

FOURTH GRADE HANDBOOK



MR. BOWEN
GEORGETOWN ELEMENTARY
2016-17

School Policies

Attendance

Please inform the school office when your child is going to be absent. You can call the school any time before 9:15 a.m. to report the absence. Our answering machine will record your message if you call before the office opens.

More and more of our learning is being accomplished through group projects, hands-on activities, demonstrations and discussions. These changes in curriculum make it more difficult to send home the work your child misses. We know that you will make school attendance a priority and that your child will miss school only when it is absolutely necessary. Please try to schedule vacations and appointments so that they will not interfere with school attendance.

If your child arrives late, please stop in at the office to sign him/her in. If you are picking your child up early, please stop in the office to sign them out. At that time Mrs. Ripley will call your child down to the office to meet you.

Prearranged Absences

Please send a note in advance indicating when your child will be gone from school. Families planning vacations **must fill out a vacation request form** at least five days in advance of the scheduled vacation.

Dismissal (VERY IMPORTANT)

If your child is going home a different way than he or she normally does, please **send a note** indicating this change. We cannot allow your child to go home with anyone else, or stay after school for an activity without your written instructions. If your child does not have a note, they will be sent home on the bus they normally ride.

Policy Change

Beginning Fall 2013, changes in bus transportation for Grade 1-5 must be approved by the Transportation Director. Parents must submit a BUS PASS to the transportation office by 10:00 am the morning of the transportation change. Parents will be notified by 1:00 pm if the change is approved or denied.

This policy applies to grades 1-5. Kindergarteners are NOT allowed to change busses.

Personal Items

Please **label** your child's hat, coat, mittens, boots, gym shoes, lunch box, backpacks, etc. so that they are easy to identify when they are lost. Toys of any kind, including electronic games, are not allowed in the classrooms at Georgetown Elementary. A toy can be used at recess, but **no electronics**.

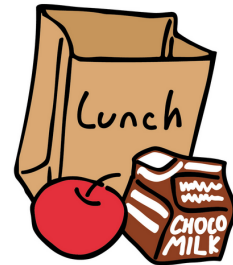
Recess

Students are expected to go outside for recess when it is not raining and the wind chill factor is appropriate as determined by the office. Students will go out before their lunch at 12:40 p.m. and at afternoon recess (2:20 - 2:40). Please make sure your child is dressed for the weather.

Lunch Money

You will need to send separate slips for each of your children with their first and last name, indicating how much money you would like to put into that child's account. Please send all slips in one envelope with the children's names, grades and teachers on the outside. It is recommended that money be sent in early in the week, but it will be accepted on any day. It is suggested that you deposit enough money in your child's account to cover at least one week's worth of lunches or milk.

Hot Lunch Money
John Smith-Mr. Bowen
Susie Smith -Mrs. Jones



Messages

Georgetown Elementary has a voice mail system, and if you need to contact me, call the school at 797-9797 extension 22306. You can also email me at cbowen@hpseagles.net. I will try to check my messages when I can, but if you have an urgent message, please leave it with the secretary. I will return your call as soon as possible.



Special Circumstances

We would appreciate knowing about any special circumstances (sickness or death of a family member, death of a pet, etc.) that you feel may affect your child at school. Sometimes things that happen outside of school cause them to need extra love and care, and we want to take care of your child the best we can.



Classroom Procedures

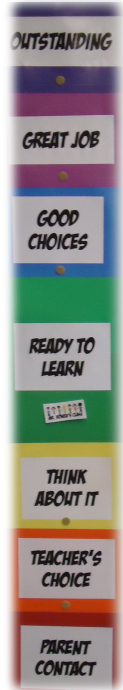


Rules

Our basic rule is that we are respectful of each other, other teachers, the school building/ grounds, the materials we use and ourselves.

Classroom Discipline Policy

We will be utilizing an approach called “Discipline is Teaching”. The goal of this program is to not only check in on negative behaviors, but to ensure students are aware and notified they are having a good day. When negative behaviors are the only ones being reinforced, students see that they can only progress into having a bad day. With this program, students will start each day at “Ready to Learn” and move up or down according to their day. The target stage for each student is to remain at “Ready to Learn” because this will display he/ she was focused, prepared, and respectful. When a student moves up on the chart, they have displayed behaviors going above and beyond the expectations. The chart we use in our classroom is shown to the right.



Homework

I feel that homework serves three purposes. First, it helps to develop responsibility. Next, it serves to reinforce skills learned in class. Lastly, it increases parent awareness of what is happening in the classroom. There will be assigned homework in math class when deemed necessary. Practicing math facts, word study words, and reading independently should be done as many nights as possible at home. Homework will be due the next day unless otherwise noted. It’s your child’s responsibility to return the work, but gentle reminders from you are always helpful. Also, feel free to help your child with homework, but please have them do the work with you as a guide.

There will be homework throughout the year done online using Study Island or Moby Max. If internet access is an issue, please let Mr. Bowen know.

Agenda and Nightly Folder

This year there will not be a daily agenda coming home. On our class blog, a Twitter feed will run occasional updates about things going on in the classroom. The Twitter feed on the blog looks like the picture shown to the right.

Also, each student will have a pocket folder that is labeled for things to keep at home and things that need to be returned. Homework, important information, student work, and other papers from the district will be sent home in this folder. It is the responsibility of the student to get this in a parent or guardian’s hands, so please help the student add this as a daily job at home.

Room 306 Agenda



Class Work

Some days your child will bring home samples of their work. Keep in mind that much of the math work is kept in a packet or notebook, which you may ask to see at any time, or done on white boards. Packets of materials are also used for science and social studies. These will be sent home in time to study for assessments. For writing, most student work is kept in their writing journal, and can be sent home for homework on given days. **Please make sure these are returned the next day.** Otherwise, the student won't be able to write in their journal during the next class period.

I will save a selection of work to share with you at conferences. At times, your child will have corrected some sheets with mistakes before they come home. Please take some time to review these papers with your child. If you ever have any questions or concerns about the work coming home, please let me know.

Notes from the Office

This year, notes from the office will travel with the youngest or only child in your family and will be sent home on the day they are issued. Please check your child's mail each evening. In our attempt to be a "Green School" you will not see as many paper notes as in the past. Please remember to check the Georgetown Blog (<http://georgetown.edublogs.org/>) and Mr. Bowen's Blog (<http://chrisbowen.edublogs.org/>) frequently for information updates.

Newsletter

Our newsletter is the blog. Updates regarding school work, field trips, volunteer opportunities and school happenings will be posted on the blog. Please make checking the blog part of your daily routine, and sign up to be subscribed to the blog. As a subscriber, you will receive email updates any time someone updates our class blog.

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued three times a year. Fall Parent/Teacher conferences will be held November 7, 9, and 10 (The 8th is election day). Spring Parent/Teacher conferences will be held March 13, 14, and 15.

MATH

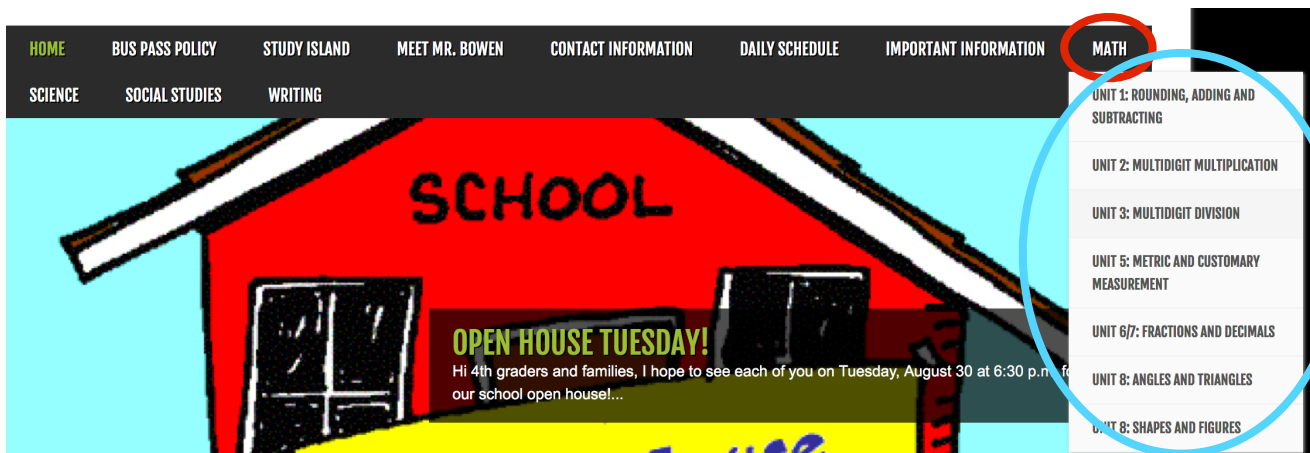
We will be using the math program called “Math Expressions.” As you may have noticed in prior years that math for students today takes a different approach to math instruction than we grew up with. It has proven to be very successful in developing “math smart” kids. Homework is an important part of the program. The homework sheets help students see that math is all around them, not just during “math time” at school. Their second purpose is to keep you involved in their math education. Quite often, the homework will require someone to work with the child. There is a homework sheet for each lesson, but since we may not complete one lesson per day, I will choose certain homework sheets to send home. **Math homework will be due the following day unless otherwise noted.** I will let you know if your child gets behind on their homework. I will also send other math homework home, depending on what kind of practice we need and what will be helpful for the students. Please encourage your child to complete these assignments, helping as necessary.

Please note: If you run into a homework assignment you absolutely cannot figure out, don’t sweat it. Send the homework back with a brief note on it. No one, including parents, should be in tears over math homework.

Math Help for Parents

To aid parents in helping their child with math homework, I have created a series of help videos. They are located on the blog under the math tab, and organized by unit of study. Please familiarize yourself with these resources so you can help your son or daughter out while using the same “math talk” and methods we use in school.

Hold your mouse over the “Math” tab.



The image shows a screenshot of a school website's navigation menu. The menu is dark with white text. The 'MATH' tab is circled in red. A dropdown menu is open, listing math units: UNIT 1: ROUNDING, ADDING AND SUBTRACTING; UNIT 2: MULTIDIGIT MULTIPLICATION; UNIT 3: MULTIDIGIT DIVISION; UNIT 5: METRIC AND CUSTOMARY MEASUREMENT; UNIT 6/7: FRACTIONS AND DECIMALS; UNIT 8: ANGLES AND TRIANGLES; UNIT 8: SHAPES AND FIGURES. The dropdown menu is circled in blue. The background of the website features a red schoolhouse with the word 'SCHOOL' on its side and a sign that says 'OPEN HOUSE TUESDAY! Hi 4th graders and families, I hope to see each of you on Tuesday, August 30 at 6:30 p.m. for our school open house!...'.

Locate the unit we are studying and click to find related videos.

Spelling

This year we will be using a differentiated spelling and vocabulary study we will refer to as “Word Study”. This approach to spelling and vocabulary will enable us to identify particular strengths and needs for each student. This spelling program will be differentiated in many ways. There are three phases as follows:

Part 1: Assessment of Complex Spelling Words

Using scientifically designed developmental spelling lists, we will determine which students have particular needs for spelling support in specific areas (letter/sounds, digraphs, syllables, prefixes, suffixes, etc.). The information gained from these spelling assessments will help to drive instruction for spelling and vocabulary study over two to three week cycles throughout the year.



Part 2: Guided Vocabulary and Spelling Concepts

Based on the above information, we will be able to work on spelling features and vocabulary words that work to grow the students’ written and verbal vocabulary.

Part 3: Word Awareness and Interest

We will be building word awareness through many whole group and small group activities including building classroom word lists, word sorts, and a variety of other word study activities.

We would love to use board games periodically to work on spelling skills. If you own any of the following games and wouldn’t mind parting with them for good, please send them in and we’ll add them to our game collection: BALDERDASH, BOGGLE, CHARADES, JUNIOR SCRABBLE, LISTEN UP!, OUTBURST and PASSWORD.

Reading

Reading is a tool that unlocks the door to many opportunities. Book after book has been written on the subject. How do we improve? READ! READ! READ! Reading instruction will take place in a variety of ways.

Reading Workshop

Our main goal in fourth grade is comprehension of fiction and non fiction texts. Our focus will be on several different strategies good readers use when they read. We will learn or review the strategy and then practice, practice, practice! Some of the strategies are: making connections, questioning, visualization, inferring, “fix-up” strategies, synthesizing, and determining important details in nonfiction. We will be practicing these strategies by reading independently, reading to someone, or working with Mr. Bowen. The students will learn how to choose books that are “Just Right” books for them by understanding why they want to read a book (interest level), if they comprehend the book, and if they know most of the words.



Read Aloud

Students will hear stories read daily. Sharing books with students is a great way to motivate them to want to read and allows them to experience wonderful literature that might otherwise be above their reading level.

Silent Reading

Every day our class will read silently. It's simple: reading is a skill; the more you practice, the better you become. The better you become, the more you want to read.

Reading Counts

In fourth grade we have a program that allows children to read at their own level and take comprehension quizzes to see how well they read the text. In the next few weeks each student will be given a quiz on the computer to determine his/her reading range (level) and a point goal. Each book is worth a certain amount of points. Depending on how well your child has read, they will receive points after taking the quiz. It is a great motivational tool for the children. They can read at their own pace and at their own level. This is not a requirement of fourth grade, but is a great, optional tool.

Reading Log and Responses (**READING HOMEWORK**)

In conjunction with the Reading Counts program, your child will fill out a reading log for each book they read. He/she will be **required to read at home during the week five times**. Your child can choose which days are “days off”. I will collect the logs when they finish a book. The **reading logs** will require your child to write the name of the book they are reading and the amount of pages or chapters they read on that particular day. The books should be **chapter books** in your child’s reading range. The goal is for your child to read for at least 20-30 minutes during this time. The information I glean from the logs is incredibly valuable when discussing reading habits and reading rate with children. Thank you for your continued efforts at home. Reading is so important!

Reading Comprehension Strategies

Quick Reference Guide for Parents

Make Connections: The reader uses what they know about themselves, other books, and the world around them to help them self understand what they are reading. These three types of connections are often labeled: **T-S** (Text to Self), **T-T** (Text to Text) and **T-W** (Text to World).

Ask Questions: The reader asks questions before, during and after reading to help them self understand what they are reading. **Before** reading ask yourself: What is this book about? **While** reading ask yourself: Do I understand what I am reading? **After** reading ask yourself: How can this book help me? Other questions include: I wonder? How come? Why?

Visualize: The reader creates a picture in their mind. They use all of their senses to connect to the characters, events, and ideas to help them self understand what they are reading.

Infer: The reader reads between the lines to draw conclusions, to make predictions before and during reading, and to identify the theme to help them self understand what they are reading. Prompt the reader asking: What were you thinking when the text said...? What did the author mean by...?

Determine Most Important Ideas: The reader reads to find the main ideas, what the author considers important, and the theme to help them self understand what they are reading. It is here that we want the reader to identify a key concept, idea, or theme within the story. Probing questions may include: How would you sum up the story in a few words?

Synthesize: The reader combines new ideas from what they read with what they already know to create something new and different to help them self understand what they are reading. It is important that the reader can recall the main idea and details in sequence and use this information to summarize the author’s underlying theme.

Repair Comprehension: The reader uses “fix-up strategies when they come to a word they don’t know or a part they don’t understand to help them self understand what they are reading. It is here that the reader will resort back to using their “decoding” strategies to figure out specific words and phrases.

Science



In fourth grade we will study: the characteristics of the sun, moon, and Earth; the phases of the moon; electricity (simple circuits); magnetism; ecosystems of animals; the food chain (including an owl pellet exploration); and the three states of matter. We will do many activities with each unit and end each unit with a final assessment. Your child will be taught science by all of the fourth grade teachers this year.

Resources related to the sun, moon, and Earth science unit can be found under the science tab on our blog.

Social Studies

In fourth grade our social studies focus is the national government, and the United States as a whole. We will be exploring the geography, economics, history, and government of our great country!

Specials Schedule

Our special schedule will be each day from 9:45 - 10:35. The Day 1, 2, 3, 4 rotation schedule can be found on the Georgetown Blog.

Day 1: STEAM (Tech)

Day 2: P.E.

Day 3: MUSIC

Day 4: ART

Mr. Bowen

Daily Schedule 2016-2017

8:45 - 9:05	Morning Work
9:05 - 9:45	Math
9:45 - 10:35	Specials
10:35 - 11:00	Snack/Math Continued
11:00 - 11:30	Intervention
11:30 - 12:20	Writing
12:20 - 12:40	Vocabulary/Word Study
12:40 - 1:20	Recess/Lunch
1:20 - 2:20	Reading
2:20 - 2:40	Recess
2:45 - 3:35	Science/Social Studies
3:35 - 3:45	Pack Up/Jobs
3:45	Dismissal



Computers with Mr. Bowen: TBD

Library: Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 2:00 - 2:20 on an as needed basis.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special. We will celebrate birthdays on their exact date if we have school on that day. Otherwise, we will celebrate it on the next school day. If your child's birthday is in the summer, we will celebrate at the end of the year with a summer birthday bash (mine is in the summer too).

Because of several food allergies in the classroom, we ask that only store bought treats with clearly marked labeling be sent in. These allergies vary year to year so check with Mr. Bowen about possible allergies. If your child would still like to bring something special they are welcome to bring in something non-edible like pencils, erasers, or some other small trinket. Please send enough for 26 students.

★ HAPPY ★
BIRTHDAY!

Snacks

We will have a working snack time each morning around 10:35. Each student in fourth grade will be responsible for bringing a daily snack in from home to rejuvenate his or her energy and attention span. This year it is important that students not only bring healthy snacks, but they also must be **NUT FREE SNACKS (All nuts: almonds, pecans, etc.)**. Snack should not replace a healthy breakfast. Please make sure your child eats a hearty healthy breakfast each morning, as food is fuel for the brain to get started each day. When packing your student's snack, please keep in mind the safety of our food allergy friends by choosing a snack off of the following list:

- Honey Maid Graham Sticks: Cinnamon and Honey Flavored
- Teddy Grahams: Cinnamon, Honey, & Chocolate
- Ritz Dinosaur Crackers
- Fritos (regular)
- Triscuits (regular)
- Saltine Crackers (read label)
- Most regular pretzels (read label)
- Most regular potato chips (read label)
- Most corn chips (read label)
- Betty Crocker Fruit Snacks and Fruit Rollups
- Kellogg's Fruit Streamers and Fruit Twistables



As always, healthy snacks are best: raisins, apples, bananas, grapes, melon, carrot sticks, celery sticks, Jello, applesauce, peaches, pears, strawberries, blueberries, etc.

The best defense against accidental exposure for our allergy students is to always read the label. At the bottom of the ingredients list there is usually an allergen warning. Ingredients do change, so always read the label even if you've checked on prior purchases. Thank you for helping us to keep our students healthy and safe! If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at school.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO SCHOOL.

I have read the 4th grade hand book with my child.

Parent signature _____

Student signature _____

Questions, Comments, Concerns:
