Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to kindergarten! I am excited to have you in our class. I hope this packet of information will be helpful to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone during school hours or by email anytime.

School: 985-2288

e-mail: brittany.milbrandt@riceville.k12.ia.us

Arrival and Dismissal

The children arrive on the buses around 8:00 A.M. Children who get dropped off by parents should arrive at the same time. If your child arrives before 7:50, they are asked to wait in the lobby. At the set time, all children may go to their lockers and classrooms. Please remember not to park and block the buses pulling up to the front of the school.

I want to teach children to be responsible right away. I try not to assist them in emptying their backpacks and hanging up their belongings in their lockers. I will be in the hall to greet them, so parents are welcome to say goodbye to them at the car and allow them to walk into the school like the other children exiting the buses. You would be surprised how proud they are and how capable they become when encouraged to be independent. When entering the classroom they must remember to give me notes they have in the folders. Remind your child each day if they have a note to give to me. Children who are to go to breakfast must let me know right away in the morning so they don’t miss breakfast time.

If your child will be arriving late to school, please call the office and let them know. It is crucial your child be here by 8:15 each morning. Our beginning lesson with the calendar is an important part of the day. If you happen to arrive with your child past 8:15, please stop in the office to let them know so your child will not be counted absent, but tarty instead.

The students are dismissed for the buses at about 3:10 from our classroom. I will walk the students out to ensure they get on the correct bus. If you plan on picking your child up, please be waiting outside the classroom door or in the lobby by this time. Your child will be dismissed when we leave for the buses. At dismissal time, parents find it easier to park in the teacher’s parking lot located south of the building rather than parking on the other side of the buses.

Please send a dated note each time your child will be going home a different way than usual. You can also call the office and let them know by 2:00. Do not leave a message on my phone or send an email during the day. It is safer to go through the office as I don’t always have time to frequently check my messages. Please help us out by trying to make these decisions with your child in the morning.

If for some reason you have to pick up your child early from school, please make sure to let us know in advance. You must let the office know when you take your child out of the building early. Check the handbook to find out what time a child is counted absent if they leave early.

For safety of students please remember to check into the office if you are entering the building other than scheduled arrival and departure times. All visitors must wear a pass no matter what their order of business is during the school hours.

Breakfast/Snacks/Lunch

A breakfast program is offered in our school each morning except for late start days. You can find out more information about this program in the student handbook. Please let me know if your child should be eating breakfast at school. If students are not back into the classroom by 8:15 they will be counted tardy, even if they are at breakfast. Some children find breakfast to be a socializing time. We need to protect our learning time in the classroom. Please visit with your child about this if he or she plans to eat breakfast at school.

We have scheduled milk breaks each day. Your child is charged for the milk, but the crackers and snacks are provided by the teacher, students, and donations. Note: There will be no breakfast or morning milk on late start days.

We eat in the lunchroom from 11:05-11:30 each day. We really encourage you to **not** send a sack lunch for at least the first full month of school if you can help it or if there is a dietary restriction. This way the students are exposed to all the wonderful meals offered. I am surprised each year by how many picky eaters try new things. We will not let them go hungry. If you do send a sack lunch, your child may bring juice or water, or buy a carton of school milk. (No pop please.) If any items in the sack need to stay cold, please include an ice pack.

Rest Time

Due to scheduling conflicts and they need to increase learning time to meet state standards, rest has been cut from our daily schedule. We will only have rest occasionally as time allows. To avoid having your child overly tired, please remember these children need at least 10 hours of sleep every night.

Specials Classes

We will be leaving the classroom for these special classes once or twice a week: art, music, P.E., social skills, and library.

Recess

We have three scheduled recess times a day along with the first and second grade students. Please check the weather forecast and help you child make good clothing choices. In the fall and spring morning recess can be quite chilly. Make sure your child has a light jacket or sweatshirt to wear. They can keep one in their locker if you prefer. Before cold weather starts, I will send a note giving details about what your child will need for recess during the winter.

We have plenty of playground equipment to play on. If your child has a favorite toy he/she would like to bring for recess, please make sure that it is not electronic, contain batteries, breakable, valuable, a danger to others, a type of fake weapon, or something they were not given permission to bring. It also needs to be quite small. We need rom in our backpacks and lockers for other important things. I do not allow children in kindergarten to bring or trade trading cards. They are often taken advantage of by older students. If your child would like to bring a special item such as a jump rope, ball or small toy to have a recess, please mark it with your child’s name. We do provide balls, jump ropes, and other outdoor equipment for the children to use here at school. I am not responsible for lost or broken toys brought to school by students and I cannot monitor their interactions with their toys since we have many children on the playground that we need to monitor for safety.

Book Orders

I will be sending home book orders. You are not obligated to buy. Information will come home with the order regarding when the orders are due and how to pay. Any checks or money orders for this should be made out to Scholastic. Through ordering, we collect bonus points which I can use for classroom items offered by the Scholastic company

Field Trips

In February, we will be taking a field trip to Cedar Falls to see a play. In May we will go to a small zoo in Byron, MN to culminate our year. A special permission slip will be sent home prior to these trips.

Emergencies

Please notify the school if your current home and work phone numbers change during the school year. We also need to have numbers of other people to contact in case we are unable to reach you in an emergency.

Emergency early dismissals usually occur because of weather factors but sometimes they are emergency dismissals due to power failure or some other type of non-weather related factor. It is very important for us to know where your child is to go. In many cases I will not have time to contact parents, so a predetermined place should be set up for your child to go and be kept on record at school for us to quickly refer to.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very important time for kindergarteners. We would love to help our friends celebrate! If the birthday falls on a weekend, please let me know what day you would like to have us celebrate in the classroom. Your child will receive a crown and birthday pencil. The birthday person gets to hand out snack and the students will sing “Happy Birthday”.

When it is your child’s birthday, you may send a special snack or treat if you would like. Any snack is fine as long as it is easy to serve and easy for the students to eat in a 5-10 minute snack break. If a treat requires silverware, napkins, etc. I would ask that you send these along with the treat.

Please read the section on birthdays in the parent handbook. No invitations can be handed out at school and please do not pick up partygoers at school. This causes hurt feelings.

Those students who have summer birthdays may want to celebrate during the school year. If you would like to pick a date to celebrate just let me know which day. It is fun to celebrate it on their half birthday. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Party Time

We will be having five scheduled parties this school year. I will have a sign-up sheet at conferences for you to choose which party you would like to provide treats and drinks for. Each student can bring enough treats and drinks for the class. For the Thanksgiving celebration, I will be sending a list of choices that are more historically accurate. I will provide the tableware for all the parties. If something comes up and you cannot provide for the day listed, please exchange with someone or let me know. If you are unable to provide treats at all, please let me know. A future note will come home prior to each party searching for volunteers to help with activities. Thanks!

Sharing

I really enjoy listening to the children share and tell about things that are happening in their lives. Sharing is a wonderful part of kindergarten. It helps the students speak better, enhances self-esteem, builds better listening, communication and questioning skills, and helps us all learn more about each other.

We will have 15 minutes set aside each day for sharing time. Your child will be assigned one day in which he or she may bring something to share or tell something special. If your child brings in an item, please limit it to one item that is non-breakable and non-valuable. Please talk to your child about the responsibility of taking very good care of these items. I have sent home a Sharing Schedule that tells which day your child shares. We will start sharing the second week of school.

Star of the Week

We enjoy getting to know each other and our families by honoring the star of the week. I will send home a poster board home the week before your child is the star of the week. I ask that you help your child decorate this board. You can put pictures on the board of your child, family, or their favorite things. If you and your child prefer to draw pictures, that would great as well. Your child will get a star of the week crown.

Behavior Chart

I will be using a color-coded behavior chart this year. We will be following PAWS for Success guidelines:

1. Be Responsible

2. Show Respect

3. Do Your Best

4. Protect Learning Time

5. Be Trustworthy

We will be spending the first couple of weeks going over these guidelines and classroom expectations. I will model these traits and praise and reward students for positive behaviors. Our classroom will have a color-coded chart that serves as a visual reminder for behavior. Each day your child will start on green. A child will be asked to move up or down on the chart depending on their behavior. If a minor misbehavior occurs, I will give a reminder and they will stay on green. If a more serious behavior occurs or the first reminder doesn’t work, they will move to yellow. If misbehaviors continue to occur throughout the day, they will continue to move down. If I see positive behavior, the child will be told they can move up. So they can be moving up or down throughout the day based on behavior. I will let you know of any major issues or if your child had a fantastic day.

* Pink: I had outstanding behavior. I went above and beyond what was asked of me many times.
* Purple: I did a great job and worked really hard at showing my best behavior
* Blue: I made some good choices today
* Green: I followed PAWS for Success and was ready to learn
* Yellow: I need to slow down and think. I needed one extra reminder today.
* Orange: I needed two extra reminders today and had to give up some recess time to plan how I am going to improve.
* Red: I needed several reminders and had to give up 3 recesses.
* If a student reaches red and continues to misbehave, he/she will visit with Mr. Schumann to talk about PAWS for Success

A calendar will be placed in your child’s folder. It is to remain in the folder all month. At the end of each day, the calendar will be marked with the color they ended up on. I will notify you about chronic behavior, major issues, or if your child deserves extra praise for positive behavior. Phone calls will be made for ending on red or office referrals.

You child will get to choose out of the treasure box for 5 green or higher days (does not have to be consecutive). If this system does not work for you child, or if misbehavior becomes chronic and consistent, we can discuss other options to be beneficial for your child’s progress.

Please keep in mind that I don’t expect your child to be perfect and this system is simply designed to manage behavior and help students become responsible and respectful students in kindergarten. It is a good visual for the child as well as me to adjust behaviors accordingly.

I hope you find this information helpful and answer many questions you may have. I assure you that your child is in good hands, and I am going to make sure that it is a very pleasant and educational year for each and every child.

Thank you,

Brittany Milbrandt