

Dear Parents,

The items discussed below will better acquaint you with our classroom and its management. If you have any questions or comments, **please contact me at school (788-3151) or at home (554-1627)**. You may also contact me by e-mail at [egentry@stmarysderby.com](mailto:egentry@stmarysderby.com). I would be happy to meet with you before or after school to discuss any concerns you may have.

### **\*RELIGION**

Our religion book is called Faith First and it has a great website [www.FaithFirst.com](http://www.FaithFirst.com) that we will access in the computer lab to complete the Chapter Reviews before each test. I would encourage you to check out this website to see what we are studying. This year your child will be preparing for two very important sacraments. They will study throughout the year in preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. As parents, you will be required to attend several meetings as you help prepare your child for these sacraments. **The Parent Reconciliation meetings are planned for Oct. 19 and Nov. 16 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the school library. First Reconciliation will be celebrated on January 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the Faith Center. The Parent Eucharist meetings are planned for February 1 and February 29 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the school library. May 3 will be the practice for First Eucharist at the Faith Center. First Eucharist will be celebrated on May 5 and 6 at all the Masses. You will sign up for a Mass time at a later date.**

We will attend **Mass on Tuesdays and Fridays and a prayer service on Monday morning** before school in the Commons. Our class will prepare the prayer service twice during the year and we hope you will be able to join us. I will notify you in the class newsletter of the dates. We will be bringing up the gifts for Friday Mass during the second semester.

### **\*COMPUTERS**

Your child will have the opportunity to work on a computer in our classroom and twice a week in the Computer Lab. They will work in a variety of subjects

both for reinforcement and for enrichment using programs such as Type to Learn, Accelerated Reader, Advanced Learning Systems, Math-O-Matic and Heartsoft. We will also access the Internet as we study various subjects. Here are some websites provided by our textbooks that might aid in your child's understanding of the material being studied:

**Spelling:** [www.spellingcity.com](http://www.spellingcity.com)

**Religion:** [www.faithfirst.com](http://www.faithfirst.com)

**Math:** [www.eduplace.com](http://www.eduplace.com)

**Reading:** [www.harcourtschools.com](http://www.harcourtschools.com) (It will ask you for an author's name to use as a password. Please use Beck for this password.)

**Science:** [www.sfscience.com](http://www.sfscience.com)

### **\*READING**

We will be using the **Harcourt** series and there are two student anthologies. At the end of each theme there will be a reading skills test. The **reading test will be on Thursday** of each week and I require them to take their **reader home on Wednesday to study**. This will help me to assess how well they mastered the comprehension skills and the vocabulary taught in that unit. I also encourage them to bring their readers home for extra reading practice and to help improve their fluency.

**I require all the students to participate in the Accelerated Reader program.** They will be tested four times throughout the year on the STAR program to help determine their reading level range. Books will be available for checkout from the school library and our class library. Students will use the points they have earned to "buy" merchandise at the Accelerated Reader Store. Their performance in this program **does not** affect their reading grade.

### **\*PHONICS/SPELLING**

The Phonics and Spelling programs are a component of the Harcourt Reading series. I will also be using Dibels materials for individualized assessment of phonics and reading skills. **The class newsletter that is sent home bi-**

**monthly will list their spelling and vocabulary words.** This information can also be found on the school website. Please keep this list in a safe place so you can help your child study his words at home. There will be several written spelling assignments during the week. We will also practice our words playing Sparkle, tossing a bean bag, and using Spelling City on the computer. **The final test will be on Friday** unless notified otherwise.

### **\*GRADING SYSTEM**

I use the diocesan grading system as outlined in the student handbook. **A late grade (10% deducted from their grade) will be given for daily work or homework that is turned in late.** A late note will be sent home notifying you of a late or missing assignment. Please **sign and return** the late note the following day. Students who fail to return their notes will lose 5 minutes of recess time. I understand that there are occasionally factors that may prevent your child from completing his homework. Please send me a note explaining the situation (i.e. illness or a family emergency) and I will allow extra time to complete the assignment.

### **\*CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & DISCIPLINE**

Good classroom management is based on children understanding the behaviors that are expected of them. **I expect everyone to be treated with dignity and respect** and I encourage children to try and solve their own problems. Of course, I monitor their progress and offer suggestions if they are not feeling successful in their efforts. The students know that they can solve a problem any way they want, provided it doesn't cause a problem for anyone else. To help curb tattling, I have a sign that says, "All tattling must be in writing". I ask students to write their concern on paper and put it in a basket on my desk and I read them when I am not working with the class. I talk to the student and ask them if they have solved the problem and if not, I discuss it with those students who are involved in the situation. However, if someone does something serious to another student such as hitting them or using inappropriate language, I don't consider that tattling and need to know about it immediately.

I use several resources to help me implement **bullying prevention and intervention strategies**. Each student completes a form that outlines which trusted adults they will tell if someone is bullying them. I have 6 books that introduce a different form of bullying through a story that includes characters and situations children can easily relate to. We also do role-playing in a variety of bullying situations. **Please contact me immediately if you feel your child is being bullied so I can address the problem promptly.**

Each student has also been issued a **demerit behavior card** by the office that is kept in their agenda book. The consequences are explained on the card.

I also use **incentives to encourage my students** to work hard, to complete assignments, and to follow the principles of the room. Listed below are some of the incentives I use:

1. Praise-verbal and written
2. Stickers/ award certificates/ candy basket
3. Free Time-instructional games and activities to play when their work is completed.
4. Reward Box-small inexpensive items that the winners of various games (i.e. Sparkle and Around the World) or good behavior can choose as prizes.
5. "Buzzing with Compliments" poster-Designed to encourage the class to make good choices throughout the school. After 25 bee magnets are moved to the hive, they will earn a class reward.

### **\*AGENDA BOOKS**

Each student has an agenda book that they must have **at school each day**. This is the first year that your child will be required to use one to record their daily assignments. This can be a very difficult and confusing task for

some students, so please be patient with them. **If an assignment is circled in red that means they have not completed that assignment and it is homework.** Try to spend a few minutes each day looking over what they did in class and ask them to explain if you don't understand what they wrote. Homework assignments, special supplies needed, and upcoming events should be noted in it. **You can also write me notes in the agenda book or reminders to your child** (i.e. go to Latchkey or bring home Reading book). Please help your child to return it to school each day.

### **\*SNACKS/WATER**

Many of the children get hungry around the first recess (9:00). If you would like to send snacks to be shared with the **whole class** it would be greatly appreciated. It should be something that is easy for your child to pass out in a few minutes. Due to the Wellness policy, some suggestions would be crackers, pretzels, animal crackers, or fruit. I know it can be very hectic in the morning, but please try to make sure your child has something for breakfast. You might be surprised how many students tell me they didn't eat breakfast and as a result they tend to be lethargic and sometimes will develop a headache.

Please send a water bottle or covered cup so your child can have plenty of water to drink. They may also fill it with ice or freeze the water to keep it cold while it sits on their desk. A koozie or coaster will help to catch the drips as it thaws.

### **\*BIRTHDAYS**

If your child would like to celebrate his/her birthday with the class, please send a simple treat that is easy for them to pass out after the last recess. **Please do not send a drink.** We have **21 students** this year.

### **\*SERVICE PROJECTS AND STEWARDSHIP**

There are several projects that our class has the opportunity to participate in throughout the year to give back to God in thanksgiving for the blessings

He has given us. We participate in the Holy Childhood Mission collections, St. Katharine Drexel Fund, canned food drives, pop tabs for Ronald MacDonald Houses, and various others during the year. We will also write letters to seminarians J.D. Betzen and Zach Pinaire who are former 2<sup>nd</sup> graders of mine! ☺

### **\*HOMEWORK AND REDO PAPERS**

If your child does not complete his work during class, it must be taken home as homework and is due the next day at 8:00 a.m. A **late grade will not** be given if it is returned completed the next day. I will occasionally assign homework in various subjects for extra practice. Please check your child's folder each day for homework, but it is their responsibility to complete it and to let you know if and when it is completed.

**If a paper is 75% or lower, it can be corrected for a redo grade of 80% (C). This rule does not apply to tests.** Please be prompt in returning the corrected work, but it does not have to be turned in the very next day. Redo work must be completed during the grading period (1<sup>st</sup> nine weeks, etc.) in which it was assigned.

### **\*SCHOOL NOTES/ DAILY PAPERS/CLASS NEWSLETTER**

School and class notes are sent home frequently with your child. I will send home a class newsletter every two weeks and this is also posted on the school website. Please stress the importance of getting this information home and notify me if you suspect that there is a problem. I **try** to grade papers every night, so there should be some work in your child's folder each day. I have them label their folders so that **graded papers and notes are in one pocket and homework is in the other**. If your child brings home an empty folder (or no folder) two or three days in a row, please contact me so we can discover what is happening.

I suggest looking through your child's folder with him so you can discuss the work. Ask your child to point out the best things he did on his papers and

have him describe to you the reasons for his success. **Children need to understand that they are in control of their success.**

I have attached a general classroom schedule and this will let you know how we spend our day and when would be the best time to schedule doctor and dentist appointments.

I appreciate your support and cooperation and I am looking forward to being your child's teacher this year. I want to be a positive influence on my students and to help them to grow spiritually and academically. I truly care about each one of them and want St. Mary Parish Catholic School to be a place that they look forward to attending each day. Thank you for your wonderful example of stewardship that has provided this amazing new facility and opportunity for all of our students to continue to walk as children of God! ☺

In Christ's Peace,

Mrs. Gentry

**"With students there are no magic answers, only magic moments!" ☺**