

Welcome Fabulous 5th Grade Families!

Families,

Hey, check it out! Your kiddo is in fifth grade! I hope you are hearing all about our exciting (and messy) first days. These first few days and weeks are so vital to our bonding and success as a class. We'll be establishing routines, agreeing on guidelines, learning to work together in a very confined space, and feeling out exactly how this 5th grade stuff works. We'll also be doing academics – Math, Writing, Reading, and Science are coming up, for sure! It is a joy for me to be able to connect and teach in such a vibrant, loving community. Your kiddos are truly a gift and I value all that they bring with them to class.

Here's to an AWESOME year!

Sarah Abshire

Now, down to the brass tacks...

Philosophy and Goals

I have some very basic, but firm beliefs. One, a child can learn and improve anything they set their mind to. Two, a messy kid is a learning kid. We will get dirty. Learning is often hard, messy work. Three, social-emotional well-being and safety are the foundation of education. Without either of these, it's too hard to concentrate.

These beliefs lead me to have the following goals in mind this year.

1. We will create a safe, inclusive, and positive classroom atmosphere. Everyone is welcome in our class.
2. By June, we will have been successful at many things that we never thought possible.
3. We will work hard and then play harder.
4. We will have done meaningful work that betters our local community and maybe even the global community.

Academic Learning

The work we do in fifth grade is so important. We are gearing up to the next phase of life. This is our opportunity to be leaders in the Queen Anne community, and to practice skills to take with us when we move on. With this in mind, work in all academic subjects pushes fifth graders to inquire, dig deeper, increase stamina, and take more responsibility for learning. To meet the demands of this rigorous year, we will be intentional in showing students strategies to solve problems and answer questions in all academic subjects. We'll also be affording students the chance to struggle and make mistakes instead of teaching just one way or just one answer. Our mission is to guide students as they meet and exceed standards and develop a lifelong love of learning. We will approach each day with a growth mindset, focused on engaging and intentional work!

Communication

There are several ways we will communicate our learning in class. For student learning, assignments, and discussion, we will be using Schoology rather than sending home paper letters and reminders (**more information about how to use Schoology will be given at Curriculum Night**). Schoology will allow us to blog about our class' activities and to engage in meaningful discussion. In addition to Schoology, emailing me directly is a great way to set up meetings or further inquire about your child or the class. Please keep in mind that emails sent during the school day may not be read until after school (we are busy learning!) I hope to be able to update our class Weebly Blog and Homework weekly with information and pictures about our adventures. The link is <http://www.msabshiregae.weebly.com>. It can also be accessed through the PTSA website. Please leave important or urgent messages with the front office rather than calling the classroom directly during the day.

Snack

The schedule change is a huge adjustment! I believe that kiddos cannot learn if they are hungry. With lunch at 10:45, snack becomes a necessity in the afternoon so that we can continue to fuel our learning. Please pack **two nutritious snacks for your child each day**. One for the midmorning (especially after PE), and the other to help fuel us until the end of the day. This snack should be quick and easy to eat while working. Protein and carb snacks are especially good as these snacks really do affect attention and focus. **Please avoid sending sugary snacks with your kiddo**. Also, I am asking that we make the Portables a **nut-free space** due to allergy concerns. If a student brings nut items (including peanuts), I ask that students save those items for lunch in the cafeteria. If your child is a hot lunch eater, or packing snacks won't work – let me know! I always have a supply of healthy extra snacks on hand for students that forget, however, donations of additional healthy snacks are always welcome!

Volunteering

We greatly value our QAE community! I look forward to having you volunteer in the classroom. We will spend the first few weeks building our classroom community and **invite you to begin volunteering after Curriculum Night!** I will explain our volunteering needs at that time, and you will be able to sign up then. Also, I am always looking for volunteers as chaperones or to help with special projects (especially for PBL activities). If you think you would like to chaperone or volunteer at all this school year, please see Karen Rang in the front office for the applicable paperwork. I look forward to teaming with you!

Homework

We will discuss our homework philosophy in detail on Curriculum Night. For the first few weeks, students will be practicing the habit of bringing everything home and back to school with them each day. In addition, **students will need to read a book of their choice at least 30 minutes every night.** I will alert you once we go over reading expectations in class. Throughout the year, special projects might require time spent at home (time that is student-focused, rather than parent-focused). To that end, please let your child struggle a little and attempt to figure out their homework themselves rather than helping right away. I know it's hard, but it will do so much to grow their independence, grit, and perseverance. If you have any questions, concerns, or trouble with a homework assignment, please send me a quick email to let me know and we will figure it out together!

Supplies

Students will share a class set of supplies, paid for by the materials fee of \$50 that you pay at the beginning of the year. Occasionally, I may request special items that I know we will be using for projects and art activities. You will have plenty of warning.

A few items need to come back and forth every day:

- 1. Orange Folder: for communication and paperwork.**
- 2. Silent Reading book: for reading and building stamina during class.**
- 3. Planner: to record homework.**

Orange folders and planners are still in transit, so students do not have them just yet.

Action Items

- Check out our classroom website.
- Send in your \$50 supply money.
- Return Parent Contact sheet.
- Return Student Profile.
- Return District packet.
- Revive your nightly reading habit.
- Bug your kiddo to tell you all about our first few days!

Thanks for reading!

Happy School Year!