**Second Grade**

**Parent Handbook**

Mrs. Murphy



*“You have brains in your head.*

*You have feet in your shoes.*

*You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.”*

*-Dr. Seuss*

Hello Explorers and Explorer Parents!

My name is Mrs. Murphy. I am delighted to be your second grade teacher and I am really excited about this upcoming year. After graduating from Berea College, I taught in Austin, Texas and London, England. I grew up in Berea and have enjoyed returning to the community.

Myself, along with the rest of the second grade team, have many exciting things in store for you! I’ve been hearing wonderful things from the First Grade teachers and I am excited to get this year started! Please use the rest of the booklet as a guide to help you with policies and procedures in the classroom this year. My goal is to keep everyone happy and safe so that we can learn many new things. I am hopeful that we can continue to communicate about your child and make the best academic, social and emotional choices for him/her together.

**ACADEMICS**

 My goal for your students this year is to introduce them to new and exciting information as well as to help them continue to develop various skills in reading, writing and math. The common core standards provide us with a rigorous framework to guide our studies.

**READING**

 Because all children develop at different levels and learn to read at various times and speeds, we do not teach them in the same way. We, the second grade team, work very hard to “meet your child where they are.” In second grade, we will continue their work from first grade and continue practicing our fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary while reading a variety of texts.

 Our reading time will be structured to include guided reading groups where I am able to work with your child in a more focused environment. Our goal will be to solidify basic reading skills (phonics, decoding, blending) while building comprehension and fluency in texts.

**SPELLING**

 Spelling is a very important skill for students to learn, and this year, we will be focusing on learning various spelling patterns. Each week, students will receive 10 spelling words (in the beginning). These spelling words will follow a particular phonetic/spelling pattern. Throughout the week, your child will receive instruction on each spelling pattern and be expected to practice at home. They will also receive 3 challenge words the will be “exception” words that do not follow the rules. Throughout the year, as the students are ready, we will build up to 15/20 words to help them prepare for third grade.

**WRITING**

 We write *EVERYDAY*. Writing involves many different skills from the basics of handwriting and conventions to the craft of composing meaningful language.

 In second grade, we will continue to develop our ideas through writing. Each student will have an interactive writing notebook to use in class. During our writing block, they will have independent time to write, conference with me, and share with others.

 As second graders, we will also begin to write different types of pieces. This year we will write a personal narrative, an informative/explanatory piece and an opinion piece.

 This year we will also be working on our handwriting as it becomes increasingly important to their writing development. We will work with both print and cursive.

**MATH**

 Math is a subject where the language is constantly changing, however, the concepts are still the same. During our math instruction, we work with different kinds of manipulatives to help solidify our understanding of mathematical concepts.

 We will build our mathematical understandings through hands on work, drawing problems and explaining HOW something works. An important part of our instruction and common core standards is that students explain HOW the process or concept works, so do not be afraid to ask and help your child explain these skills at home!

**HOMEWORK POLICY**

 Your child will receive a homework folder and a reading log at the beginning of school. Every Friday, students will receive their spelling words and a Reading A-Z book that will be on their independent reading level (This does not take the place of reading other books as well). They will also receive math/writing/science/social studies homework depending on the units of study. All homework and reading log will be due on the following Friday.

 It is important that students keep their homework folder in their backpacks every day, even if they are working on homework throughout the week, as I will send unfinished classwork home as homework when applicable. If students take home unfinished work, it will be due on Friday as well.

 One thing to remember, homework is meant to be HELPFUL and a way to practice skills learned in class. Students will need some assistance in understanding instructions, but should hopefully know what to do from previous instruction in class. In saying this, please feel free to communicate with me about any issues/concerns or questions. I am piloting this homework policy and appreciate any input.

 ***READING LOGS***

 Do not worry when I mention “reading logs”. You will not have to record every book you or your child reads. That does not mean that you do not have to read at home with your children. As many of you know, reading at home whether to your child, with your child or having them read on their own, is VERY IMPORTANT.

 Reading logs this year will serve the purpose of communicating with you about your child’s reading. Each week they will receive a reading A-Z book that is on their independent reading level. Your task at home is to have them read the book and read it to you. As they read, you will be the teacher, noting things they struggle with or excel with.

*i.e. “Joey struggled with the words, ‘there’ and ‘where’, but he really enjoyed reading about polar bears.”*

 I will check reading logs on Friday, this will help me guide the books I choose to send home with your child. I will begin sending one book home per week. As the year goes on, I may work up to sending two leveled books home.

 Also, remember that they read the book multiple times! It is good practice to re-read books. To make it more exciting, they can read them to different people (stuffed animals, pets, etc.) or in different voices. I know life happens, so if for whatever reason you are not able to finish all of the homework one week, it can be turned in when they are finished, but do try and have them complete the work as it is still important practice!

My last note for homework: *IF IT BECOMES A FIGHT TO GET YOUR CHILD TO DO HOMEWORK, THEN LET’S GET TOGETHER AND FIGURE OUT HOW I/WE CAN MAKE IT BENEFICIAL.*

**BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

 Our classroom behavior plan is straightforward. I use the clip system to track positive behaviors and unwanted behaviors. Students start off everyday “ready to learn” and then they can move up as they make good choices or down if they need to think about the choices they are making.

 This year, our school will be instituting The Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). This framework is not changing a lot of what we are already doing, but making it clearer and more consistent throughout the school. Students will *set (with me) clear* expectations for the classroom and will have clear interventions/consequences when these expectations are not followed. We will also focus a lot of our time on teaching positive behaviors and modeling these behaviors for students.

 During the first week of school, we will be working as a class to set our own expectations that will allow us to create a productive learning environment. We will also spend the first few weeks of school establishing routines, procedures and practicing expectations for different common areas throughout the building. Research has shown that spending the time to practice these skills and procedures will make learning and teaching content knowledge more beneficial.

 I will provide interventions for unwanted behaviors before giving warnings and moving clips. If a child has their clip moved to “consequence” on the chart, then they will receive a consequence for their behavior. Usually this consequence will be walking laps at recess (your child will not lose all of their recess as I feel it is important for them to have time to play and exercise). Sometimes the consequence may be a form of restitution depending on the behavior exhibited.

 Your children will spend most of their time with me, but will also be with different teachers and adults throughout the day. Please remember, and help your child remember that ALL adults in the building are there to help keep our school safe and remind students of the expectations if necessary.

***PHYSICAL HARM/VERBAL THREATS:*** If these behaviors are exhibited by any child, they will immediately be removed from the group and will receive an office referral. The office or myself will contact you once the situation is under control and now one is in immediate danger.

INCENTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM

While students will have clear consequences for unwanted behaviors, they will also have incentives to help them learn and exhibit positive behaviors. In order to encourage children to work hard and be a leader, I have randomly divided my students into ‘team’: *North America, Europe, Asia and Africa.* When students achieve goals, work hard, follow behavior expectations and exhibit the 7 habits, they can earn team points. Students are in charge of recording their own points and the team points leaders are in charge of tallying the points at the end of every day and week. At the end of the week, the team points leaders will announce the winning team. This team will earn lunch bunch on Wednesday of the following week, where they will get to eat in the classroom with me.

 This is not meant to be a competition within the class, but set-up so that the work each child puts in benefits other in the class.

**PLANNERS & INFORMATION FOLDERS**

 Each child will be issued a planner and yellow folder at the beginning of the year. The planner should be checked and signed each night. The folder should be checked and emptied each night. At least three times a week your child, and myself, will write to tell you about their day. This is a great way to communicate with you at home and keep you “in the loop” of what’s happening at school. Please feel free to write notes to me if you have any questions or concerns. I will check planners every morning while students are working on morning work.

**TOYS**

Please help you children remember NOT TO BRING TOYS TO SCHOOL. It has been my experience that they are distractions in the classroom and provide more stress than fun. Toys are easily, lost, stolen or broken. Dealing with that takes away from instruction and other exciting things we need to be focusing on. I-pods, MP3 players, DS Machines and cell phones fall into this category as well. *(please see student handbook)*.

I understand that some students may be going to daycare and need toys/cell phone for after school. This is fine, however, they must understand that they stay IN THEIR BACKPACK during school. If I see toys, I will remind your child that they are to be put away. If I see the toy again, I will take it and keep it until the end of the school day.

If they forget the rule yet again and I see toys out in class, I will take the toy and put it in my “May Box”. Once it is in my May Box, only you, the parent, can come and collect it or I will send it home with them at the end of the school year.

I do not like to be harsh, but if students have toys out or in their desks, they take away from learning. If toys go out to the playground, they often end up lost or broken, so I ask that you please help your child understand that toys stay at home or in their backpack.

**BIRTHDAYS/CLASS PARTIES**

If your child, or you, would like to bring a small treat to celebrate his/her birthday that is of course fine. Just let me know a day ahead of time. As we are trying to maintain a learning environment and we have children with food allergies, I ask that you consider a healthy snack for your child’s celebration. Yogurt parfaits, Go-Gurts, fruit, etc. are all wonderful treats that kids do enjoy. Please keep in mind that any birthday celebrations will take place right before recess so that we can go outside and enjoy the snack and head straight to the playground.

 If your child is having a birthday party outside of school and would like to hand out invitations, you may send those to school, only if ALL CHILDREN IN THE CLASS ARE INVITED. IF you need to invite a child from another classroom, we ask that you send it through the mail.

SNACK

This year, we will be having a snack time in the morning. Last year, I found that it really helped my students’ stamina and focus when they had a nutritious snack mid-morning. I do ask parents to help provide snack daily for the children. This is strictly on a volunteer basis, it is not required, but I do appreciate those of you who can and choose to help out! On our class website ([www.secondgradewithmrsmurphy.weebly.com](http://www.secondgradewithmrsmurphy.weebly.com) ), there is more information about why I have chosen to have snack, as well as suggestions for possible snacks.

Please keep in mind that there are children with nut allergies as well as color dye (artificial coloring) allergies.

Hopefully many of you will have signed up at the ice cream social. If you did not get a chance to, you can visit our website and follow the link to sign-up. It would be helpful if you signed up for the entire year and the website will send you reminders before your day.

WEBSITE

I will be keeping and updating a classroom website this year. I will post newsletters, and any other important information that you will need (I will still send hard copies home). I am piloting this website in hopes that it will make communication between home and school a little easier. Again, the address is [www.secondgradewithmrsmurphy.weebly.com](http://www.secondgradewithmrsmurphy.weebly.com) . I will also try to keep it updated with pictures of field trips and activities within class *(I will only post pictures of students who have been given photographing permission, and I will not put the full names of students with their photographs).*

**As this is a new system for me, I appreciate any feedback you might have to make it more effective!**

**A SCHOOL MOVEMENT**

 Our school has selected to be a part of a program called “The Leader in ME.” This program is based on the seven principles laid out by the best selling author, Steven Covey. Steven Covey wrote the book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Our entire staff has been a part of rigorous training and have made a commitment to embrace these Seven Habits school-wide. We are ready to help your student develop great leadership skills. Here are the 4 Cores for Developing Leadership in students:

1. **Model Leadership:** Let students see that leadership principles guide our personal choices and relationships.
2. **Teach Students Leadership:** Teach the 7 Habits and other leadership concepts directly and integrate them into our curriculum and instruction.
3. **Empower Students:** Give students roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to experience leadership for themselves.
4. **Develop a leadership culture:** Align our school and classroom culture to communicate the worth and potential of everyone.

A NEW LANGUAGE

**HABIT 1: BE PROACTIVE:** You are in charge of your own actions.

**HABIT 2: BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND:** Have a plan.

**HABIT 3: PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST:** Work then play.

**HABIT 4: THINK WIN-WIN:** Everyone can win.

**HABIT 5:** **SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD**: Listen before you talk.

**HABIT 6: SYNERGIZE:** Working together is better.

**HABIT 7: SHARPEN THE SAW:** Take care of yourself; find balance.

\*\*You will certainly be hearing more about our school movement to help your kids become great leaders and effective kids. We are all excited about where this process will take us. ***We are establishing a guiding vision, common language and culture.***

If you have ANY questions, concerns or thoughts, please DO NOT hesitate to get in touch with me! My email and school phone number are listed below. My planning will be from 11:50-12:35. Unless it is an emergency, the office will only be allowing calls through during planning times, at other times you will be asked to leave a message. I hope this will be a wonderful year.

Welcome to second grade!

Kind Regards, ***Email***: Caitlin.murphy@berea.kyschools.us

Mrs. Murphy ***Phone:*** 986-4065 Ext: 378



Dear Parents,

 Getting to know your child is a very important part of my job as a teacher. Since I am just meeting your child, I would like to give you the chance to introduce them and tell me about them. This is optional, but if you wish, you may write a letter telling me about their personality, likes/dislikes and anything else you think I might want to know. You may return this letter in your child’s yellow folder. Thank you for all you do!

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