the envelope. This is a great time to give praise or encouragement to your child regarding his/her study habits and achievements. There will be a space for you to make comments if you wish to do so, but whether or not you make comments, you must sign in the parent comment space to show you have seen the materials sent home. EMPTY Progress report folders are to be returned to school the day after they are sent home.
8. Report Cards: Report cards will be distributed quarterly. These are the following guidelines in percents, when evaluating student work:

100 - 97	E+	86 - 83 G	72 - 70 S-
96 - 93 E		80 - 82 G-	69 - 60 N
92 - 90 E-		79 - 77 S+	59 - 0 U
89 - 87 G+		76 - 73 S	

Some assignments cannot be graded using the above scale, such as oral reading or manipulative math activities. These assignments are evaluated using the following criteria:

Exceptional performance / No errors / no assistance	E	(5)
Good Performance / Some errors / Assistance given	S+	(4)
Fair Performance / Errors made / Assistance given	S	(3)
Poor Performance / Consistent errors / Dependent	S-	(2)
No Participation / No attempt made	N	(1)

9. Our Class Agreements: Our class will adopt a First Class Promise and some First Grade Agreements. These are things the students will decide on to make first grade a safe and enjoyable place to come to school. They will be posted on a bulletin board in our classroom.
10. Behavior: One of our goals for the year will be to help students monitor their own choices and behavior. To this end, we use the model of a stop light. All students will have a clip and start the day with their clip on the green light, which means they are doing what is expected of them and should continue. If they do not follow the classroom rules, they will be asked to move their clip to yellow. A yellow light is a warning that they need to re-evaluate what they are doing. If they have been warned and continue to make inappropriate choices, they will be instructed to move their clip to red. If they change their behavior they immediately return to yellow, then green. When a student fails to correct their behavior the following consequences will occur:
  1. Teacher discusses inappropriate behavior with the student
  2. Student moves clip to yellow: Suspension of a privilege
  3. Student moves behavior clip to red: Parent notified of behavior and a conference may be requested. All privileges suspended.
  4. Sent to the Principal's office with a discipline report, noting it is the fourth incident.
  5. Our "stoplight" also has the color blue on it, too! Extraordinarily good behavior will merit a student moving his/her clip to blue, and a certificate will be awarded.
11. Volunteering: Time is scarce for many of us, but your participation in any way you can at school sends an important message to your child that school is worthwhile and important. There will be many opportunities (large and small) for you to be a part of our classroom and Our Savior Lutheran School. We hope you can join us for some of our activities. The school library can always use volunteers. Please contact Mrs. Nakamura if you are interested in helping in the library.
12. P.E. class attire: The first grade class has P.E. on Thursdays and Fridays. **All students (boys and girls) need to wear tennis shoes to school on Fridays.** Boys can wear school uniform shorts and aloha shirts or school uniform shirts. First grade girls enjoy wearing aloha dresses on Fridays, but there is a need for students to dress appropriately for P.E. classes and all P.E. activities. 1<sup>st</sup> grade girls must come to school wearing school uniform shorts (not a uniform jumper), a school uniform shirt or aloha shirt, and tennis shoes. The 1<sup>st</sup> grade P.E. class is at 8 AM in the morning, and the girls will not be allowed to change from a dress to P.E. clothes before P.E. class. If the girls want to, and parents agree, they may bring aloha dresses to change into (in the girls' restroom) during 1<sup>st</sup> recess at 9:55 AM. They will continue wearing their tennis shoes the rest of the school day. Aloha dresses must be kept in the students' backpacks, as we do not have the space to hang them anywhere. The girls must be able to change clothes without any assistance from an adult, and must display proper behavior in the girls' restroom while changing. Not being able to do so will result in loss of the privilege to change clothes. Students do not have to bring aloha dresses to change into; it is optional. They can stay in the clothes worn for P.E. Students who do not wear appropriate P.E. attire will receive a dress code violation form and won't participate in P.E. class.
13. Class directory: During the first week of school a form will be sent home asking if you'd like your address/phone number/e-mail published in a directory that will be given to the parents/guardians of first grade students. Your information will only be published if you give your permission. Each family will receive a class roster with names of the students regardless of whether permission is given for any other information to be given.
14. Birthday Parties at School: With our large class, we will have LOTS of birthdays to celebrate, and we will definitely acknowledge each child's special day on the day! However, we will limit the number of parties in the classroom. For those parents who want (and it is optional!) to share something with the entire class for their child's birthday, we will celebrate all birthdays for each month on the minimum day of class each month, usually near the end of the month on the minimum day. This will give parents an opportunity to collaborate and plan together if they wish to do so. It can also be more economical as well as fun for all. Each month's birthdays will be in our class newsletter, and I will confirm the date of the party at the beginning of the month. You will all be reminded of who has a birthday that month and can contact each other to make the proper arrangements.

15. Party Invitations (any kind): Invitations to outside-of-school birthday parties (or any kind of party) can be sent to school under one of the following three conditions:

**The whole class is invited ... OR All the girls are invited... OR All the boys are invited**

At this age it is very easy to get hurt feelings, so if only part of the class is going to be invited to a birthday party, please use our student directory (will be sent home the second week of school) to mail the invitations directly from your home. Thank you so much for your cooperation in this!

I am looking forward to working closely with you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at school or send me a note in your child's homework folder. I will be happy to meet with you. God's blessings to you and your family!

*Janet Epperson*

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