August 16, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Greetings!  I hope everyone feels a bit settled into the start of the new school year.  Sixth grade is a pivotal year in both academic and social growth for most students.  Our primary goal in sixth grade is to provide the building blocks of creating independent learners who embrace self- control of both their academic responsibilities and behavior in and outside the classroom.  This critical independence will help students make a smooth transition into what will be expected of them in seventh grade.  Sixth grade students will be taught many organization and problem-solving strategies that will help them in the future.

**Class Expectations**:

My class theme is “High Expectations and Mutual Respect”.  Students will be challenged and supported to persevere through many difficult academic concepts.  Students are expected to enter the classroom quietly, focused, and ready to learn.  Before entering the classroom, campus rules require that all hats are taken off, no gum or food is allowed, cell phones are to be turned off and placed inside (out of view) of their backpack, and dress code followed.  In general, I maintain a very quiet work environment so that students are able to focus -- free from excessive noise and distraction.

**Grading Policies**:

Graded assignments will be returned to students each Monday in a large brown manila envelope.  Each weekend students may also access any graded Google Classroom assignments.  Parents/ Guardians and students should also expect to receive each weekend several individual emails that show current AERIES assignment scores and cumulative grades.  Please keep an eye out for assignments that show a “0”.  This zero means the student either has not completed or turned in the assignment.  Zeroes greatly hurt and negatively affect overall grade averages.  At the beginning of the year, students may turn in work late without any penalty.  Also, if you see the letters “NA” that stands for “not applicable”.  This code represents an assignment that does not need to be completed by your child.  It neither helps nor hurts a student’s overall average.

**Course Content**:

Sixth grade curriculum covers some of the following broad topics:  physical education, genres of literature, essay writing, all parts of speech, research and note-taking skills, earth science, ancient civilizations, pre-algebra skills, geometry, as well as art and music.

**Contact Information**:

Please feel free to contact me through school email:

lrowland@aadusd.k12.ca.us

**Materials Needed**:

So far, all materials have been provided for students.  Please keep an eye on your child’s three-ring binder.  If you notice the rings no longer close correctly, it would be a good time to replace it.  Many students replace the classroom binder at the start of each quarter.  Also, if you could ensure that your child has a silent reading book at school in their backpack every day, that would be appreciated!

**Parental / Guardian Support**:

Even though self-control and independence of sixth grade students is the goal, it does take adult help and support especially at the beginning of the year.  If you would like to help your child start off well, here are some things you could do to assist at home:

* Check your child’s daily student planner (found in front of their notebook).  As a class we record each day before we go home exactly what is due the following day.  It’s important that students keep zeroes out of their averages.
* Check the Class Web Page regularly.  The class web page can be located in the High Desert School Web Page under Academics / 6th Grade tab.  Each night I post in chart format what we hopefully will be completing for that day.  If you click on the Assignments tab you will get a good idea of what we will be doing each and every day here at school.  If a student is absent, the “X” mark off to the side of the chart lets the student know that those assignments are expected to be completed during or after the absence.
* Each Friday we do have a Spelling Test and Vocabulary Quiz.  It would be greatly appreciated if initially you helped your child prepare and study for these assignments by giving them practice tests.  The two lists can be located in the student’s three-ring binder under the Spelling Divider.
* Please make sure your child has access to a computer or Chromebook at home.  If you do not have access to one, sometimes the school district office located on Crown Valley Road (across from the Acton Park) can issue one for you to keep and use at home for the year.  Simply stop by the main district office and they will issue you for home usage this year.  It’s very important that students have access to a computer at home since so many assignments are completed through Google Classroom.

Again, thank you for helping your child make a smooth transition to sixth grade here at High Desert School.  If I have forgotten to answer a question that might be important to you, please feel free to email me.

In sincere appreciation,

Larry Rowland, High Desert School