

First Grade Handbook

2023-2024

Mr. Matt Cahill – 1A





I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to First Grade! It is going to be an exciting year filled with lots of learning, laughter and fun! I am looking forward to working with you and your child. If you have any questions or concerns, no matter how small, please feel free to contact me. I am always happy to talk with you because I believe in a strong parent-teacher relationship. Below is my personal contact information. If necessary we can always speak in person or over the phone as opposed to email.

Contact Information: mcahill@myholylfamilyschool.org

Daily Schedule	
8:05-8:25	Unpack, Morning Announcements/Meeting Time
8:25-9:10	Math
9:10-9:25	Snack/Recess
9:25-10:10	ELA
10:10-10:55	ELA/Religion
10:55-11:40	Lunch/Recess
11:40 -12:10	Religion
12:10 - 12:55	ELA
12:55 - 1:25	Math
1:25 - 1:45	Recess
1:45 -2:55	ELA/Science/Social Studies

Our Specials

Monday – Technology
Tuesday – Music
Wednesday – Library
Thursday – Gym * Don't forget to wear your gym uniform
Friday – Art

Communication

Newsletter

A copy of our weekly newsletter will be sent home each Sunday or Monday via email. The newsletter will contain upcoming school and classroom news and events, weekly learning objectives, the week's spelling words, and project dates.

Yellow Folder

Your child will have a yellow HFS "Nicky" folder. This folder will go home and be returned to school daily. Please check this folder each evening for papers, announcements, and assignments and then return it to your child's backpack.

Website

Please check our school's website frequently for additional school news. Review my classroom webpage for homework and additional classroom information.

Classroom Involvement

My goal is to build a classroom community that is rich with parental involvement. My classroom door is always open, and I look forward to hosting many events for you to come in and be a part of your child's wonderful work. I also enjoy having volunteers help within the classroom. I will be emailing a volunteer sign up sheet for Mystery Readers. I encourage everyone to sign up for these special opportunities. If you would like to volunteer to be my homeroom parent, please email me as soon as possible.



First Grade Expectations

Each morning students will be expected to independently hang up their belongings, turn in their homework, and begin the morning assignment at their desk. (Independence and responsibility will be recurring themes throughout the year!) Students are expected to follow our classroom rules and demonstrate superior behavior when attending Mass and specials. Students are responsible for bringing home their yellow homework folder and any additional textbooks each evening and returning them each morning. Students are expected to complete their nightly homework assignments. In addition, students are expected to prepare responsibly for tests. I will notify you of upcoming assessments in my weekly newsletter. Students will have assessments in all major subjects this year, excluding science and social studies.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

I will be scheduling conferences in November to formally discuss your child's academic and social growth. If you would like to schedule a conference prior to November or at any time during the school year, please let me know. I am always happy to make time to discuss your child's progress with you.

Homework

Students will have homework on a regular basis and a few small, long-term projects throughout the year. Homework assignments may be given Monday-Thursday. Typically, homework should take no longer than 25 minutes to complete. Assignments will usually consist of math, spelling/phonics, and/or reading practice. I feel that homework is an essential reinforcement tool to ensure comprehension of previously taught lessons, but I also feel like too much at this age can have a negative effect, so I will keep it to a minimum. Reading is such an important skill that we will be working on it throughout the school year.



Reading

I encourage you to find time as a family to read together. Reading as a family not only makes reading enjoyable, but it also instills the importance of becoming a strong reader. Try the below reading techniques: *Echo Read* - Read a sentence aloud to your child and then have your child read the sentence aloud to you. *Choral Read* - Read a sentence or page of a book together at the same time. I will send home stories and poems throughout the year for your child to practice reading. Repeated readings are an excellent way to build fluency, expression and most importantly, confidence in oral reading. Each week, sight words based on our weekly phonics skill will be attached to the spelling list. Your child should practice reading these words aloud throughout the week.

Reading Folder

Your child will have a blue reading folder. This folder will contain reading strategy suggestions, comprehension questions, seasonal poems, and a reading log. Your child will be expected to keep a reading log throughout the year. Each evening, as part of their nightly reading homework, they will fill in their log. These logs will be turned in on a regular basis. Please encourage your child to find a safe place to store their reading folder. Blue reading folders should be returned to school only on the day when their reading log is due.

“Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.”

~Margaret Fuller

End of Year Assessments

End of the year assessments for grades 1-8 are developed by the Office of Catholic Education in the area of Religion and by Holy Family School in Mathematics and English Language Arts.

Standardized Testing Program

The Terra Nova Achievement Test given in grades 1-8 during March enables the faculty to closely examine our program in the light of student achievement and to differentiate instruction to meet student needs. The parents in the grades tested (1-8) are informed of their child's scores through a comprehensive home report.

Report Cards

Parents may monitor their child's progress through our database, Option C. Individual grades as well as averages for each core discipline and special subject areas can be viewed.

Report cards are issued three times a year to students in Kindergarten through 8, with grade-specific progress indicators.

Grades 1-3

O	Outstanding Progress	S	Satisfactory Progress
VG	Very Good Progress	I	Improvement Needed
G	Good Progress	U	Unsatisfactory Progress

Healthy Habits

A good night's sleep, hearty breakfast, and healthy lunch will fuel the body for learning. Foods with high levels of sugar decrease concentration and overall focus. Please remember to pack a water bottle each day. Make sure **your child's name** is on their water bottle. Having a water bottle in the classroom decreases the time away from instruction. Hydration is essential for focused learning.

Snacks

Please remember to pack nutritious snacks. We will have a morning and afternoon snack time. Students will eat their snack outside on the playground when weather permits. Due to food allergies, students are not allowed to share food. **Please do not send in food containing nuts for snack time.** Students may eat peanut butter at lunch.

Ice Cream Day

Every Wednesday during lunch, students have the option to purchase ice cream. Ice cream costs between 50¢ - \$1.00. Please make sure to place money in a secured vessel (change purse, wallet, envelope or plastic bag). Remember to label it with your child's name and grade level. Loose coins can get lost. It is your child's responsibility to hold onto their ice cream money.

Birthday Celebrations

Please feel free to bring in a small token (pencils, erasers, or stickers) to celebrate your child's birthday. Your child will have the opportunity to give a small treasure to their classmates on their special day. Sweet treats (cupcakes, candy, etc.) are not permitted.

Field Trips

If you would like to volunteer to attend any of our field trips, you must have all of your clearances on file in the office. Please check with the office to make sure that all of your paperwork is up-to-date!

Transportation Schedule

If your child's method of transportation home from school changes, please send an email to both myself and the office to make us aware. If an emergency occurs during the school day and you need to change your schedule, you must call the office. If time allows, please also email me about any last minute changes.

Money

Please submit money in a sealed envelope with your child's name, date, and grade level. Please write the subject of each payment on the front of the envelope. Only include one payment in each envelope.

I will be sending home monthly Scholastic book orders. **All payments for this can be handled online so there will be no need to bring money for that in to school.**

Classroom Celebrations

We will have a classroom party to celebrate Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines Day, and other special events throughout the year. I will ask my homeroom parents to help me organize these celebrations. **Please remember that all treats for these parties must be nut free.**

V.I.P. Of the Week

Each week a different child will be the V.I.P. student of the week! Your child will be sent home the “All about Me” poster on Friday before their week. While your child is the V.I.P. of the week, each day will have a different exciting event or activity to honor him or her. Please email me if you have any questions.

All About Me Page (Monday): Your student should bring in their “All about Me” poster on Monday to share with the class. Parents are asked to help their child complete the poster and return it the Monday of their child’s week. The poster will be displayed in the classroom and shared with the class. Students are encouraged to add drawings or photographs to the poster and be prepared to answer questions about the poster from their peers.

Comfy Chair (Tuesday): The V.I.P. student gets to sit in our “comfy chair” during certain times of the day. We will also share our favorite things about that student during our morning meeting time.

Celebrate You (Wednesday): The V.I.P. will receive a small treat from the teacher. They will also get to choose one of our classroom stuffed animals to keep with them and take care of during all appropriate times of the day. (Morning meeting, centers, lunch, recess, etc.)

Favorite Book (Thursday): Student should bring one of his or her favorite books to read to the class (or have the teacher read to the class). I encourage all students to practice reading the story aloud at home beforehand.

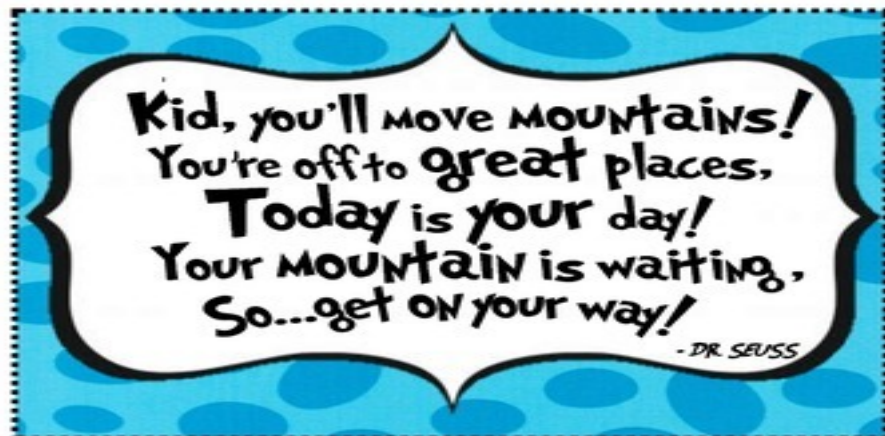
Mystery Item (Friday): The student will share one of their favorite items from home. They can keep it in a bag and we can try to guess what it is, “mystery bag”-style, or they can just show everyone and have a traditional show-and tell. They will take this item home with them at the end of the day. Please make sure the item is something your child can carry easily to school. The student should be prepared to talk about why they chose this item and why it is special to them.



STUDENT
of the
WEEK!

Tips for a Fantastic First Grade School Year

- ❖ Set a specific time each evening to complete homework. Establishing a consistent routine can make completing assignments more efficient and enjoyable.
- ❖ Find a quiet place to complete homework and studying. Minimizing distractions will help sustain focus.
- ❖ Review the weekly newsletter so that you and your child can refer to it throughout the week.
- ❖ When a long-term project is assigned, create a reasonable plan for completing the project. Discuss each element of the project with your child and determine how long each element will take to complete. This will help your child build time management and organizational skills while preventing them from becoming overwhelmed as they complete their project.
- ❖ Create a folder or basket in your home where your child can keep their recently graded papers for additional review. In addition, create a place to store your child's weekly reading. Rereading these short stories helps to build fluency and reading confidence.
- ❖ A good night's sleep, a hearty breakfast, and a healthy lunch will fuel the body for learning!



How To Be A Mature First Grader

In order to be a mature first grader I have to:

Be respectful

Be kind

Be supportive of classmates

Be patient

Be positive

Be ready to try my best

Be able to share and take turns

Be willing to listen to others and ask questions

Be quick to forgive others

And always be ready to learn something new each day!



Remember we are a TEAM

