



Kindergarten News

August 2008

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe it is already the first day of school! I am looking forward to working with your child this year. I am sure you will see a lot of learning and growth in your child throughout the year. The beginning of the school year is a time when I focus on developing the tone and environment of the classroom for the year. We focus on making good choices and learning about each other. I spend a lot of time teaching the schedule and routines along with expectations for behavior for each of them. I also introduce the students to our classroom environment and materials, including how to use and care for them.

At the beginning of the year, the class will help generate rules for a productive and safe learning environment. Children are much more likely to respect the rules that are made if they help in this process. We will start by having the students and myself generate a list of hopes and dreams we have for the school year. Once this is complete, we move on to create rules that will help us achieve these hopes and dreams. Please share your hopes and dreams for your child's kindergarten experience with me and your child. Through your discussions about this topic, your child will better understand this activity.

Learning in kindergarten is very much a hands-on experience! Please make sure your child comes to school in comfortable play clothes that are easy to wash. T-shirts are available in our class for messy painting projects, but accidents do happen! Also make sure your child is wearing sturdy shoes or sneakers that will keep your child safe while running and playing on the playground.

We will visit the library weekly to check out books. This helps encourage a love of reading and respect for books. As the students become familiar with the school, they will be allowed to exchange books daily. I encourage you to take time to read to your child every day. Although schedules become very hectic, spending 15 minutes reading to your child can benefit both of you! Please find a special, safe place to keep the library books so they can be returned promptly.

It would be helpful if your child had a backpack to carry to school each day. When you purchase a backpack, please look for one large enough to hold library books, papers, and projects that may come home daily, but not so large that it will not fit in your child's cubby. School notices, PTO info, class work, and other important information will come home daily in a folder I will provide for your child. Please review the information and return the folder to school the next day, enclosing any notes or replies.

Families are responsible for sending a nutritious snack each day. The snack break in our kindergarten room offers opportunities to develop healthy habits and good manners. Fruits/vegetables, pretzels, popcorn, granola bars, crackers with cheese, etc. are good choices to boost energy. Please save sweet treats for after lunchtime or after school. Be sure your child is able to open his/her snack by themselves. On occasion, our cooking projects will become the snack for the day. A note will be sent home informing you when these activities are planned.

Birthdays are special in kindergarten! If you wish to send in something special for your child's birthday, please let me know in advance so we can plan on it. Anytime a classroom treat is sent in for birthdays, this will be used for snack.

School sessions are as follows: **morning class is 8:30 to 11:20** and **afternoon class is 12:20-3:10**. Please do not drop your child off at school before **8:10 or 12:20** because there is no supervision until then and your child's safety is important to us. On shortened days, the schedule is as follows: **morning class is 8:30 to 10:40** and **afternoon class is 11:00to 1:10**. Inclement weather may cause early closings or delayed openings. Morning kindergarten is canceled when there is a delayed opening, while afternoon classes are canceled in an early closing. Please tune into your local radio station or TV channel when wintry weather is possible.

If you are going to pick your child up or if she/he is going home with someone else or going somewhere besides home, you **MUST** send in a note indicating this. In the case of a last minute change in your plans, you may call the school with instructions (742-7313). Parents or your designee must check in at the office before your child will be dismissed. Please be prepared to show identification...our school staff may not recognize all parents. **Understand that your child's safety is our primary concern.**

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please call Mrs. Curtiss, the school nurse (742-4553 ext, 157) on that day or beforehand. If a long absence is anticipated, please make the school aware of this. Some contact from school may make things easier on your child when he/she returns to kindergarten.

I encourage you to get involved with your child's education in whatever way is possible for you. Our kindergarten program offers many opportunities for this. Field trips are only possible with the help of parent chaperones and special classroom art, nature and cooking projects require extra hands for material preparation and direct assistance. Your help is always appreciated. Please indicate on the volunteer form what level of participation is possible for you at this time.

This is only the first of weekly newsletters that will be sent home each Friday to keep you informed of units of study, special activities, and upcoming events in our class. It will also be available on my web page which can be accessed @ coventrypublicschools.org and following the links (Coventry Grammar School to Academics to Kindergarten to Mrs. Smith).

If you have any questions about our class newsletter or any other concerns, you may reach me here at school via the main office (742-7313) or by voicemail (742-4553 ext. 207) or by email (rsmith@coventryct.org). I am usually available to take calls before 8:00 a.m. or after 3:30 p.m. If you leave a voicemail, I will return your call as soon as possible. I will check my email before and after school each day and respond ASAP to any messages.

I am looking forward to working with you to make this an exciting and productive year for your child. I am excited to learn more about your child and to help him/her learn and grow!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Smith
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