



*Welcome
to
First
Grade!
2016-2017*

*Teacher: Mrs. Wright
Teacher Assistant: Mrs. Potter*



Hello & Welcome!



Welcome to first grade! This will be a memorable year for your child. I am looking forward to starting the new school year and being a part of the social and academic growth that your child will experience during this time. I understand that you must be nervous, yet excited about sending your child to 1st grade. I want to say thank you for intrusting your child to our care. This year will be unique and exciting for your child because it is the time when he/she will develop his/her reading and writing skills. As a parent, you are invited to share this year with us. I am sure that together we can make this year an unforgettable one!

Communications



Homework Folders – Your child will be given a DAILY folder in which he/she will carry homework and school communications. This folder should be checked and INITIALED NIGHTLY and turned in EVERY morning so we may receive any notes from home and update it for the next day. Homework can stay at your house or in the folder until it is turned in on Fridays. Your child should be encouraged to take on the responsibility of remembering his/her own folder. Try to find a permanent place at home where your child can keep his/her homework folder so it is easier to remember each morning. Homework folders will also go home on Fridays so that you can get a head start on homework for the next week. The Homework folder and the initialed Home-School Connection sheet need to be returned each Monday.

Friday Folders – On Fridays, your child will bring home a manila folder inside his/her Friday Folder containing important papers from the office. In the Friday folder you will also find any completed work that is ready to be sent home. Please make sure you review your child’s work and return any papers necessary as soon as possible. Doing so will help ensure a successful year. It is very important that both folders be returned to school each Monday.

Home-School Connection – Inside the homework folder will be a sheet titled “Wright’s Home-School Connection.” Each day comments will be written inside a box. Please read them and write your initials inside the smaller box in the corner. You may also write comments or questions on this form. Sometimes there will be a statement like, “Ask Johnny about the garden.” This is meant to be a prompt to connect what we are learning at school with your conversations at home. This sheet will really help us communicate and work together.

Classroom Website – To access our classroom website, type in the address <http://www.wrightswinners.webs.com/> Helpful information such as word lists, math facts, and track out activities can be found on this website. You may also visit the school’s website <http://willowspringes.wcps.net/> where you will find PTA information, school lunch information and much more!

Email – If you need to e-mail me at school, my address is lwright1@wcpss.net (letter “l”wright #1) Please do not e-mail me any vitally important information and/or changes in transportation because our system may be down or I may not be in class. I always try to check my e-mail daily; however, it is possible that I might miss an important message due to unforeseen circumstances.

Homework



Homework will be assigned on a weekly basis. Every Friday, a sheet will be placed in your child’s Homework Folder explaining the assignments for the following week. All homework should be completed and returned the following Friday. Assignments should be completed each weeknight in order to develop good homework habits. However, since homework is sent home on Friday, you can get a head start working on assignments in case you have any busy nights in the upcoming week. Plan ahead. *Please do not leave all assignments to be completed Thursday evening.* Developing good homework habits is very important. All assignments should not take more than 20 minutes daily. Homework does not have to be done in one sitting. Your child can do 5 minutes when they get home, 10 minutes after dinner, and 5 minutes at bedtime. It is up to you and your child. If your child has to spend more time to complete the assignments, write a note in the Home-School Connection and stop. Your child should read or listen to you read every night from any available source. Hopefully reading will be a pleasure and not necessarily part of the homework time.

Optional Homework – At the bottom of each assignment block, I include OPTIONAL activities such as reading from a supplementary book, learning word lists, and/or monthly Homework Activity Calendars. These are SUPPLEMENTARY activities that are NOT REQUIRED, but only provided if you choose to work with your child on additional activities. These activities are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED as they will benefit your child, but again, are optional and are NOT a part of the 20 minutes mentioned above. HOWEVER, I may choose to occasionally have them as a required part of homework. Please know that I do recognize students for their extra effort in our classroom newsletter and reward them with a certificate.

School Behavior

Discipline Plan – One of our classroom bulletin boards is titled “Wright’s Winners.” Students have a turtle with their name on it. Each day, students automatically start out as a turtle that is having a great day relaxing on a rock in the pond. If a student misbehaves and breaks a classroom rule, the student will be called down and the rule will be discussed with the child. Further breaches of classroom rules will result in the student’s turtle being moved to the “oops” area of the bulletin board. A picture shows a turtle slipping off the rock in the pond. This is a warning to the student. He/she will be allowed to return to the “relaxing turtle” area if their behavior improves. However, if the student continues to misbehave, the student will have their turtle moved to the area of the bulletin board showing the turtle in the water. Once the student reaches this level, he/she will remain and will not be allowed to return to the “relaxing” area. If the student continues to misbehave, the student will have their name moved to the area of the bulletin board showing the turtle in its shell. On the Wright’s Home-School Connection sheet, the behavior that caused the student to remain *out* of the “relaxing turtle” area will be recorded. Students that keep their turtle on the “relaxing turtle” area all week will receive a treat from the treat box at the end of the week.

Positive reinforcement is given to the students throughout the day. Students also have sticker charts displayed in the room to keep the special stickers they have earned for various tasks. When the sticker chart is full, students earn a trip to the treat box.

ALL STUDENTS ARE TREATED IN A FAIR, POSITIVE, AND EQUITABLE MANNER.

PBIS – Our school uses Positive Behavior Incentive Support (PBIS) which is a proactive structure that unifies student expectations throughout the school. Whether students are in the cafeteria, the playground, the hallways, special areas classes or the classroom, the same behaviors are expected. At Willow Springs Elementary, we practice the “3 B’s” – Be Safe, Be Responsible, and Be Respectful. Please encourage your child to demonstrate these behaviors at home as well.

School Transportation – The same behaviors expected in school are expected to be demonstrated on the school bus. Also, our first grade students are responsible for wearing and returning their bus tags for the first 4 weeks of school. This is a Wake County Policy and it is very time consuming to create new tags so please return your child’s bus tag for the first 20 days of school. In addition, for safety reasons, the bus driver will NOT dismiss a Kindergarten or first grade student at the bus stop unless a responsible person is present at the bus stop to meet them. Please make sure to arrange for a responsible person to meet your child at his/her bus stop. In the event that no one is present to meet your child at the bus stop, the driver will return your child to the school.

Progress Reports

Conferences – Parent/teacher conferences are held at least twice a year. The first conference will be at the end of the first quarter in September. The second conference will be held during the third quarter. However, if you would like to schedule additional conferences, I will be available before or after school. *We are partners in your child’s education and we should work together for his or her benefit.*

Report Cards – Progress reports will be sent home at the end of each quarter. A score of 3 or higher is considered passing. Children will receive the following grades:

- 1 – Insufficient performance of targeted grade level standards with support.
- 2 – Needs support to meet targeted grade level standards.
- 3 – Demonstrates proficiency of targeted grade level standards.
- 4 – Extends targeted grade level standards.

Curriculum



Reading – The reading program your child will be participating in this year is based upon several different philosophies including Reading Workshop based on the Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project involving Dr. Lucy Calkins and guided reading techniques by professors Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. I have also implemented parts of “The Daily Five” program developed by Gail Boushey and Joan Moser. I have combined the best of each theory to create an approach that will best help your child progress through the North Carolina Literacy Assessments.



Writing – We will use a developmental approach to teach writing, which will permit your child to pass through a variety of writing stages before reaching the ultimate goal of standard writing. Your child will learn to write opinion pieces, informative/explanatory texts and narratives. Our main focus will be for children to write introductory and closing sentences with several supporting details on a single topic. Students will also be expected to use correct capitalization and punctuation as well as appropriate spelling (basic sight words spelled correctly, words with common spelling patterns spelled correctly and untaught words spelled phonetically).



Phonics/Spelling – In first grade, we will continue using Letterland, the phonics program your child learned in Kindergarten, which was adopted by Wake County Public Schools. Letterland is a unique, phonics-based approach to teaching reading, writing, and spelling. The Letterland characters transform plain black letter shapes into child-friendly pictograms and they all live in an imaginary place called Letterland. Simple stories about the Letterland characters explain the full range of dry phonics facts so that children are motivated to listen, to think and to learn. These stories explain letter sounds & shapes, allowing children to improve their word building, reading and writing.

Math – In recent years, WSES first grade teachers participated in a yearlong training on mathematics instruction through Project AIM at NC State. This training, along with county resources, will provide the majority of our math program. Lessons will not only meet the needs of our curriculum, but will also meet national standards. There is a very strong emphasis on number sense, problem solving and math talk (the ability to prove your thinking and to discuss the “how’s” and “why’s” of mathematical concepts).



Science - Just as in math, science will focus on using and strengthening your child’s problem solving skills. The science curriculum in first grade focuses on four areas of science including earth materials, balance and motion, living organisms, and measurement. We will be using a scientific approach to studying these topics centering on questioning skills. Inquiry will be a big focus in our science activities. In looking for answers, students usually start with free exploration of materials, followed by a discussion of their discoveries. Usually new questions arise while students seek answers, leading to additional student-motivated inquiries with materials to reinforce and extend concepts. We will also be participating in taking care of our school garden – “The Grow Zone”!



Social Studies - Social Studies will surround the topics of rules, communities, diversity, mapping skills, natural resources, holidays, and basic economics. Also, we are working hard to try to teach our students how to be good citizens. Throughout the year we will emphasize the following character traits: *Responsibility, Respect, Courage, Kindness, Self-Discipline, Integrity, Perseverance, and Good Judgment.*



Attendance

Absences – If your child is absent for any reason, please call the school or email me (lwright1@wcpss.net) to let me know that your child will not be in class for the day. This is very helpful as I mark attendance and reasons for absences on the computer. If you cannot call or email, please send a note with your child when he/she returns to school. Please make every effort to send your child to school each day. *There is a direct correlation between student achievement and attendance.* Our goal is to have all children miss less than 10 days in a school year. Although good attendance is very important, if your child is sick, do not worry about what he/she will miss at school. We will catch him/her up when he/she returns. Please do not send a sick child to school. Students have to be fever free for 24 hours before they are allowed to return to school. Thank you for your cooperation.

Student check in/out – If your child is tardy or leaving early, please stop by the office to check your child in or out of school. The office staff will call the room so that your child can meet you at the office. Please remember that academic learning will begin at 9:20 AM and occur until 3:40 PM each day. If a child is consistently late to school or checked out early, he/she will be missing instructional time. Thank you for your cooperation on this issue.

School entrance – Students who are being brought to school by their parents or other authorized persons are to be dropped off at the school's main entrance. For safety reasons, it is requested that parents not walk their children to class after the first week of school unless you have signed in at the office or at the desk in the hall outside the office. If you need to send a message, please write a note on your child's Home-School Connection or leave a message at the office. Thank you for your cooperation on this issue.



Food

Eating lunch with your child -Parents are welcome to enjoy lunch with your child in the cafeteria. After signing in, please meet us in the hallway outside the office. School policy states that you and your child may sit together at a back table while eating lunch or outside at the picnic tables. Unfortunately, no other children may sit at the table with you due to safety regulations.

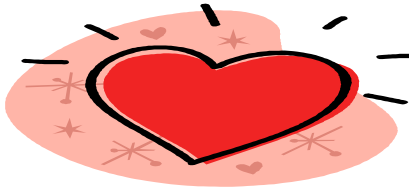
Forgotten lunches or lunch money - Our school does not have a lunch fund for children who have forgotten lunch or run out of money. If your child does not have money, he/she will still receive a lunch including fruits, vegetables, and water. Please make every effort to be sure your child has daily funds. One option is to make sure that your child always has at least one paid lunch on his/her cafeteria account. This is a good idea even if your child will always bring a lunch from home – you never know when a lunch box will be forgotten. Also, you can set up automatic payments for your child's lunch account at www.mylunchmoney.com.



Birthdays – Each child’s birthday will be recognized at school with a song and line leader privileges all day. It is a very special day for him or her! If you wish to send in a treat for the class, please send in the morning of and we will pass the treat out at recess. Please clear it with me first so that we can make sure no child is allergic or has other medical issues. According to Wake County Policy, all treats must be store bought for health reasons. Please keep in mind that the treats do not have to be edible. Fancy pencils, mini containers of Play-doh or bubbles make great birthday treats instead of sweets. Thank you.

Snacks – In first grade, we do not have snack time as our lunch is scheduled in the middle of the day making snack unnecessary. However, if you find your child is hungry by the time they get home, your child may bring a snack to eat during the first part of recess. If you choose to send a snack, please make sure it is a healthy snack that can be disposed of outside – no plastic containers or silverware, please. Thanks!

Water Bottles – Our classroom does not have a water fountain. Since research shows that a hydrated brain is beneficial for learning, students are allowed to bring water bottles to school each day. This is optional, however, as students may use the drinking fountain whenever we stop by the restroom. Students are responsible for remembering to take their water bottles home to be cleaned each week, but you may need to help them remember.



“How to Really Love a Child”

Be there. Say yes as often as possible. Read books out loud with joy. Remember how really small they are. Giggle a lot. Surprise them. Say no when necessary. Teach feelings. Search out the positive. Speak kindly. Handle with caring. Children are miraculous.

(Adapted from SARK. *A Creative Companion*. Berkeley, California: Celestial Arts, 1991.)

Working with your child this year, I will keep in mind these words from SARK’s poem. Your child is a truly miraculous being, and I will do my best to encourage his/her growth in a positive direction. I realize the amount of trust you are placing in me to care for your child during the day. I hope to make each day a special one for your child, and I know that you and I will work together to make this a wonderful year. We will have a fantastic year working together. Thank you for your care, trust, and cooperation.

Classroom Volunteer Sign-Up



Volunteers are an important part of our classroom. Parents who volunteer to help in anyway really do make a difference in the education of every child. Please check all boxes that apply and return this to the classroom to let me know how you would like to volunteer. If you are signing up to volunteer in the classroom, please select more than one option so I can make sure to utilize all interested volunteers. Thank you so much for your time and efforts.

- I would like to help out with special activities in the classroom.
- I would like to donate supplies for activities
- I would like to help by making things for classroom use at home (cutting things out, sorting math pages, the possibilities are endless!)
- I would like to volunteer on Friday mornings to get Homework folders ready for the following week.
- I would like to volunteer on Friday mornings to check in/out homework and get Friday Folders ready.
- I would like to work with students on word lists. I am available weekly at the following day/time: _____
- I would like to work with students on math lists. I am available weekly at the following day/time: _____
- I would like to work with students on spelling words. I am available weekly at the following day/time: _____
- I would like to help out by working with groups of children in our school garden.
- I have or know someone with skills, interests, hobbies, or a job that **could** be shared with the class (ex. My neighbor is a policeman and would be willing to visit the class. Or, I love photography and would like to do a bulletin board of class activities.)

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Childs's Name: _____

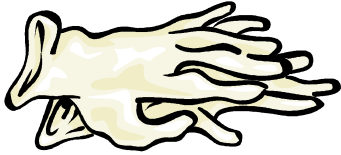
(Please understand that first grade children need time to acclimate to their new school environment; therefore, I may not ask for in-class volunteers until after routines are established.

Thank you for your understanding.)

Wake County requires that volunteers and **all persons attending field trips, helping with the PTA Festival or Field Day** register EACH school year. If you registered as a volunteer at our school last year, **you will need to reapply** using one of our school computers. You can register any day (8:45am-4pm) in the Media Center. Later in the year, you will only be able to register on Mondays. Be sure to bring your driver's license and social security number with you to register, as background checks will be conducted

for safety precautions. To avoid a lengthy wait time on volunteer clearances, please consider registering early. Thanks! 😊

Allergy Alert and Food Consumption Form



Throughout the year, we will be having various learning experiences which will involve the use of food, including eating items we have grown in our school garden (The Grow Zone). In an effort to provide for each child's specific needs, we would appreciate you taking a moment to answer the following:

List Any Known Food Allergies

List of other allergies, including latex, bee stings, etc.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____

These forms will be kept in your child's room and referred to prior to the planning of a food experience or garden excursion. Thank you for your help.

ATTACH:

Supply list

Wish list

Student Information Card

Data card

Transportation Information Paper