

Dear Families,

This handbook is designed to provide information about what is taught in second grade at Barrie Elementary School. It does not include everything students are taught or will experience; instead it highlights major skills and/or units of study. I make every attempt to adapt curriculum to meet individual needs.

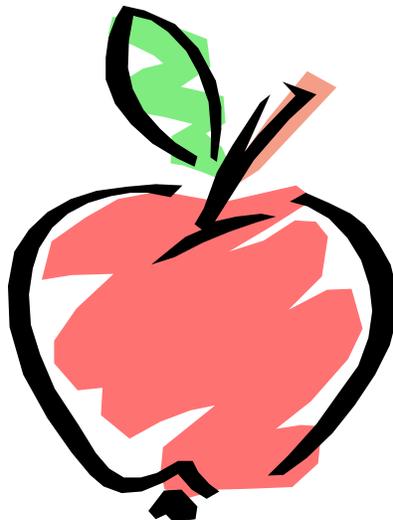
I hold the philosophy that every child can learn, and has special gifts and talents to offer. I will try to focus in on each child's strengths as we work our way through second grade.

The following is a summary of our classroom activities, including ways to help your child receive the best education possible. By working together as partners in your child's education, we will be better able to help your child learn and excel in second grade.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to set up a meeting to discuss your child's progress, please feel free to contact me at school at 563-7817 or englandk@fortschools.org .

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kris England



LITERACY

Reading Workshop:

Throughout the afternoon children will be engaged in many components of literacy. Reading and writing are important skills used throughout our lives. They are developmental processes that begin early in life and grow over a span of years.

Our Reading Workshop is designed to follow the *Comprehensive Literacy Model*, and incorporates many avenues of learning including word study, mini-lessons, reading to self, reading to others, listening to reading, guided reading, literature discussion groups, and sharing. In whole group and small group contexts, we review strategies for decoding words, explore a variety of genres, identify story elements, learn comprehension strategies, build fluency and phrasing, and respond to literature using a tool called a *Thoughtful Log*. The students will also be introduced to several popular children's authors. Throughout the year we focus on four reading genres including *fiction, non-fiction, oral tradition, and poetry*. We also highlight four comprehension strategies including *making connections, visualizing, inferring, and questioning* among others.

Throughout the year, students will be expected to grow in their reading skills and progress through leveled texts as they improve as readers. We do have quarterly benchmark goals that we hope to have children achieve. Our Reading Workshop is structured so that students receive explicit whole group instruction and then are given practice time to read and write independently while focused, intense instruction is provided to individuals and small groups of students. We are fortunate to have a trained instructional aide in our classrooms to help with independent activities and to assist when we have small group instruction.

Word Study:

Word Study involves developing an understanding of the relationship between letters and speech sounds. These sounds can be written down so that the child can express him/herself without speech. Through lessons on structure, meaning, high frequency words, spelling patterns, letter/sound relationships, and word-solving actions, children will

learn many strategies for reading and writing words. There will be no weekly spelling test or list of words to memorize. Instead, lessons will be taught and skills will be modeled and practiced as a whole group, and then children will practice the skills in their own reading and writing.

Handwriting:

We will review correct letter and number formation and practice penmanship techniques through use of the Zaner-Bloser Handwriting program. Our instruction will focus on guided and independent practice of letters and numbers with an emphasis on the 4 S's – *size*, *shape*, *slant*, and *spacing*. Children will be expected to use these techniques to ensure neatness and accuracy in daily writing.

Reading At Home:

I encourage an appreciation for books and a love for learning, and we emphasize the importance of a foundation for lifelong reading. Parents reading with their children is one of the major building blocks of this foundation. Students will bring home take-home books daily which are at a level appropriate for building fluency. I expect that students are reading for 10-15 minutes every evening as part of his/her weekly homework. This provides a good opportunity for you to read to or listen to your child and lets him/her see that you, too, value reading.

The children read silently every day, and are read to several times a day. In October, we will be starting a special Reading Club that will continue for the remainder of the year. Children joining the 'club' will need to read at least 24 books each month outside of school. Look for a special Reading Club calendar and information sheet to come home at the end of September.

Writer's Workshop:

I teach writing using a Writer's Workshop approach. Each workshop is comprised of whole-group mini-lessons, explicit small-group instruction, independent writing time, and sharing. The mini-lessons that go along with each workshop highlight strategies for improving writing skills, introduce genres, and teach new writing techniques to enhance story ideas.

Throughout the year, we will move through the writing process as a class by focusing on small units of study related to different genres. We focus on four writing genres throughout the year during Writer's Workshop. These include *fiction*, *non-fiction*, *explanatory*, and *poetry*, among others. Children will be introduced to these genres, and we will read pieces from published authors in our mentor texts. Each day during our mini-lesson, the children will learn or review a strategy or skill related to the writing process through modeling and guided practice. After the mini-lesson, the children will try the skill in their own writing by prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, or publishing their own creative stories. Throughout the process, I am conferencing with students to support and guide them with their writing. We do a lot of shared writing to see the writing process develop, and relish in each other's accomplishments during sharing time. If children have extra time after they have finished their independent practice from the day, they are allowed to work on a "free write" story of their own choosing. This is their opportunity to move through the writing process at their own pace and apply the skills we have learned in our units of study as a class. You can expect the pieces from our whole-group units of study to be very polished and accurate, while "free write" pieces may contain more errors as the children become comfortable with the writing process.

We also spend time learning about what good writers do by teaching the Six Traits of Good Writing. These traits include *ideas*, *conventions*, *word choice*, *voice*, *sentence fluency*, and *organization*. We will study these traits throughout the year and identify them in published pieces of writing. Gradually we will look for these traits in the children's writing.

MATH

Our district is in the process of implementing a new math curriculum entitled *Everyday Math*. This year, your child will experience the program for the first time. Because the program is new to the students and you, I

appreciate your patience as we develop a routine and the process unfolds.

I have learned a lot about Everyday Math, and I feel confident in its abilities to provide students with the tools they need to be successful mathematicians. Everyday Math stresses a spiral curriculum in which concepts are taught and are revisited often throughout the year, providing students with many opportunities to reach mastery. The program utilizes a hands-on approach to learning using manipulatives, games, and useful daily life skills. Second grade concepts include addition and subtraction (basic facts as well as regrouping), problem-solving, graphing, estimating, place value, time, money, measurement, geometry, and fractions. We have a math aide to assist in providing individuals or small groups with additional help or enrichment.

Students will be responsible for completing Home Links, which extend the skills learned in the classroom so children can continue learning at home. Most Home Links encourage family involvement with practical activities for real-world application. We will have unit tests to measure growth and you will be informed of your child's progress through the use of an IPP (Individual Profile of Progress).

SCIENCE / SOCIAL STUDIES

This year second graders will have the opportunity to study social studies with Mrs. Adams and science with Mrs. England! We are excited to allow the students to rotate between classrooms and to experience each subject area in a fresh way.

In social studies with Mrs. Adams we will focus on four major units of study including geography, history, government, and economics. Students will be tested on their geography locations four times during the year. Study packets and maps will be sent home for practice. In addition, social studies assessments will be given to test students' knowledge on big ideas, vocabulary, skills, and critical content. These assessments will be sent home and students' scores can be found on the rubric at the back of the test.

Students will engage in various explorations and experiments through the use of the FOSS Science program with Mrs. England. This program provides students with hands-on experiences with scientific processes, enabling them to conduct experiments and interact with manipulatives to make observations and discoveries. Emphasis is placed on small group work and communication to expand on hypotheses and share in the learning. Our units will include plants and animals, solids and liquids, and air and weather. Units will frequently be integrated with other areas of study.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Through a positive learning atmosphere, we strive to build and develop a strong community sense, promote positive attitudes, and strengthen critical thinking skills. My goal is to facilitate and nurture students to value individual differences, promote team building and strive to be socially responsible citizens.

Our district is implementing its second year of a program called Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). PBIS is a decision-making framework that guides staff and students in selecting and implementing effective practices for improving academic success and behavior. As a school community, we will learn rules and routines that help our school to run smoothly and safely. We will also have an individual Clip Chart system in our own classroom that we will use daily to promote self-regulation of positive choices. More information on this will follow.

HEALTH/GUIDANCE

Throughout the year, health and guidance lessons will be alternated. In health, we will study fire safety, nutrition, hygiene, accident prevention, and disease control among others. We will learn about empathy, impulse control, problem-solving, bullying, and anger management in guidance.

TECHNOLOGY

We are fortunate enough to have access to several modes of technology at Barrie School, and students have many opportunities to interact with technology throughout the year. SMARTboards are interactive whiteboards that allow children to see material presented in a whole new way! We use the SMARTboard throughout the day and the children love playing an active role in learning by being able to write, reveal answers, manipulate objects, and sort information on the SMARTboard. Through the use of this technology, we can also watch movie clips, insert links to internet pages, and even print ideas we came up with.

We will also utilize a document camera to project images on the SMARTboard for students to see more closely. This is beneficial in showcasing student work, exploring features in texts, enlarging photographs, and modeling expectations. In addition, children will have the opportunity to use personal Mp3 players during our Reading Workshop to listen to stories.

Finally, we are fortunate to have a set of iPads for use at Barrie School. Students can use iPads during math to play games on the Everyday Math website, during reading to practice word study skills, and during writing to check their spelling while editing. These are just a few of the opportunities your child will have using the iPad this year.

CLASSROOM WEBSITE

Additional information and resources can be found on our classroom website. This site includes important classroom information, links to websites for kids and families, Barrie School information, and other helpful tools. Our website can be accessed by visiting the district website at www.fortschools.org and navigating to Barrie Elementary and Staff Webpages. The direct address for the site is <http://www.fortschools.org/webpages/kengland> .

HOMEWORK POLICY

I believe homework is important because it is a valuable aid in helping students make the most out of their experience at school. I give homework because it is useful in reinforcing what has been learned in class, prepares students for upcoming lessons, teaches responsibility, and helps students develop positive study habits.

Students will have a short math assignment called a Home Link to complete almost every night which reinforces concepts that were taught that day. I expect students to do their best on their homework, but I do not expect it to be perfect. If you or your child are confused about a specific problem, please leave it blank or write a small note letting me know that the problem was challenging. These Home Links are designed to be an extension of what was taught in class, and are not a graded, high stakes assignment. We will often review the assignment at school the next day, which gives students an opportunity to ask questions and to correct their work and learn from their mistakes. Being responsible with homework is assessed on the report card and reflected in your child's effort grade on each math assessment, so please make every effort to complete homework on time. If there is a legitimate reason that a student is not able to finish homework or assigned projects, please send a note stating the reason it was not completed.

I ask that parents make homework a top priority, provide a quiet homework environment, set a daily homework routine, provide praise and support, and contact us if there is a problem. Thank you for your help with this.

I look forward to working with your child this year! Thank you for your support at home!

