

September 2015

Dear Parents,

This week begins a brand new school year for all of us, and I'd like to extend a warm welcome to my students.

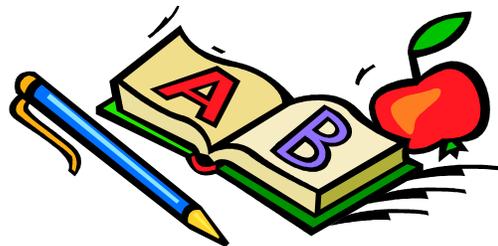
I have put together a handbook of information to help you and your child become familiar with my expectations for the school year. This orientation package is divided into two sections. The first section deals with routines and expectations that are part of grade six. The second part deals with curriculum.

Take a day or two to read through this information, and then sign below by Friday. (Please make sure you send this handbook to school each day with your child because we will be using it for several class activities.) Then you may want to keep the handbook in a special place so that you may refer to it throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have either at the school or by email at lbouchard@lssd.ca. I check my email each day and I will respond promptly. If you do not have email, you may call the school and leave a message (482-4409).

I'm looking forward to an exciting year with my class. Thank you for your cooperation in getting this year off to a great start!

Sincerely,

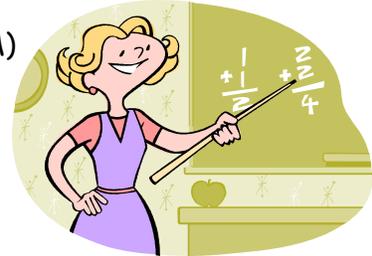
Mrs. Laurie Bouchard, Grade 6 Mornings.



Meet the Teachers!

This year the grade six class will have more of a junior high atmosphere. Below is a list of the teachers that will be working with your child and the subject areas they will cover.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mrs. Laurie Bouchard | ELA, Social Studies, Art (AM) |
| Mrs. Tracy Giesbrecht | Math, French, Science (PM) |
| Mr. Lane Collins | Music |
| Mr. Cody Hunter | Phys. Ed, Health |



Classroom Behaviour Expectations

Since lifelong success depends in part on learning to make responsible choices, I have developed a classroom discipline plan that guides every student to make good decisions about their behaviour. Your child deserves the most positive educational climate possible for their growth, and I know that together we will make a difference in this process. The plan below outlines our rules, positive recognition for appropriate behaviour, and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. They are:

Rules:

1. Follow Directions
2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
3. Do not leave the room without permission
4. No inappropriate language or teasing

Students who choose to break a class rule will receive verbal warnings, loss of recess time and/or privileges. In addition, students will be required to complete a reflection which will be sent home for parents to review and sign. Severe disruptions will result in a referral to administration.

Respectful Classroom Agreement.

A Respectful Classroom Agreement will be developed collaboratively with all members of our classroom the first week of school. Because all class members will have the opportunity to contribute to establishing the Respectful Classroom Agreement, all class members are expected to take responsibility for honouring this agreement, both as a class and as individuals.

Once created, copies of our Respectful Classroom Agreement will be sent home as well as posted to our class website.

Agendas

As in previous grades, the grade six students have agendas that will travel between home and school. Students will write assignment due dates and important information regarding the homework inside the agenda. Any notes travelling home will be placed inside the agenda at the current date. If you have any notes to come back to school, or need to jot a note in the parent comment section, they can travel back inside the agenda.



*****I will be signing the agenda at and I ask that parents review the agendas each evening and initial it.*****

Agendas are an effective tool that promote independence, time management, and organization. However, like all tools, they must be used regularly and correctly to be effective.

Homework/Classwork

I believe that homework is necessary for practicing skills that have been learned or for enriching the classroom experience. On the other hand, I don't believe in overloading students will busywork! In many cases, homework is simply class work that was not finished. I try to give ample time in class for the completion of assignments, but some students work more slowly and must finish at home.



Due dates will be indicated in the student agendas. Longer projects will come with supporting timelines for parents and students to refer to at home. Homework should be something that students can do independently and within a reasonable amount of time.

The establishment of a "homework time" at home is very beneficial for students in grade six. By allotting **30 or 40 minutes of time daily** for students to work on homework, or non-recreational activities when there is no homework (ie: reading), students are able to establish a routine that helps them transit more easily to the junior high level. At this grade level it is important that students develop study and work habits outside of school that will support them as they continue through junior high and high school.

I expect all homework and classwork to be turned in on time. Students will not be allowed to call home if they forget their work. Students should pack their bookbags at night with all the materials needed for the next day. Organization is the key to success! If you are concerned with either of these areas, please contact me so that we can work to improve the situation.

Library

Our class has library twice a cycle. Students are allowed to take two library books home. Borrowed books must be returned in order for students to check out new books.

Microwave Use:

Students are **ONLY** allowed to use the class microwave on their day.

| <u>Monday</u> | <u>Tuesday</u> | <u>Wednesday</u> | <u>Thursday</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Bryant | Jayce | Kyle | Cali |
| Justin | Nathan | Daegan | Harmony |
| Reggi | Andrew | Zack | Christian |
| Jenna | Johnathon | Lyric | Emma |
| Peyton | | | |

Mrs. Bouchard's Newsletter

A copy of our classroom newsletter will be sent home the first of every month. It will provide updates in what we are learning in the classroom and doing around the school. A digital copy of the newsletter can be found on our grade 6 webpage under "Newsletters".

Our Class on the Web

Our class has a home on the Internet! We have a class web page which supplements student's classroom learning and display classroom work. Parents can visit the web page to view see curriculum outcomes and keep up-to-date on classroom events. Our web site is located at <http://mapleton6.weebly.com>. I only use students' first names and last initials, and I don't match pictures with names. If you do not want your child's picture, stories, or other work on our class web page, please write me a note or send me an email. Be sure to visit our web page before you make this decision! I hope that all students will be able to be included on our class website.

EDMODO

This year, we will be using Edmodo in our classroom. Edmodo is a free and secure social learning network for teachers, students and schools. It provides a safe and easy way for us to connect, share content and access homework, grades and school notices. Edmodo also offers parent accounts and I'd like to invite you to join our classroom online.

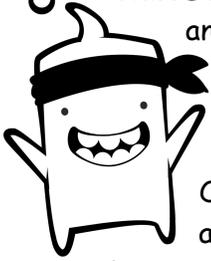


With Parent Accounts, you can:

- View your child's homework assignments and due dates
- Receive updates on class and school events

Edmodo is accessible online and on any mobile device with Internet capabilities (they also offer a free iPhone and Android app). You can access your account on the go, and adjust your notification settings within Edmodo to receive alerts via text or email. I will be sending home parent account passwords mid-September.

CLASS DOJO!



ClassDojo, a new teacher tool I will be using to help build your student's learning habits and boost classroom engagement. ClassDojo allows me to track student behavior and learning skills. Please note that ClassDojo only gives feedback on student's use of independent work time, and is not in effect for all hours of the school day.

One of the great features of ClassDojo is that it allows me to send you a "behavior and skills report" every Friday by email. My hope is that this will bring you and me closer together and help you better understand the progress of your student on a week to week basis. I will be sending home parent account passwords mid-September.

Cooperative Learning A.K.A. Group work

I wholeheartedly believe in cooperative learning in the classroom. From time to time, I will place my students in mixed ability groups so that they may help each other during the learning process. Research has shown that all students do better when they are allowed to discuss and defend their ideas as they learn. Working in small groups also helps students learn valuable social skills they will need throughout life. Parents are often concerned about grades in the cooperative learning classroom. Don't worry! All grades come from individual assignments and tests. No student's grade will be raised or lowered based on the performance of others in the group. I welcome the opportunity to discuss cooperative learning with anyone who has questions or concerns. I've had great success with this technique in recent years, and I'd love the chance to convince anyone of the benefits of cooperative learning!



Spelling Program

Okay, buckle your seatbelts! I know this is lengthy, but I have some very important information to share with you. It concerns our new word study program (spelling) that your child has been involved in everyday of the week here at school. This year I have been using a program called *Words Their Way* in my classroom. *Words Their Way* is phonics, spelling, and vocabulary instruction through daily word study.

At the outset, word study may be most confusing to parents. For those of you who, like me, had a traditional spelling program in school, with a list of random words to memorize and a test on Fridays, this will be something a little different!

One focus of word study is to teach students how to spell and decode new words and to improve their word recognition speed in general. To accomplish this goal, I will teach the students how to examine words to learn the regularities that exist in the spelling system. I will also teach them some irregularities of spelling (we call "oddball words"). The simple process of sorting words into categories is the heart of our word study program. When students sort words, they are engaged in the active process of searching,

comparing, contrasting, and analyzing. Word sorts help students organize what they know about words and to form generalizations that they can then apply to new words they encounter in their reading.

In a nutshell, you will see...

- Students who are grouped into appropriate level spelling "sorts" depending on their initial spelling assessment.
- Students introduced to a new group of words with a specific feature as its focus each week.
- Students working on hands-on activities to sort words with common characteristics into defined groups.
- Students thinking hard about whether these features mean they have to HEAR what the words have in common or SEE what they have in common (or both).

By repeated sorting of words with similar features, students learn to examine and make judgments about new words they encounter based on what they have learned. This is our goal.

The best part of Words Their Way spelling is that students can be provided with instruction that fits their particular stage of spelling development and be moved along sequentially in their instruction. It allows students to build on what they already know, to learn what they need to do next, and to move forward.

Classroom Word Study Schedule

Monday: Students will be given a list of 10 spelling words for the week. Students will sort and identify word patterns into two groups.

Tuesday- Thursday: Students will complete a daily "Word Study Warm Up". This activity will vary from day to day. It will involve a variety of sorting activities, from games to kinesthetic activities (jump spelling, ball bounce) and writing opportunities. Students may work with partners to complete their warm up.

Friday: Students will take the weekly spelling check in. Students will be asked to start their spelling check in by writing the words they remember from this week's list and how they should be sorted to encourage spelling recall. Then, the words of the week will be dictated, and students will double check the words they remembered and/or add the words they missed to complete the check in.

What can you do at home?!?

Your child will bring home a page of words each week. These words **are not meant to be memorized** or written multiple times for rote practice!

This is not official homework. Nothing needs to be turned back into me. I just thought this would be a fun, more productive, and a more meaningful way of studying spelling words with your child. The days of copying words five or ten times each is gone.

Whew, nothing like information overload! Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have ANY questions or concerns on this new program.

CURRICULUM

English Language Arts (ELA)

Through the six language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing and representing), the general outcomes are to:

- ☑ Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences
- ☑ Comprehend and respond personally to and critically to oral, literary and media texts
- ☑ Manage ideas and information
- ☑ Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication
- ☑ Celebrate and build community

The official explanation is rather jargon filled for those not in the education business. As I am sure you are aware, students arrive in grade six and five with a range of abilities in each of the different language areas. Some may be strong readers, some good speakers, and others enjoy writing. Primarily, we want to expand on student skills in the six language arts and ensure continuous progress for each student. At times, this will mean different work for individuals to meet their learning needs.

The reading program will be composed of three main ideas: independent reading, guided reading, and literature study. As well we will be reading and writing poetry. Writing will be done through daily Free Writes and Mini-Lessons.

Social Studies

This year in social studies, students focus on people and events in Canada from Confederation to the present. They explore the changing character of this country as they examine territorial expansion, the role of immigration, and the evolving relationships between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and the Canadian government. Students will be encouraged to develop historical thinking skills as they explore Canada's past and present.

The four areas of study for this year are:

1. A New Nation
2. 1914-1945: An Emerging Nation
3. Shaping Contemporary Canada
4. Canada Today

Science

The emphasis in science is on Scientific Inquiry and Design Process. Each grade explores these global objectives through specific topics. The four main topics in this year are:

- Diversity of Living Things
- Electricity
- The Solar System
- Flight

Math

The math curriculum covers five different strands. They are listed below with a few of the outcomes for this. Although they are divided into units on the year overview, I have found that continued reinforcement of concepts throughout the year is key to building students' numeracy.

✓ Patterns and Relations

- Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship within tables of values to solve problems.
- Represents and describes patterns and relationships using graphs and tables.
- Demonstrates and explains the meaning and preservation of equality by balancing objects, or by using models and diagrams.
- Demonstrates and explains the meaning of preservation of equality, concretely, pictorially, and symbolically.

✓ Statistics and Probability

- Creates, labels, and interprets line graphs to draw conclusions.
- Select, justify and use appropriate methods of collecting data.
- Graph collected data and analyze the graph to solve problems.
- Demonstrate the understanding of probability.

✓ Shape and Space

- Demonstrate an understanding of angles.
- Demonstrate that the sum of interior angles is 180° in a triangle and 360° in a quadrilateral.
- Develop a formula for determining the perimeter of polygons, area of rectangles, and volume of right angle rectangles.

✓ Shape and Space Continued:

- Construct and compare triangles
- Compare and describe the sides and angles of regular and irregular polygons.
- Describe and analyze positions and motion.

✓ Number

- Demonstrate an understanding of place value for numbers greater than one million and less than one thousandth.
- Demonstrates an understanding of factors and multiples.
- Relate improper fractions to mixed numbers
- Demonstrates an understanding of ratios, percent, and integers.
- Demonstrates an understanding of multiplication and division of decimals.
- Explain and apply the order of operations (excluding exponents).

Math becomes more complicated in grade 5 and 6 so it is important that students practice topics both at school and at home.

CLASS HANDBOOK SCAVENGER HUNT!

Parents/ Guardians make sure you have read our class handbook through carefully!
Answer the questions below and return to Mrs. Bouchard for your chance to enter your student in our special start of the year draw!

1.) What day is your student's "microwave day"? _____

2.) How much homework time is recommended to be set aside **daily**?

3.) Who teaches grade 6 math? _____

4.) Who teachers grade 6 language arts? _____

5.) What two days does your student have library on? _____

6.) What online tool allows Mrs. Bouchard to send you a behavior and skills report on your student every Friday? _____

7.) What spelling program are we using in grade 6? _____

8.) What is the address of our class webpage? _____

9.) When does our class newsletter go home? _____

10.) What are **2 ways** to get in contact with Mrs. Bouchard?

Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____