September 7, 2012

Dear Fifth Grade Families,

 We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child(ren) to the fifth grade at World of Inquiry School’s Franklin Campus! We look forward to getting to know your family this year. We, the three fifth grade teachers, have gotten together to come up with this packet of information we believe you will find helpful as you help your child transition to fifth grade. You will find information regarding homework and behavior policies, class assignments and projects, crew wear, chaperoning field trips, classroom procedures, and the new addition of student lockers while at the Franklin Campus. Please take the time to read over the information and make note of any questions or concerns you have. The last page of the form is for you to indicate that you have read the forms and also document any questions and concerns you may have. We also want to communicate to you again that we have open door policy and encourage you to call before or after school with questions, comments, or concerns. Our school phone number remains the same: 325-6170 (Martin/Berical ext. 1250; Simmons ext. 1210).

We will be having our first parent-teacher conference in early November. Conferences can be scheduled at your request any time prior. We believe we must work as a team to ensure your students’ success and growth throughout the year. Feel free to come in any time to observe or jump into the fun. We will be looking for volunteers during the year and appreciate any time you have offer. More information will follow. We look forward to meeting you all soon for what is sure to be an exciting 2012-2013 school year.

 Sincerely,

 Ms. Martin and Ms. Berical (Room 125) and Ms. Simmons (Room 121)

**Borrowing Classroom Books**

 We are fortunate to have a vast supply of books from just about every genre and reading level in our classroom. All three fifth grade teachers share their personal book collections with each student in the class. Since every student is expected to complete a nightly reading response assignment (which consists of reading a set number of pages from a book at their level and responding to a prompt), we allow students to sign out books from our personal libraries to use for these assignments. This ensures that all students have access to books of interest to them that are also at their reading level.

 Due to some previous confusion, we are asking parents to give their child permission to sign out books from the classroom library. By granting your permission, you agree that your child is responsible for all books that he/she signs out and also agree to replace the book should your child misplace or damage it. There is a section to indicate your permission on the last page of this packet. If you would rather your child not borrow our books, you can indicate so on the last page. Please know that for those children who do not borrow classroom books, they will need to bring in books to be used for homework assignments and/or Book Talks for our approval **before** reading them (this is to ensure they are at the child’s reading level and, in the case of a Book Talk, have not been chosen by another student already). Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about our book policy.

**Student Lockers**

 One new adjustment for our students this year is the use of personal lockers. Lockers are being used because the former classroom closets/hooks are not available in our current building. Each student will be assigned his/her **own personal locker**; no students will be sharing lockers. **The lockers will remain unlocked** **at all times** **per our administration’s policy so no students will be using a lock**. Please ensure that your child does not bring anything valuable to school, as we are not responsible for stolen items. Please also know that there are cameras in all hallways throughout the school, so students who either steal or attempt to steal any items from someone else’s locker will be caught and subject to discipline.

 Students will have regular access to their lockers when they arrive at school in the morning and again when they prepare to leave school. Due to the location of the lockers being outside of the classroom, **students will not have access to their lockers during the school day other than to retrieve a lunch they may have brought from home**. This is because one of us needs to be in the hallway to supervise students at their lockers. We will remind students to get all necessary items out of their backpacks first thing in the morning. If you have any questions or concerns about our locker policy, or if you believe your child has an extenuating circumstance and may need access to his/her locker during the day, please let us know so we can come up with a solution.

**Crew Wear**

 Students will be expected to be in **full crew wear every school day**, unless teachers have given notice in advance about a non-crew wear day (such as a class party or school-wide “dress down” day). Acceptable crew shirts include any school t-shirt (with the crew logo), light blue polo shirt, or navy blue polo shirt. Long sleeve shirts can be worn as long as they are either light or navy blue with **no logo** other than the WOIS logo. **Sweatshirts are not permitted unless they are completely free of logos/designs and are in a solid acceptable crew wear shirt color.**  **Shirts that have non-crew wear colors and designs** **may be worn underneath** acceptable crew shirts. Acceptable bottoms include khaki, navy blue, or black pants/shorts/skirts of any material. **Blue denim of any kind is not permitted.** **In the event that your child is unable to wear crew wear (due to laundry difficulties or otherwise), we ask that you either send in a note or give us a call ahead of time to let us know.** If a student is not wearing a crew shirt, he/she will be expected to wear a crew shirt from our clean classroom supply. Students who have consistent problems coming to school in crew wear will receive phone calls home and will be referred to Mrs. Webster.

Fifth graders have Physical Education classes every Tuesday and Friday. Students are expected to wear their gym clothes **under** their crew wear. Students will not be allowed to change in the bathroom due to time restraints. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns about this policy. If you believe your child has an extenuating circumstance and may need change in the bathroom, please write us a note or give us a call to let us know. Please also let us know if you have any questions or concerns about our crew wear policy.

 **Homework Policy**

 Fifth grade is a challenging year that requires effort and increasing responsibility for students. The amount of homework will increase and students are expected to read nightly for at least 20-30 minutes. There are also two state assessments students will be taking in the middle of April: New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. They are in good hands but we need your support. It is essential that students complete their homework consistently.

We have discussed how homework is essential to reinforce skills, strategies, and content learned in school, as well as teaching responsibility and fostering a healthy routine. The policy has been explained, will be reviewed, and practiced in school. We urge you to have a discussion on the challenges, worth, and benefits of doing homework with your students. Personal experience and leading research shows that students who regularly complete homework far outperform those who do not. We highly suggest that you designate a well-lit area in your home for doing homework at a table. We understand that family schedules may conflict with the amount of time needed to diligently complete homework assignments, and ask that you manage the time accordingly. Below you will find a list student responsibilities regarding homework:

1. Students will receive homework every night and over the weekend.
2. Students are expected by the District to read at least 25 chapter books and will be expected to read at home daily (books are always available to them-*See Borrowing Classroom Books*).
3. Student will record the homework each morning/afternoon in their planners and will get it initialed with their behavior score by teachers at the end of the day. Students will record a behavior score for how they believe they did too.
4. Students are expected to show their planner to a parent or guardian for review and a signature.
5. Students are responsible for taking homework home each day.
6. Students are responsible for completing and returning the homework on the day it is due.
7. Students are responsible for handing in the homework upon arrival in the morning.
8. Students are required to fill out a missing homework form for every assignment not ready to turn in.
9. Students are required to hand in any late and /or missing assignments the following day.
10. Students who are absent will be allowed extra time to complete missed work, or if you would like to pick it up, please call the office and we would be happy to make arrangements.
11. If students hand in all homework throughout the week, they will be able to come to fun Friday in the classroom.

**Chaperoning a Field Study**

As you may already know, parent involvement in their child’s education makes a great difference! One of the many ways to be involved in your child’s education is by chaperoning a field study. It is always great to have extra hands to help out during our field studies to create a safe and productive learning environment. All chaperones must have signed the volunteer form with the Rochester City School District and be at least 18 years old or older. Since these are educational field studies, we discourage purchasing food or other items or provide opportunities that are not offered to all students in the class or pre-approved by the teacher. Please refrain bringing other family members (younger siblings or other relatives) in order to maximize attention to assisting students. Please wear a watch and be prompt when time to meet. We discourage use of cell phones. Business and personal calls are not considered appropriate. If the call has to be taken, we ask that it is done quickly. The guidelines for being a chaperone are listed below. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns for chaperoning a field study.

As a chaperone, you will be responsible for:

* Arriving at the school 15 minutes early to review chaperone guidelines, meet your assigned group, and assist where needed. You are also expected to stay for the entire field study.
* Supervising a small group (about 5-6) of students who will be assigned to you for the field study. In addition to the field study, we expect you to supervise them during lunch, bathroom breaks, recreation (if time permits), and on the bus.
* Making sure students have all necessary items (journals, pencils, lunches, trash, etc.)
* Bringing your own BAGGED lunch instead of purchasing one on the field study. This way, you will be able to maintain the supervision of your assigned group and eat in a timely manner. We also encourage your child to have a BAGGED lunch either brought from home or provided by the school.
* Riding the bus to and from our field study site to help monitor bus behavior. This is an opportunity to get to know more about your group by sitting with them and chatting about what they are hoping they will learn, finding out about what they already know about the topic, and asking them what they learned from the field study. If we are walking, we have the same expectations as on the bus, and that you help students to cross the street safely and keep up with the group.
* Following procedures outlined by the teacher even if there is a difference of opinion, with the exception of safety issues. We have the ultimate responsibility and we depend on your support. If any emergency arises, please remain calm and seek assistance immediately.
* Reporting any problems you may have encountered during the field study.

**Use of Agendas**

Keeping the lines of communication open between school and home is essential for your child’s success at school. Each student has received an agenda to be used during the 2012-2013 school year. The agenda is expected to go back and forth between home and school. There are resources in the agenda that students can use such as a map of the United States, multiplication facts, food for thought, to name a few. We have looked through the agenda and reviewed the criteria for how to effectively use it. Students will use their agendas for recording their daily homework assignments and reminders, writing the behavior score they feel they deserved for the day, and writing their daily reflection. Teachers will use the agenda to record your child’s daily behavior score, write a parent a note, and respond to a note from a parent. We ask that parents use the agenda to write your child’s teacher a note, writing a reminder down for your child, a motivational note to your child (optional), and most importantly, **write your signature to indicate that you have reviewed your child’s homework assignments and behavior score.**

**Behavior Plan/Model Citizen Card System**

All students come to school to learn, however there are a few times that some may have difficulty remembering their self-control. Everyone begins on a 4 everyday which gives full privileges. If the card is changed to a 3, the student will take time to reflect so that the behavior does not happen again. If the card is changed to a 2, students will not have the following privileges: computer fun time, outside recess, Club Tilley, etc. and they must fill out a reflection sheet. If the card is changed to a 1, there will be an immediate call home in hopes that we can reach you so that you can talk with your child to help him/her to refocus and get back on track with the rest of their day. In the event that we cannot reach you, your child will be sent to a nearby classroom (K-5 area) for a moment to take a BREAK, which is an acronym for Breath, Relax, Exchange negative energy for positive energy, Apply a new goal, and Keep moving forward. If the student continues to have difficulties, he/she will be sent to the Main Office with a referral and work to be completed. If your child received a 2 or a 1, we ask that you talk to your child about what happened to get him/her off track and what he/she needs to do have a successful day next time. Teachers and students will create the rubric for how to stay on a 4, and what a student does to make them earn a 3, 2, or 1. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about our model citizen card system.

**Snack**

 This year, our lunch is scheduled at 1:00. Students will need to bring a healthy snack every day in order to help their focus and energy throughout their work day. We ask that you try to send in healthy to somewhat healthy snacks instead of ones high in sugars and fats. The only drink students will be allowed to have in the classroom is water. We highly recommend getting a water bottle they can bring regularly and refill here as needed. Snack donations for the class are most helpful for students who may not always have a snack. We do have nut and raisin allergies so please do not send in snacks containing these items if you wish to send in a whole-class snack. Thank you for your support!

**Packet-Sign Off**

Please initial next to each section to indicate that you have read it and indicate choices where applicable. There are lines for you to document questions or concerns, which are optional. Please place your full signature at the bottom of this form.

**Parent/Guardian’s Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Child’s Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Borrowing Classroom Books**

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I give my child permission to borrow classroom books and agree to replace the books should my child misplace any.

\_\_\_\_ No, I do not give my child permission to borrow classroom books. I understand that I will need to provide them for my child.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student Lockers**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Crew Wear**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Homework Policy**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chaperoning Field Trips**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Use of Agendas**

**­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Model Citizen Card System**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Snack**

**Questions or Concerns (may use back for additional space):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_