



# Miss Christensen's First Kindergarten Newsletter



## Our Schedule

Monday- Music 9:40-10:10

Tuesday- P.E. 11:15-11:45

Wednesday- Music 9:45-10:15

Thursday- Art 10:15-11:15

Library story time (every other week) 11:50-12:15

Friday- P.E. 10:45-11:15

Computer Lab 11:15-11:45

PLEASE feel free to contact me at any time with any questions or concerns. I check my email before and after school, and in between when able. Also, if you have a note for me in your child's backpack please let them know so I may respond that day.

I would like to start by thanking you for coming to our classroom. I hope you enjoy visiting! I want the children to feel how magical and fun kindergarten and learning can be. It is an exciting time as children begin new adventures in the world of learning and learn many new skills.

As I wrote in my first letter home I realize that you are a VERY important part of our team this year. I would like to thank you for your support in working with me this year to help make your child's school experience a positive one!

**Transportation**- If there is a temporary change in transportation, please send a note to school with your child or call the office at 463-3100.

**Take Home Folder**- Your child's folder will come home each day with school papers, notices, notes and/or homework (Jolly Phonics practice to reinforce what we're learning in school). Hopefully you've found information already in your child's folder! Please look for this folder every day, review its contents, and return it to school the next day. Unless I ask for the papers back, please keep them at home. Place all notes, lunch money, book orders, pick-up note, permission slips ...whatever you need me to see in their folder! This will be part of your child's morning

routine. On Fridays, please look for the majority of the office/PTO notices in the folder.

**Money/Notes**- Occasionally your child will bring in money or a special note to school. Always send money in a sealed envelope. Please include the following information:

- Your child's first and last names
- The purpose for the money (book club, lunch money, etc.)
- My name or KC.

The purpose of this is to reduce the likelihood of errors when bookkeeping. It is easier to track if it gets lost in the hall. Those folders are slippery! Ha, ha.

**Snack**- Due to our late lunch there will be a snack time set aside for a snack. I ask that the snack be **healthy** and **nutritious**. Some suggestions are: fruits, veggies, cheese, crackers, pretzels, raisins, fruit snacks, and dry cereal, to name a few. Please **no juice, water, or items that need a spoon**, since we often continue working as we eat our snack. We do have a drinking fountain in the room for drinks as needed. Some students bring a water bottle, which they can use during lunch if it's packed in their lunch box.

**P.E.**- Each child needs a pair of gym shoes to change into for P.E. class. These are kept for "inside" use only, in order to protect the gym floor. It helps for your child to be dressed for gym activities on Tuesdays and Fridays. Girls may find wearing skirts and dresses difficult, and when wearing sandals in warm weather on gym days, bring a pair of socks to wear to gym class. It is also a good idea to bring them during snowy weather to change wet socks along with extra mittens. They can keep these in their backpack or P.E. shoes in their cubby as well.

**Library**-Each student will be able to visit the library during certain times of the day. In kindergarten, your child is allowed to check out one book at a time and can keep them for two weeks. If your child returns a book and needs to get another one, I would be happy to find a time for them to check out more books. The more they read the better!

**Newsletters**-We will be spending the first weeks building a learning community, establishing routines and expectations, and getting to know each other. Newsletters from kindergarten will begin in a couple of weeks, and I try to send

one home weekly to let you know all of the exciting kindergarten news! I would like to send newsletters home via email to cut down on paper if that is okay with you. I sent home a note earlier to let me know which you prefer. Please check your child's Home/School Folder daily for notes and other reminders I may need to send home in between.

**Homework**- Once we begin our Jolly Phonics instruction each little learner will have some homework to share with you each night. They also will be bringing home paper books at their individual reading level to practice once we get into our instruction and routines. I will also provide ideas and suggestions for things that you can do with your child at home to reinforce the concepts we are learning in kindergarten.

Another great site for parents is: <http://www.parenttoolkit.com/>. It's a wonderful source of information for not only academic, but social/emotional, and physical development as well. I find myself "clicking" around in there and finding all kinds of helpful tips and suggestions to use in our classroom.

**Positive Classroom Environment**- I believe that a positive learning environment is critical to learning. Together, the students and I came up with two general rules to ensure that all students feel safe and respected. Then we brainstormed what each of those looked like and sounded like. See the chart below to view what the students came up with.

<u>Be Respectful</u>	<u>Be Responsible</u>
Keep your hands and feet to yourself.	Raise your hand to share ideas.
Be nice and care about one another.	Concentrate on your work.
Include everyone in activities.	Look at the person speaking.
No teasing. Share with each other.	Listen to the person speaking.
Help someone when they are hurt.	Work together as a team.
Always use good manners.	Have courage to try even if you make a mistake.
Share with each other.	

**Behavior Plan**- This is a year of learning how to get along with others and following school rules and expectations. I will be using a lot of positive comments and praise to help the students understand how proud I am of them for making good choices and working hard. If by chance after reminders they continue to make poor choices that impact the class and their classmates' ability to learn or focus, or my ability to teach, they may be asked to go to Time-Out. Knowing that

the children are learning how to conduct themselves in a classroom environment they are given MANY positive reminders and cues before I hope this would be necessary. If your child is asked to go and sit in Time-Out, or as I call it a Thinking Spot, a note will come home letting you know what they were having trouble with that day. If you could, please sign and return this form the next day. All of the kindergarten teachers used this form last year to help with consistency for following school rules.

**Book Club Orders**- Book orders will go home monthly throughout the school year. Some of the books are generally inexpensive, and are a constructive way to assist your child to read. If you place an order, please write a check payable to the Scholastic Book Club. Even if you order from separate forms you can combine it and write one check. You also can order online and use a credit card when ordering if that is what you choose. I also add suggestions to our online classroom page. Many parents liked the convenience of ordering online.

**MVP of the Week**- Self-esteem is very important. Each week, our classroom will have a MVP of the Week (see attached note) and share information about themselves to the class. The purpose of this activity is to help the children become confident speakers, strengthen their listening abilities, and help build community.

**I will send home a reminder note before your child's special week approaches.**

**Birthdays**- Birthdays are a special event in our classroom. Due to various food allergies each year, it is a district policy that no food treats be sent to school. While it isn't something you have to do, if you wish to send in something special for the class to celebrate some ideas are non-food treats or gifts (such as a book or game for the classroom, or pencil). Please refrain from sending goodie bags for each child. Summer birthdays will be celebrated on  $\frac{1}{2}$  birthdays, or as close as we can get to it. I will send a note letting you know when we will be celebrating those children's birthday.

Often the children wish to invite friends to a birthday party. To prevent hurt feelings at school if all the children in the class cannot be invited, or all of the girls, or all of the boys, the school policy is that the invitations must be mailed from home. Thank you for your understanding and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me as your child's birthday approaches!

**Toys**- No toys, balls, electronics, or trading cards are to be brought to school at any time. It is a school policy. The "Star of the Week" student may bring their item for sharing purposes on the day set aside for this during their week, but the item will be taken back home the same day that they are shared.

**Mystery Reader**- One of our favorite activities over the years, as well as the parents, was Mystery Reader. I'm thinking Fridays a special mystery reader may come in at special story time to share one or two of their student's favorite books, a book from the library, one of our books, or one of their favorites as a child. This is our day with our afternoon P.E. class so I thought this might fit in well here.

In the past the students always have looked forward to the surprise all week, and the part that makes it best is if you can keep it a secret you can see the surprise on their face when you come! It's hard, but it is well worth the big smile! We have also had visiting grandparents, aunts, and two high school brothers surprise our class and share a story. Great fun!

There is a sign up calendar and reminder sheets at Back to School Night, and if there are any open spaces I will share that in our next newsletter to see if anyone's interested.

I have CDs available for those who would like to participate, but work too far away to make it into class and have access to a way to record their story on CD. If you choose this option I ask that you put the CD and book in a brown paper back labeled for me but closed so your child will not know what it is. One of my favorite stories was by a dad who taped himself and during his introduction asked the boys and girls if they recognized his voice. His son didn't at first, but when he told that he was his dad I got the best picture of a surprised 6 year-old that I think I've ever had. I sent him a copy so he could see the reaction. It was one of those priceless moments that make my job so special to me.

Looking forward to a great year in kindergarten!!

Miss Christensen