

*Welcome to
our Flock!*

Mrs. Sturm

1-22

2025-2026



Welcome!

My name is Kelly Sturm. I am from Fort Wayne, and graduated from Saint Charles, Bishop Dwenger, and Indiana University, Bloomington. I am married with three daughters.

For five years I was employed as a para-professional at St. Vincent DePaul School in second grade. During this experience I was encouraged to pursue my teaching license at Indiana Wesleyan University, and I was blessed to student teach with Mrs. Richardson. This will be my 14th year with this extraordinary first grade team. The key part of our team is Mrs. Welsh, who assists me in your child's instruction. She has a great passion for your children, is patient, kind and over-qualified! I am thrilled to be working with your children. It is important that your child enjoys school, becomes a proficient reader, and develops a love of learning. I hope to provide your child with the opportunity to reach their potential. As partners in the education of your child, we can achieve these goals in an environment where your children grow academically and spiritually.



Happy Homework



Just as athletes and musicians must practice to develop their talent and skills; practice is essential to learning math facts and fluent reading. We ask that you practice sight words, math facts and read the assigned stories four nights a week. In addition, there may be class work to be finished or math worksheets to complete. A sample timetable follows:

5 minutes – sight word practice (after a while you may find you can just combine this with the week's assigned reading)

10 minutes – read the assigned story, or your choice if none is assigned that day.

10 minutes – Spelling & phonics practice (after a while you may find you can just combine this with reading the story)

3-5 minutes – Otter Creek math facts; use your choice of flash cards, online, or practice sheets. These will all be in the homework packets, although you will need to duplicate the practice sheet

Total time: 30 minutes or less

Practice! Practice! Practice!

Reading

Reading is the most important skill we learn in first grade. We use a combination of small group and whole group instruction.

Each child will work on grade level material, as well as material at his or her own instructional level. Your children will read from a great variety of texts; our weekly decodable texts, guided reading texts, plays, magazines, fiction, nonfiction, and other Language Arts activities.

We are using a framework for instruction called the Daily 5 (Read to Self and listen to Reading,, Read with a Partner, Work with Words, Work with Writing, phonics games.) in combination with our Reading program, Magnetic Reading. The children will be doing these activities every day when they are not in a guided reading group with Mrs. Welsh or me. We expect to make amazing progress. Children who read a great many books at home, as well as during independent reading times, will progress faster than those who read only a few.



Challenge words are optional and are checked on Friday. You may try to read as many as 5 lists each Friday. You'll find these in your child's binder which we plan to be returned to you the first week of school

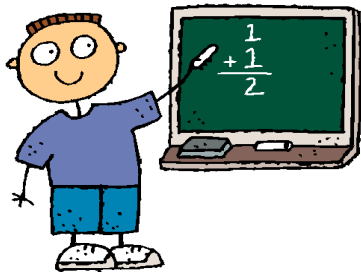
The reading grade is based on knowledge of sight words, fluency, and comprehension of the assigned stories. Grades are determined by performance in weekly tests.

Math

Our curriculum meets or surpasses the Indiana Math standards. It does not matter if they are called Common Core, Indiana Academic, or NCEA; they are challenging-requiring number sense and developing the skills to think mathematically. We will use manipulatives frequently to build understanding; then move on to more abstract lessons.

The standards require that first graders memorize the facts through ten VERY WELL and be able to calculate the facts through twenty quickly and easily. We call this math fluency. We will use a variety of strategies such as fact families, touch math, and time tests to help memorize. We will also begin to develop problem solving skills.

Students will learn measurement, fractions, geometry, money, place value and number sense, in addition to computation. The math grade is based on the average of, usually, weekly tests, and completion of math homework practice assignments. These will begin later on in the quarter.



Any graded written work in all subjects will be given a percentage, with the number correct over the number possible.

Spelling

I plan to begin spelling the second full week of school. I will use words that are aligned with the reading and sight words for my weekly tests. The spelling grade is based on the average of weekly tests. We will add bonus words and sentences as we go on.

Phonics

We will review consonants and short vowels in a little more depth, but we will move on to blends, digraphs, and long vowels at the end of second quarter. We will work diligently and creatively with the children to assure their success in this.

The phonics and English grades are based on the average of weekly tests that are coordinated with our new reading program. They will focus on one or two skills each week.

Science and Social Studies

Much of our science and social studies is taught in our cross-curricular units. The children generally enjoy these studies very much. We are aligned to the new Indiana Science Standards, including the Engineering standards.

The science and social studies grades are based on participation in the activities. Because there are no tests, the children receive an “S” if they have completed the in-class projects.



Religion

Your children and I are at Saint Charles because we believe in Catholic education.

We integrate religion in all subjects and every part of our school lives. The children are taught prayers and encouraged to pray spontaneously. We learn many Bible stories and study saints. **We attend Mass twice a week, on Monday and all- school Mass on Friday.** First grade has the privilege to plan the liturgies, giving us the opportunity to learn church songs and understand the mass. We do lessons, crafts, and activities based on the Saints and the liturgical calendar. Students are encouraged to live and learn their Faith in and outside of religion class. Religion grades are based on participation in activities and discussions. There are no tests; the grade is determined by the activities, class participation and if your child demonstrates a “Jesus attitude”. Mass behavior and participation is also part of their Religion grade.

Behavior and Discipline

Our classroom rules are simple: quiet at specified times, reverence in Mass, demonstrate active listening, stay on task, complete work, and be safe, kind and respectful to all. Generally we have outstanding behavior in first grade. Behavior is guided by the life skills of

trustworthiness, responsibility, truthfulness, active listening, no put downs and doing your personal best. We use a card system to remind the children about the rules.

Green means all behavior is great!

Yellow is a warning

Orange is a strong warning

Red means a consequence, (move desk, no partner work, center projects at seat instead of at center, missing the next recess) and a note home.

Blue is a disciplinary referral.

Our students rarely pull blue cards. If any behavior is beyond the red card level, I will call or email you about the referral.

At Saint Charles, we do not tolerate bullying. Our discipline system, Vision, Beliefs and Mission reflect this conviction.



Communication

PLEASE feel free to contact me if anything is bothering you or just “doesn’t seem right.” My preferred method of communication is email. I would rather you emailed me to solve a problem right away than have you worry about it, or have the problem escalate.

Most issues can be resolved quickly and easily. My school e-mail:

kellysturm@saintcharlesschoolfw.org You can always send a note with your child, or contact me by school office phone.

Check the teacher newsletter on Mondays for spelling words, homework and classroom information. Each night check your student's *Go Home folder* for completed work and classroom information.

You may also find re-dos, work to be finished, or "extra help" assignments. Check the *Go Home Folder* for completed and graded work. I normally have graded tests back Monday,

Specials

I will send home the specials schedule in a newsletter as soon as it is finalized.

Students keep their gym shoes here at school. Specials include Art, P.E., Music, Library and Computer. Our specials usually start the first full week of school.

Field Trips & Events



Digitarium

Lunar New Year

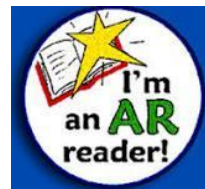


Grandparent's Day

Grandparents'/Special Person's Day will be held on The Monday before Thanksgiving, 11/24.

Academic Enrichment

There are many opportunities for academic enrichment at St. Charles, even in first grade. These include a spelling bee, book reviews, chapter book comprehension packets, challenge lists, Accelerated Reader, math facts races, Fame Arts festival, I-Ready, and XtraMath



VIP

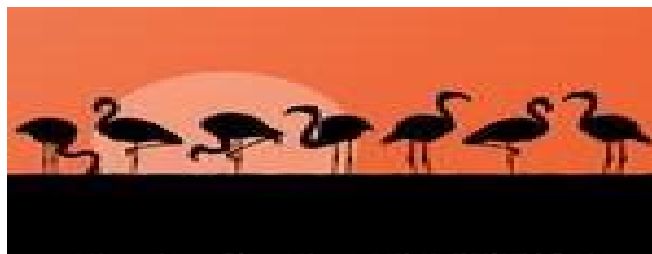


First graders have a special event, VIP day. Each student has the chance to show our class how special they are and what is important to them. Your child will be V.I.P. and enjoy the star treatment that day! Each student can bring in their favorite book to be read to the class, a favorite treat, make a poster or bring in photos of important people and times in their life. (I'll try to schedule VIP the week of their birthday for the students whose birthdays are during the school year.)



Health Concerns

- Birthday and VIP treats may be brought in.
- Please, no messy snacks and no nuts.
- Students may bring in a flip top water bottle to keep at their desk. We will use the water fountains as filling stations after recess. No screw tops please. Make sure it does not leak, or is too big for your child to handle.
- A small healthy snack from home is allowed on Tuesday & Thursday mornings ; no nuts or junk food please. Students with dietary issues may keep their substitute snacks at school. We will not provide or share daily snacks.



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