

4th Grade Handbook

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This handbook can also be found on our web pages.

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to 4th grade! We want to thank you for sharing your child with us and the entire St. Gabriel Community this year. We are all looking forward to an exciting, enthusiastic, and fun-filled school year!

Fourth grade is a big transition year, as I am sure you have heard, but you will be amazed at the changes in your child this year. We always ask parents to take a few minutes at the beginning of the school year to jot down a brief description of what your child is like now. What is his/her personality like? How is he/she about doing homework and how much assistance is needed? etc. Then at the end of the year, go back and look at what your observations were. The changes are usually quite incredible. Each year when we begin with a new class of 4th graders, we see a class of “big, little kids.” However, when they leave us in May they are our “little, big kids.” They grow up so much this year and we know it is hard for many parents to start letting go, but it is so important that you do so.

Education is a joint effort between teacher, parent, and student. It is our job to teach your child HOW to LEARN—it is your job to teach your child HOW to WORK. We have put together this handbook of information to help you and your child become familiar with our expectations for the school year. Please take some time to read through this information and discuss it with your child. We then ask that you sign and complete the last page of this booklet. The signed page will need to be returned to your child’s homeroom teacher.

Please contact us regarding any questions or concerns you may have during the year. You may contact us by email, note, or by calling the school office. We look forward to working with you and your child!

Sincerely,
Lisa Lauder Science and Social Studies
Barbara Rastocny Math and Religion
Lea Sweeny Language Arts

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Science and Social Studies – Ms. Lauder

I teach Science and Social Studies to all of the 4th grade students. This will be a year of many firsts for your child, and he/she will adapt very well I am sure. We put a great deal of effort into working with the students to help them learn to be better organized, prepared for classes, and responsible. We do ask that you help work on these skills at home as well. Please help keep your child's expand-a-file in order and help your child date his/her homework notebook. These are very important organizational skills that will be beneficial throughout your child's school career.

As mentioned earlier, 4th grade is definitely a transitional year. This will be the first year your child has had Science and Social Studies taught as individual subjects on a daily basis. There is a great deal of material covered, much more content than the students experienced in previous grades. It is very important that you work with your child to help with comprehension and study skills. I am asking that you read regularly with you child – have him/her read aloud from the Science or Social Studies text and summarize the information to you. This is vitally important in helping your child build the strong content reading skills necessary to be successful not only this year, but in years to come.

For each chapter in Science and Social Studies, the students will make flashcards for the vocabulary introduced in the chapter. The students are expected to begin studying the flashcards right away. They will take a vocabulary quiz near the end of each chapter. Throughout the year, students will also complete classwork/homework in which they will need to use the text to find the answers. This is often a difficult skill at the beginning of the year. We will work a lot on this in class, but you may also need to work with your child on this skill at home.

The students will be provided study guides for each test in Science and Social Studies. These are guidelines of what to study to prepare for the upcoming test. On average, these study guides will cover about 80%-85% of the material on the test. I do not require students to complete these, I do, however, strongly encourage them to do so. I offer two bonus points that will be added to the test grade if the student shows me a completed study guide by the assigned date (usually two class days before the test – this date will be given along with the test date when the study guides are distributed). Please encourage your child to complete the study guides, they are very beneficial.

Approximately every other week the students will complete a writing assignment on various topics related to Science and Social Studies. In the beginning of the year, the assignment will be a five sentence paragraph on the given topic. As the year progresses, the assignments will most likely increase in length. There will be specific directions given in class, and we will complete the first few assignments at school. I will check to make sure they are being completed correctly and make corrections to your child's rough draft. A good copy will then be done in class in your child's composition notebook. After a few weeks, the students will be doing the rough drafts on their own as homework. I do ask that you check the rough draft each week for spelling, grammatical, capitalization, and punctuation errors. The rough drafts will usually be due on Wednesdays – the specific dates will be on my homework board as well as my webpage.

Throughout the school year we will be doing science experiments/activities during science class. On days we have done the activities, the homework will be to take

the information from the activity home and explain it to a parent. I have found that students have a better understanding of the concepts/outcomes if they “teach” someone else about it and discuss it one-on-one. I ask that you sign your child’s science notebook on those evenings to let me know that he/she did explain the activity to you.

Homework will be assigned in Science and/or Social Studies most nights. Some nights it will be written homework, other nights it will be studying. When homework is assigned, it is due the next school day unless an alternate due date is given. Students will receive credit for completing homework by the date it is due. Late homework assignments will not receive credit.

As I am sure many of you already know each teacher at St. Gabriel has a personal web page. I try very hard to keep my web page up to date with homework, study guides, and other links that may be beneficial to your child and you. Please utilize this tool, but please don’t allow your child to become dependent on it. I do try to update the homework page daily, but there will be days when I am not at school or just don’t get it updated for some reason. All students are given the opportunity to write homework down at the end of each class period. At the end of the day, all homework (for all classes) is written on the homeroom homework board and students have time to check their homework notebooks and make sure all homework is written down. If you find that your child is not writing all of his/her homework down, please let the homeroom teacher know so she can check your child’s notebook more closely.

Please feel free to contact me (llauder@stgabriel.net) about any questions/concerns you may have during the year. I look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,
Lisa Lauder

Math and Religion – Mrs. Rastocny

This year your fourth grader will be changing classes. I teach your child Religion and Math. Although exchanging classes is a challenge, they **really like** moving from class to class.

Our daily schedule is posted in my classroom so each student is aware of where and when they change classes. Homework is written down on each homeroom homework board—each teacher tries to allow enough time for the students to copy his/her homework before they leave that teachers’ room. Also, at the end of the day, we give them plenty of time to copy homework in their homeroom. We go over this process each day—very slowly—as to make all the kids feel comfortable with this procedure!!! We encourage all parents to check/sign your child’s homework notebook each night—this way you are aware of what skills they have covered and upcoming test/quiz dates. Most days I try to post Math and Religion hmwk on my web page—this is done as a courtesy—not a requirement for teachers.

Our Religion book is Faith First (Legacy Edition). It is a great book with lots of bible stories that have moral/practical lessons to be learned. We will be learning new

prayers. There are many student activity and parent activity pages that are relevant to their daily lives. There is a Family section for each chapter and we cover the chapter review pages in class. The web site for this book is FaithFirst.com which also has a practice chapter test section.

Our Math book is Progress in Mathematics. We will be using the text book in class and sending corresponding workbook pages for homework practice. Students will be copying notes from the board to share with their parents and they should study math facts daily. Our fourth grade curriculum follows Archdiocesan and National Standards.

HOMEWORK POLICY FOR FOURTH GRADE MATH AND RELIGION

Math homework is considered participation for that day. It is an extension of that day's Math lesson. Parents are asked to check each written homework assignment. This way each parent is aware of the math skill taught that day and can see if his/her child needs further home practice with a parent. There are no points given/taken away for math homework—it is home reinforcement; however, parents will be notified if a math assignment is not completed. Math tests, quizzes, and in class work is graded and will comprise each child's math grade.

Religion homework is considered participation for that day. It is an extension of that day's Religion lesson. Most Religion homework is to finish/complete what was started in class that day. There are no points given/taken away for Religion homework; however, parents will be notified if a Religion assignment is not completed. Religion tests, quizzes, and in class work is graded and will comprise each child's religion grade.

I feel sure my expectations for my students are the same as your expectations of your child for this 2009-2010 school year:

- *pay attention in class
- *follow directions
- *ask questions
- *share class notes with parents
- *practice math/religion skills with a parent
- *complete all your homework

Again, I look forward to a very exciting, enthusiastic, and fun-filled fourth grade year!!!

Thanks for all your unending support,

Barb Rastocny

Language Arts – Ms. Sweeny

Spelling:

On our five day weeks our spelling schedule will be:

Monday: Pretest. If the student receives a 100% on the pretest, they will keep that 100 and will not have to take the final test on Friday.

Tuesday: Two workbook pages

Wednesday: One workbook page

Thursday: We usually play a game to review for the test. We may do sentences or ABC order on this day.

Friday: Test

If there is a four day week, the schedule will be closely the same.

If there is a three day week, there will be no spelling for the week.

Workbook pages can be done in print because many of the blanks are smaller and some students have trouble keeping on the lines. Of course, they can do their spelling workbook pages in cursive if they wish. Any other assignments, such as sentences or ABC order, need to be done in cursive. Pen or pencil is acceptable.

Some spelling grades may come from English. When there are assignments in English, the spelling is also important. I will take a grade on the spelling part of the assignments.

English:

Students will be given notes about the area of study in English. It is expected that all students write all notes in their notebook. This notebook can be used as examples to help complete work.

We will cover punctuation usage, word usage, sentence structure, and other English topics during this class.

Just like spelling, English workbook pages may be done in print because the spaces are small. All other work will need to be in cursive.

It is possible that we will not have English every day. Some stories in reading take longer to get through, therefore, English will wait until the next day.

Writing:

Students will have a composition notebook in which to do their writing assignments.

There will be a large variety of topics covered in this. The students are to write on the assigned topic. To start the year, they will need to write at least 100 words on each topic. Please write the story on the right hand page. The left hand page is for any artwork I may assign for the writing. Some assignments must have artwork, others do not. The student may add artwork anytime they want. They can also add photos.

The spelling in the composition notebook will not be graded. I am more concerned that their imaginations flow. For each grading period, they will need to make a “good copy” of one of the written assignments to be graded and added to their portfolio.

There will also be “parent” homework every once in awhile. What you, or another adult in the family, will need to do is read what the students have written. Then, the adult will need to comment on what the student has written. You can write on each story, or make one comment at the end of all the stories. This will be done once per grading period.

Reading:

We will do most of our reading from the reading book. We will either read orally in class, silently in class, listen to the story on tape, or have to read the story at home. Notes will be given to help the students study for tests on the stories.

There will be vocabulary they need to learn. These words will be defined in their notebooks.

Other information:

You will be notified before most tests are given. It is possible that a pop quiz can be given in any subject, however, this will not happen often.

Please remember that spelling will count in all subject areas.

The students do not need to ask to get up and sharpen their pencil or get tissues. I just ask they wait until I am finished talking before they do these things.

No homework or class work can be done in any other color than blue or black pen.

Please email me with any questions or concerns.

One thing about email...My last name is spelled Sweeny. I haven't received some emails because an extra “e” is added to my last name.

I am looking forward to a fantastic year.

Ms. Sweeny

General Information

Absences:

Absent work is sent home with a sibling, relative, neighbor, friend, or can be picked up at the office—just call the office and let them know who should be picking up the work. We send an absent sheet with the work listed and books needed—it is due the next day if possible—if there is a lengthy illness, a reasonable amount of time will be given to complete the assignments. If a quiz or test is given the day of the absence, the student is expected to make it up the day of his/her return if possible. It is the responsibility of the student to check with each teacher and turn in his/her work. Out of town absent work will be given when the student returns to school, as per the handbook.

Progress Reports:

Graded work and quizzes/tests will be sent home as they are graded. We will not be sending them home in a packet. It is your child's responsibility to show you this work. Since all grades are posted on Power School, we will not be requiring a signature on quizzes or tests, as we have done in the past. Grades on Power School will be updated by the 15th and 30th of each month. This is a wonderful tool, and we strongly encourage you to use this to monitor your child's academic progress.

Just a reminder . . . when you log on to Power School to check your child's grades, please remember to do so as YOU and NOT as your child. Power School lets me know when you log-on and check your child's grades. This way I know you are staying informed. If you have misplaced your personal log-in information contact Mrs. Kremer at skremer@stgabriel.net . She will be happy to forward that information to you.

Birthday Treats:

It is suggested that birthday treats be a healthy snack and **individually wrapped**. Students may bring these with them in the morning. If parents wish, they may drop them off at the office—**not** the classroom. FYI—in the past, some parents chose to send in pencils, stickers, etc. instead of food treats.

Book Covers:

We are asking that your child have his/her books covered. Please use brown paper bags or cloth covers. Do not use any book covers that are adhesive. This type of cover damages the covers of the books when it is removed. Please remember when taping book covers, to tape the flaps of the book cover together and not tape the cover to the book itself. Also, please make certain your child's name, subject, and homeroom teacher's name are on the front outside book cover.

Behavior Expectations:

In order to guarantee your child, and other students in our school, the excellent learning climate they deserve, we have adopted the following rules and consequences.

CLASSROOM RULES

1. Appropriate behavior in common areas
2. Be respectful of all people
3. Be prepared for class
4. Be respectful of property
5. Be respectful in church
6. Stay on task

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCES

1. Name in book = warning (behavior slip sent home to be signed by parent and returned the next day, if not returned signed the next day a written assignment will be given)
 2. Name in book (second time in one day) = written assignment (2nd slip sent home to be signed by parent and returned the next day - if not returned signed the next day a detention will be given)
 3. Name in book (third time in one day) = detention (Detention form sent home to be signed by parent and returned the next day - if not returned signed the next day an additional detention will be given)
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- Major infractions will be handled as stated in the student handbook.
 - Minor infractions (stated in handbook) will be given a warning first and result in a detention thereafter.

Please sign and return this page to the homeroom teacher.

We have read the 4th grade student handbook.

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Student signature

Date

Please check all that apply. We will use this information to help us decide how much we will use the computer and internet for projects and assignments.

_____ We have a computer in the home.

_____ We have internet service in the home.

_____ We do not have a computer in the home.

Does your child have any conditions of which we should be made aware (e.g.: allergies, asthma, etc.)

_____ No

_____ Yes – please explain below.