September 2016

 Dear Parents,

Your children have been very busy during the beginning of kindergarten! They have been getting used to kindergarten by learning names, routines and places around the school. We all look forward to getting to know more about each other through games, conversations and activities.

We have also been building the foundation for a successful year with a slow and deliberate start. The students have been learning about how we will be using and caring for materials in our room through a process called **“guided discovery.”** This process gives children the opportunity to model and practice the use and care of classroom materials and areas so that it is clear to everyone from the very first time how we use a new material or area. We have also spent time getting used to classroom routines, like making lunch choices in the morning and going to the cafeteria for lunch. It will take approximately six weeks to fully learn about all the routines. This slow and careful start to the year helps children feel confident and independent in school while we plunge full steam ahead into the academic curriculum.

**Book club flyers** will usually be sent once a month. Book clubs are a very inexpensive way to build home libraries and when children order books, there is a great deal of excitement for literacy! If you choose to order, you may order at **scholastic.com** (This is a very simple process!) **The code for online book order purchases for our class is GBR9Z.** You may also send in one check, payable to Scholastic Reading Club. If you order books from more than one flyer, simply combine the totals on the one check.

**Snack times** have been going well. Students eat two snacks in our classroom, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Please continue to label the first snack (the easy, no utensil snack) with a #1 and the second snack (snacks that may or may not need utensils) with a #2. Good healthy choices like string cheese sticks, small bags of cereal, crackers, pretzels, carrot sticks, peanut-free granola bars, or cut up fruit would be great for the first snack. Yogurts, applesauce, or anything healthy are great choices for the afternoon snack. Please remember, keep all nut-ingredients at home! Please check all ingredient lists Thanks!

Water bottles are welcome at school. Please continue to send in bottles that have **no spill spouts** each day. Please **label** your child’s water bottles! Many students have the same kinds of bottled water and labeling might help with germ control. Children may refill bottles during the school day at snack time. We try to remind the children to bring home their water bottles at the end of each day so they can be washed and refilled at home! Thank you!

We recommend that you talk to your child about his/her **lunch choices** each morning. If your child tends to be forgetful about details, please put a post-it note in your child’s home/school folder with his/her lunch choice written on it when we stop sending home lunch choice slips. If your child forgets his/her lunch choice after we discontinue sending the lunch choice slips, we will allow your child to make his/her own decision regarding a school lunch if they do not bring a lunch from home.

The children decided what they **hope and dream** to learn or get better at in our classroom. Their goal may be academic or social. We took time in class to discuss this process. I hope you will take a moment to talk about your child’s choice for his/her hope and dream. Some hopes and dreams include: \*to learn about animals, and to learn to read. Check out your child’s hope and dream in the classroom at Open House!

Your children seem to be excellent messengers! Please be sure to assist your child in returning his/her **Home/School folder** every day. We look in the home/ school folders for lunch money (checks, etc.), pick-up notes, bus passes, etc.) and other communications every morning. It is your child’s responsibility to hand in their folder each morning. Children will also receive flyers and announcements this way. Help your child to remember to put the folder back in his/her backpack at home! Also, be sure to send a note in the home/ school folder each time your child has a change in after school destination.

We look forward to seeing you in our classroom for **Kindergarten Parent Open House on Thursday, September 29 at 5:30 p.m**. We think being informed is crucial in making your child’s kindergarten year as fabulous as possible. This event is for parents only. During Open House we will discuss essential classroom information. We will explain how to sign up for a parent/teacher conference. **Conference times** will be offered **Monday, November 21 during the afternoon and early evening, and all day on Tuesday, November 22.**

During open house there will also be another opportunity to sign up to **volunteer**. Please come prepared with the days and times so that we can determine if they match our needs. Volunteering usually begins sometime in October, once our routines are well established.

We will send parent letters via email. Parent letters will also be available on our **web page f**or your reference. Just go to <http://ves.yorkschools.org>, click on staff, select Jen Ellis/Melinda Gallagher, and you will arrive at our weebly site! Photographs, schedules, resources, and many other items of interest regarding our classroom will reside on our website. We are in the process of updating our website now!

Please remember to send in your **picture day order form (optional) and payment on or before Tuesday, September 27.**

Thank you for assisting us in getting this year off to a smooth start. We have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know your wonderful child!

Sincerely,

Jen Ellis and Melinda Gallagher