

WELCOME FIRST GRADE VIPERS!

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the wonderful world of first grade! As Sierra Verde Vipers we will be learning many exciting things together this year as we help our children grow and learn. There will be lots of information in this letter, as well as, throughout the year. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask.




We will be using many hands-on ways to learn our academics. In reading we will follow our core curriculum, Into Reading for instruction. Our literacy block will include small group and whole group instruction as well as literacy centers. In math we will use the district adopted Eureka Math program which includes many hands-on activities. While much of our Science and Social Studies curriculum is often addressed through our reading curriculum, we will also use Picture Perfect, Mystery Science, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and Harcourt Social Studies to ensure that all standards are being met and taught in detail. We will be focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) throughout the year as a major emphasis. Though writing is integrated into all subject areas, we will be teaching writing each day with an emphasis on proper sentence structure. Students will become authors quickly by implementing a Writer's Workshop approach to writing. We will use Thinking Maps along with Lucy Calkins Writers Workshop. The state of Arizona established AZ ELA High Academic Standards for students that must be taught. We will be following these first grade standards. These standards are available to you at <http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/>.





During the first few weeks of school we will spend lots of time getting to know each other, as well as, learning our class routines and expectations. Structure and consistency are very important for children. For that reason we ask that your child be on time for school each day. The Sierra Verde school day begins promptly at 8:45. Students will be allowed on campus at 8:30. They will head to our classrooms at 8:30. The school day ends at 3:30. If you are picking your child up from school in a vehicle, please make sure the purple placard with your last name and grades written clearly is placed on your dashboard. Your child will meet you at the Sports Gate (to the right of the MPR) at 3:25. If you are walking to pick up your child, they will be dismissed at the Kindergarten Gate (to the left of the office). Students that are being picked up by a sibling will be waiting outside the first grade classrooms. Bus riders will be walked to the back bus loop. Please alert the front office if your child needs to deviate from their usual dismissal plan. First grade teachers often do not have time to check email during the day.




Lunchtime is an important part of the day for students to recharge. Please make sure your child's name is on their lunchbox. Students will go out to recess after they eat so to ensure your child eats a healthy lunch, please discuss their choices with them and your expectations of what they are to eat from their lunch box or meal. Students are welcome to **bring lunch from home, or they may get a school hot lunch.** Breakfast is available before school at 8:10 AM for \$1.50. Lunch will cost \$2.95. Please visit the Sierra Verde website to create a lunch account and find menu choices.

 Please send your child to school with a water bottle. This is especially important during the hot months. **Please make sure the water bottle has your child's name on it.** Gatorade and other flavored drinks are fine for lunch but children may only have water in the classroom.

 Home/school communication is extremely important. Most information is shared electronically. Your child will have a daily take home folder. This folder will also be a great avenue for communication. Please check them each night to see your child's work and important information. If you have any notes etc... for school please put them in the folder or send us an e-mail. Each day we will check them.


 Homework will focus mostly on reading and math practice. It is important that students practice what they are learning and that they begin cultivating the art of responsibility at an early age. Giving your child a quiet place to complete homework or a special box of writing/ coloring tools to use will show your child that you value learning and understand the importance of it. If your child is having difficulty with the homework given, please feel free to adjust the workload for your child. Also, let us know so that we can help your child. Students shall read or be read to for **at least 15 to 20 minutes nightly**. Please sign the reading log each day that you read. Our math program assigns homework daily to review the concepts taught in class. You will need to check the daily folder for math homework each day.


 This year Sierra Verde, along with all DVUSD schools, will continue to implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school safety system to support student behavior and classroom management. PBIS is a structure designed to ensure classroom management and student discipline are addressed in a positive, systematic way that supports the academic achievement of all students. The purpose of implementing PBIS is to:


- * Approach student discipline in a proactive manner, modeling appropriate expectations and rewarding positive behaviors, decrease disruptive behaviors in classrooms, common areas, and all campus locations.
- * Increase academic instructional time and administrator's leadership time.
- * Improve school safety and positive school climate for staff, students, parents and community members.
- * Track behavior data to determine the effectiveness and support we are providing for our students.


Sierra Verde students are expected to follow our four school wide rules: **1. Be Safe 2. Be Responsible 3. Be Respectful 4. Be Kind**. We will spend time the first week of school discussing the school wide rules and what they look and sound like in our classroom. This will become our Viper Pride. If a student has trouble following a rule they will receive a warning and we will discuss how they can change their behavior, if they continue to have difficulty they may be given a few minutes to think about their behavior at recess and parents will be notified. Again, we will discuss good choices. If the student needs a third reminder parents

will be contacted. If a student continues to have difficulties making choices they will lose classroom privileges and be put on a daily behavior plan. Students do not have the right to interfere with another child's learning. Chronic behavior issues will require parent involvement and possible office referral. Students will follow the district discipline matrix as needed. This flowchart can be found on our school website at <http://www.dvusd.org/domain/2647>.

 Our first graders will go to special area classes this year. They will go to Art, Band, Music, Physical Education and STEM each day at 1:15 to 2:00. On P.E. days it is important to wear tennis shoes or your child will have to sit out! We have a six day rotation for special area classes. The special schedules can be found on our website and are available from your teacher tonight.

 We will have seasonal celebrations throughout the year and information regarding these occasions will go home as they come closer. **Children are allowed to share a NON-FOOD item treat with the class at the end of the day to celebrate their birthday, if they choose.** A list of suggestions include: pencils, erasers, or party favors. Please let me know ahead of time if your child will be sharing something for their birthday. We will pick a week during the school year to celebrate our summer birthdays. Just a reminder: we are a balloon free school.

 Volunteers: Each first grade classroom is in need of a homeroom parent to organize and plan classroom parties. Please let your child's teacher know if you are interested. Once first grade routines are established teachers may be looking for volunteers for other classroom activities and field trips. All volunteers must attend volunteer training. Be on the look out for training dates if you did not already complete this training.

 It is important that we work together to make a positive home/school connection. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to call, email, or send in a note. During the school day we are busy instructing the students and we will do our best to contact you as soon as we are able. If you need to meet with us, we can set up an appointment before or after school. We look forward to working with you this school year to make your child's school experience exciting, rewarding and positive.

Sincerely,
First Grade Team