

**Greenbrier
Elementary
School
1st Grade Handbook**



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to one of the most exciting years of your child's educational life. This is where the wonderful beginning your child had in Kindergarten grows into a thirst for expanding the knowledge they have just begun tasting.

One of the main ingredients in your child's success is YOU, the parent. Since this can seem like an extremely overwhelming responsibility at times, this parent handbook has been designed to be a fingertip resource for you to use throughout the year. This is a year of many firsts, and sometimes it can be confusing trying to do what is best for your child. Hopefully, you will find some answers to your questions and confirmations of your decisions throughout this booklet.

You are strongly encouraged to be an active participant in your child's education. It is very important to form an open and understanding line of communication with the teacher by:

- asking questions when something is unclear,
- attending all scheduled conferences,
- answering all correspondence home,
- discussing difficulties you believe your child is experiencing,
- discussing achievements your child has accomplished,
- listening to the professional recommendations and suggestions given by the teacher(s),
- understanding no one is perfect or has all the answers, including the teacher(s).

Share the joy of learning with your child by helping with homework (not doing it!), reading every night, being a partner in special projects to be done at home, and celebrating any job or accomplishment done well. The time you spend now will form a firm foundation for successful study habits later.

It's time to begin our journey. Get ready for a ride with many exciting, surprising, and sometimes unexpected trips through a "Year of Discovery".

Sincerely,

Your Child's First Grade Teacher

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Necessary supplies will be provided in the classroom for the students' use. However, if you would like to help our school to reduce the amount it spends on supplies or assist with those supplies the school does not provide, the following is a list of what first grade uses.

- 1- 2-pocket folder (to use as take-home folder)
- 1- Bottle of hand sanitizer (8oz. or more)
- 1- Box tissues
- 1- Box *small* freezer "zip-type" plastic bags
- 1- Box *large* freezer "zip-type" plastic bags
- 1- Backpack (no wheels)
- 1- Box of 8 markers (bold colors/broad tip)
- 1- Box of 24 Crayola crayons
- 2- Large pink erasers
- 2- Large package of glue sticks
- 1-Pair scissors (rounded tip)
- 1-Composition Notebook (black/white marble)
- 1-Spiral Notebook (70 pages/Wide Rule)
- 1-Set of earbuds or headphones
- 2-Dry erase markers (thick tip)
- 1-Bottle of liquid glue (8oz)
- 1-Package of baby wipes
- 1-Package of disinfecting wipes (ex. Clorox)
- 1- Roll paper towels

Keep in mind that supplies purchased by parents as well as those provided by our school will be used as community property in first grade, and should not be labeled with your child's name. ***The exceptions to this are the "Take Home Folder", spiral notebook, composition book, headphones, markers and scissors. Please put your child's name on these items.*** Any special supplies such as pencil boxes, 3 ring binders, small pencil sharpeners, crayons larger than 24 count, fancy markers, stamps, cool pencils, pens, etc., are to be kept at home. No special supplies will be allowed to be kept in the student's desk if they appear at school. These items can be used at home to make homework time special. Students should have crayons, pencils, scissors, glue and primary writing paper on hand at home for homework assignments.

TOYS

Absolutely NO toys will be allowed in the classroom, unless it is authorized by the teacher such as part of a theme related activity in which the whole class is participating or reward activity. Please help by checking your child's backpack. It is an extreme temptation for children at this age because they have so many things they want to show their friends.

CLASS WORK

The following acronym is used to describe how students' work should be done:

NC2O
Neat—Complete—Correct—On Time

Students are expected to do their personal best and to check their work against the above class work policy. If the work is incomplete or messy, and if there is no extra class time to complete it, it will be sent home to be finished or redone and will be due the next day unless otherwise indicated. Work with errors may be sent home to be corrected so the child will be able to see the mistakes he/she made and therefore will be less likely to make the same mistakes again. Likewise, that work will be due the next day as well. Consequences will be given for incomplete assignments or for assignments not done.

It is important that good work habits are formed early, and that is the reason for the above policy. Children are given adequate work time to complete their work and ask questions about their work. Very seldom should you see work coming home unless there is a problem, at which time you will be contacted.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special times for all of our first graders. Birthday treats are welcome, but please do not go overboard. We usually celebrate the last 15 minutes of the day so there is not time for anything elaborate. A treat to take home or cupcakes or cookies are great. Food items must be store bought. No homemade items are allowed. Please provide plates and/or napkins, if necessary.

GREENBRIER'S WATER BOTTLE RULES

- Water bottle may be no larger than standard squeeze bottle size.
 - Water bottles must contain only water.
 - Water bottles must be spill proof and free of leaks.
 - Water bottles may not be shared.
 - Water bottles must remain closed except for drink opening.
 - **Water bottles should be marked with your child's name.**
 - Water bottles are not allowed at the desks.
- (There is a drinking fountain in the classroom for the student use, and bathroom/drink breaks are scheduled during the day.)

READING PROGRAM

Reading is the most important and perhaps the most challenging skill first graders acquire. It is understood that students have varying levels of ability as well as the fact that students learn in a variety of ways. In addition, one reading strategy may not be efficient or successful in every situation. Due to these facts, the reading instruction is eclectic and utilizes several methods in order to help the students develop as readers.

Helping students acquire phonemic awareness and use phonics skills to decode is an integral component of the reading program. Phonemic awareness focuses on the sound units used to form spoken words; phonics instruction associates sounds to written symbols (the alphabet). Together they help students develop word recognition skills, namely the ability to “sound out” unknown words. Once beginning readers have mastered sound-symbol relationships and applied them to print, they can approximate the pronunciation of most printed words.

Another important component of the reading instruction is the reading (word attack) strategies borrowed from the Reading Recovery Program. Through these strategies the students are taught to help themselves when reading by using such things as picture clues, context clues, phonics, rereading and reading on in the sentence. Using stories from the Pearson reading program and other children’s literature, the students are taught these strategies which are then reinforced throughout the school year.

The following are other valuable components of the reading instruction:

- Words Their Way Program
- Sight words (high frequency words)
- Writing activities
- Paired, choral and independent reading
- Small and whole group activities
- Readers’ Theater
- Songs, chants and poems

All first graders are assessed at least three times a year using the DIBELS assessments. These assessments given in August, December and May determine each student’s ability with several key-reading skills: letter identification, phoneme segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency, oral reading fluency and retelling. Those students who struggle with any of these skills will receive additional instruction and their progress assessed more frequently. Running records/DRA assessments (individual reading assessment) are also used throughout the year to determine a student’s reading level and monitor each student’s progress toward meeting year-end grade level reading goal.

In addition to the instruction that occurs in the classroom, it is vital that the students are involved in reading at home on a regular basis to reinforce and support what is happening

at school. In order to motivate students to read at home, there is a reading incentive program called the Star Reader Program that will begin in early September and continue through April. The students will earn prizes for the amount of reading they do at home in that time period. A celebration of the students' reading accomplishments during a special ceremony will be scheduled in May. It is asked that parents and other family members encourage and assist their children to read at home daily, for it is only by reading that children will learn to be better readers. Through everyone's efforts, the students can become successful, independent, and life-long readers.

WORD ATTACK STRATEGIES

1. Think about what would make sense.
2. Look at the picture.
3. Reread the sentence.
4. Crash into the unknown word and . . .
 - a. Say the beginning sound.
 - b. Find known chunks (un-, -ing, dis-, -ly).
5. Say the word you think makes sense, sounds right, and looks right.
6. Read on to the end of the sentence.

READING GROUPS

It has been found to be most efficient and effective to meet with the students each week in a small group setting to teach, review, and enhance reading skills. Students meet in small groups three to four days a week. Reading groups are based on a student's ability level; these smaller, ability based groups allows the teacher to better meet the needs of individual students with different skill levels. While each group meets with the teacher, the remainder of the class is involved in other activities.

LEARNING AT HOME

READING FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILDREN LEARN TO READ!

1. Read to your child from a very early age. Make it a pleasant experience.
2. Read yourself and share what you read. Create a family reading hour.
3. Listen to your child read. Discuss what has been read.
4. Encourage your child to talk and really listen.
5. Give your child books for gifts on birthdays, holidays, etc. Join a book club on his/her level. Establish a shelf for your child to keep books. Encourage a card file for books your child has read.
6. Subscribe to a daily newspaper and/or magazines. Read articles aloud and discuss. Encourage your child to establish this habit as soon as possible. Encourage the clipping of ads, pictures, letters, etc.
7. Join and use your public and school libraries. Secure a card for your child and let him/her choose the books he/she wants to read. Show your child the value of books and point out how books can answer questions for the child.
8. Medicine cabinet reading – concentrate on reading labels on bottles, boxes, jars and tubes found in the bathroom. Use only those that are not dangerous and poisonous with small children. This will also aid in teaching that no drug is put into a body without parental instructions.
9. Reading in the kitchen – read the labels on cans, boxes, etc. This teaches the names of contents and can lead to the reading of menus and measurements of contents used in preparing recipes.
10. Reading pertaining to hobbies – reading record covers, cards of sports figures, instructions for playing games, construction of models, etc.
11. Reading signs when traveling – reading and playing games of locating license plates from certain locations, reading directions and road maps.
12. Reading charts placed on strategic places throughout the home and changed periodically might include:
 - Inside bathroom door – large chart of a poem that the child will learn effortlessly when he/she spends time in the bathroom.
 - Vocabulary list of new words that the family has been discussing in the news placed on the inside of the bathroom door.
 - Schedules and notes placed on the refrigerator door. For the young child a simple picture can be substituted for a word he/she may not be able to read in a sentence.

WRITING

Next to reading, writing should be the most exciting and fun skill the students learn this year. It can also be very challenging for many students. The class will do some kind of writing every day. It is important that the students enjoy writing and not think of it as drudgery. At the beginning of the year, please accept any invented spelling they come up with when writing. The goal is to get the students to put their thoughts on paper and feel confident in doing that. We will be using the Write from the Beginning program to guide instruction. Early in the year we will focus primarily on good sentence construction. As the year progresses, we will use these strong, well-developed sentences to create various types of writing. Writing instruction is primarily assessed using the Six Traits of Good Writing: Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Voice and Conventions. Rubrics for each of these traits will be used to assess a student's skill with each of the traits. A selection of writing samples will be assessed for one or more of these traits throughout the year. A score of one (lowest) to six (highest) will be given for each trait assessed. The Six Traits of Good Writing will be used and reinforced throughout the school year and throughout your child's elementary and secondary education.

Invented spelling is referred to as "sound spelling" because that is what the students are doing. The students are taught to stretch a word they wish to spell by saying it slowly so as to hear each sound in the word better. The students should also repeat the word several times in order to hear all of the sounds. Larger words should be broken into syllables and spelled a syllable at a time to make spelling easier. These are skills that get better with modeling, time and practice. Correct spelling is referred to as "book spelling" because that is how the students see words in books and in the dictionary. If your child asks for the "book spelling" please have him/her try to spell the word first to encourage independence, and then you can show them the correct spelling. If your child has difficulty sound spelling a word, please assist them to stretch or segment the word as described above to help them strengthen their spelling skill. Praise their efforts.

Tools such as Quick word books, dictionaries and word lists will be used to increase conventional or "book spelling" of words.

SPELLING

Spelling is not an isolated subject but rather integrated into the writing curriculum. The Words Their Way program will be used to teach spelling patterns and word building which will improve students' spelling skill. In addition students will use a list of words adapted from the district adopted Pearson reading program. The list incorporates high frequency words (sight words) along with decodable, patterned words (i.e. had, bad, bag, rag). Each week the students will have a list of words associated with the week's story. The students will work with the words in the classroom in a variety of ways. You will receive a master list of these additional words for the year, and the appropriate word list for each week will be noted on the homework calendar. Once these words and

their spelling patterns (i.e. –ad, -ag) have been introduced, students are expected to spell the words correctly in all of their writing activities, both at home and in school. Work with the Words Their Way program and learning these additional words will improve students’ reading and writing skills. Spelling will be assessed through writing samples, including a weekly dictation and included in your child’s quarterly writing grade.

SCIENCE

We use the Core Knowledge Curriculum in our classrooms. District FOSS kits are also incorporated into instruction.

SOCIAL STUDIES

We use the Core Knowledge Curriculum in our classrooms.

MATH

Each day your child will participate in a wide variety of mathematics activities provided in the Eureka curriculum. Math Their Way and other math resources will be used to enrich or remediate students as needed. Your child will learn through hands-on experiences, discussion, and exploration. The new learning will be reinforced through carefully considered practice.

The math lessons introduce new concepts through discussion and activities. Concepts and skills include computation, problem solving strategies, measurement, geometry, money, time, patterns, fractions, graphs, charts, and developing higher level thinking processes.

Number facts are introduced using fact strategies and are practiced consistently orally and in writing. Students are encouraged to practice the number facts at home through games and activities for speed and mastery.

Lessons will include guided written practice reinforcing the new learning as well as the review of past concepts. Homework – when assigned - will include the reinforcement of math skills and will need to be returned the following school day. Please be diligent in checking your child’s Take-Home folder every day to see if your child has math homework.

Assessment of your child’s progress occurs on a regular basis, both written and verbal. Any missed objectives will be reviewed and retaught.

First Grade Grading Policy

Reading:

Oral reading assessment will account for a part of your child's quarterly reading grade. These reading scores are based on your child's reading level in relation to grade level quarter benchmarks, accuracy, fluency and comprehension. Scores for class reading activities (comprehension & phonics) will also be included in quarterly reading grade.

Writing:

Early in the year the focus is on encouraging the children to write and teaching them to write strong, well-developed sentences. As the year progresses, students will use their knowledge of sentence structure to write for a variety of purposes.

Your child's writing will be assessed using rubrics listing expected criteria. This includes either a teacher created rubric or the use of the district adopted Six Traits of Good Writing rubrics. When the Six Traits rubric is used, a selected writing sample may be graded for one or more traits. Other language skill activities will also be included in your child's quarterly writing grade, including dictations using words from the provided word list and spelling patterns taught in Words Their Way.

Spelling:

Spelling assessments will be included in the quarterly writing grade on the report card and not given a separate grade.

Math:

The quarterly math grade will be based on math assessments and select math activities and assignments.

Science

Your child's grade will be based on participation and completion of various activities.

Social Studies:

Your child's grade will be based on participation and completion of various activities.

Grading Scale:

A new standards-based grading system will be used. Grades will now be based on the following scale:

4 = Demonstrates above grade level proficiency independently.

3 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency independently.

2 = Demonstrates grade level proficiency with support.

1 = Demonstrates below grade level proficiency with support.

This is the same grading scale used to assess your child's progress with identified standards on the report card.

The target score is a 3. This score does not equate to any letter grade such as "A, B, C. . ." OR "E, S, N, U" as used in the past. A score of 4 is only earned in the case that a student demonstrates true above-grade level skill independently.

- **Please be aware that a grade in any one of these academic areas may be changed at the teacher's professional discretion based on classroom observations of effort, participation and skill.**

HOMEWORK POLICY

WHY DO WE ASSIGN HOMEWORK?

Homework is important because it is a valuable tool in helping students make the most of the experience in school. Homework helps reinforce what has been learned in class, prepares students for upcoming lessons, teaches responsibility, and helps students develop positive study habits. It is one of the school-wide goals.

WHEN WILL HOMEWORK BE ASSIGNED?

Homework will be assigned Monday through Thursday nights. Assignments should take no more than 15 minutes to complete each night. Students should also read (or be read to) at least 15 minutes every night. Practicing spelling words and sight words should be done on a consistent and frequent basis. Reading drills will be sent home at times to improve key reading skills. Math sheets may be sent home, as explained in the previous section, but should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and correct.

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S HOMEWORK RESPONSIBILITIES?

Students are expected to do their best job on each homework assignment. It is expected that homework be neat, not sloppy. All written portions should be done in pencil. Students should write their names on all assignments. Homework is expected to be completely finished by class time the following morning. Consequences may be given for incomplete assignments and late/missing assignments.

WHAT ARE THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

The teacher will check all homework assignments to see if they have been completed and show good effort. The teacher will support good homework habits by giving praise and other incentives, as well as asking for incorrect or careless homework to be redone.

WHAT ARE THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Parents are the key to making homework a positive experience for their children. Therefore, it is asked that you make homework a top priority, provide the necessary supplies and a quiet homework environment, set aside a time everyday when homework should be done, provide praise and support, not allow your child to avoid doing homework and contact the teacher if you notice a problem. Parents should check all homework and initial the homework sheet each night.

WHAT ABOUT LEGITIMATE REASONS FOR A STUDENT NOT COMPLETING A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT?

If there is a legitimate reason why a student is unable to finish an assignment, please send a note or email to school on the date the homework is due stating the reason it was not completed. Students will be expected to complete the late assignment as soon as possible. Parents will be contacted if homework is not consistently completed.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

In order to have an environment in which all students have the opportunity to learn and grow, it is necessary to implement a strong, positive discipline plan. The following behavior guidelines, in addition to Greenbrier's campus rules, will enable all of the students to have such an environment. These guidelines are based on the principles of Love & Logic. If you would like more information, please visit the website at www.loveandlogic.com. These guidelines will be thoroughly explained and discussed in class. Please review these guidelines with your child at home.

In this classroom we do not cause a problem for ourselves or others.

- If there is a problem, we will be given help to solve it.
- If we cannot self-correct our problem, our teacher will do something about it.

Students who choose to follow the rules will be rewarded with **a greater capacity to learn** as well as with:

- Verbal praise and hugs
- Positive notes and awards
- Classroom privileges

Interventions will be used when possible to assist students in correcting disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Interventions may include the following:

- In class or out of class "Think-Time"
- Change of location in class
- Proximity (Standing closer to student during instruction)
- Providing choices

If interventions are not sufficient or behavior is more severe, a student will be subject to a consequence. Appropriate consequence will be given based on the situation, individual need of the student(s) and teacher discretion. Examples of consequences that may be used are:

- Conference with teacher
- Character Management Form (school disciplinary action)
- Self reflection time/ time-out during recess or lunch
- Lunch/After school detention

The students begin with a clean slate in the classroom every day. More details about a classroom behavior tracking system will be explained by the classroom teacher when school starts. School discipline forms and detentions will be recorded and addressed as explained in the school discipline plan. It is more important to teach a child personal responsibility and self-discipline through problem solving than to issue a consequence for every mistake made. A lot of time is spent in communication with each other, creating an understanding that each child is responsible for the choices they make and how to avoid wrong choices in the future. Parents will be notified as the consequence(s) warrant it, including when behavior is more severe or there is a pattern of behavior that needs to be addressed. Parents, teachers and the student work as a team to promote positive behavior.

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Student's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Home Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Cell Phone (Dad) _____ Cell Phone (Mom) _____

Name of Mother/Step/Guardian _____

Mother's Work Phone _____ Occupation _____

Name of Father/Step/Guardian _____

Father's Work Phone _____ Occupation _____

Brothers & Sisters (Please give ages, grade level & teacher – if attending Greenbrier) _____

Allergies/Medical Problems _____

Religious Restrictions _____

Other Comments & Concerns _____

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please sign below when you have completed the above sheet and read the classroom procedures, homework policy, and discipline policy explained in the classroom handbook with your child. The classroom handbook is emailed to parents and posted on my website found under teacher websites on the Greenbrier website.

Student's Signature (Print)

Parent's Signature