

September 15, 2017

## Welcome to Grade 3

I am very excited about teaching grade 3 again this year! I wanted to officially introduce myself and tell you a little bit about our classroom and some of the activities we are doing this year. I am very much looking forward to teaching your child and working together with you so that your child has a great year!

My full name is Ms. Jody MacKenzie. This is my 17th year at Keenooshayo. I am originally from Drayton Valley where I was very fortunate to get my first teaching assignment in my hometown. I have a 12-year-old son named Kayne. He is in grade 7 this year and is so enthusiastic and excited about starting at the junior high school. He is active and keeps me busy and on the go but I love every minute of it. I look forward to spending all my spare time with him. We love to go swimming, play street hockey, skating, skiing, we go camping and quadding, riding bikes, scooters, reading books, and building Lego. There is never a dull moment in our house. I feel very fortunate and blessed to be able to enjoy all these activities with him. I think St. Albert is a wonderful community and I feel very lucky to be a part of the staff here at Keenooshayo. It is a great place to come to work everyday!

***In Language Arts***, I will be doing "balanced literacy". I will be focusing on spelling, writing and reading skills all year. We have started reading the novel, "TJ and the Cats". We just finished chapter 6. We are reading the book out loud together, as well as answering questions in a booklet that follows each chapter. My focus will be on making complete sentences and recalling important information from the chapters that we are reading.

We soon will be starting reading groups in the classroom, once I am done with all the individual testing with each student. During reading centers, the children will rotate through many different centers within the classroom. The main centers are: read to the teacher, partner read, silent read, listening to books on CD, computer, spelling, and/or writing center etc. Each day I will read with one group at their independent reading level. The kids really look forward to this time together, especially "FUN FRIDAY" center time and the LEGO table rotation.

We started ***cursive writing this week*** and will continue to work on letter formation and words for both lower and upper case letters until Christmas.

We will do a lot of writing in grade 3. Each day, the students will work on activities that will lead up to writing a paragraph on Fridays. Each week, we will focus on a

different trait to enhance their writing, based on the '6+1 writing traits'. The traits are: ideas, conventions, organization, voice word choice, sentence fluency and presentation. The topics will vary each week. Occasionally, we will write in our writing journal for about 10-15 minutes a day on a specific writing prompt. Sometimes it will be on a prompt of their choice and other times I will provide it on the white board.

**Friday Journals** will go home every **Friday**. The kids will enjoy writing to you about their thoughts, feelings and/or activities that are going on at school. Please write back to your child and return all books back to school by the following Monday or Tuesday.

**Spelling words** will continue to go home on **Mondays**. The children will copy the words neatly and carefully in their agenda. Thank you for studying these words at home with your child. We will be doing various activities/worksheets daily at school to practice. This is so important for them to be exposed daily to these words and practice spelling them. Some parents do a pre-test with their son/daughter at home and help their child learn the words they are struggling with. This is a great idea!

**Spelling tests** are on Friday's. Your child will spell 15 spelling words, 2 bonus words and write 2 sentences with a spelling word in it. I will be marking the sentence looking for capitals, end punctuation and the word circled and used correctly in the sentence- 3 marks for each sentence.

**In Math**, my focus for the last 2 weeks have been reviewing grade 2 concepts. Today, we started Chapter 1, it's called, "*Patterns in Mathematics*" and Chapter 2 will be on "*Numeration*". There are lots of concepts to be covered in mathematics this year. Please refer to my website on my weebly site for the breakdown and extra activities and pages that can be printed off and practiced at home.

We have also started '**timed tests**' on **basic math facts**. I give the kids 2 minutes to complete addition facts and subtraction facts. My goal is to help your child with speed and accuracy on basic addition and subtraction facts to 18. I encourage you to practice flashcards on these basic facts at home to help these become more automatic (speed and accuracy) This is one of the student leaning outcomes on the first report card.

I will be sending home at the end of every second month, a "**portfolio binder**". The binder will contain samples of work that your child has done that month, testing sheets and any other important pages for you to review with your child. This has worked extremely well in previous years because parents can see exactly what their child is doing as well as areas that may require extra assistance at home. There will

be a pink "parents reflections" sheet, as well as a sheet for the children to fill out, located at the back of the binder for that month. When you are finished looking through the binder, please return it back to school. I have found in past years that 2-3 days was enough time to have the binder at home. Your child's binder will be going home towards the end of October. If your child has not brought a 2-inch binder to school yet, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Please fill out the **monthly reading record sheet** that was sent home and return it back to school at the end of each month. I will send a new one home at the beginning of each month in the Friday envelope. Thank you to all parents for taking the time each night to sit with your child and listen to them read. Your child should be reading between 10-15 minutes a night. Together this year, we are going to make sure that reading is top priority for your child. My goal is to get them 'hooked on' books and for them to love reading books. I can tell many of the children are already hooked and just love to read! This is awesome! As they become more familiar with words, practice good word attack skills and are exposed to a variety of chapter books at their level, they will become more fluent readers and therefore want to read more at home. I am excited to see this unfold and take place!! I am very passionate about kids reading and will reward them throughout the year. I am encouraging all students to try to take out chapter books from the library. I will help them select books each week. ☺

At school, we have a school wide reading program. It's called 'Renaissance Place'. The students are encouraged to take library books at their reading level. Preferably chapter books. All the kids have taken a STAR reading test and they have a range where they are able to take out books and read them at home. When they have finished, they are able to take a quiz on their book on the school computers. It's a great way to practice comprehension. Most books have 10 questions and 60% is a pass. I will reward kids throughout the year by having **'AR PARTIES'**. We will decide as a class on the theme of the party and how many books they want to read to achieve the goal.

We set a goal for 3 books/quizzes passed by Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>. One of these books can be TJ and the Cats, as we will be done reading this novel by then. We are going to have ice cream or an ice cream float party to celebrate. Only the kids that meet the goal will participate. *I've had kids in the class already take AR quizzes. As of today we have taken 30 quizzes.* I am proud of how excited they are to participate in this. ☺ Plus, it's a great way to get kids reading!

I will continue to set reading goals throughout the year to encourage reading and to make learning/reading FUN. It's very important to me and I am very passionate about it. Reading is in ALL subjects and it's just so important to develop a LOVE for it.

Please make sure that all *library* books are returned on Thursday. Our Library class is right after lunch recess. I have a basket in my room where the kids can put their library books when they are done reading them. I encourage them to take out 2 chapter books that they can read at their level from the library each time we visit.

We have *music* on Tuesday and Thursdays. We have *gym* on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I have also signed out chrome books on Wednesdays and Fridays. We will play a variety of web games, type spelling words and practice typing.

**Communication Pocket**- I have put together '*communication pockets*' to go between home and school for things that need urgent attention, that are from me or need a signature from you. It's a way that information can go back and forth and not get lost or misplaced.

If there is any parent that is interested in stuffing 'Friday Envelopes' on Friday's, please let me know. I appreciate this so much. 😊

Also, please feel free to send the birthday invitations to school on or before Fridays and we will make sure they go home in the Friday envelopes. I would prefer that invitations go home in the envelopes, so there are no hurt feelings for the students that did not get invited. I hope you understand.

If your child is celebrating a birthday and would like to bring in birthday treats, email me ahead of time and I would be more than happy to distribute the birthday snacks on their special day, we have already had 2 birthdays this month and snacks too! Depending on the treat, napkins would also be appreciated. 😊

**Behavior**- I have also started a '*positive behavior visual display*' at the front of the class. There are different levels the kids can move to. I will reinforce the positive behaviors that are seen throughout the day and move the kids accordingly. All kids start the day at the "Ready to Learn". They have a clothes pin with their name on it. These are the levels: Super student, Good Choices, Ready to Learn, Think about it, and Consequence. If your child is at the 'Think about it' they will be asked to stay in for a few minutes of their recess, this will give us a chance to talk about their behavior and hopefully come up with a positive plan. If they are at Consequence level, I may contact you either by telephone, email or a note to discuss, or your child may write a note to you. I want this to be all positive and I want us to all have a fabulous year together in grade 3. We will work towards 'Fun Friday' Centers to celebrate a great week and reward the kids for their hard work. As well as ballots, games, free time, listening to music, dancing and treats 😊

## Unfinished Classwork-

1. *The classwork that is sent home is usually concepts that we are working on at school and that I feel your child may need some extra practice and reinforcement or*
2. *If they have corrections to fix or work that was not completed during class time. I always give plenty of time for kids to get their work done.*
- 3..... *Or work that is incomplete because of being absent.*

*I think it's important to see what your child is working on and how they are doing at school. Some extra reinforcement from home helps too. Please make sure that all workbooks are returned the next day to school.*

Today, we started our first grade 3 math unit and some of the students struggled on the first two pages. The first unit is called 'Patterns'. I am going to send an extra practice book to work on at home. If you would like to continue to get the booklets throughout the year, please let me know and I will make copies for you for the unit ahead of time. The booklet is strictly optional and each activity goes along with the lesson we did that day. I DO NOT require the students to return them back to school. It's a home book, to help them gain confidence if they struggle in math. 😊

This year we will be featuring a "**student of the week**". Before hand, I will be sending home the sheets that will need to be filled out and put up in the classroom on Mondays at recess. Your child will have the opportunity to talk about themselves, and the pages and pictures they have brought. The students have seen the display and now understand what is expected and how it will look once it is complete. Thank you in advance for helping your child complete these pages. They are excited for their turn to come and share with their classmates. If you would like to send in treats on the week your child is being featured, that would be awesome. Akari was student of the week this week! I learned a lot about Akari and she even spoke some words to us in Japanese.

Agendas should be signed and checked daily at home. We will write in them everyday at 3:00 pm, as this is our most important means of communication between home and school.

Please feel free to write me a note and attach it in your child's agenda as I sign them at the end of each day. If you could please initial your childs agenda each

night I would really appreciate it. If you write a note, please get your child to put it on my desk first thing in the morning so I see it or please feel free to email me. I turn my computer on first thing in the morning and check it periodically throughout the day. Emails work great and are effective.

In your child's "**portfolio binder**" next month you will see a copy of the word wall words for grade 3. Your child must know these words by sight. Please take out this copy and leave it at home so that you are able to practice these words at home occasionally.

**In Health**, we will be participating weekly in ' Mindfulness' lessons on Wednesday. Am very excited and happy to be doing this again, this year. Thank you to Marjolein Makowecki-Fuentes for teaching this valuable skill, being present in the moment and mindful. ☺

**In Science**, we are learning about "Rocks and Minerals". I personally love rocks and am looking forward to sharing that passion with the kids. I have many of my own rocks that I like to collect them and will share these with the kids. Our next unit after this one will be "Hearing and Sound".

**In Social**, we have started with a "Mapping Skills booklet". We will work in this for the next couple weeks and then we will start to explore and study these 4 countries: India, Peru, Ukraine and Tunisia and comparing them to Canada/Alberta.

I will be participating in ordering **scholastic books** each month. This is a great way to have books at home for your child to read. Please make cheques payable to Scholastic Canada Ltd or you can send cash as I order from the book clubs each month for my own son and for our classroom library so that I am able to put books into the class reading program. You can also pay on line, which is super convenient. Thank you for supporting this worthwhile program.

We are in need of some gently used games, puzzles, books, blocks, Lego etc. to be donated to the classroom for the children to play with during those rainy/cold days that we frequently have throughout the year. If you have any such items that you and your child are willing to part with and are in great condition, I would love to have them for the classroom. Please send anything you feel is suitable at your earliest convenience. Thank you!!

The grade 3 teachers are also collecting the fieldtrip fees for this year. A letter is going home today regarding this. We are asking for a one-time fee of \$75.00. This will cover all costs for the fieldtrips as well as bussing for all of us. Please pay on parent portal at your earliest convenience and by Friday, September 29th. Thank

you so much. We have already registered for all the fieldtrips this year.

I believe in open communication with the parents- we are partners together in your child's education.

Please feel free if you have any questions, to not hesitate to call me at school or attach a note in your child's agenda as I see them everyday. Also, please feel free to contact me by email.

My email address is [jody.mackenzie@spschools.org](mailto:jody.mackenzie@spschools.org)

My web page is: [www.3mackenzie@weebly.com](http://www.3mackenzie@weebly.com) . You can also download the app, to make it convenient and easy to check.

I update my weebly page every few days. I usually do not send home a monthly newsletter. I put all info on my weebly website or the kids write it in their agenda. With weebly, I take pictures and upload them. Please check it out. There are lots of pictures in the September folder already. ☺ I take pictures of the bulletin boards, special projects and special days and the kids having a great time together. I will also put reminders on there, news from our classroom and important events that are coming up. The kids have already seen it as I have an entire page of web links to a variety of games and activities across the curriculum. Please check it out if you haven't done so already. You can down load the app on your phone too.

Looking forward to a fabulous year working with you and your child! I am very much looking forward to it! ☺

Sorry, for my lengthy newsletter. I have so much to share with you.... Just want you to know what grade 3 is all about. ☺

Your child's education at heart,

Ms. J. MacKenzie