 ABC’s of Kindergarten 

A

Absences: In order to ensure that all children arrive safely and promptly at school, if you have not contacted the school explaining your child’s absence, the school will call your home the morning of the absence. If it is necessary for your child to be absent for any reason, please contact the school.  If you know in advance that your child will not be in attendance, please send a note explaining the reason for the absence.  A written note should also be sent the day your child returns to school.

Arrival:  Pupils should arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 am.  Breakfast will be served beginning at 8:00.  Students should not arrive prior to 8:00 am since supervision is not available by the school staff.  School begins promptly at 8:30 am and dismissal is at 3:00 pm.

Art: We will now have Art for one of our specials each week. Mrs. Thomure will be our art teacher.

Attendance: A successful school experience involves the cooperation of the child, teacher, and parent.  Your child’s progress, both academically and socially, is influenced by daily participation.  Consistent attendance enhances learning.

Attitude:  Thinking they CAN do something is very important to kindergarten children. We want to encourage an “I can” attitude in them.  Please celebrate each step they take – even the smallest step.  Their attitude is influenced by our attitude, so it is our desire for them to have a positive attitude about school when they enter the door each day and when they leave.

 **B**

Backpacks:  Please make sure your child carries a backpack daily to carry his Take-Home Folder to and from school.  (Please no preschool backpacks.) Check your child’s book bag daily.

Behavior Expectations:  It is our desire that each child daily displays the characteristics contained in our character education program.  If the children try to be their best, learn all that they can, and treat others as they want others to treat them, then they will have success.

Behavior Report:  Any day that children have their card turned to red or white they will bring home a behavior report explaining why they had their card turned.  Please go over this report with your child, and if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know what they are.  Please sign the report and return it in the Take-Home folder the next school day.  Having your child explain his/her misbehavior teaches responsibility for actions taken.

Book orders:  Every month I will be sending home book order forms for you and your child to look over.  Book purchase is optional.  The forms will be sent in your child’s Take-Home  Folder. (If you want to purchase any books, please send the money or check in an envelope, along with the slip from each book club you will be ordering from, listing your child’s name and the amount enclosed.)  Checks should be made out to the book company.  These books include excellent selections for children that are reasonably priced.  What a great way to build your home library and help our classroom earn bonus points for books and CDs that the children can use in the classroom!

**C**

Centers:  The best way for kindergarten children to learn is through active play/work.  The children will be learning through math, writing, alphabet, science, puzzles, games, art, listening, and reading centers.  The planned activities in the centers help develop skills.  The children will also have free choice of some center activities where they make choices as to what they do and which area they choose. \*\*This will look a little different this year with social distancing.

Citizenship:  My goal as a teacher is to help (side by side with you) teach the children in my care to display good citizenship traits.  If I do not also display these traits, then I have failed in my commitment.  We all have bad days, but my desire is that these “bad days” are not consecutive days.  Our daily rules and discussions summarize what traits good citizens portray.

Clothes: Please label all coats, jackets and sweaters.  Many clothes are identical, and various items end up in the lost and found container.  If your child’s name is on all articles, they are more likely to be returned.

Conferences:  Parent/Teacher conferences are held in October and February.  At the conferences we will be discussing your child’s accomplishments, strengths and overall progress.  Please feel free to schedule additional conferences any time throughout the year if you feel a need.

 **D**

Discipline Policy: My philosophy of discipline is based on the belief that children need affectionate care as well as firm, consistent guidelines.  To establish a positive, caring class environment I hope to help children learn self-control by respecting themselves as well as their classmates.

Dismissal:  Kindergarten children who are not riding a bus will be picked up in the back of the school.

**E**

Envelope:  When sending ALL money to school, cash or check, please put it in a sealed envelope with your child’s name, my name, and the purpose for the money on the outside of the envelope.  This insures that the money is used for the intended purpose.

Extra Clothes:  It is suggested that each child have a set of clothes at school in case of a bathroom accident or a messy spill.  If the extra clothes are at school, we will not have to bother you at work or at home for this “non-emergency.”

**F**

Family Projects:  To encourage collaboration of themes between kindergarten classrooms, and to promote parent/child cooperation, we ask that each family member help their kindergarten child with a project to be brought to school for display.

• August/Sept. – Kinder-Garden Flower ~ Star Student Day

• October – Decorated pumpkin

• November - Thanksgiving project

• December – Gingerbread Man

• January – Snowman

• February – Valentine Holder

• March – Kite

• April – Decorated Easter Egg

Footwear:  Please have your child wear shoes that are appropriate for running and active movement both on the playground and in PE class.  Cowboy boots, flip flops, or dress shoes, for example, are not good choices for school activities.

**G**

Got a Question?: Since so many of you are new to Bethalto East and kindergarten, I’m sure that you may still have unanswered questions or questions may occur throughout the year.  Please feel free to send me a message on Seesaw or e-mail me at aheflin@bethalto.org during the day. You can also reach me after school at 377-7250. Any question or concern is important!

Guided Reading:  Guided reading provides an opportunity for a small group of children to meet with the teacher.  I will monitor and evaluate each child’s progress on various literacy activities that may include working on alphabet recognition, individual children reading simple stories, and teach the children a variety of reading strategies for those who are ready for this step.

**H**

Holidays/No School Days: (See district calendar & newsletters)

Homework:  Homework will be sent home each week listing activities that correlate with at least one activity we will do in class.  Please help the children to be prepared for the day by having them complete the homework and bring the homework to school the next day.  Parent help is encouraged, but this is their homework and responsibility for having it each morning.

Hands-On Learning: I feel that the best way to help children learn is to make learning fun. Important concepts can be learned by doing meaningful hands-on activities. There are times when seatwork is required and necessary, but for the most part, our classroom will be an active learning environment.

**I**

Illness:  The question of when to keep your child home from school is often a difficult one, especially when decisions must be made first thing in the morning.  It is important, however, to keep your child home if he/she is ill.  Keeping them at home helps to make them more comfortable and prevents their classmates from becoming ill, also.  Children function more effectively in the classroom when they are healthy.

Independent Reading:  Because children learn to read by reading they need plenty of opportunities to read by themselves.  “Kindergarten reading” includes talking about the pictures, summarizing what they have heard an adult read, approximating what sentences say, then actually reading word for word.  Sufficient time and appropriate materials are necessary to develop and strengthen the children’s reading abilities and desire to read.  By giving the children time to read both at school and home we can work together to provide a life-long love of reading.

iPads: Each student will have an iPad this year. I will be sending iPads home occasionally for students to complete Seesaw activities for homework. More info to follow.

 **J**

Journal Writing/Kid Writing:  The children will have numerous opportunities to write “their way”.”  There are many stages of “kid writing” as well as developmental levels of the children in our room.  During writing times, the children will combine their emerging writing skills with their drawing skills.  As we work this year with a variety of phonics and reading experiences, many of the children’s writing will move from phonics – based or “kid writing” spellings towards more conventional writing.

**K**

Kindness:  All children in my room are encouraged and expected to treat everyone at our school with kindness and respect.  Hitting, fighting, name-calling, and making fun of others will not be permitted without a consequence.

**L**

Literacy Centers:  During Literacy centers children practice reading and writing skills while the teacher works with small guided reading groups.  These center activities are designed to strengthen letter/sound knowledge, listening skills, oral language expression, rhyme, letter formation, etc.

Lunch: Children may bring lunch from home or get a tray from the cafeteria.  A monthly lunch menu will be sent home with each day’s meal choices listed for you to discuss with your child.  Breakfasts and lunches will be free for all students.

**M**

Masks: Masks should be worn every day. We will take breaks outside so children can take their mask off while social distancing. I recommend keeping an extra mask in backpack.

Math:   We will use *My Math* for our math curriculum.  It is a hands-on series that provide experiences with the use of manipulatives such as unifix cubes, counters, graphing and sorting materials.  Mathematical concepts taught include numeral recognition, printing numerals in sequencing, counting sets, measurement, graphing, shape recognition, and addition and subtraction readiness.

Music:  Our music teacher is Mr. Raymond. He will be teaching the children the basics of music education and will be sharing many wonderful songs with them.  We are scheduled to have music every other week.

Morning Meetings: We sit together on the carpet for our Morning Meeting. This is a time to greet each other, sing songs, listen to a good book, and talk about the day's activities.

Morning Messages: In the beginning of the year, I write a morning message to the children on the board. We read the message together and look for specific letters and words. We count the number of words in each sentence. We also talk about capital letters and punctuation.  Students listen for beginning, middle, and ending sounds of words. They learn to stretch words to hear letter sounds and chunks. This activity also gives the children an opportunity to see the teacher model writing.

**N**

Newsletter:  You will be receiving a newsletter each week that will keep you informed of our classroom activities.  The newsletter will include homework, important dates, and other classroom information.

Notes to/from Home:  I encourage communication.  I realize sometimes it is hard to reach someone on the phone, so please feel free to write me a note, email me at aheflin@bethalto.org or send me a Seesaw message.

 I will try to contact you the same day I receive your note.  I will also write you notes individually on occasion.  Oftentimes, especially concerning behavior issues, I will expect you to sign and return the note the next day.  I check the children’s folders first thing in the AM, so please send notes back in their daily folders.

Nurse:  Our nurse, Mrs. Verdun, will be at Bethalto East to dispense medication, take temperature, clean scratches and scrapes and to make decisions concerning more serious injuries and illnesses.  Please make sure we have current contact numbers on file in case Mrs. Verdun needs to get in touch with you.

**O**

Outside Recess:  The children will have a 20-minute lunch recess along with another 15-minute recess sometime throughout the day. (I have not received our schedule yet.) Please keep this in mind when helping your child select clothing for the day.  We have district criteria concerning winter wind-chill on whether the children go out or stay in – wind chill of 15 in AM, 20 at lunch.

**P**

Parent/Teacher Club:  We have an active parent/teacher organization that welcomes new members.  Our Parents’ Club has bought many things to benefit our school and also provided many fun activities.  Come be a part of decision – making this year!  Please try to attend.

Parties and Celebrations:  We have parent sponsored Christmas and Valentine’s Day parties.  The room parents usually organize these events, coordinate volunteers, and ask for donations.  All are welcome to participate in our celebrations!  \*\*I am sure this will be different due to Covid-19 this year.\*\*

PE:  Mr. Burnett is our new PE teacher.  The children will learn many skills and new games.  We will have PE three times a week. I will let you know the days when I receive my schedule.

**Q**

Quiet Time:  In the beginning of the school year, when the children are getting used to a busy schedule, they rest for a 15-20 minute period each day.  They are not expected to go to sleep, but oftentimes they do.  Small towels are perfect resting mats because they are easy for the children to fold and fit well in the small lockers.

**R**

Report Cards:  We will issue report cards three times per year.  A progress report will be shared during Parent/Teacher conference in October.  The report cards will correlate with the Common Core Standards.

Restrooms:  The children are encouraged to go to the bathroom before school begins, before lunch, and again after lunch recess.  At all other times they are free to go to the bathroom as the need arises, as long as there is a bathroom pass available.

**S**

Science: The focus of the kindergarten science curriculum is on developing an awareness of the world in which we live.  Through scientific inquiry, concepts will be presented by studying plants, animals, forces/motion, engineering, weather, and seasons.

Seesaw: Our digital platform for learning this year will be “Seesaw”. This is an app where your child will have assignments to complete in school or at home. I can also take pictures or videos of your child/assignments and add it his/her portfolio for you to see at home. You will need two apps: Seesaw “Class” app and Seesaw “Family” app. The “Family” app allows you and I to direct message each other. I will send home instructions soon.

Shared Reading:  Shared reading is exactly what is says – sharing the reading of stories with the whole class.  As the teacher reads a story, children join in on phrases or words that they know.  During re-readings (and some books we read many times!), children read more and more of the text until they may be able to read the story themselves.

Social Studies:  Our social studies curriculum focuses on the students and how they relate to others in their families, classroom, school, and community.  Activities will help the children focus their natural curiosity for the world around them.

Star Student:  We will begin the year by focusing on learning each other’s names.  We will cheer the Star Student’s name, interview them, and draw a picture for their Star Student book to be taken home.

**T**

Themes:  Expanding a child’s knowledge base is very important at his young age.  We try to incorporate language arts (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), math, art, social science, and science activities into our theme units.  We encourage the children to research on their own information to share with the class by bringing items or books that correlate with what they are learning in class.

Tentative Theme Schedule:

• August – Rules, Colors, All About Me

• September – All About Me, Nursery Rhymes

• October – Fall (Apples, Pumpkins, Spiders, Bats, Fire Prevention)

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• November –Thanksgiving, (Pilgrims/Indians) Mickey Mouse Day

• December – Christmas

• January – Artic Animals (Bear & Penguins)

• February – 100th Day, Valentine’s Day, Presidents

• March – Dinosaurs, Seeds, Planting

• April – Farm, Eggs

• May – Oceans

Transportation:  If you plan to pick up a child that normally rides the bus, you must call the office.  **If a call is not received, your child will be sent home by his/her usual method of transportation.**

**U**

Unique:  Kindergartners will learn that they are special and unique.  They will have opportunities to describe how they are alike as well as different from others.

**V**

Visitors:  At this time, visitors will not be permitted to go to classrooms right now with Covid-19.

**W**

Water Bottle: Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to use throughout the day. We will not be using the water fountains. We will have water bottle refill stations available.

Wish List:  Throughout the year we sometimes need supplies above and beyond our classroom materials.  I will post these needs in the class newsletter.  If you can help provide them, I will be most appreciative.  Extra items that you think we might be able to use are always welcome!

My Wish:  I would like for each child to enjoy coming to school each day.  It usually takes a month or so for them to get accustomed to expectations and routines, however.  I want them to develop that attitude of “I think I can . . . .  I think I can . . . “ even when I ask them to do things that they think they can’t.  I tell them we have erasers and the ability to say, “I’m sorry”, but we can’t make mistakes unless we try!

Writing:  Our writing program builds on what each child already knows.  Writing is a developmental process that begins with scribbles and proceeds to lines and circles, random strings of letters (most of which are found in their name), words and spaces, then eventually, to sentences.  Your children will be encouraged and praised for all attempts and accomplishments in writing.  Providing a risk-free environment is paramount to your child’s progress in writing.  If possible, please provide your child with writing tools, such as pencils, crayons, markers and paper, at home.  Our goal is for all children to write for a variety of purposes.

Word Wall: We will begin the school year and add every student’s name to our word wall. We will also add sight words to our word wall and many other words that students will use in their writing.

**X**

eXperiences: Kindergarten is such an exciting time!  We are learning about the magic of books, letters, numbers, poetry, songs, science, social studies, art, music, PE, computers, and oh, yes.... school rules!  Enjoy this year and let your kindergartner know how important school is to you.

**Y**

Young Authors:  Our district participates in this writing program that encourages children to enter their best book writing efforts.  This effort will require cooperation between the children, teacher, and parents.  I will send information when we get closer to beginning this project.

Yearbook: You can purchase a yearbook closer to the end of the school year.

You!: You can help to make your children feel successful this year by reading each night with them.  This encourages them to become good readers. Remember to discuss the school day with kindergartners.  Ask questions like, "What did you do in centers today?" or "What did you learn today?" Ask about new friends, Music, PE, Library, or Art.

**Z**

ZZZZZZZZZs:  Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.  Setting and keeping a bedtime schedule is a wonderful gift you can give your child.  Plenty of sleep will help them to be alert and ready to learn each day!

ABC Parent Summary

• Check your child’s bookbag and Take-Home Folder **daily**

• Read ALL school notices

• Read the newsletter

• Send money in a sealed, labeled envelope

• Donate supplies when asked

• Make sure your child is well-rested.

• Attend Parent’s Club meetings

• Call or message me if you ever have a question or concern

• Provide a good reading and writing environment for your child

• Read aloud to your child daily

• Listen to your child read

• Be Patient!  They each learn at their own rate.

 This will be an exciting year!
You will be amazed how much we will learn
       and how much fun we will have doing it!!!

   I am looking forward to a wonderful year with
your kindergartner!

