

Dear Parents/Guardians,

First of all, I would like to welcome you and your child to third grade. I am certain that we are going to have a wonderful year! Please feel free to communicate with me as needed. If there is anything that I can do to help your child better succeed in school, I am happy to work with you on your child's behalf. My number at Nelson Prairie is 815-462-2874/Ext.6236, and my e-mail address is [keaker@nlsd122.org](mailto:keaker@nlsd122.org). You are welcome to send in a note with your child, as well. ***I do prefer that you contact me through e-mail, a written note, or through your child's assignment notebook.***

Next, I put together this handbook as a resource to provide you with the expectations and routines in third grade. I want it to be a useful tool, so if you have any suggestions, please let me know. You will also find information about classroom procedures and a subject synopsis in the following pages. I believe you are your child's first and most important teacher, and I value your input! Therefore, please let me know if there is anything you want to share about your child or how they might be more successful.

Finally, while I ask for your support in accomplishing our goals this year, I want you to know I am committed to doing all I can to help your child succeed at Nelson Prairie School. I welcome your input and am truly looking forward to working with you and your child this year! Thank you for the chance to do so and welcome back!

Sincerely,

*Ms. Kelly Eaker*



## Policies & Procedures

### Homework

The goal of homework is to give your child meaningful practice to reinforce skills taught and practiced in class. Homework assignments should take no more than 30-40 minutes. *If a homework assignment is especially challenging for your child, please write me a note explaining the issue so that I can work with him/her in class.* Students will be assigned homework Monday through Thursday. If students complete their homework on those nights, they will have the weekend off. Most weeks, your child will have four math homelinks and will be expected to practice the week's spelling and vocabulary words each day.

In addition to assigned homework, students are expected to read at home. I don't want this to become a chore, instead I want to instill that reading is important and fun! That being said, I would recommend that your child read for 15-20 minutes per session on four-five days during the week for a total of about 300 minutes/month. (Note: See "At Home Reading Programs" for additional information.)

Finally, I will be keeping a homework log of missing work. If a student misses an assignment, an "oops" note will be sent home, and the assignment will be due the next school day, along with your signature on this note. Students who frequently miss homework assignments may need to stay inside during their *extra recess* to make up the work. If homework is repeatedly missed, we will schedule a parent-teacher-student conference so that we can work together to resolve any issues.

### Grading Scale

B = Beginning

D = Developing

S = Secure

## **Birthdays**

As per the District Wellness Committee, birthday snacks will not be allowed in the classroom. Our school has developed a list of appropriate trinkets for birthdays: stickers, pencils, erasers, pencil grips, bookmarks, \$1.00 books, a class game donation, a class birthday book donation, playing cards, etc. Please contact me if you have questions about appropriate items.

Whether or not your child brings a birthday trinket, we will sing "Happy Birthday", the office will gift your child with a book, and I will be giving each student a small gift as well...😊.

## **Birthday Books**

To make your child's birthday a meaningful one, while adhering to the District Wellness Policy, I would ask that you consider treating our class to a "birthday book". The birthday child may bring a book (wrapped in birthday paper and tied with a ribbon if you wish) that he/she would give to the class. Your child or myself will then read the book to the class before placing it in our classroom library. Since the book will become a permanent part of our classroom library, please glue a picture of the birthday child on the inside cover of the book and/or print his/her name and birth date. Please note that you are not obliged to do provide a birthday book. This is just an idea for commemorating your child's birthday in a way that many others will enjoy for years to come.

If your child's birthday falls outside the school year, you may choose to pick a day during the school year for us to celebrate. Just inform me before that special day, so I' can be prepared to celebrate with your child.

## **Behavior**

Behavior is a choice. Therefore, if a student chooses to make inappropriate decisions, there are consequences. I use a color-coded card system in my class. At the start of each new day, all students will begin on green. If a student makes a poor behavior choice (after verbal warnings), he/she will be

warned to "check his/her behavior" and will be moved to yellow. For a second infraction, the student moves from yellow to blue and will receive an appropriate consequence, such as a time out, removal from an activity, or a change in the student's seat assignment. Any student ending the day with a blue card will be sent home with an "I had a blue day" slip. The blue slip must be signed by the student's parent/guardian and returned to me. Any student who continues to disrupt the class and his/her own learning will be moved from blue to red. In the unfortunate event that this move occurs, I will call the child's parent/guardian to discuss ways to help the child to make good choices in the future. The student will also be asked to complete a reflection log to address his/her poor behavior choices. Finally, on a daily basis, all of my students will have the opportunity to reverse the color-coded card process by demonstrating good behavior subsequent to poor behavior choices.

*\*\*\*Please Note: If a student chooses to severely or repeatedly disrupt the classroom, he or she will be moved to red and will be sent directly to the principal's office. \*\*\**

The rules of our classroom are:

**RESPECT yourself, others, their property, and the school.**

**Listen when others are talking.**

**Follow all directions.**

**Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.**

**Work quietly and do not disturb others.**

**Work and play in a safe manner.**

In general, I expect my students to be kind, caring, and respectful at all times!

### **Snack**

We will be eating a snack in the classroom each day at about 11:05 A.M.

Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks. I will be reading aloud to model fluency and expression and working on comprehension skills during this time.

## **Assignment Notebooks**

Students must fill out and bring home their assignment notebooks every day to inform you of any homework to be completed and the date each assignment is due, as well as to provide you with information regarding upcoming tests. While the majority of test preparation will occur during class, a few minutes of review at home will benefit your child greatly. Advance notice of testing will also be given in my weekly newsletter, which is published on my web page each Friday. Additionally, your child will record his/her behavior color at the end of each day in this notebook. *Please look it over with your child and initial to indicate that you have reviewed all information.* **I do check these notebooks daily, so this is another way you can easily communicate with me.**

## **Specials**

Each day we have a special from 10:30-11:00 A.M. We have blue days and green days, and the colors alternate. On the green days, we will be having P.E. On the blue days, we will be having either Art or Music. Every two weeks, we rotate between art and music. Finally, our library resource time is from 11:30 to 12:00 P.M. on each Friday. The specials schedule for the week can be found in my newsletter on my NLSO website.

## **Lunch and Milk Money**

Your child may purchase a box lunch from school or bring a cold lunch from home. Please be aware that we do not have excess box lunches at school. If your child does not have a lunch, we will try to contact you. If we cannot reach you, we will call the emergency contacts you provided us to ask them to bring your child a lunch. To purchase the box lunches, you may either deposit lunch money into your child's Mealtime account online through the district website, or you may send your child to school with lunch money to be deposited. *The lunch money should be placed in an envelope or baggie with your child's name and ID number written on it.* Lunch milk is 30¢ (cash only).

## **Dismissal**

It is **very important** that you send a note or contact me and/or the office if there is going to be any change in your typical dismissal plans. I will not let your child go with another parent, take a different bus, or otherwise change their normal dismissal plan without your permission. This is for the safety of the kids. Also, if you need to pick up your child early, please send in a note so that I can have your child ready.

## **Vacation**

For any vacations, I would encourage your child to complete a daily vacation journal, practice multiplication facts, and/or read. If requested by you, independent work may be sent along for your child to complete. However, many worksheets and practice assignments are tailored to meet the learning needs of the children and cannot be planned in advance. Therefore, please understand that important learning worksheets may also be sent home as make up work upon your child's return to school. ALL missed assessments will be completed upon your child's return.

## **Important Information**

On my web page, you can find my weekly newsletter, spelling words, vocabulary words, our daily schedule, and other important information, as well as some general information about myself. Please go to the district website at [www2.nlsd122.org](http://www2.nlsd122.org). Then, click on Nelson Prairie under the "Schools" tab. Once you arrive at the Nelson Prairie page, just go to Staff-Third Grade-Kelly Eaker. My newsletter explains what we will be working on each week, advises you about upcoming assessments, and gives you the specials schedule for the week, along with any other important school happenings. **Please take a moment to review the newsletter each week.**

## Subject Synopsis

### Reading

I have implemented "The Daily Five" reading program, which is a research-based literacy program that focuses on fostering reading independence. Students will work in five different stations during our reading block: read to self, read to someone, work on writing, word work (spelling/vocabulary), and listen to reading. "The Daily Five" is student driven with high student engagement and provides for meaningful, consistent reading and writing practice.

While the students are engaged in their Daily Five activities, I will be working with small groups of students or individual students to improve their skills and challenge them at an appropriate level. I will also be assessing students or working with students who have been absent during this time.

Each student will be expected to have books to read available at his/her desk each day. In addition to the school library, I have a classroom library available in my room for student use. Having a variety of books at a student's reading level is a vital piece in creating independence and a love of reading. Therefore, you are welcome to send books to school with your children, too.

Additionally, our district utilizes the ReadyGEN curriculum by Pearson. ReadyGEN is an integrated literacy curriculum which engages students by utilizing authentic, rigorous texts. It fosters the connection between reading and writing to help your child develop into a lifelong learner, thinker, and communicator. The ReadyGEN curriculum incorporates a variety of reading genres, foundational skills, informative/narrative/opinion writing, spelling/phonics, grammar, and vocabulary into a comprehensive literacy program. This program will be used in conjunction with the Daily Five centers to cultivate your child's ELA proficiency.

Finally, reading at home has been shown to help students in overall school performance, assisting in the development of comprehension and higher order thinking skills. *Therefore, I highly encourage my students to read at home.* In October, I will begin the Book-It reading program. Monthly calendars will be sent home with your child for use in tracking reading minutes. Your child must read at least 300 minutes per month in order to receive the Book-It Pizza Hut coupon and a no homework pass from me.

### **Additional Spelling Information**

The ReadyGEN word lists will be available on my web page, and our spelling quizzes will be on most Fridays, pending appropriate pacing. The students will practice these words at school each day during the Daily Five word work center. However, these words should also be practiced at home daily.

### **Social Studies**

Our district utilizes the Pearson My World Social Studies series. This series utilizes storytelling to bring social studies content to life. The textbook is also the student's workbook. Some topics that we study in third grade include: communities in the United States, natural resources, the birth of the U.S.A., our nation's capital, the flag, government, immigration, the connection between goods and services, imports and exports, geography, and mapping skills. Finally, we will also study Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

### **Science**

Our science series is also from Pearson. Our science curriculum adheres to the Next Generation Science Standards. We will cover the following topics: Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions, From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes, Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics, Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits (plant and animal only), Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity, Earth's Systems, Earth and Human Activity, and Engineering Design. The students will be creating an Interactive Science Notebook for each of these areas of study. At the end of each unit, their work will be sent home.

## Math

Everyday Mathematics is the series we use in our district. This program focuses on problem solving, higher order thinking, practice of basic skills, and the use of games to apply the skills and concepts. Everyday Math revisits these concepts regularly throughout the year. We will cover number and numeration, operations & computation, data & chance, measurement & reference frames, geometry & patterns, functions and algebra through the use of activities, discussions and games. *Additionally, students will be expected to memorize basic multiplication facts, 1 - 12. While we will work on these facts at school using Reflex math, at-home practice of the facts is essential. Working with the multiplication facts for 5-10 minutes on three days per week will greatly benefit your child and lead to his/her mastery of the skill.*

## Handwriting and Keyboarding

This year students will learn cursive handwriting. The "Handwriting Without Tears" program aims to make cursive writing easy and automatic for all students. The program is simple to learn and uses unique strategies to teach good letter formation, spacing, neatness, and cursive letter connections. We will also practice keyboarding skills this year.

## Character Education

We are continuing our character education program. Character Counts focuses on six ethical value pillars: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. We have also added a pillar on bullying. Each month we will focus on one of the pillars.

# We're Going Back To School

