

Classroom Handbook

Visit our website at www.griswoldschoolk.weebly.com.

The ABC's of Kindergarten for K1



Aa

Absences 🍏 If your child needs to miss school, please remember to call the office at 860-828-6336 telling us why your child is absent.

Assessment 🍏 We use formal and informal assessments throughout the year. The formal assessments are used to determine where your child is as he/she enters the school year and are administered again to provide the best information we can obtain for report cards and conference meetings. Teachers are given some coverage so that we can focus on one student and provide a quiet environment. The assessment is given to each child individually and is done in a fun and stress free manner.

Attendance 🍏 Attendance is very important! Your child's progress, both academically and socially, is greatly influenced by daily participation.

Bb

Backpacks 🍏 Children should come to school with a backpack and folder every day. The backpack should be large enough to fit a folder, lunch, and library book. The folder is used for notes that are sent home and notes that are sent to school. Each day when children arrive they are asked to check their backpack for mail and other important papers. This is a way to set students up for individual responsibility for years to come.

Behavior Management 🍏 I believe that children will thrive in a structured and predictable environment where they feel safe and loved. Students respond well to high expectations with positive recognition and praise. We all must show respect. Children must be friendly to every member of the classroom community. I teach students that life is about choices and I expect them to “make good choices.” I strive for consistency and start the school year with clear expectations. Children are taught to use caring language to tell each other how they are feeling. If a problem occurs, I expect the children to “use their words” and listen to each other and try to come to a resolution. Many times they are able to work out problems without my intervention. If that is not possible, they should bring the issue to my attention.

Birthdays 🍏 Birthdays are important to children. With many food allergies in our classrooms, we want to ensure all students can participate in birthday celebrations. We will sing and celebrate each child on his/her special day. As an option, families are welcome to purchase an inexpensive book, toy, game, or puzzle to donate on behalf of your child’s birthday. You can ask your child what item or book they would like to have in our classroom. Another option can be to send in a non-edible ‘goodie’, such as stickers, pencils, or party toys for each student to take home. You can contact me if you would like to explore other options as well. FYI: It is our school policy that invitations cannot be handed out in class. A class list with addresses will be made available a few weeks into the school year.

Breakfast 🍏 Research shows that children who eat breakfast learn better than those who don’t, so please make sure your child is eating a healthy breakfast each day.

Bucket Filling 🍏 Have you filled a bucket today? All classrooms use the bucket filling philosophy to promote respect and empathy towards others, as well as positive self-esteem. Activities may include read alouds, role-playing, filling a classroom bucket, and creating classroom norms.

Cc

Calendar 🍏 Important dates can be found on the school website.

Celebrations 🍏 We will have Halloween, December, Valentine, and spring celebrations. I will ask room parents to help organize these parties. We will have a special snack and some fun activities on these days. Each family will be asked if they wish to contribute something. Information will be sent home prior to the dates.

Centers 🍏 Centers is a common term in primary classrooms. It is usually a time when students are engaged in a variety of tasks, both play and academic. In K1, Centers is a structured playtime. This will be a time for students to practice social skills and explore and discover new learning through play.

NOTE: Stations are different from centers. At stations, students are working on a variety of tasks that are directly related to new learning or practicing an extension of existing learning. This may be an oral activity, a partner or small group game, an academic project such as stamping or cut and paste, or it can be an art project. These art projects are not a simply a “fun craft” but rather extend an area of learning while helping your child develop fine motor skills, improve problem solving skills, practice organizational skills, learn how to follow written and picture directions, and develop a sense of pride in their work.

Communication 🍏 Communication between school and home is vital to your child’s success. It is very important to me that you are aware of what is going on at school. Throughout the year I will send monthly newsletters (email with link to website) to keep you informed of some of the things that we are doing in class. Talking with your child and asking about their day is your primary means of information. It will help their communication skills to grow and give you information about our jobs and lessons. If you need to contact me, you may send a note to school, call, or email. I prefer email to start, as it is a quick way for me to respond.

If you are sending a note please remind your child to put it in my mailbox. Please note that I check my email daily, but at times the system is down. If it is important that I read the message right away (especially changes in transportation), you should send a note or call the school.

Griswold School: 860.828.6336

School Email: rmarquis@berlinschools.org

Concepts About Print (C.A.P.) 🍏 Concepts about print includes awareness that print carries a message. There are conventions such as directionality (left to right, top to bottom), differences between letters and words, distinctions between upper and lower case, punctuation, and books have some common characteristics (e.g. author, title, front/back). We will work on C.A.P throughout year in kindergarten, and it is a part of our assessment.

Conferences 🍏 Griswold School has two parent/teacher conference days during the school year. However, you or I may request additional conferences throughout the year if needed. During the first conference, the main focus will be on social and emotional development and progress with expected skills thus far for kindergarten. At the second conference, I will mainly focus on academic progress toward end of the year expectations. We will also revisit any areas that we were watching for growth and progress.

Confidentiality 🍏 The privacy and well being of students is to be protected. If you have an opportunity to volunteer in the classroom, please respect the privacy of our class. Conversations and parent observations of other students should remain confidential.

Dd

Dismissal 🍏 If your child needs to leave school before the regular dismissal time, you must go to the office to sign him/her out. Our secretary will call for your child to meet you in the office. If you are picking up at the end of the day, you will wait outside the designated pick up door. Your child will be sent out to you.

Ee

Extra Clothes 🍏 We have extra clothes in the nurse's office if your child has an accident, gets wet, dirty, etc. If your child needs to change, the school nurse will provide your child with the appropriate clothing. These clothes need to be washed and returned to school as soon as possible for any other students who may need them. *We strongly recommend keeping extra clothing in your child's backpack or cubby.

Ff

Field Trips 🍏 We will be going on a couple of field trips that are both fun and educational. Notices will be sent home in advance informing you of all the details regarding the trip. Please return permission slips as soon as possible. We will request parent volunteers to chaperone field trips. We can only take 2-3 volunteers on each trip. If you are available to chaperone please write that on the permission slip. If you are not selected for the first trip you will be given priority on the next.

Gg

Goodbyes 🍏 Saying goodbye at school can be very emotional for both you and your kindergartener. Try to send your child off with a smile and a wave, along with the reassurance that you will see them after school. Remember, even distressed children settle very quickly once you are gone. Give a quick hug. Most often, once you are out of sight, your child settles and is ready to begin their day. Resist the urge to return if they cry, as this will only prolong the situation. Please don't feel guilty about leaving your child with me if they are crying. Trust that they will be shown concern and compassion from the moment they enter my room.

Guided Reading 🍏 Small reading groups begin early in the year and continue through the end of school. These groups may be focused on a specific level text and guiding the readers to the skills needed at that level or could be a group focused on skills that will help at all levels. Because children become so excited about reading once they realize that they CAN do it, I know they will be thrilled to share their stories with you. Please set some special time aside for you and your child to share books together. Encourage your child to share their reading with other family members as well.

Hh

Habits of Mind 🍏 During the school year, you and your child will hear more about the Habits of Mind. They are a set of 16 life skills and problem solving strategies that are an important part of social and emotional growth. In kindergarten, we focus a great deal on the following habits of mind: persisting, managing impulsivity, and listening to others with understanding and empathy.

Halloween 🍏 Kindergarteners are the only students allowed to dress up for Halloween. We will have a fun filled day with a special snack, games/activities, and a parade around the school. Parents are welcome to join in the fun.

Health 🍏 Please let me know of special circumstances that may affect your child (i.e. medications that may make them sleepy, a death in the family, etc.) Also, please let me know of any allergies your child may have, especially food allergies.

Holidays Around the World 🍏 During the month of December we will learn about many different holidays and customs. We will learn a little about Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Las Posadas, and St. Lucia Day. Please talk with your child about your family beliefs. If your family celebrations include other holidays, let me know so that it can be included in some way. It would be great if you could come to school and share a holiday custom or tradition with the class.

Homework 🍏 It is so important for children at this age to hear fluent readers. Please **read to and with your child** for about 10 minutes every night. Make sure throughout the week this reading includes your child's library book. The first half of the year the children will have Letter Tile and Math Packs at home. This includes an assignment for each content area that should be completed a few times during the week. Later in the year your child will be bringing home "red dot" books and sight word rings. These assignments all begin to develop student responsibility.

Ii

Illness 🍏 The question of when to keep your child home from school is often a difficult one, especially when the decision may affect your work schedule. It is important however, to keep your child home if he/she is ill. This helps them feel better more quickly and prevents others from becoming ill. Children function more effectively in the classroom when they are healthy.

Independent Reading 🍏 Children need plenty of opportunities to read independently to become stronger readers. Remember that children begin to read by **memorization**, looking at the **pictures** and **creating** or **retelling** the story. By giving the children time to read both at school and at home, we can work together to provide a literature-rich environment and life-long love of reading.

Jj

Journey 🍏 This year is sure to be an incredible journey for your child, and I am so glad that I can share it with you and your family. We will cross many milestones together and face many new challenges. With your help, we can make this year a journey that your child will cherish for the rest of his/her life.

Kk

Kindergarten Readiness 🍏 There are many things you can do to help prepare your child for kindergarten. Please look through all the information coming home in the first month for some great ideas. Remember to stay positive!

Ll

Letter Sounds 🍏 As adults we forget (or at least very rarely think about) that each letter we use in speech and writing has its own sound. It is an important skill for all children to *recognize* upper and lowercase letters and be able to articulate each individual *sound* for the letters. This includes those difficult short vowel sounds. Later in the year we begin to isolate beginning and ending sounds as well as use these sounds for our writing. It is important that as children are working, that we help them hear and write what they hear, not traditional spelling patterns.

Their writing might look like: {rit=write, ran= rain, sumr=summer, got=goat, crisms=Christmas}. This type of writing will provide a smooth transition to next steps in the process.

Library 🍏 We will visit the library once a week. Please try to read the books to your child during that week, and send them back for the next library class. Children will often say, “Mom/Dad forgot.” I encourage the children to accept that they forgot their books and can bring it the next day. I will remind them that everyone forgets something sometimes. This is a great way to teach the students independence and responsibility. If a book is lost or damaged, we will ask that you pay the replacement cost.

Lost and Found 🍏 We have a lost and found at Griswold School. I encourage you and your child to check it regularly for any missing items. Please label your child’s removable clothing such as jackets, coats, sweaters, hats, and sweatshirts with their first and last name.

Lunch 🍏 Students will be eating lunch in the Griswold cafeteria. You can prepay for lunch via the online system accessible through www.griswoldschool.org or you can send in a check or cash that will be deposited into the account. Each day students will sign up for what they will be having or if they have brought their lunch from home. Please talk with them about their choices ahead of time to expedite the process.

Mm

Mailing List 🍏 Please join the email mailing list. It will allow me to communicate important dates, ask for parent help or involvement, and make you aware of upcoming events. If you do not have an email account, I can send home a hard copy with your child.

Marquis 🍏 The *s* is silent. It will be the first silent letter we learn about!

Money 🍏 Money is difficult for children to keep track of. Whenever you send money with your child (school store, special events, etc.), please put it in a sealed envelope or baggie that is labeled with my name, your child's name and what the money is for. Many times students will place it on my table or leave it around the room so a label would be helpful.

Nn

Newsletter 🍏 I will post a monthly newsletter on our website. It is very important that you read the newsletter so that you can keep your child prepared for classroom events. The newsletter will contain information about our classroom activities, schedules, and events. It will also include an overview of lessons and may include activities and questions that you can discuss with your child to reinforce learning at home. You will also get to enjoy a new set of photos each month that can spark conversations about life at school!

Nurse 🍏 We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful nurse and nurse's assistant on staff here at Griswold. Mrs. McCormack and Mrs. Baillargeon are here to tend to minor scratches and scrapes, as well as sudden illnesses, and to administer medication. All medications are to be brought to the nurse by a parent, not sent in with a child. Please be sure your contact information is kept up to date in the event that Mrs. McCormack needs to get in touch with you. I will take care of VERY minor needs that may require band aids or cream for chapped lips to avoid children leaving the class during our valuable time together.


Oo


Open House 🍏 The Griswold School Open House is held one evening during September. **This is for adults only.** I encourage you to attend because I will be discussing in more detail the academic expectations for kindergarten and providing information that you will need to know in order to have a successful year.

Orientation 🍏 Orientation to the classroom, Griswold School and the wonderful staff here will happen gradually during the first few weeks of school. An important part of this process is our **traveling books**.


Through these books, children will learn friends' names, extend stories, and share their own and friends' work with you. These will travel to your home periodically throughout the first few months of school. Please read them together with your child, add a brief comment in the back, and return it to school the following day.

Pp


Peaceful Place  The children of K1 have a "Peaceful Place" to go to as needed. They may use it to take a break, gain control of an emotion, think about making better choices, or simply have a little alone time. A child may choose to go there or may be asked to go there as needed.

Phonemic Awareness  Phonemic Awareness is the awareness that words are composed of small sounds and children will develop the ability to manipulate these sounds. Kindergarteners will do a lot of work with phonemic awareness, and it is an important part of the district expectations. These skills are often taught and learned through singing different songs together in school. I encourage you to sing these songs together with your child and be playful with language and songs.

Qq

Questions  Many of you are new to Griswold this year, and I am sure that you will have some unanswered questions. Please feel free to contact me at anytime if you have any questions or concerns. I will gladly address them as soon as possible.

Rr

Recess  Recess is an important part of the day for children to play outside and during poor weather conditions to enjoy free choice play indoors. This is a time for children to develop additional social and motor skills and expand friendships to students in other classes. They will also develop life long skills in problem solving, turn taking, and being a good friend in group activities and games.

Red Dot Reading Books 🍏 These are short texts that we work with in the classroom. They are used in a variety of ways such as reinforcing curriculum, sight word acquisition, fluency, tracking and phonemic awareness. These should have a special spot at home where they are kept and reread throughout the year and saved for summer reading as your child transitions into first grade.

Restrooms 🍏 A restroom is located in our classroom. Students are required to ask permission to use the rest room. Since there is only one boy's room and one girl's room, they may have to wait.

Room Parent 🍏 I will ask for 1-2 parents to be the room parents. The job of the room parent is to coordinate celebrations and activities by asking other parents to contribute and to seek volunteers when needed. Being a room parent is a great way to be involved in your child's school life. Please let me know if you would like to be one of our room parents.

Ss

Scholastic Books 🍏 The Parents Club will host one book fair in the fall and one in the spring. Please sign up to help if you are available.

School Supplies 🍏 Griswold School will supply everything your child needs for the year. The only thing you need to provide is a folder for your child's backpack.

Show and Tell/ Sharing 🍏 This is a time in our schedule that children have the opportunity to share about something that is important to them. At Griswold School we use an "Expanding Expression Tool" kit that teaches children the necessary skills to describe an item thoroughly and therefore increase their expressive vocabulary. We will have sharing every week, beginning later in the year. I will send home a class schedule when we're ready to begin. Please help your child pick out something that is interesting and special to him/her. Please help your child prepare to share the information about the object:

What group does it belong to (fruit, toy, game, etc.)? What does it do? Where did you get it? What do you do with it? What does it look like (color, size, shape)? What is it made of? Where did you get it or where does it come from? Why is it special to you? What else would you like us to know about it?

Snack Time 🍏 Snack will be scheduled for mid afternoon. Students should bring a water bottle (if desired) and a quick and easily consumed snack. Snack will last for about 10 minutes. *Please refer to the district snack policy for information about limiting allergens in classrooms.

Special Classes 🍏 The students will attend a special class each day. These include art, music, physical education, and library. Please make sure students are prepared for these classes. They will need to return library books on library day and wear sneakers and appropriate clothes on P.E. (physical education) days.

Tt

Take Home Folders 🍏 Take home folders are the folders that should be in your child's backpack and will travel with them to and from school every day. This will be your number one means of communicating with me this year. Any notes, changes in transportation, etc. should be sent to me inside this home/school folder. I ask children to check their folder daily when they arrive into school. Please ask your child for this folder each day as it may also contain notes from me, completed schoolwork, etc. Be sure to **empty** the folder on a daily basis and return it back to school each day.

Tardy 🍏 If you bring your child to school after the beginning of the school day, you will need to walk with them in for a late slip and to sign them in. It is very important that your child arrives on time so that they can get settled in and ready for the day.

Toys 🍏 Bringing toys to school or wearing lots of extra jewelry is discouraged because they distract the children from learning and take up space in backpacks. Please encourage your child to leave personal items at home. Our classroom is filled with items to keep us busy. Lost and broken toys and jewelry can result in very sad feelings.

Transportation Changes 🍏 If your child's transportation for any given day changes, please alert me by sending a note in your child's take home folder or by calling the school office. If you choose to send a note, please be sure it includes your child's first and last name, the date, the day, and your signature. If a child fails to bring a note and is supposed to do something different from the normal schedule, the child will not be permitted. For example, if a child is normally a bus rider, but thinks he/she is getting picked up but does not have a note, the child will be sent home on the bus.

Transportation Tag 🍏 It is important that your child has the nametag on his/her backpack for the first weeks of school. It helps us know where your child is going if they forget. It also helps the bus driver know the drop off address. If the tag is lost you can make a new one. After about a week or two the students learn the routine and do not need the tags.

Uu

Unique 🍏 Each child is unique and special! They enter our classrooms with different skills, personalities, experiences, backgrounds, and learning styles. My goal is to foster children's individual strengths and help each child develop to his/her fullest potential, academically and socially. The two most important elements that I hope to instill in your child are a positive self-concept and a love for learning.

Vv

Valentine's Day 🍏 On or around Valentine's Day we will have a class celebration. I consider this to be a day of friendship and kindness. This will include a special snack, fun activities, and the exchange of Valentines for our classmates. Valentines are a great opportunity for students to practice writing their classmates names. I ask each child to participate. A list will be made available. Thank you in advance for including everyone, as we do not want any hurt feelings.

Visitors 🍏 ALL guests, including familiar faces, must sign in and get a nametag in the school office. Griswold welcomes and encourages family involvement. It is important to remember that while this may seem inconvenient to frequent visitors, it is the goal and responsibility of the school to create a safe environment.

Volunteers 🍏 I strive to utilize volunteers in our classroom on a daily basis because I believe your involvement in your child's education is essential. By expressing an interest in your child's education, you are encouraging their success in school. Many adults work full time and are unable to come in on a weekly basis. I encourage you to volunteer to be a "Mystery Reader" for the class or come into class if you have a day off and are available. I am very flexible with the schedule. If you would like more information about how to become a volunteer, please let me know.
*DCF and Raptor paperwork must be done annually to volunteer.

Ww

Websites 🍏 More information is available on our district and school websites: www.berlinschools.org, www.griswoldschool.org. We also have a separate website dedicated to our kindergarten team. You can access this website at www.griswoldschoolk.weebly.com or from the school page. This website gives information about our curriculum. Each teacher also maintains a communication page that is linked. My page will be updated monthly with a brief newsletter, new photos, and a short video we have enjoyed in class. I will send an email with the link every month.

Wish List 🍏 If you would like to donate a box of Kleenex, it would be greatly appreciated. **This is optional.** You may also support Griswold School in other ways. You can sign up for free programs like registering your Stop and Shop card or shopping through a specific website portal that gives financial benefit to our school. Watch for these programs in Parents Club notices.

Xx

X-ray 🍏 Yes, even X has its own sound and can be tricky for little ones to articulate. They can tell me “x, like in box, fox and x-ray.” We also pretend to open a soda can, which makes the /x/ sound.

Yy

You 🍏 Please remember that you are your child’s first and most important teacher. No one can influence your child’s life in the way that you can.

Younger Siblings 🍏 We love younger siblings, but they should not be brought to school when you are planning to volunteer in the classroom. This not only allows your full attention to be focused on the class, but it also allows for some special time between you and your kindergartener. Special days like the end of year picnic are perfect times for your other little ones to get a sneak peek at kindergarten!

Zz

Zz Zz Zz Zz 🍏 Please make sure that your child gets plenty of rest each night. Setting and keeping a consistent bedtime helps them to be alert and ready to learn each day.

Contact Information:

Rosina Marquis

rmarquis@berlinschools.org

860.828.6336, Ext. 4351

The best time to reach me is in the morning. I will most likely not be able to return daytime calls until after the school day is over. If you are looking for a quick response on a simple matter, an email is best. 😊