Ms. Lowe’s Grade One Parent Handbook

**2019-2020**

**Dear Parents,**

Welcome to the world of Grade One!

Grade One is a time of new beginnings, of making friends, and of learning lots of new things. The month of September is an exciting (and often exhausting) transition for Grade One students. They are getting used to full days at school, being here 5 days a week, are adjusting to having less free time than they had in kindergarten and are now doing more independent tasks. If your child is extremely tired at the end of the day, this is normal! Their little bodies surprisingly will adjust after just a few short weeks.

I am delighted to be your child’s teacher this year. This is my fifth year at Mike Mountain Horse, and I am beyond excited to continue working with grade ones! I can’t wait for all of the excitement and growth that this year will bring. This is your handbook, please read it over carefully and keep it for reference throughout the year.

****If you need to contact me for any reason, at any time throughout the school year, feel free to stop in and chat, call the school (403-381-2211) and leave a message, send an email or write a note in your child’s agenda. Primarily, our class will be using Class Dojo to facilitate communication between classroom and home. Class Dojo is a free app that you can download to your phone, tablet or desktop computer. I will send home a Class Dojo info sheet, with instructions on how to sign up to our class. If you have trouble signing up, please send me an email and I will help you through the process.

**EMAIL:**

Ms. Marie Lowe (marie.lowe@lethsd.ab.ca)

**GRADE ONE WEBSITE:**

www.mslowesgradeones.weebly.com

## GRADE ONE HOURS

Monday to Thursday

8:19am to 3:20pm

(Warning bell 8:14))

Nutrition Break 1: 10:00 – 10:37

Nutrition Break 2: 12:37 – 1:15

Friday

8:19-**11:45am**

# **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

There is no supervision at the school prior to **8:05am**. When students arrive at school it is the expectation that they play on the playground until the bell rings, rather than wait inside the school. This area is supervised. Once the bell rings, students line up in their classes and will be invited into the school by the grade one teachers. (This of course will take a few weeks to build a routine!) Parents are welcome to accompany their child into the class after the bell rings if they wish. Please encourage your child’s independence by having them hang up their own coat and backpack, change shoes and prepare for the day. Quick goodbyes seem to be best, once children are settled.

If by chance your child is late for school, please stop by the office on your way in**. Late children need to pick up a late slip before coming to class.**

Please be prompt in picking up your child for dismissal time, and phone if unavoidably delayed. Our classes will meet their parents and guardians outside our classroom or in the Grade One bootroom at the end of each day. For the first few weeks, please come inside the school to pick up your child, to avoid confusion and fear if they have trouble finding you.

GRADE ONE WEBSITE

Please visit our Grade One website often. It will provide you with frequent updates about our school and our classroom. I will send out a Class Dojo message each time a major newsletter is added to the blog.

Our MMH school newsletter can also be found online each month. It contains tons of important information, including the school calendar. Please make a point of taking a look at it and marking important dates.

## NUTRITION BREAKS AT SCHOOL

Please be sensitive to the fact that your child is expected to be focused in their learning throughout the day. A healthy lunch is greatly appreciated. Water is most often best as a drink, and water bottles can be kept at your child’s desk or in their backpack during the day. Water bottles will be sent home each Friday, or every day if a child has a cold. Beginning this year MMH will be trying out the nutrition break model. There are two nutrition breaks with 15 minutes for eating and then 22 minutes of outside play. **Please have a conversation with your child about exactly what they should be eating** during the first break, and during the second, making sure that they eat enough to keep them energized, but save enough so that they will still have food for the second break. We will be eating in our classroom each day. There is no microwave access for students. We will absolutely do our best to help students out during eating time by opening containers, etc. However, there is one teacher supervisor for three grade one classrooms so if items are easy to access and simple to eat, that would sure be appreciated! Please don’t forget to send a spoon if it is needed for one of your child’s food items. Please be aware that students are asked to please avoid bringing food that contains peanuts, as there are students in our school with severe nut allergies. While it is very difficult to monitor exactly what each child is eating, please let me know if your child doesn’t seem to be eating enough of their lunch and I’ll be happy to check in with them about their eating. Thanks!

### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

I believe that family involvement in learning is essential to each child’s success. This includes a range of activities such as supervising on field trips, helping in the classroom and reading at home. As a volunteer, you may be asked to read with children, supervise simple games or obtain and prepare materials. I have an open door policy in my Grade One class (although many times the door is physically closed to keep noise from our busy activities to a minimum). If you ever need to pop in, please feel free to do so.

****If volunteering in the classroom is something you would be interested in doing once a week or so please come and see me! If you are unavailable during school hours but would still like to help facilitate learning in our room, I always appreciate help cutting out new centers activities and games. Please let me know if you are interested in having laminating sent home. ☺

#### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

*THIS IS* ***SO*** *IMPORTANT*

Please keep in mind that clothing, shoes and jackets that are easy to get on and off will be most efficient for your child to have this year at school. We love to play and explore, and this can result in some dirty clothes.

**Please make sure that coats, boots, sweaters, hats, mitts etc. are labelled**. It really helps us at home time. We encourage the children to take care of their own belongings, ie. hanging up their own coat and backpack. Please be sure your child can put on and take off his/her own jacket and shoes. It is important that students learn to be independent, and this includes tying their own shoes**. If your child is still learning to tie their shoes please send them to school with Velcro or slip on runners so that they can make the most of their recess and gym times**. Students will be going outside at least two times per day, regardless of the weather, with the exception being a temperature of below -20. Often we go outside regardless of wind, light rain etc. PLEASE DRESS FOR THE WEATHER.

In Grade One it is not uncommon for accidents to occur if students don’t make it to the bathroom on time. In order to move on from these types of accidents as smoothly as possible please feel free to send an extra pair of pants/underpants to school in a labeled Ziplock bag. I will hold on to them to be used “in case of emergency”.

**Please be sure your child has one pair of indoor shoes (suitable for gym class) that are left at school each day.**

PLEASE DO NOT SEND TOYS TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD ☺

**SHOW AND SHARE**

We do have Show and Share in Grade One. Approximately once a month (always on Friday), your child will be invited to bring in a special item to share. Please watch for a schedule, coming soon!

**FIELDTRIPS**

Our Grade One classes will go on several field trips in order to enhance the classroom experience, most of which take place during the second part of the year. We will often need parent volunteers to accompany us on these outings. Please be sure to submit a criminal record check to the school office if you would like to join us on the field trips!

### GRADE ONE ROUTINES

Most school days begin with a Morning Warm Up activity that students get started on as soon as they are ready for the day. A group **carpet time** follows, in which we talk about our day, complete a math activity, update the calendar and share with each other.

Each day also includes a **Language Arts and Math time**. The Grade One curriculum also includes Science, Social Studies, Health, Computers, Art, Music and daily PhysEd. These subjects are taught separately as well as combined, with theme type activities. Ms. Peeke-Vout is the Grades 1-5 music teacher (2 periods per week), all other subjects will be taught by me, with the occasional addition of the other Grade One teachers.

### GRADE ONE PROGRESS REPORTS

Your child’s progress will be assessed in an ongoing basis in our room and results communicated as needed. Formal report cards will go home in November, March and June.

**BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays can be a very exciting but tricky time at this age. We of course can’t invite every child in our class to our parties, and often feelings can get hurt as a result. If you have invitations to hand out, if you wouldn’t mind handing them to me, I can make sure they get sent home discretely. Thank you!

**STUDENT AGENDAS**

Your child will be bringing home their very first agenda soon. Please acknowledge how special this is to them!

Each day your child will write a little something or glue in a note, about school on the current date**. It is their responsibility to bring the agenda to you each day to get it signed.** Learning to be a responsible student is a big part of Grade One so please help them out with this. Your child will get a special stamp each morning for getting it signed the night before. If you as a parent have a message for me, feel free to use the agenda. The right side of the page is designated for teacher/parent communication. Weekly sight words will be written in our agendas as well.

**HOME READING PROGRAM (begins late October)**

In the next while, you will start to see our grade one home reading program come to life! Once this begins, students will bring home 4-5 paper readers to be read throughout the week. In order to build independence students will be responsible for switching their own books every Monday morning. Please write a quick note in your child’s agenda indicating which book they read and if it was too easy, too hard, or just right. There will also be an on-line home reading option available. RAZ kids is a great option for many parents, as reading can be done on the go, on tablets and other personal devices. Stay tuned for more info coming soon!

Home reading should last AT MOST, 15 minutes per day. This process may be slow and laboured at first, but if your child reads every evening, he/she will become a confident reader in no time.

The books we use as our primary source for home reading are leveled A-Z and are at your child’s “instructional level” according to in-school assessments. However, if you have concerns at any time please let me know, as sometimes what we see at school differs from what you may see at home. Sometimes students choose their own book, and they will often choose books they’ve already read because they’re comfortable with them. This is okay! I do encourage children to read any other materials they are interested in at any time other than the 10-15 minutes per day that you spend on our formal home reading.

Please allow your child to read at their own pace while kindly encouraging them to progress. The point of this program is to develop and nourish a love of reading, and we don’t want to do anything to undermine that. I am confident that they will love reading as much as I do, and I’m so excited to hear their stories of learning new words and reading new books!

Following are some guidelines for you:

1. Encourage daily reading. Model this for your child. Let them see you enjoying books!
2. ****Encourage your child to track along with their finger reinforcing the left-right, top-bottom patterns and to keep their eyes focused on the correct words.
3. Work on accuracy in sounding out phonetic words.
4. Work on recognition of sight words.
5. Encourage your child to ask questions!
6. Encourage your child to use the pictures to help figure out tough words.

It takes a lot of effort on the part of the students, parents and teachers to develop confident, proficient readers. Parents are their first teachers and their most prominent example of lifelong learning. Thank you for doing your part!

I would like to welcome all children and their families to Grade One at Mike Mountain Horse and look forward to a very special year together. I hope this handbook has provided some background information and important details about my program. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for all that you do to help your child see success! I look forward to working in partnership with you this year!

 **Sincerely,**

**Ms. Marie Lowe**

 **Grade One Teacher**