

Welcome Back to School 2009-2010

August 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year at St. John Fisher. I'm so happy to be your son or daughter's first grade teacher this year. I'm looking forward to a great year getting to know your children. We will learn many things from each other and have great fun along the way. First grade is such an exciting year. I think it's the most important year in grammar school because of the tremendous growth you will see in your sons and daughters. I hope they are as eager to begin as I am! I would like to introduce myself and give you an overview of how our classroom will operate.

My name is Debby Dillon and this will be my eighth year at St. John Fisher. I taught fifth grade for a year and then first grade for the last six years. My husband and I have three children, one daughter at Marquette University, a daughter attending The University of Arkansas, and a son who is a senior at St. Rita High School.

There are many wonderful events which take place during First Grade! Your children will surprise you with the amount of knowledge they will retain in this most special year. Non-readers, beginning readers, and readers will transform into "book worms" with all of our help. My goal is to guide your children. You are the real teachers. I hope to work together with you to make this a wonderful year for your child. Your help at home is so important. I'd like to share some ideas on how you can do that. Please find time to read to your child every day. Use stories to ask about predictions, describe a favorite character, retell a story using their own words etc., and help them to follow the text in a storybook from left to right. Books make a wonderful gift for a special occasion and it's great to make frequent trips to the library.

The first few weeks of school will consist of the students getting acquainted with each other and me and review and assess where they left off in Kindergarten. Your children are all very unique and each will bring many interesting qualities to our classroom. I will not expect everyone to be at the same level at the same time. Our classroom "bouquet" of children will bloom at all different times during the year. Please be encouraging and patient as each one of your special flowers bloom.

I'm looking forward to getting to know each of your children and I hope to provide a classroom setting in which they feel happy, comfortable and relaxed.

I'm looking forward to meeting you and I want to thank you already for all the help you give your children.

The next few pages explain some of the "nuts and bolts" of our classroom to try to keep it running smoothly. Please read, fill in, sign, and return the necessary sheets by the date noted.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Debby Dillon

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

QUESTIONNAIRE:

- In this packet of information there will be some information sheets to fill out about your child. This will help me to get to know your child. Please share any information that I should be aware of such as food allergies, bee stings, asthma, or any vision or hearing problems. Please complete the First Grade Questionnaire and return it by Friday, Sept. 4.

ABSENCE:

- According to the school handbook, homework will not be sent home on a daily basis, unless your child is absent for an extended period of time. I will keep all the work that is to be completed in a folder on their desk. When they return to school they will have several days to finish any work they missed.
- *H1N1: If your child is feeling feverish in the morning, please keep them home from school. The office will call you to pick up your child if they have a temperature of 100 or higher. A child must be fever free for a full 24 hours before returning to school.*
- **VERY IMPORTANT! A note must accompany your child the day they return as to why they were absent.**

BOOK ORDERS:

- I will be sending home Scholastic Book Club order forms on a monthly basis. Scholastic offers wonderful choices of books and they are usually cheaper than most book stores. It's completely optional should you choose to order any books. If you decide to order, please fill out the order blank and return with payment of a check only made out to **SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB** in an envelope with your child's name on it.

NEWSLETTER:

- I will try to keep you informed about what happens in our classroom on a regular basis with my weekly newsletter. You can contact me at this website: ddillon@sjfschool.net
Also, you can check my blog for weekly news from our classroom.

FOLDERS:

- The children will be using two folders each day. Their "SCHOOL" folder stays in their desk with papers we use every day. Their "HOME" folder will travel back and forth to school every day. Any mail or notes we have for each other should be sent in that folder. You will also find any homework papers, graded papers and any correspondence from the school office in there. There might be some days when the "HOME" folder will be empty! If you are sending anything to school that needs to go to the office, please label it with your child's name, room

number and what the envelope contains. Example: Child's name, Room 114, Tuition

HOMEWORK:

- I will be giving the children homework every night, Monday-Thursday. It might be to read a book or story, practice their sight words, study addition and subtraction facts, math sheet, phonics sheet, printing paper, or some unfinished work from class. Reading a book every night is expected. The children are expected to do their own work, in their own printing, in PENCIL ONLY. It will be due back the next day (to be returned in their home folder). I understand that sometimes homework is forgotten at home. If your child forgets an assignment, the homework should be brought in the following day. It is important to teach children homework is their responsibility (not Mom or Dad's). Parents can help by checking the work and reminding them to put it in their folder. Thanks for your cooperation.
- STAR OF THE WEEK:
- We will have a "Star of the Week" student every week. The students are very excited when it's their turn. A new star will be chosen every Friday. I will be the first "Star" so they can see what to do when it's their turn. I will send a separate note about this.

BIRTHDAYS:

- Birthdays are a very special day for your children. Your child will get to wear a birthday crown for the day and receive some other "surprises". You are welcome to send a birthday treat on your child's birthday. Please refrain from sending cupcakes or sheet cakes. They can become very messy. Brownies, cookies, candy, fruit or fruit roll ups are some suggestions. As of this printing, I don't know of any food allergies, but I will let you know as I find out. We have 22 students in our classroom.

SPECIAL CLASSES:

- Our special classes are as follows:
Monday: Music with Mrs. Vander Woude
Tuesday: Computer with Mrs. Maxwell
Wednesday: Gym with Mr. Schroeder
Thursday: Attend 8:15 mass
Friday: Art/Library with Mrs. Funk /Mrs. Newman (the group is divided in half, they will alternate going to art one week and library the next.
The children are expected to behave and follow the rules in their specials classes.

LABELING:

- Please be sure to **LABEL** all of your child's personal items especially, **SWEATERS, GYM PANTS, SWEATSHIRTS, BACKPACKS, LUNCHBOXES,** and **ALL SCHOOL SUPPLIES**. Please replace any supplies when they are gone. I'll try to send a note when something is running out.

LUNCH TIME:

- Our lunch time this year is 11:25 – 11:45. Since this is third lunch, we will have a snack in the morning. Please provide a small, healthy snack that is easy to eat and not messy! Some examples are dry cereal, granola or cereal bar, pretzels, or graham crackers – nothing with a spoon. Your child should not bring a drink for snack time. Candy should be saved for lunch time. I continue to encourage the children to start the day with a good breakfast.

BEHAVIOR PLAN:

- I will explain our behavior plan for room 114 on another sheet.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL:

- Please drop off your children in the morning at the glass door next to the church. I will come out to pick them up every morning. At dismissal, please wait by the sidewalk in front of the glass doors. I will only dismiss them when they see their parent/neighbor who will be picking them up. Thank you so much for your cooperation in this matter.

QUESTIONS:

- Please feel free to send me a note, email, or call school if you ever have any questions or concerns. I am also available at the end of the day, outside, at dismissal time, except for Wednesdays.

Thanks for your time and we're off to a great start!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Dillon