

## WELCOME

Welcome! I am so excited to have the opportunity to work with, teach, and learn from your child every day for the next nine months!

This handbook has been created to help you understand some of the routines, procedures, and "stuff" about our class. Please refer to this often, as it will answer many of your questions. Please also refer to your Prairieland Handbook, as it goes into greater detail about many things mentioned in these pages.

Undoubtedly there are errors within, and items missing from, these pages. This is not meant to be a legal contract, just a guide that will help clarify classroom procedures. Should new information (or situations) arise, or you have any questions, please ask your child first. They are here every day and generally know the answers to how things work. Trust them! However, you may contact me at the school at 309.888.6838 or via e-mail at [kalinake@unit5.org](mailto:kalinake@unit5.org). Please also check our classroom website. You can also send a note with your child via their Parent Communication Log (or any other type of note!) or stop by the school and leave a message at the office. I'm looking forward to a wonderful, fulfilling, successful, and exciting year with this group of fifth graders.

Sincerely,

Kathie Kalina, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

FIFTH GRADE CLASS HANDBOOK

## MISSION STATEMENTS

**Prairieland** (adopted August, 1999)

To work together with the help and support of parents and the community to provide a safe and nurturing environment. Children will learn to access, use, and apply information through educational experiences that promote excitement and enthusiasm for learning. We will develop and continuously strengthen educational programs to help each child grow academically, physically, emotionally, and socially in order to prepare them to be responsible, respectful, life-long learners.

We Believe:

- Every child can learn. It is our responsibility to make accommodations to meet their unique styles of learning.
- Students are the most important people in our profession and school exists for them.
- Education comes in many forms and is a lifelong journey that will provide many wonderful opportunities.
- We must create a learning environment that is child centered, stimulating, current and innovative, and most importantly, enjoyable.
- High expectations, appropriate for each child, instill a sense of goal, responsibility, accomplishment, and pride.
- Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, building an individual's self-esteem and worth as a person.
- Children must take ownership of their actions, and through self-discipline be responsible for their behavior.
- Change is inevitable. Everyone should strive to learn to accept, prepare for, and learn from change.

## PHILOSOPHY

To help prepare you for what you and your child will encounter as a part of the class this year, I want to share with you some of what I believe about education. I believe that all children can learn. However, all of us learn best in different ways and at varying speeds. I therefore believe that information should be presented in as many ways possible to meet the needs of all students. I also believe that people tend to meet the expectations set for them - both set by themselves and others. Therefore, I have very high expectations for your child. I want them to be stretched to reach their highest potential. I want to do more than present a simple curriculum to them. I want to provide them real life projects and activities to expand their experiences and help them to see things in a new way. I want them to enjoy learning, but also to be frustrated in order to grow. I want every child to walk out of the classroom every day having accomplished three things. I believe all of us every day should:

Learn something new

Laugh

Look at ourselves, or the world, in a different way

If we all do that, I believe we have had a successful day. Finally, I believe that, as educators and people, we have a choice - we can tell children what to think or help them learn how to think. I tend to believe it is more important to help children learn how to think.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Obviously teaching is more than philosophy. There must be a practical application of the philosophy.

Therefore, I pledge to you and your child the following:

- I will put my time and effort into creating new and fresh lessons and experiences.
- I will present information in a variety of ways to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- I will trust, care for, and respect your child as an individual and a member of this class.
- I will treat every child equally as a human being, and uniquely as a person.
- I will attempt to provide opportunities for real-life application of classroom lessons.
- I will make every attempt to model what I teach.
- I will help your child learn different ways of thinking, and challenge them to grow, mature, and develop.
- I will hold your child accountable and responsible for their actions and learning, and be accountable and responsible, myself, for my actions and my teaching.
- I will keep your child's best interests in mind.
- I will care for your child.

Hopefully, together, by putting this philosophy into practical application, we'll all have a wonderful and exciting year as Fifth Graders.

## RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

We have drafted and adopted a Classroom Constitution. This constitution states what we as a class believe to be our rights and responsibilities, as well as the consequences. This operates in our class in addition to, and along with, the School Behavior Management Plan.

We, the members of 5K, do hereby establish this classroom constitution. We believe we have certain rights as members of this class. These rights help to make this class the best possible place for everyone involved. These rights include: the right to be safe, the right to be trusted, the right to be treated fairly, equally and respectfully – and to treat others the way we want to be treated, the right to have a voice and to share our ideas and opinions, the right to be paid attention to, the right to help others and to ask for help when we need it, the right to ask questions, the right to use classroom and school resources, and the right to make choices during our free time.

We also believe that these rights need to be protected. Therefore, there are certain responsibilities that each of us has in order to help guarantee these rights. These responsibilities can be summarized as:

1. Respect ourselves
2. Respect other people
3. Respect property/stuff/things

Should someone's rights be violated or someone not fulfill their responsibilities, there will be certain results and consequences. We have decided to adopt the Prairieland consequences as our own. Therefore, anyone who violates these rights or does not fulfill their responsibilities will (depending on the severity of the violation):

1. Receive a warning from the teacher and/or loss of Kalina Kash.
2. Have a one on one conference with the teacher.
3. Miss five minutes, or more, of recess and have their parents notified.
4. Serve an after-school detention until 4:00 and have their parents notified.
5. Be sent to the principal's office, have a conference with parents, and serve an in-school suspension.

We are looking forward to a great year! It is our desire that each member of 5K will feel valued, respected, and safe. We pledge and promise to protect these rights and carry out our responsibilities in order to make that happen. Therefore, we agree to the above rights, responsibilities, and consequences, and will live by them every day in the classroom and at school, and whenever and wherever we are representing 5K.

## BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

In addition to, and along with, the classroom constitution we have adopted, our class follows the Prairieland Behavior Management Plan. Every student is expected to always Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Ready. Students may be rewarded for meeting the expectations, or they may suffer consequences for failing to meet the expectations. A clipboard follows them around the school to every class they go to. Students are allowed a maximum of 5 checks per day, with an ascending list of consequences for each check. Students receiving 0 or 1 check in month receive positive consequences! The sequential system of consequences is as follows. . .

- 1st Check: warning by teacher
- 2nd Check: conference with the teacher documented parent contact
- 3rd Check: loss of recess, parents contacted
- 4th Check: detention until 4:00 pm (parents pick up),
- 5th Check: principal's office, parent conference scheduled in-school suspension

## KALINA KASH

Part of our regular classroom procedure and behavior plan involves "Kalina Kash". Students receive a weekly "salary" for performing classroom tasks (i.e. water the plants, erase the board, etc.) and then can earn more money for doing extra jobs, helping out a friend, getting good reports from other teachers, etc. They can also be charged or fined for not meeting expectations. At least twice a year we will have a classroom auction, at which time the students may spend the money they have earned by bidding on various items and opportunities. Donations of items for the auction are always welcome and accepted! They can also use their "Kash" to purchase time on the computer, lunch in the classroom, etc.

## ATTENDANCE

It is very important that your child is in school every day that they are healthy and able. While there will be circumstances that arise, please make every effort to have your child in school on time every morning. Much of what we do in 5K occurs in class. While I can give "make-up work", I cannot create "make-up learning". Our discussions in class and the time that is provided are not reproducible. Your child's regular attendance is very important!

## TARDINESS

Students are to be at school by 8:30 every day. While tardiness does not always affect their grades, it directly affects their learning. Walking in late never puts one in the right frame of mind to learn and be alert to the degree needed. Please make every effort to have your child arrive at the school sometime between 8:15-8:25 so they can get to class and begin the day on time!

## MAKE-UP WORK

When your child has an **excused** absence, they have twice the number of days they were gone to make up the work. For example, if they were gone for two days, they will have four days to get the work turned in. However, it is preferable that the work is completed sooner so that your child does not fall behind and that the information and concepts are fresh and relevant. If you know your child will be gone, please let me know in advance. I can give them an idea of what we will be doing during that time so they can have a little less makeup work to complete upon their return. However, I will probably not be able to provide them with all of the work they will miss. Please keep in mind that they may be required to take previously announced tests even if they are absent. Please also keep in mind that it is impossible to reproduce a day in the classroom. Much of what we do is not textbook/workbook type material that can be sent home. Some of the work your child misses will not be able to be made up. While it may not adversely affect their grade, chronic absences will affect their learning and likely their success.

## HOMWORK

Homework is often a part of the learning process. However, homework should help the learning process and not hinder it in any way. Your child should not have more than an average of 30-40 minutes a day of homework. If they are consistently having more than this, then it is likely they are not using their time wisely in class or not seeking help when they need it. I will often give them time to begin their work during the day so I am available to answer questions while it is fresh for them. I will often provide them a "work time" at the end of the day to complete some of the tasks they have started as well. I believe that if your child uses that time wisely and asks questions in class when they need to, that they will rarely have even 30-40 minutes of work to take home at night. I would prefer that the time they spend at home be spent either proofreading and correcting work they have completed, reading a book, or going over something with you pertaining to the concepts we are covering. School should take as little time as possible away from the time you have as a family.

Homework is to be turned in to the appropriately labeled tray every morning by 8:35. Every item should be neatly done and have a proper heading. Typing is never required or rewarded on homework, but it is required on final copies of some class work. Students are allowed to use the portable word processors and computers in our classroom in order to type their work, but if they are not getting finished by the due date, they will need to type the final copy at home.

A proper heading looks like this and should be placed in the top right hand corner of every paper that is turned in:

First and Last Name  
Subject  
Date

Please also keep in mind that many of the activities we will be completing are ongoing projects. Time is allotted in class to work on these projects and often the only work that needs to be done at home is "finishing touch" work or catch-up work when one is behind. It is vitally important that your child learn to manage their time, set goals, and work with a deadline. It is also important that all work completed is completed by the student! Homework will usually be posted on the classroom web site.

## PINK SLIPS

When a homework assignment is not turned in or it is not completed on time, your child may be asked to get a "pink slip". This slip must be filled out and signed by you and then returned with the completed assignment. I am willing to give some grace on assignments if I am alerted to a situation ahead of time and asked for an extension. Homework is due first thing in the morning and any time after that it is considered late. Late homework is two completion points off, per day, until it reaches a zero. Homework must still be turned in, even if it has received a zero.

## EXTRA CREDIT

I rarely offer extra credit. However, I do reward effort. Many of the things your child turns in are simply marked with a plus, check, or minus sign (indicating how well they felt that

they understood the concepts), a star, stamp, or sticker (or Kalina Kash) for effort and completion, or a number signifying the completion points earned for the homework. At times they may receive a different mark or note to signify less than best effort. When calculating grades, those completion points will often “pull someone over the hump”, while a lack of effort in completing homework will leave them at the lower grade. Nearly every project or task assigned (excluding worksheets) includes a rubric allowing the student to access the level of achievement that they desire. Specific criteria that need to be met in order to achieve the maximum number of points are included.

## RESEARCH

We will be completing a variety of research projects this year. Your child will be exposed to a variety of resources, both technological and print. It is vitally important that you work with me in teaching your child the importance of copyright and "intellectual copyright" issues. If your child is working on a project at home, please help your child to put information into their own words and to avoid any appearance of plagiarism. The best way to do this is to keep track of all of the resources used, including websites and their publishers (the entire URL or address as well as the name of the company, organization or individual responsible for the site). This will lend credibility to their research and product, as well as teach them a lifelong skill! They will usually be provided with very specific guidelines for keeping track of and “citing” the sources they use.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology will play a large role in our classroom. We attempt to use it effectively and efficiently. In addition to having a web site for our class, your child will become familiar with Microsoft Office products this year, including Microsoft Office 2007 productivity tools (Word and PowerPoint). We will integrate the Smartboard into our curriculum throughout the day. We will also use a Document camera in conjunction with the smartboard. We will use laptop computers for research, and Alphamarts for word processing. Students will also use the two computers in our classroom on a daily basis. A variety of media tools (i.e. Comic Life, Audacity, etc.) will also be utilized during different projects.

## CURRICULUM

The fifth grade curriculum expectations are available at parent night. They are also available online on the Unit 5 website ([www.unit5.org](http://www.unit5.org)). Should you have questions regarding the specific content of the curriculum, please contact me. In the past few years, Unit 5 has done a good job of revising its curriculum to best meet the needs of students, to challenge each student to achieve personal excellence, and to align our curriculum with State standards. This year we will use and refine a new social studies curriculum to help achieve those goals.

## TEXTBOOKS

Your child has a textbook for every subject. They also have two consumable journals for math. These books are all kept in the students' desks, and the books are numbered to correlate with the students' numbers. They are responsible for their book. They may take them home at any time, but need to bring them back. We rarely rely only on the textbook and sometimes may go for a few days without using them. However, they can be a good

resource and you should see them from time to time at home. If you don't see the textbooks for awhile, don't worry. We are learning - we just are learning using authentic activities, primary sources, and a variety of other resources. We do a lot of research on the Internet and using encyclopedias and other books, and we will do a lot of hands-on activities in other subjects that may or may not require the use of the books. The math resource book (the hardback book) is very helpful for you and your student in understanding the Everyday Math material. You should see that book come home every evening in your student's backpack. The book remains in their backpack during the day, unless we are using it. The Language Arts handbook is also a useful tool, and will be used for homework.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

We are fairly flexible with our daily schedule in 5K. Depending on the day and the week, and even individual circumstances, what we do and when we do it may change daily. However, we do basically follow the following schedule.

Morning

- \_ Language Arts
- \_ Art/Music/IMC (times vary for each ... typically one per day for 20-40 minutes)

Afternoon

- \_ Lunch/Recess – 11:00-11:50 daily
- \_ Math
- \_ Science
- \_ Social Studies
- \_ PE (from 2:45-3:15 daily)

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

As mentioned earlier, our schedule is fairly flexible. However, we do have area classes that occur on a regular basis throughout the week.

Monday:	IMC 8:45-9:20	PE 2:45-3:15
Tuesday:	MUSIC 9:10-9:35	PE 2:45-3:15
Wednesday:	MUSIC 10:00-10:25	PE 2:45-3:15
Thursday:	NO SPECIAL	PE 2:45-3:15
Friday:	ART 9:25-10:05	PE 2:45-3:15

## IMC (LIBRARY)

Our IMC day is Monday. Your child will be checking out books from the IMC. These books must be returned or they will not be allowed to check out more. If the books are lost or not returned you will be charged for the price of the book. Please be careful if you also use one of the public libraries, as it is very easy to return books to the wrong place! We also have a classroom library that students may check books out of to read at home. Please watch for these books as well and make sure they get back! The IMC time is split between technology instruction and book check-out.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We have PE every day for 30 minutes. (Students may have an extended PE time of 40 – 50 minutes once or twice per week.) Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately as they often go outside. It is also very important that your child have appropriate gym shoes. Girls should also wear shorts under their skirts/dresses for PE.

## LUNCH

Lunch recess begins everyday at 11:00, followed by lunch at 11:25. If your child eats sack lunch, they should be sure to have that with them every morning and to take the container home (if it is not disposable) every night. Each student has a lunch card with his or her name on it that they carry to the cafeteria, if they choose the option of eating hot lunch. The lunch cards are deposited in a small bin, the cost of lunch (or just milk if they are buying it to drink with their cold lunch) is deducted from each student's account, and the card is returned to the classroom teacher each day. They are then redistributed to the students. Students should bring money in an envelope (labeled with name, room code, date, and amount) to deposit into their accounts to the office. Money may also be deposited into the students' accounts online. Students who have a negative balance in their accounts will not be allowed to purchase lunch. Please also note that milk purchased in addition to, or separately from, the hot lunch costs \$.35. If you will be eating lunch here, you may call the kitchen to let them know you will be eating here (prior to 9:30 am) at 862-5062.

## GADGETS, GIZMONS, AND STUFF

No toys are allowed in the classroom unless given specific permission by me. This includes trading cards, video games, desk decoration, electric pencil sharpeners, gadgets, gizmos, etc. If it is not part of the school supplies list and I have not asked for it or given permission for it to be here, please keep it at home. Thanks! Items that are deemed inappropriate will be confiscated by me, and either returned home at the end of the day or later (up to the end of the year), depending on circumstances and number of occurrences.

## COMMUNICATION

I welcome your communication. I firmly believe that we are a team, and that open and honest communication from the beginning can help to solve, and even prevent, a lot of problems later on. I welcome your comments and questions, and of course your concerns. Compliments are always nice once in a while too! I will try to communicate with you on a very regular basis. You will receive regular updates and newsletters from the class. I may send home other notes and handouts as well. Your child is responsible for checking their home folder every day before they go home. Things that do not get home are your child's responsibility! Should you need to contact me, you may do so via e-mail. I check my e-mail during my lunch hour and at the end of the day. I also check during breaks, as I have time. If an emergency should arise or you do not have email, you may call the office at school at 309.888.6838. They will transfer the call if I am not in class. Otherwise, you may leave a message, and I will return your call at my earliest opportunity. You can communicate using your child's parent communication log, or through a letter sent with your child or dropped off at the school. I also maintain a classroom website that is (usually) updated with homework and other information.

## CONFERENCES

You may sign up for a conference time by the office during curriculum night. Conferences are scheduled during the day for the most part. More information is available on parent night.

## VOLUNTEERS & VISITORS

Volunteers and visitors are always welcome at Prairieland. This year, however, the district is implementing a background check program for any adults who will be around the students. If you plan to help at a room party, chaperone, etc. please ensure that the background check is completed. We ask that you always sign in the office when you visit for any length of time and for any reason. We need to protect the security of our school and students, so we ask your cooperation in this. Don't be offended if someone asks who you are, asks you to check in the office, or offers to help you find whom or what you are looking for! In 5K, we do not do a lot of workbook work, copy art activities, or reproducible work sheet activities so we do not need a lot of copiers or paper cutters. We would like to have you visit us and share your expertise with us -- be it your career, hobby, or whatever! Just let me know your interests and we will try our best to get you plugged in!

## FIELD TRIPS

We will plan a couple of field trips this year. All of our field trips will directly correlate to our curriculum and goals. We organize a fundraiser to help pay for our major trips, but at times there may be a cost to you, though this cost is very minimal and help can be provided for in special circumstances. Some field trips will allow for volunteers and chaperones. Should these trips arise, you will be notified in writing and asked to respond in writing if you would like to commit yourself to going with us on the trip. Field trip transportation will always occur by bus and all children will be required to ride the bus.

## PARTIES

Various classroom parties are scheduled throughout the year. You can sign up to help with one of these parties either by organizing one, being here in person, or simply by bringing something that is needed. These parties will be announced ahead of time and will be posted in the school calendar that comes home in the Prairieland Press. You can sign up at Parent Night as well. Periodically our class will also set goals for ourselves that will possibly lead to parties. Information about these will come home when those times arrive.

## REPORT CARDS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are sent home at the end of every twelve weeks. The report card should be reviewed by you, with your child, and then the yellow comment card should be signed by you and returned. The white report card is yours to keep. Progress reports are generally sent home midway through each grading period. The progress report will include various topics and concepts we have covered and an indication of the progress I see your child making. I will also often write comments to help give you an idea of how your child is doing and what their strengths and weaknesses are. The progress report will have a parent signature line for you to sign and return to let me know you received it, and to ask any questions/make any comments you might have. Please remember that Progress Reports and Report Cards are but one glimpse of your child. They are an attempt to show you and your child how they are progressing. Straight A's are not the standard, although they may be a personal goal. The important thing is that your child is learning, progressing, growing, maturing and developing. If those things are happening, and they are meeting or exceeding the expectations, then they are where they need to be! Be

proud of your child for giving their best effort, and continue to encourage them to give their best!

## BIRTHDAYS

We will celebrate each child's birthday this year. If you do not want your child's birthday celebrated for any reason, please let me know via e-mail or a note. You are welcome to bring treats to class on the day of your child's birthday. However, I do ask a couple of favors if you are sending treats. First, please make sure the treats are store-bought and come in packaging that makes it clear they do not contain peanuts and were not made in a facility that may have contained peanuts. This should be easy to find on packaged items from stores. Secondly, please send **only** individually prepackaged snacks. (For example, fruit snacks, granola bars, etc.) Generally, in middle school, students do bring treats on birthdays, and this year, we would like to start making that transition. We will generally have birthday snacks at about 2:00. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate it on their half-birthday. Should your child's birthday be on a weekend or holiday, they can decide if they would like to celebrate it on the day right before the weekend/holiday or right after. Just let me know.

## BOOK ORDERS

I will be sending book orders home periodically. I generally send them every other month, and send the two month together. Please do not feel obligated to buy from these, though they often provide great books at very reasonable prices. When book orders are sent home, they will be due three school days later. Therefore, if they are sent home on a Friday, they will be due on Wednesday of the following week. Please look carefully at the orders and mark them completely. Please make the checks payable to Scholastic. **DO NOT SEND CASH!!!** Orders typically take a couple weeks to come in and some items are on back order. Remember that the orders come in a couple weeks after all of the orders are turned in to me and I can send the order in. If we all follow the three-day guideline we should get our books back fairly quickly. Your ordering from these book orders also earns our class bonus points to acquire additional books and materials for the classroom.

## SUPPLIES

You should have received a supply list when you registered. There may be some items, throughout the year, that are needed or that need to be replenished.

## READING

Reading is very important in 5K. Your child will have Independent Reading Time every day. They will also read a variety of novels throughout the year (shared reading) and I will be reading aloud. Your child is also expected to read for at least 100 minutes every week outside of class. The minutes should be recorded on the Reading Log, and then initialed by you before turning in on Monday of each week. Reading logs are expected to be completed during weeks that school is not in session (i.e. winter break). The reading logs are part of the language arts grade!

## GRADING

We follow a very simple grading scale in 5K. The scale itself is below and is followed by some more explanation:

A 90-100 %

B 80-89 %

C 70-79 %

D 60-69 %

F 00-59 %

I truly believe that if your child puts forth their best effort in all they do that they should rarely, if ever, receive below a C on any given assignment, project, or grade report. Essentially, the only way to fail in 5K is to not do the work or not put forth the effort needed. Some of the work that is done receives completion points (an effort grade). Homework is practice and is often given completion points. At times, daily work that is turned in will be given a score of 0-10. These go in the grade book and are added to the final grade and included in the percentage. Tests and projects will usually receive a percent score and corresponding letter grade.

## TESTS

At times, tests will be used as a summative assessment tool. Tests serve as an opportunity for your child to show what they have learned and what they know. Tests will always be announced and will generally be preceded by a study guide. Tests in 5K have no time limit. I usually allow students who receive a letter grade below a "C" to retake a math test, if they are willing to come in during recess to do so. The retake test is similar to the original, but uses different values.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Your child is primarily responsible for themselves. Whether it is homework, attitude, behavior, or whatever, your child is responsible for the choices they make. With this in mind, I encourage you to not always bring things to school when they forget. Sometimes it is better for them to experience the consequences than to be bailed out. Encourage them to be organized and take responsibility for themselves! Help them develop a routine that works for you and them. Your child is responsible for staying organized and keeping track of assignments. They should record assignments in their assignment book every day, and mark assignments as complete only AFTER they are turned in! I strongly encourage students to take work home, even if it is complete, so that you may see what they have been doing and they can double-check their work, if you would like to do so.

## INTEGRITY

One of the characteristics that I stress for your child is integrity. Basically, I want your child to do what they say and be who they are supposed to be. If they get in trouble in another class, I want them to tell me without me asking. If I ask them about an incident I want them to tell me the truth. If they are given an assignment I want them to do their own work and not take someone else's as their own.