

Welcome to Fifth Grade!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I want to welcome you and your child to a new and exciting school year. I look forward to working with you and your child. The following information will help you understand our classroom procedures and expectations. The classroom needs to be orderly and conducive to learning.

Classroom Rules/Responsibilities:

1. Respect yourself, others, and all property.
2. Be prepared with your mind and materials.
3. Complete assignments neatly and on time.
4. Follow directions the first time.
5. Always do YOUR best.

Classroom Behavior Policy:

As in our community, there are consequences for breaking rules. Students will lose privileges for misbehaving. Referrals and calls home will be used if necessary. Positive reinforcements will be used to reward students for positive behavior, such as "WAY to Go's" for individual reinforcement and marbles for cooperative group reinforcement. "WAY to Go's" are a ticket system used to promote and reward positive choices. It teaches children that you must work for something to earn something in return. Student misbehavior will result in "flipping" a card for the corresponding behavior. Failure to turn in assignments, talking in line, not being respectful or kind to others, and not showing good sportsmanship are some of the behaviors that will cause the students to "flip" a behavior card. Participating in class discussions, receiving compliments from other teachers, performing an outstanding task, or showing great character traits are all ways in which the children can earn "Way to Go's". Students are encouraged to monitor their behavior and improve on areas of concern. This behavior management plan has worked in the past and I am sure it will be effective within our classroom.

GRADES:

Grades will be posted on STI (a web-based school tool) so you don't have to wait until report card time to know your child's grades. If you need information on how to log into STI, please contact the school at 309-785-8054. I enter grades into STI every other day or so, so it is really the best way to see how your child is doing in my classes.

In my class, students will earn their grades in multiple ways through projects, presentations, tests, quizzes, reports, participation, journals, A.R. tests, homework completion, etc.

Cuba Elementary's GRADING SCALE

A	90-100	Superior
B	80-89.99	Above Average
C	70-79.99	Average
D	65-69.99	Below Average
F	0-64.99	Failure
S		Satisfactory
U		Unsatisfactory

STAR BINDER (Students Taking Academic Responsibility):

Each student will be responsible for maintaining their individual STAR Binder, a black or white, 1-inch or 1 1/2-inch 3-ring binder. The STAR Binders will be divided up into 11 different categories:

- (1) Fliers & Important Papers from school and PTO (Front Pocket of Binder)
- (2) Money & Important Notes (Zippered Pocket Pouch)
- (3) Student Planner
- (4) Newsletter & Class Schedule (1st Clear Sleeve)
- (5) Monthly Calendar & Menu (2nd Clear Sleeve)
- (6) Class List & Spelling List (3rd Clear Sleeve)
- (7) Study Guides (4th Clear Sleeve)
- (8) Graded Work/Homework (Pocket Folder)
- (9) Communication Log (Notebook Paper)
- (10) Behavior Management Plan (Back Pocket of Binder)

These STAR Binders are very important for your child to keep track of and take care of because they contain extremely important information and will be a useful tool during Parent-Teacher conferences. Students must bring their STAR Binders to and from school every single day; NO EXCUSES! If a student forgets his/her STAR Binder, an appropriate consequence will occur.

TEXTBOOKS:

Textbooks are assigned to each student. The care of these books and other equipment is the responsibility of your child throughout the year. Many of our textbooks are consumable. Please take care to keep them intact.

Please make sure your child covers their textbooks by the 2nd week of school. We would like these textbooks to last as long as possible and book covers really help. You can buy cloth book covers or make your own from brown paper grocery bags or some other sturdy material. Novels used during literature circles are considered a textbook. If a novel is lost or damaged, it must be replaced.

HOMEWORK:

Students WILL have homework on a fairly regular basis. I will try not to overload the kids with homework. **However, please keep in mind that the amount of homework your child has each day is**

largely based on how wisely he/she used their class time!

Students will be assigned homework to reinforce daily lessons and in-class work. The kids will usually have time to start their homework before they leave my classroom; I rarely give them homework assignments as they're walking out the door. Students must record ALL assignments from each classroom in their homework planner. Please check and sign your child's homework planner each night.

When students come into my classroom, I will either collect their homework altogether or they will turn their homework into the appropriate tray, depending on what I tell them to do. **If a student does not have his/her homework complete the day it is due, they will flip their behavior card.**

All homework assignments will be located in the student's homework folder included in the STAR notebook.

PLANNERS:

The students are required to write down their homework in their homework planners every single day. I will go over homework assignments each day and post them in my room, but I do not go around to each student to make sure they wrote it down. It is the **students' responsibility** to write the assignments down themselves. Your child's homework planner will be located in the front of their STAR binders.

Once they get home, it is your child's responsibility to show you their planner with the assignments written down under the appropriate day. Once you have seen their planner, please sign your name in the appropriate section for that day. (Please sign your full name instead of just writing down your initials. In the past, I have had problems with kids forging their parent's initials in their planner.)

Your child should always write **SOMETHING** down in their planner every single day. Even if they have no other homework, your child will always write down "Read" in their planner. **If their planner is blank, that means they didn't write down their homework in class.** Please write me a quick note saying that your child's planner was blank. If your child does not get their planner signed OR if you write me a note telling me it was blank, they will flip their behavior card.

It is very important that you check and sign your child's planner each night. I often use planners as another means of communication; I frequently write notes to you or attach information you may need in the planners. Any important papers or notices will be in the first section of your child's STAR binder.

ABSENT WORK POLICY:

When students are absent from my class, they will be expected to independently obtain their assignments from our "Absent" folder/notebook when they return to school. Each day, all of the homework assignments will be written in our "Absent" notebook and any worksheets/hand-outs will be put in our "Absent" folder. Absent students will be expected to gather these materials independently when they return to school.

Once the students have all of the necessary materials, they will have the same number of days they were absent to complete all of the work. (Example: If a student is absent for 2 days, they will have 2 days to make up missed work.) If students have any questions about the content of the work they missed, they can ask me questions during an appropriate time.

LATE WORK POLICY:

Students are expected to turn in their homework for my class as soon as they come into my room each day. If a student does not have his/her homework done the day it is due, it is considered LATE. Late assignments may be turned in before the beginning of class the following day, but 10 points will automatically be taken off. **Work that is not turned in at this time will be counted as a zero.** I will not allow students to redo or make up work after this time. The students need to learn responsibility and *will* be held accountable for their work and effort. A phone call will be made home after 3 missed/late homework assignments.

EXTRA CREDIT:

I rarely give out extra credit during the school year. I think that students need to take their school work seriously everyday and try their best on every assignment. I feel many students think they can mess around for most of the 9 weeks, then do a lot of extra credit at the very end and bring up their grade.

I *do* give extra credit to students who meet their A.R. reading goal each 9 weeks (see "READING" section.) This extra credit significantly helps the kids' reading grade, but they have to *earn* it by meeting their A.R. goal each 9 weeks. Please do not send me a note asking what extra credit your child can do to bring up their grade. If I do decide to make extra credit an option, I will inform the students as well as the parents.

READING:

Students will be expected to read 20 minutes EVERY NIGHT; this is a daily/nightly homework assignment. Students will have the opportunity to check books out of the school's library twice each week and I also have a library of books in my classroom. (My books **MUST** be checked out by me.)

Accelerated Reader Program:

Cuba Elementary uses the computer software Accelerated Reader (AR) program. All of the books in the school's library have colored AR stickers on them so students can pick out books that match their appropriate reading level. All of the books in my classroom also have AR stickers on them.

To determine each child's A.R. reading level, each child will take a computerized STAR reading assessment at the beginning of every 9 weeks. The students read a passage, then answer comprehension questions. The program then determines each individual child's A.R. reading level. Once I receive the scores, I will give each student the following information: their S.S. (Scaled Score), their G.E. (Grade Equivalent), their range, and their new A.R. goal for the 9 weeks. This AR

information will be stored in their STAR Binder in the AR section.

The S.S. is the score your child will get overall on the S.T.A.R. reading assessment – the higher the number, the better. The G.E. is what level your child is reading on (example: if your child's G.E. is a 5.6, that means he/she is reading on a 5th grade level in the 6th month of the school year.) The G.E. will also be your child's new A.R. level. The range lets your child know what books they can read comfortably (example: if your child's range is 4.8-5.7, they can read books as low as 4.8 and as high as 5.7 and still comprehend them.) The kids should not go above or below their specific range.

Hopefully, I have helped you with the adjustment to 5th grade. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing your child's progress throughout the year. If you have any questions or concerns before we have Parent/Teacher Conferences, please feel free to contact me at school 309-785-8054, via email at jscharping@cusd3.net or personal cell phone 309-338-5047 (if an urgent situation should arise).

Sincerely,

Mrs. Scharping and Mrs. McLean