



Elmwood's Grade 5 News

September 13, 2011

Dear Grade 5 Parents:

This letter contains specific information about the academic programme and the procedures in place in our classrooms. We have also added to the package a number of materials that we thought you might find useful.

Our Philosophy

Let us begin with our teaching philosophy. We believe quite strongly that for Grade 5 students, school should be stimulating, exciting, and fun! Grade 5 students need to be challenged on a regular basis, yet they also require multiple opportunities to practice and develop their skills in an environment that offers support and regular feedback. The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) encourages students to take risks and try new things, and these are qualities that we value highly in our classrooms. Girls at the Grade 5 level are also beginning to face competing priorities in terms of academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities. As a result, it becomes increasingly important for them to learn to develop a balanced lifestyle that includes time for unstructured socializing with their friends.

Our Schedule

A copy of your daughter's Grade 5 timetable is included with this information package. Your daughter has already received a copy of her schedule and it is in her agenda. As you will note, our timetable is filled with lessons in language arts, mathematics, and UOI (units of inquiry). Throughout the year, subjects such as science, social studies, and art will be taught *through* our units of inquiry as often as possible. Throughout these lessons, we will cover the outcomes outlined within the Ontario Curriculum.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/grades.html>

Please note that Junior School hours are from 8:20 a.m. - 3:25 p.m. It is important that a parent call the School prior to 8:20 at (613) 749-2558 if a student will be late or absent.

Handwriting

- ✓ Neatness is the first goal for handwriting and our expectation is that students' writing is legible. Most students are familiar with cursive writing and the expectation is that this is the predominant method of writing during the year.

Language Arts

Reading

- ✓ Our reading programme is based on current research and contains opportunities for students to read in groups, read with other individuals, read independently, and be read to.
- ✓ Students will be provided with a wide-range of materials to read and will have opportunities to read short pieces of non-fiction, stories, novels, poetry, and a variety of other texts throughout the year. Students will be assessed, given feedback on a regular basis, and guided to choose material appropriate to their reading level and interests.
- ✓ The reading done in class is intended to support the topics we are learning about; however, students also have regular opportunities to select the material they wish to read. Students should always have an independent reading novel with them at school.
- ✓ Twenty minutes of independent reading is expected each night.

Writing

- ✓ Our expectation is that students will be given opportunities to write daily. They will write for a variety of purposes, using a range of formats such as point form, complete sentences, stand-alone and inter-connected paragraphs (for example, essays), story writing, report writing, and poetry.
- ✓ Students will conference with their peers and with the teacher to learn more about the editing process and to take their writing from a first draft through to a finished product.

Spelling

- ✓ Students will be introduced to spelling patterns on a weekly basis.
- ✓ We will use a spelling program that is individualized and unique to each student. Current research demonstrates that each student needs to have a list tailored to her understanding of spelling patterns. Students will be given a pre-test during the week and each will then create a list of ten words that she needs to practice and learn to spell.
- ✓ Practising will be done in class.

Mathematics

- ✓ Elmwood School uses the **Everyday Mathematics** programme from Kindergarten through Grade 5. The programme matches or goes beyond the curriculum expectations outlined in the Ontario Curriculum.
- ✓ The programme is broken into a number of units and the curriculum expectations are laid out in a spiral format, so that material is reviewed repeatedly throughout the year. Pre-tests are given prior to beginning each unit to determine students' skill and understanding in order to allow for differentiation. At the end of each unit, students will be tested on their understanding of the material covered.
- ✓ You will receive a newsletter for each new unit. The newsletter will focus on the new material presented in the unit, relevant vocabulary, and activities you might like to complete with your daughter. Many of the suggested activities are games that will allow your daughter to practice her skills in a fun way.

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program's Units of Inquiry

- ✓ The Primary Years Programme is a teaching framework that employs a dynamic, inquiry-based approach to learning.
- ✓ In Grade 5, there are six units of inquiry, each of which runs approximately six weeks.
- ✓ Attached is a brief outline of the units we will cover, and the order in which they will be covered.
- ✓ At the start of each unit, a newsletter will be sent home that will outline the key concepts of the unit, the vocabulary that will be taught and used, and suggestions for ways you can enrich the programme for your daughters at home.
- ✓ The Ontario Curriculum provides an outline for the skills and knowledge to be covered in Grade 5 science, social studies and art programmes. The skills and knowledge of these content areas are integrated into the units of inquiry.

Assessment

- ✓ Assessment is best when it is ongoing and formative; thus, we use an assortment of assessment strategies for a variety of purposes, to both inform and promote student learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Grade 5 programme.
 - **Pre-Assessments:** These take place at the beginning of a unit and are an opportunity for students to demonstrate what knowledge and skills they already possess, so that lessons may be tailored to build upon their existing understanding of the content when new material is taught.
 - Examples of pre-assessments include quizzes, tests, and 'Show What You Know' activities.
 - **Formative Assessments:** These take place throughout a unit of study and are an opportunity for each student to receive feedback about her skill development and knowledge acquisition and comprehension.
 - Examples of formative assessments include class work, small group and whole-class discussions, quizzes, and performance-based activities. Rubrics, self and peer reflection, as well as teacher observations and evaluations also serve as formative assessments.
 - **Summative Assessments.** These occur at the completion of a unit of study and are opportunities for students to show the knowledge and skills they have gained.
 - Examples of summative assessments include projects, tests, and presentations. Additionally, rubrics, self-assessments, student reflections, and teacher observations and evaluations are essential to the assessment process.

Physical Education

- ✓ Physical education classes will be held three times a week and we will go outside as often as possible. Your daughter should have two pairs of running shoes at school at all times—one **indoor pair** and one **outdoor pair**—and should dress appropriately for the weather when class is

outside. We will go outside even in colder weather, thus please ensure your daughter has the appropriate attire for all weather occasions.

- ✓ Our physical education classes will include numerous units including soccer, basketball, and net sports (badminton and volleyball) among others. Students will work on skill development as well as teamwork.

Reporting Periods at Elmwood

- Thursday, November 10, 2011: Term 1 Mid-Term Report
- Thursday, November 17, 2011: Parent-Student-Teacher Conference
- Thursday, February 16, 2012: First Term Report
- Wednesday, March 7, 2012: Parent-Student-Teacher Conference (upon request)
- Friday, April 20, 2012: Term 2 Mid-Term Report
- Mid-June 2012: Second Term Report

At any time, should you wish to meet to discuss your daughter's progress, please do not hesitate to e-mail your daughter's homeroom teacher for an appointment: aholmes@elmwood.ca or cwiegand@elmwood.ca

Unit of Inquiry: Decisions, Decisions!

ORGANIZING THEME: **How We Organize Ourselves**

DESCRIPTION: An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.

SUBJECT FOCUS: This unit is linked to Ontario Curriculum Social Studies unit on *Aspects of Citizenship and Government in Canada*, as well as aspects of geography as we review provinces of Canada and continents in the world.

DURATION: Approximately six weeks, from September to mid-October.

CENTRAL IDEA:

Decisions made by both groups and individuals influence us on a personal and collective level.

INQUIRY INTO:

- How decision-making by groups is similar to and different from decision-making by individuals;
- The role of values, attitudes, needs and wants in group decision-making;
- Current local and global issues that involve decision-making.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES AT HOME:

- Ask about the activities completed in class.
- Discuss how decisions are made in your home. Who makes them? How do people decide? What do you consider when making a decision?
- Involve your daughter in more decision-making at home. Discuss pros and cons for decisions to be made.

- Invite your daughter to watch the nightly news, particularly when there is a local or global issue that involves people making a decision.
- Clip out and discuss articles that show local, national, or global politics. Please send these articles to school for your daughter to share.
- Review and discuss vocabulary linked to politics, government, provinces, continents, and decision-making.

Any parent who has expertise or ideas to share about this unit is asked to e-mail Ms. Holmes or Ms. Wiegand with their suggestions. Ideas will be incorporated when possible and time permitting.

Field Trips

Our first field trip supporting this unit of inquiry will be to Parliament Hill on Thursday, September 15th.

We will be participating in an overnight trip to the Y-Camp in Dunrobin from Wednesday, October 5th – Thursday, October 6th. This trip focuses on team building and group leadership and is an important and unique aspect of the Grade 5 programme. Details will follow soon.

Everyday Mathematics

Welcome to fifth grade Everyday Mathematics. This curriculum was developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project to offer students a broad background in mathematics. It is a curriculum based on research into best practice for the teaching of mathematics from around the world. Everyday Mathematics covers, and in many areas exceeds, all of the strands contained in the Ontario Mathematics curriculum.

The features of the program, described below, are to help familiarize you with the structure and expectations of Everyday Mathematics:

- A problem-solving approach based on everyday situations. Students learn math skills in a context that is meaningful by making connections between their own knowledge and experience and mathematics concepts.
- Frequent practice of basic skills. Students practice basic skills in a variety of engaging ways. In addition to completing daily review exercises covering a variety of topics and working with multiplication and division fact families in different formats, students play games that are specifically designed to develop basic skills.
- An instructional approach that revisits concepts regularly. Lessons are designed to take advantage of previously learned concepts and skills and to build on them throughout the year.
- A curriculum that explores mathematical content beyond basic arithmetic. Mathematics standards around the world indicate that basic arithmetic skills are only the beginning of the mathematical knowledge students will need as they develop critical-thinking skills. In addition to basic arithmetic, Everyday Mathematics develops concepts and skills in the following topics—number and numeration; operations and computation; data and chance; geometry; measurement and reference frames; and patterns, functions and algebra.

- Students will be assessed on their mastery of the concepts covered through an end-of-unit test.

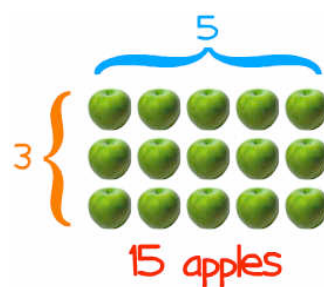
Everyday Mathematics provides you with ample opportunities to monitor your child's progress and to participate in your child's mathematical experiences. Throughout the year, you will receive mathematics newsletters to keep you informed of the mathematical content your child is studying in each unit. At the Math Morning you will receive a package containing vocabulary and Do-Anytime Activities for each unit.

UNIT #1 - Number Theory

We have just begun our first unit in Everyday Math. The material presented in this unit builds on students' prior work with multiplication and division of whole numbers. This unit builds on students' understanding of factors and products to explore topics from the branch of mathematics called number theory.

Unit 1 has 5 main areas of focus:

- ✓ To introduce students to the Student Reference Manual;
- ✓ To review rectangular arrays and multiplication number models;
- ✓ To review and practice factoring;
- ✓ To introduce prime, composite, and square numbers; and
- ✓ To develop an understanding of exponents and square roots.



We have included vocabulary relevant to the unit. You may wish to familiarize yourself with these terms and help your daughter review them at home. We have also included a section of games that are key to the implementation of the programme. Through playing the games, students practice learning the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. As always, should you have any questions about the content being covered, please let us know.

Scholastic

This year, we will be providing you with the opportunity to order books through Scholastic, as well as the opportunity to subscribe to OWL magazine. Please note that both programmes are completely optional and no child is required to purchase any books or magazines.

Scholastic Book Clubs are an easy and affordable way to find and order books that children love. Scholastic pre-selects books that are at variety of reading levels. OWL is an age-appropriate magazine that includes articles about important current events, as well as puzzles and projects that your daughters can try.

Throughout the year, if you would like to order any of the books from Scholastic, simply fill out the forms at the back of the flyers. Please have your child return the completed forms to her homeroom teacher with a cheque for the total amount made out to Scholastic Canada Ltd.