

Penn Brook School
5th Grade Parent Handbook
2016-2017

Mrs. Johnson Room 308

Mr. Ford Room 309

Miss. Connors Room 310

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What is the purpose of the 5th grade parent handbook?

The fifth grade teachers worked together to compile this handbook to inform the parents of fifth grade students about the educational philosophies, procedures, and expectations for fifth grade students at Penn Brook School. **Our team firmly believes that children are most successful when there is a clear and open line of communication between the teacher, family, and student.**

The contents of the handbook will be posted on the Penn Brook website and reviewed at Parent Information Night on Thursday, September 15th. Each teacher will also discuss more specific information about the curriculum in each subject area. **Please return the last page of the handbook with your signature confirming your receipt of the information. We welcome you to include any questions on the signature page so that teachers can address questions at Parent Information Night.**

We look forward to a very successful and exciting year working with 5th grade students and families!

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Fifth Grade Homework Policy

Purpose of Homework:

The purpose of homework is to support the curriculum while developing the good work habits that will lead to success in both school and life. These habits include: *scheduling time, organizing work, prioritizing, ignoring distractions, and taking responsibility for a task and seeing it through.* Please structure a home environment that encourages learning; a quiet, consistent, and tidy place to study will lead to quality work and homework success. Let your child know that it is okay to turn in homework with mistakes! While careful work should be encouraged, mistakes give children an opportunity to learn. Remember to expect and encourage self-correction. Please know that if your child struggles with an assignment. The best way to indicate that your child has struggled with an assignment is to sign off on an assignment after your child has spent the allocated amount of time. **This way, the teacher is aware that an effort was made to work on the assignment.** Clarifying questions can be addressed in class and the work can be completed the following night.

Does homework count?

Yes, homework will count as 10% of the overall grade for each subject.

How much time should be spent on Homework?

Fifth graders can be expected to have an average of 50 minutes of assigned Homework as well as 20 minutes of Independent Reading each night, **totaling 70 minutes.** The fifth grade Homework expectations are consistent with the Homework Policy outlined in the Penn Brook Parent Handbook. Teachers will provide ample notice of upcoming tests and adjust the nightly assignments to allow time to work on projects and study for tests. The schedule below is an **example** of a typical week of assigned homework. **(The example is a recommendation of how to schedule the workload.)** It is important to know that writing assignments will be given at the start of a week, as we expect that students will work through the entire writing process throughout the week. Students will be expected to plan, draft and make the necessary revisions, so that they are turning in a finished draft on Friday. Writing assignments will mirror concepts taught in curriculum, and give students an opportunity to practice the different modes of writing. Math homework will be given on a nightly basis but will be consistent and predictable. Word study homework will include grammar or word patterns taught in the classroom, and are intended to give students an opportunity to practice and apply learned patterns. Science and Social Studies homework will be assigned as needed based on the unit of study, and will often be integrated with writing assignments. Science and social studies assignments may often include reading that can be counted in the monthly or weekly reading calendars as the 20 min. nightly reading.

***The amount of time that each child spends on Homework will fluctuate. If you notice that your child is working far beyond the 70 minutes, despite ideal working conditions, please contact your child's teacher.**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Writing	20	20	20	20
Word Study/Grammar	On average 20 minutes per week 5 minutes per night			
Math	20	20	20	20
Social Studies & Science*	20 minutes per week 5 minutes per night			
Independent Reading	20	20	20	20
Total minutes	70	70	70	70

Electronics Policy

The use of personal iPods, iPhones, cell phones, MP3 players, Game boys, PSPs, and laser pens during school hours is prohibited. Cell phones must be concealed, turned off, and not used at any time during the school day. The intent of this policy is to allow students to use these devices while they are coming to school and/or after school, but not during the school day. The first time a student uses a personal device, a warning will be issued. Should the device be used a second time, the item will be taken from the student and held in the office until a parent/guardian is notified. The parent/guardian must then pick the device up at school.

What is Morning Meeting?

Morning Meetings build community, set a positive tone, increase excitement about learning, and improve academic and social skills. Meetings typically take between twenty and thirty minutes and begin with children sitting in a circle on the rug. We begin every meeting by greeting each other. Every day, your child hears his or her name spoken by a classmate in a friendly and cheerful manner.

Next, a few students share some interesting news followed by a conversation with the class. This helps students listen carefully, think about what they hear, formulate good questions, and learn about one another. When children share they have a chance to feel that their ideas are valued and that other children care.

After sharing, there is an activity planned for the whole class. We might sing, recite a poem, or play a math game. The activity time helps the class feel united as a group, reinforces academic skills, and helps children learn how to cooperate and solve problems.

Finally, we read the news and announcements chart, which helps students think about the day ahead. Sometimes, this time is used to review and practice a reading, punctuation, or math skill. Every day Morning Meeting lets children know that school is a safe place where all children's feelings and ideas are important.

Purpose of Morning Meeting

1. Morning Meeting sets the tone for respectful learning and establishes a climate of trust
2. The tone and climate of Morning Meeting extends beyond the meeting
3. Morning Meeting motivates children by addressing two human needs: the need to feel a sense of significance and belonging and the need to have fun
4. The repetition of many ordinary moments of respectful interaction in Morning Meeting enables some extraordinary moments
5. Morning Meeting merges social, emotional, and intellectual learning.
(The Morning Meeting Book, Roxann Kriete, p.9)



Reading & Writers' Workshop



What is the purpose for our literacy block?

The Literacy Block has many purposes. It is a time when students will be reading at their own level either independently or with peers in book clubs to build skills, stamina and interest. It is also a time when students will be reading complex text with the whole class to build higher-level comprehension skills and text analysis. Students will be reading from various genres including fiction, non-fiction, historical fiction and poetry. At all times, they will be reading with purpose and asked to demonstrate their understanding through discussion and writer's response.

What is Writers' Workshop?

The purpose of Writers' Workshop is to teach students to become independent writers and have them write for real authentic purposes. Writers' Workshop is a different format than what most students are used to. In a traditional classroom setting the teacher usually supplies the topic and then students write on that topic until finished. In Writers' Workshop, students will be provided with a block of time to write and learn skills that support the modes of writing: argumentative, narrative, informative/explanatory. Students will work through the writing process; ultimately learning to brainstorm, plan, and be constructive of their own writing. When they complete one piece, they will begin work on another. Because of this, students will maintain ownership of their work and feel a sense of pride when they are able to share their writing with an audience.

What does a workshop look like in the classroom?

There are several consistent components but there is much variation on how each are implemented in different classrooms. Each workshop typically begins with a mini-lesson in which the teacher models and explains the use of a reading or writing strategy with the whole class. Following the whole group instruction students are given time to apply and practice using the strategy independently. The teacher engages in student conferences on an individual or group basis to provide support and informally assess students. In addition to conferences, students will also receive small group instruction to differentiate and scaffold student growth. To conclude the workshop students return whole group to share their progress and work.

Word Study/Grammar

Word Study and Grammar will be taught both in isolation, as well as addressed during writers' workshop or any opportunity to explore language. Word study/grammar are explicitly taught two times a week, and students are expected to apply learned patterns and rules in independent writing. The primary goal for word study is to extend and refine our students' ability to use language. The words that students will be working on will come from two different areas in the curriculum. Some of the words will come from content areas such as math, science and social studies. The remainder of the words will come from a program called "Words Their Way", which focuses on spelling patterns. These words are aligned with fifth grade specific language. The purpose of Word Study Homework is to enhance and maintain the strategies and patterns taught in class. The grammar piece will address all necessary conventions needed to write clearly and concisely meeting 5th grade expectations and Common Core Standards. Students will practice basic grammar structures and rules, to enhance, clarify, and strengthen written work.

Word study helps students...

- Learn about the meaning and structure of words
- Recognize spelling patterns
- Develop strategies to solve unfamiliar words
- Learn the meaning of words and be able to use them appropriately in their written work

A Word Study Lesson looks like...

- teaching about how words look, sound and mean
- opportunities to encounter and notice words in meaningful contexts
- exploring word meanings and origins
- noticing and applying spelling patterns

Grammar Standards for the 5th grade include...

- Demonstrating command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading and listening.
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content.
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Mathematics

Mathematics instruction within the 5th grade classrooms is *differentiated* using the Everyday Math program.

This means that the individual needs of each child are identified first and then each week a portion of class time is directed towards providing instruction and opportunities for learning at a level most effective for each child.

Students will work independently, in partnerships, as well as receive small group instruction. Students are placed into learning groups with others of similar abilities, allowing the teacher to conduct a small-group lesson that most effectively targets the needs of children. The make-up of these groups is *flexible*, meaning that children are placed in them in light of what the child needs on a given day to help with a given topic. Likewise, students will also have an opportunity to review learned concepts through daily math boxes, and opportunity for challenge through problem solving, and similar extensions of daily lessons.

Typically, concepts are taught whole-class, then, depending on the progress of individuals, groups are constructed and more individualized instruction occurs.

*Explaining mathematical thinking *in writing* is emphasized and practiced daily.

Science & Social Studies

Science and Social Studies curriculum provide students with opportunity to engage in research projects, collaborate with small groups, and seek inquiry through exploration. Over the course of the year, students will study history dating from Ancient Civilizations to the American Revolution. Similarly in Science, students will explore topics in Earth and Space Science, Physical Science, Technology & Engineering, and Life Science. Students will interact and manipulate various aspects of the curriculum through the use of Foss labs.

Social Studies will be contained in the classroom. Units will be approximately 2 to 4 weeks depending on the content, and are often integrated into our literacy curriculum. For science, students will be rotating throughout each fifth grade classroom. Each teacher will be an expert in one topic and students will spend about 4 weeks within each classroom before transitioning to another teacher. Students will study respective social studies or science units in depth, rather than alternate between the two. Due to the academic calendar and testing dates, as well as the chronological nature of Social Studies, there will be periods of time that are “Science heavy” and others that are “Social Studies heavy.” This impacts where you will see a grade on the report card. If a trimester is heavy with social studies there may not be a science grade during that marking period. However, it will be the complete opposite for the following trimester. Our overarching goal is to provide a rich and integrated Science and Social Studies curriculum for your child. Regardless of when or where you see a grade, be assured that all Massachusetts standards will be taught during the year.

Receipt Confirmation & Questions

Dear Fifth Grade Families,

We would like to address all of your questions at the upcoming Parent Information Night. Please take a moment to write down any questions you have about your child's classroom, areas of instruction or curriculum, our school, or any other areas of interest.

Please return this form to your child's classroom teacher by **Thursday, September 15th** to confirm receipt of the handbook and include any questions you have. Thank you for taking the time to read the handbook and we are look forward to meeting each of you at Parent Information Night on **Thursday, September 15th**.

Sincerely,

The Fifth Grade Team



I have received and read the 5th Grade Parent Handbook.

X _____

I also have some questions about....

- Daily Schedule:
- Curriculum:
- Homework Policies:
- Other: