



# **First Grade Handbook**

## **Shumway Leadership Academy**

1325 North Shumway Avenue  
Chandler, AZ 85225  
(480) 812-7400

Dr. Korry Brenner, Principal



## **WELCOME TO FIRST GRADE**

First grade is an exciting, and in many ways, the most important year for your child. This year your child will be building the foundation for the rest of his/her education. Students will work on many new academic skills, as well as, refining and applying learned skills. It is also a year for increased accountability. Responsibility, independence, organization, and social skills will be key focuses. Our program is highly academic and utilizes a combination of hands-on activities and paper/pencil tasks. Weekly work goes home or is saved in logs and/or portfolios. *Discussing daily activities with your child, practicing skills nightly, and frequently checking their backpack for notes and work is the best way to help and support your child.*

### **Reading & Phonics**

First grade is the most important year in reading instruction as it builds the foundation and groundwork for all academic areas. There are many different learning styles and abilities; therefore, we teach using many different approaches. Chandler Unified School District has adopted the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys reading series. This series is an integrated, systematic reading program with a wide variety of instructional activities that provide for each student's individual learning style and level. Reading skills and strategies will also be integrated throughout the curriculum using additional resources, materials, and methods.



As your child gains reading skills, please encourage them to use a variety of strategies (i.e. tapping out words, using picture and context clues, reading ahead, etc.) to decipher printed text. While spending time reading with your child, it is important to model left to right progression, how to use a bookmark, and how to find appropriate reading levels. This is a developmental year and each child will progress at his/her own rate. *Daily practice at home is crucial. This practice time is usually the determining factor in successful progress in reading.*

## Spelling

Our spelling program builds strong working skills which children transfer and use in their daily writing opportunities. Shumway uses the Wilson Language Basics for K-3 called Foundations. Foundations provides a systematic and explicit approach to reading and spelling with phonics. We will combine this instruction with the *reading of good literature*, which is just as important for your child's development. Each week's spelling words coincide with the skill we are learning. Look for a parent letter at the beginning of each unit to explain how the student uses the new skills. On Fridays, your child will be given a copy of the new spelling words for the following week. Throughout the week, we will complete activities that utilize the spelling words such as word work, dictation, alphabetizing, and a variety of games. Spelling tests will be given on Fridays. Please be sure to have your child study these words each night so that they are prepared for the test.



## Writing



Shumway uses Write From the Beginning as our core writing program. It provides a solid structural foundation for writing instruction that is designed to be used from kindergarten through eighth grade. It has five basic components: Focused Modeled Writing, Mini-lessons, Analytic Rubrics, Unassisted Writing, and Self-Assessment. Students will also have time to write in journals about topics of their choice.

## Penmanship

Shumway uses the Foundations Letter Formation Guide for handwriting style. This letter formation style will be taught and utilized for all writing tasks. Our goal is to promote legible handwriting that includes proper ball and stick letter formation, proper spacing, correct use of upper and lower case letters, correct letter sizes, neatness, and correct positioning on the lines.



## Math

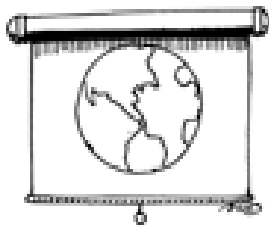
The main objective in the math program is to make math meaningful in our world. Along with the Shumway adopted text, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's GO MATH!, we use many hands-on activities with an emphasis on problem solving and reasoning skills. The use of manipulatives (objects) is imperative to your child's understanding of math concepts. In order to truly



have ownership in mathematics, a child must first have concrete experiences, then link them to the abstract (i.e. computation figures), and finally, be able to record these experiences. Computation and recording of math data on paper will be sent home in homework folders or kept in logs/portfolios. Continual help at home reviewing, practicing, and drilling on math facts and concepts is beneficial if your child is developmentally ready and understands the skill.



## Social Science & Science



Social Science and Science areas are emphasized throughout the year in both a thematic format and embedded in our Language Arts themes. We will be doing research projects in the middle of the year and map skills in the spring. I encourage you to enhance your child's learning in our areas of study through discussion, reading, research, computer, art projects, etc. at home.



## Enrichment

First graders are challenged daily with critical thinking skills, higher-level questioning techniques, and enhanced curriculum when appropriate. We feel it is important to offer independent center activities as well, so that students may challenge themselves to improve. As first graders complete assignments and required activities, they may independently go to a variety centers in the

classroom. Children will practice various skills through games and creative activities. We focus on knowledge enrichment and the demonstration of appropriate use of skills rather than pushing children to memorize more material. Some children may be asked to do challenge homework at home if the teacher and parent feel it is appropriate.



Since there are so many “life skills” and study skills to learn at this level, it is often a mistake to push too fast and too much. It is wonderful for students to feel good about their academic abilities while mastering their independence, organization, and responsibility skills. It is equally important at this age to allow children to become well-rounded in many areas and to enjoy being six and seven years old.



## **Specials**



First graders will attend a special class (P.E., Music, Library, and Technology) on a daily basis. These classes will be attended on a block schedule rotating over a six-day cycle. That means that Music, or any special class, will not always be on the same day of the week, but it will move through a six-day schedule. For example, one week Music might be on a Monday and Thursday, but the following week on Tuesday and Friday. In addition, students will also be able to use the classroom computers during center activities. You will be informed about the block schedule for each week in the classroom weekly newsletter.

## **Homework**



The main reason for first grade homework is to establish the habits of responsibility and organization. Our school district requires first graders to spend 10-25 minutes – 4 times a week on homework. Homework folders will be sent home each Friday and should be signed by a parent and returned the following Friday. Homework will include spelling, fluency, comprehension, writing, and math practice.

In addition, we would like each child to spend 15 minutes reading each evening. A minimum of 60 minutes per week is required. These minutes should be totaled and recorded on the homework sheet by the parent. In order for your child to have appropriate reading materials at their level, a reading folder containing reading materials will also be sent home weekly for practice. Please find other sources for reading such as library books, computer material, environmental print, etc. Contact the teacher for other concerns and materials.

This is truly the most important time you will ever spend with your child. We are teammates. We rely on you to choose the appropriate amount of homework time for your child and family situation. You may wish to use the optional enrichment ideas sent home in the homework folder. Making a “homework spot” for your child’s materials, as well as a routine time to do work, will help your child feel the value of this habit. Establish these routines now and you will be so grateful later that you did!



## Classroom Management



First graders will be taught the Leader in Me vocabulary for behavior choices. We are eager to encourage and reward children for good behavior choices through verbal praise, class incentives, class treats, stickers, etc. These will depend on the teacher. School Star Cards are also given to children for positive school behavior. If a child makes a negative behavior choice, the series of consequences includes a verbal warning, loss of class incentive, loss of recess, and/or a call or note to the parents. The goal of the school wide discipline plan is consistency and to promote student responsibility for actions and decisions.

## Grading System (District-Based)

Our aim in first grade is for each child to feel successful at his/her developmental stage of learning. Children may be asked for their own reflections on their work and behavior in their portfolios and on teacher based reports to parents. If at any time, there is a concern about your child's progress or behavior you will be contacted immediately. It takes time to develop all of the skills necessary in first grade. Please celebrate your child's efforts.



## Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held in the fall after the first few weeks of school. This is an extremely important time to discuss your child's progress and adjustment to first grade. In the third quarter, we will have student-led conferences where the students will celebrate and share their accomplishments in the areas of reading, writing, math, as well as, behavior goal setting. We strongly encourage you to support your child and this form of self-reflection and responsibility. We will be in the room to answer any general questions you may have, as well as, congratulate your child on his/her efforts. If you would like a separate time to meet with the teacher, please feel free to ask. We will let you know if we feel the need to conference with you too!



## **Communication**

Look for classroom highlights in our weekly newsletter. This will give you a picture of what we are studying and upcoming events. Each student will be given a communication folder from the office. Please have your child keep it in his/her backpack daily so that important notes can be sent back and forth to school. PLEASE check backpacks daily.



## **Star Student**



Each child will be the special student for one week this year. They will be asked to make a poster to display in our classroom (I'll send it home). Star Students will also be the class helper and may share some special treasure with the class on their Friday.

## **Attendance (8:10-2:40)**

Students may arrive on campus after 7:50 am. Upon arrival, your child should go to breakfast or directly to their classroom. Please encourage your child to follow this routine, even if they are with a parent. It is a safety concern to have children in areas without appropriate school personnel supervision.



Coming to school on time is very important to set the tone for your child's day. Your support is greatly appreciated. If your child is tardy, please sign in at the office and obtain a tardy pass before coming to the classroom.



Please send a note to your child's teacher if your child's after school plans change. Also, if you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please sign him/her out at the office and they will call for him/her to meet you in the office.

**IMPORTANT:** Students at Shumway are not allowed to come to school with scooters, skateboards, or roller blades. Only 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders may ride bikes to school.

## Lunch



Lunch at school is very exciting for your first grader. Each child is given an option of two hot entrées with a choice of side dishes, or they may choose a peanut butter or deli meat sandwich. Sides may include yogurt, a fruit, a vegetable, and chocolate bear grahams. The lunch menu changes daily. Please consult the monthly menu or check the Internet for exact meals.

Lunch is \$2.85 each day. It is very upsetting for the children who do not have lunch money or a lunch each day. Please help them by keeping track of when lunch money is needed. Parents can pay for their child's lunch account online at **MySchoolBucks.com**. If you need to bring in lunch money or a sack lunch after school has started, please leave it in the office and they will bring it to the room. Any further questions, please call the cafeteria. First graders have lunch in the cafeteria first, and then they go to the playground with recess aides.

## Hungry Tummies

We find that six and seven year olds get hungry during their morning of work. In order for them to continue to stay focused during this important part of the day, it is imperative that your child comes to school with a healthy breakfast in their tummies. Breakfast is also available in the cafeteria for \$1.70. This small action makes such a big difference. Thanks!



## Recess

First graders have two recess breaks. One recess is in the morning at 9:30 and the other is after lunch. Students may play on a variety of equipment, in the sandbox, or they may play under the large covered patio with various toys and activities.



Water bottles may be brought to school for drinks during the day. However, for health reasons, they will not be taken to the playground. There is a cold-water drinking fountain at the playground. Water bottles should be taken back home and washed daily.



## Safety



Our focus is to keep your child safe at school. We travel on campus as a class on most occasions. If your child needs to go to the restroom or office, we send them in pairs for safety. All school staff and District personnel wear identification badges each day to avoid confusion. Teachers and aides are on duties before school, at recess, and after school with walkie-talkies to call for help if needed. We ask your help by

doing the following:

- All visitors/parents must check in at the office. Please wear the visitor badge the office gives you while on campus. We are required to stop and ask all adults on campus without a badge to return to the office.
- Please refrain from just walking on the playground or driving up along the fence and stopping to talk to your child and/or other students while they are at recess. This can be alarming to other students, as well as, teachers on duty.
- Please have your child meet you in one of the designated after school pick up areas (in the front or back of the school) so that they are able to safely get to you. Remind them to walk to that meeting spot using the sidewalks and not the grassy areas.
- We ask that you do not bring pets on campus unless there is a specified pet day.
- Please discuss with your child the importance of his actions and words. Any child that uses words or actions that threaten another student must, by law, be reported to the police. It is no longer a joking matter. It would be helpful to talk with your child about inappropriate words, gestures, or actions that are threatening.



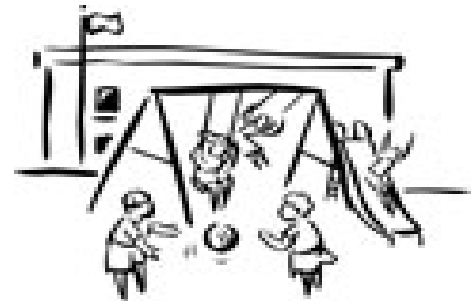
## First Grade Expectations

- Be respectful.
- Be a good listener.
- Be polite.
- Be careful with hands and feet.
- Be your best.
- Be a friend.



## Playground Expectation

- No running or sliding on cement.
- No throwing sand, rocks, sticks, etc.
- No hanging or pulling on trees.
- Only three children on the pretzel at one time.
- No tag or chase games.
- No pulling on others or their clothing.
- Keep hands on the monkey bars at all times.
- Swing sitting down, facing forward.
- No jumping off of the swings.
- No pushing others on swings.
- Wait along wall or fence for next available swing.
- Sand must stay in the sandbox.
- Sand must not be thrown in the air.
- Toys must be put away after using them and at the end of recess.



## Shumway General Playground Rules

1. Tag or games that involve hitting or grabbing another student are not allowed.
2. Do not jump off any piece of equipment.
3. There is no digging except in the sandbox area.

4. Bars:

- Hold on with two hands.
- Travel in one direction.
- Do not sit on top of hand-over-hand bars.
- Never stand on top of any of the equipment.



5. Slides:

- Slide in a seated position, feet first.
- Slides are for going down, not climbing up.
- Only one person at a time.
- Keep safety zone between you and the person ahead of you.



6. Swings:

- One person at a time on a swing.
- Hold on with both hands.
- Stay seated.
- Swing straight, not crooked or twisting.
- No jumping off.
- No pushing others on swings.



7. Bathroom:

- Take a pass from the lunchtime monitor before going to the bathroom.
- No running or fooling around in the bathroom.
- No spraying water, as the floor gets very slippery.

\*\* We ask children not to scream on the playground. \*\*

## **Volunteers**



Volunteers are the backbone of making our program successful. Without your help, we cannot do as many enriching activities because the preparations take a great deal of time. Since volunteers have various strengths and preferences as to the type of help they are comfortable with, please fill out the volunteer note and return it to your child's teacher. Volunteers and projects can then be coordinated to meet everyone's preferences.

If you would like to volunteer at school, we could use your help in a variety of ways. First grade does not have many textbooks. Most of our work is xeroxed. Your wonderful help with this effort is truly appreciated. There are also many other preparations like cutting, sorting, stapling, gluing, etc. to do for our first grade lessons. Helpers who can donate extra time and feel comfortable working with children as Art Masterpiece teachers, Room Parents, Ceramics Teachers, etc. are always needed too. Please let your child's teacher know if you are interested in learning more about the responsibilities of these helpers.

If you volunteer on campus, please sign in at the office before coming to the classroom. Visitors must wear a badge on campus at all times for safety reasons. In addition, please be sure to record your number of volunteer hours in the office.

First grade is a time for the children to become more self-sufficient and independent. Therefore, there is not as much hands-on help needed within the classroom doing things for children. We strongly encourage children to do tasks and assignments for themselves. Children gain much pride in themselves as they gain this independence. If there is a project to complete within the room, it is very distracting for many first graders to have younger siblings in the room. Therefore, we ask that siblings do not come during classroom helping time.

If you are unable to come on campus, we also love to have helpers who can staple, cut, assemble, etc. at home and then send the materials back to school. If this is you, thank you! There is always something to help with and we look forward to your help and support. Thanks!

## **Speakers**

We have several speakers come to school to talk to first graders about topics of study. If you have a job or hobby that you would like to teach the students about, please contact your child's teacher. We would love you to become a guest teacher.



## Donations



Thank you for your generosity! We do so many hands-on projects that your wonderful support is much appreciated to make learning fun and interesting at this level. We would love to have volunteers to donate things for cooking projects and art projects, as well as, extra class supplies to share such as markers, colored pencils, highlighters, white board markers, etc. as needed.

## Field Trips

First grade adventures out on fun field trips each year. We need parent helpers for these field trips. The field trip budget is decided after the fall PTO fundraiser, and then locations are determined. Due to safety reasons, siblings may not go along on the field trips. Sometimes there may be a small fee for adult helpers. Field trip permission slips and volunteer/chaperone requests will be sent home with plenty of advance notice in order for parents who volunteer to make arrangements to their schedules.



## Birthdays



We sing and celebrate within the classroom for each student's birthday. Students may bring treats for sharing, but they must be store purchased. Please distribute birthday party invitations outside of school to avoid hurt feelings. If you have other questions or plans, please contact your child's teacher.

## Parties

We will have class parties for Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and at the end of the year. We have lots of room for helpers!



## Student Supplies



Please do not send in large boxes of crayons, pencil sharpeners, or other individual supplies unless requested by the teacher. A backpack is very helpful for students to have at school each day. Parents should check the backpack each night for notes, work, and other communication.

## **Speech Screening**

Speech screening for first graders is done at the request of parents or the teacher. Please contact your child's teacher if you have a concern.

## **Learning is Fun!**

We plan to have a very balanced, exciting, and successful year. Our plans include a wide variety of integrated activities so that all children enjoy learning. Since we offer countless opportunities for learning through whole class, small group, pairs, independent, and center activities, there is always a chance for your child to be learning or practicing skills.

Please encourage your child to spend quality time on their activities in order to get the most learning from them and to begin to learn self-motivation. We are excited to have the opportunity to nurture, guide, and encourage your child toward being an academically strong and self-reliant learner!



Thank you so much for your help and support!

### ***The First Grade Team***

Mrs. Carrie Milkovich  
Room 5  
[Milkovich.Carrie@cusd80.com](mailto:Milkovich.Carrie@cusd80.com)  
Voice Mail: 480-812-7435

Mrs. Donna Hughes  
Room 6  
[Gorski.Donna@cusd80.com](mailto:Gorski.Donna@cusd80.com)  
Voice Mail: 480-812-7436

Mrs. Janell Ochs  
Room 7  
[Ochs.Janell@cusd80.com](mailto:Ochs.Janell@cusd80.com)  
Voice Mail: 480-812-7437