

Greenwood Kindergarten Handbook

Mrs. Lowe
2024-2025

Absences

When you know your child will be absent, please email me (AbbyLowe@missouristate.edu) or email GWDattendance@missouristate.edu.

Arrival & Dismissal

Students come to the classroom at 8:10 and school officially begins at 8:15. If students arrive at school before 8:10, they will be directed to the cafeteria where there is supervision. Students arriving in the classroom after 8:15 will be marked tardy. Students can be dropped off in the carline in the circle drive starting around 7:30. As you pull into the circle drive, there is usually an adult that will greet your child and direct them to the entrance. You may not park your car in the circle drive and leave it unattended. You may walk your child to the classroom on the first day. After that, please say goodbye to your child in the carline. Coming to the classroom by himself or herself is an important step in becoming independent.

Dismissal begins at 2:55. For dismissal, enter the carline through Lot 8 from Bear Boulevard. When you reach the circle drive, the carline will split into two lines. Please have your visor tag displayed. Students will be kept inside until they are called.

Students will be called by last name, so make sure your child knows his or her last name! Your child also needs to be able to recognize his/her car. When your child gets into the car, please have him or her buckle quickly so we can keep the carline moving. If your child needs help buckling, please pull forward and around the corner so the carline can continue.

You can also park in the parking lot and walk up. You will type your child's name into a computer and wait in the lobby area (near the office). Parents cannot come to the classroom, as this creates congestion during dismissal.

After school care called "Jaycare" is available through the YMCA, and is located in the cafeteria. Arrangements can be made through the YMCA.

If there is a change in your child's normal pick-up routine, please send me an email or note, or you can call the school office.

Assessment

Kindergarten assessment is done in a variety of ways, including observation, informal on-going assessments, classroom assessments, one-on-one assessments, and formal assessments such as the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) and writing prompt. We also use portfolios to collect student work and see individual student progress throughout the year. Assessments are used to monitor student progress and to guide instruction.

Attendance

Good attendance is essential for your child's academic and social success at school. We understand that students sometimes need to miss school due to illness, appointments, or travel, but please make an effort to have your child at school regularly. Much of the learning we do in kindergarten is based on experiences and cannot be made up. School starts at 8:15. If a student is not in the classroom at 8:15, he or she will be marked tardy.

Students with excessive absences or tardies will receive an attendance probation letter from the office, and this may prevent you from receiving a contract for the following school year.

Birthdays

Children may pass out birthday invitations at school only if ALL students in the class are invited, otherwise feelings may be hurt. A school directory with mailing addresses and email addresses will be available from the Greenwood Parent Association (GPA) so you can connect with other parents.

Your child's birthday will be assigned as their snack day (or if it falls on a weekend or school break, it will be scheduled as close as possible). If you would like to send special snacks like cupcakes or cookies, you can send that as their snack and we will eat it during snack time. Please do not send party favors or toys for your child to hand out to classmates. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in April/May.

Calm Spot

Our classroom utilizes some strategies from Conscious Discipline, including the use of a "Calm Spot." The Calm Spot is a place where students can choose to go if they need to calm down, regulate their emotions, and get ready for learning. The Calm Spot is never used as a consequence and it is always the student's choice if they want to go there (i.e., they can ask to go to the Calm Spot if needed, and I will never "make" them go). We will spend time learning about what the Calm Spot is and how/ when to use it.

Classroom Rules

We will create our classroom rules together on the first day of school. We will have a class discussion and I will guide the students in coming up with our rules. The purpose

is to give students ownership in creating our classroom community, and to help students understand *why* we have certain rules. I will send home the rules we create together after the first day.

Clothing & Shoes

Kindergartners are very busy playing, working, and actively learning! I encourage you to dress your child in comfortable play clothes and closed-toe shoes (students tend to get hurt on the playground more easily when they wear sandals, flip-flops, etc.). Jackets should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Students must wear tennis shoes on the days we have P.E. (see schedule).

Please keep a change of clothes in your child's backpack in case he/she has an accident.

Communication

Open and honest communication is so important! I strive to communicate frequently with parents, to keep you informed about what the class is learning and how your child is doing. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions and concerns, or to share things that are happening with your child. If you have a concern, please come to me first (as opposed to talking with other parents, teachers, or administrators).

The best way to contact me during the day is through email (AbbyLowe@missouristate.edu). If I do not get back to you right away, it is because I am busy teaching, but I will get back to you within 24 hours. If there is an emergency, please call the school office. Please keep me up to date if there are changes to your phone number, email address, etc. You can contact me through the Seesaw app; however, I do not check that regularly and sometimes I do not see those messages right away. Email is the best way to communicate with me.

I will send home a weekly newsletter, which will include our learning objectives for the upcoming week, as well as other classroom and school events. I will send the newsletter via email every Friday. If you do not have regular access to email and would like a hard copy, let me know. The newsletter and other class links and information will be posted on my website as well. Our class website is:

<https://abbylowe43.wixsite.com/greenwoodkinder>

I will also use the See Saw app to post pictures, videos, reminders, etc. You will need to create an account using the information given out at the parent meeting/ Meet the Teacher. This will contain your child's unique code.

I will check students' folders daily, but I do not check students' backpacks. If they have something to turn in or give to me, it is their responsibility. Please make sure any homework papers, etc. have your child's name on them.

Content

Most Content learning (Science, Social Studies, Health) is integrated into our Literacy through themes, which is why you do not see separate times for these subject areas on our schedule. Integrating concepts in this manner makes learning more meaningful and memorable for students. We also have a "Discovery" time two times per week. This time is set aside for additional hands-on learning through manipulatives and play, experiments, STEM challenges, etc. Sometimes it is related to our content theme, while other times it is a general hands-on time for exploration. Kindergarten content standards are listed in the class syllabus, which can be found on our class website.

Daily Folder

Your child will bring home a folder in their backpack each day (T.O.Y.S folder). One side of the folder is labeled with papers to be taken out and kept at home; the other side will contain papers that need to be returned to school. Please be in the habit of checking and cleaning out the folder daily. Your child will need to take their folder out of their backpack and turn it into the "T.O.Y.S. Folder" basket independently each morning. I will remind students to do this for the first month or so, but after that, it will be their responsibility.

Discipline

I believe structure and high expectations help create an environment where all students can learn at high levels. My goal is to partner with you in helping your child learn to follow classroom rules and procedures, to regulate his or her emotions, and to become a good citizen. Our classroom management plan is based on a variety of resources, including *Love & Logic* and *Conscious Discipline*. Some of the guiding principles include having logical consequences, positive reinforcement, and building students' ability to regulate their choices and their emotions. Ultimately, the goal is to help students learn to be good classmates, good citizens, and members of our classroom "family!" We use a clip chart system that serves as a visual to help students as they are learning to follow the classroom rules. A detailed explanation of the clip chart can be found at the back of the handbook. It is important that we have open communication and that we work together. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns, and we will set up a time to meet. If your child is having difficulty with behavior, I will contact you so we can come up with a plan to help your child be successful.

Greenwood Handbook

Please be sure you have read the Greenwood Handbook. This can be found on the school's web site under *Documents>School Resources>Students*.

Greenwood Parent Association (GPA)

Our parent association is very active in supporting Greenwood students, teachers, and classrooms! There are many ways to be involved; I encourage you to become a member and get involved!

Health & Safety

We have two school nurses at Greenwood. Here is their contact information:

Heather Seal: HeatherSeal@missouristate.edu

Blair Usery: sbusery@gmail.com

Please inform me and the school nurses of allergies, medical conditions, etc.

We also have a full-time school safety officer.

Homework

Reading at home is the single most important thing you can do to ensure your child's future success as a reader! I cannot emphasize this enough. Please spend 20 minutes reading with your child each night. This can include you reading to your child, your child reading to you, or a combination. Students will bring home a take-home reading bag each week with books at their reading level starting in January. Students will occasionally have homework projects/activities to reinforce the concepts we are learning at school.

Illness

Please refer to the student handbook and information sent out by the nurse for information about screening your child for symptoms of illness at home. Students must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

Independence

Learning to be independent is an important part of kindergarten. I will spend a lot of time, especially early in the year, teaching students to solve their own problems and do things for themselves. I expect a lot of students, but this allows us to spend our time LEARNING, and it sets students up for future success. Solving problems gives students a sense of accomplishment and builds their self-esteem. Look for ways to help your child be more independent at home. This includes things like taking care of their own backpack, dressing independently, self-care, etc. Also, encourage your child to try things on their own before jumping in to do things for them. It takes time and patience, but it pays off!

Library Books

Students will have the opportunity to visit the school library and check out books every week (please refer to the schedule to see our library day). Your child must return his/her library books in order to check out new books.

Lunch

Our lunch time is 11:30-12:00. Students have the following lunch options:

1. Bring a lunch from home, including a drink (no microwave or refrigerator available).
2. Bring a lunch from home, and buy milk in the cafeteria (using their Bear Pass card).
3. Purchase a school lunch. You may load your child's Bear Pass card with money at the following address:

<https://gapp.missouristate.edu/BearPassCard/bpcDeposit/thirdParty>

Please make sure your child knows if they need to buy milk, if they have a drink in their lunchbox, etc. An elementary student lunch is \$3.50 and milk/juice is \$0.85. Lunch and milk must be paid for on the student's lunch account (i.e., do not send money). I help students walk through the lunch line, but school staff cannot monitor what they get on their trays or the ingredients of foods. If your child has allergies or foods you do not want them to have, they will need to monitor that for themselves.

Parents are welcome to come have lunch with their children on special occasions **starting after Labor Day**. Lunch is an important time for socialization, so we ask that you do not come on a regular basis. You are welcome to purchase a school lunch or you can bring something for you and your child.

Medication

If your child needs to take medication at school, including cough drops, you must contact the school office or nurse and fill out the appropriate paperwork. Children may not have any medication in their backpacks.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We will have one formally scheduled conference for the year, which will be October 31-November 1. Students will not have school on those days. I am happy to schedule a conference with you at any time! Please email me and we will arrange a time.

Parent Volunteers

I love parent volunteers! If you would like to help with things like cutting, preparing lesson materials, etc. you can sign up for the "Volunteer Basket." I will typically send the basket home with your child on Thursday and I ask that you return it by Monday. You can sign up to be a "Mystery Reader" and come read to the class. There will also be opportunities to help throughout the year with special projects and events like class parties, field trips, or special activities related to themes/lessons. Sign-up sheets can be found on our class website. These typically fill up quickly, so sign up early!

Play

Play is the work of our children, and as such, it is an integral part of learning in kindergarten! Purposeful play opportunities will be embedded throughout the day. Through play, children practice and learn important social skills, such as sharing and taking turns. Play also helps children develop important speaking, listening, and language skills, including speaking so they can be heard clearly, listening to others without interrupting, expanding their vocabulary, etc. In addition, hands-on play experiences help children develop many cognitive and motor skills. Children will also have outdoor play/recess two times each day. For kindergartners, play is not a “break from real learning,” it is an important part of the learning process!

Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home at the end of each quarter. The report card is designed to give you an overview of how your child is doing with mastering end-of-kindergarten skills. Progress on each skill will be evaluated as:

M: Meets Expectations

P: Progressing

N: Needs Improvement

Most of the assessments we use in kindergarten are given one-on-one.

Rest

Getting enough rest is very important, especially at the beginning of the year! You can expect your child to be very tired as they are going through the transition of starting kindergarten. Please make sure your child has a consistent bedtime and that they are getting enough rest. We do not have a rest time at school.

SeeSaw App

I will use this app to post pictures, videos, reminders, etc. Instructions on setting up your account will be distributed at the parent meeting. This is one of the best ways to gain insight into what your child is learning in the classroom. Once you download the app and set up your child's account, you can set your account preferences. It is up to you, but most parents like to have notifications turned on so they do not miss photos, videos, etc. that are posted during the day. **Please connect to your child's account before the first day of school.** More than one parent can connect to the account, but I ask that **only parents** connect (not grandparents, etc.) so that student pictures and information remain private.

Snacks

A snack calendar will be sent home each month. On your child's assigned day, please send enough snacks for all students in the class (see snack calendar). Snacks should be **individually wrapped**. Keep in mind that we have a limited amount of time to enjoy snack, so it must be something that does not require any preparation (for example, I will not have time to slice apples). We do not have a refrigerator in the classroom, so

we cannot have things that need to be refrigerated. Do not send drinks. **Do not send any snacks that contain nuts.** I will schedule your child's birthday as their snack day for that month (or if your child's birthday falls on a weekend, over break, etc. I will schedule it for a nearby date). We are allowed to celebrate birthdays, so you are welcome to send cupcakes or special treats on that day (birthday treats are an exception to the "individually wrapped" rule). We will celebrate summer birthdays in April & May.

Special Classes

Please refer to the schedule to see when we have special classes. Make sure your child wears tennis shoes on P.E. days and returns library books on library days!

Sensory Path

The colorful stickers you see on the floor in the hallway near our classroom are called the Sensory Path. It is designed to help build motor skills, balance, hand-eye coordination, and balance. It can also provide children with a "brain break" and an opportunity to get their "wiggles" out so their bodies and brains are ready for learning. Students will learn to use each part of the sensory path. All students will have opportunities to use it at certain parts of the day, and students may ask to use it when they need a sensory break. Although all students benefit from it, the sensory path can be especially beneficial for students with ADHD, sensory issues, or those who need extra support in developing motor skills and coordination.

Technology in the Classroom

We have a few iPads in our classroom, plus an iPad cart that is shared with first grade. Students will sometimes use the iPads during Reader's Workshop and Math Workshop to reinforce specific skills we are learning. We will also occasionally use the iPads for special projects, such as conducting research. Technology can be a useful tool to enhance student learning, but it is just one of many tools, and I believe it should never "replace" instruction from a teacher or hands-on learning. There is a great deal of research currently that demonstrates the detrimental effects of too much screen time for young children. Students' screen time in the classroom will be very limited and purposeful.

Toys

Toys should not be brought to school, as they may be lost, broken, etc. We will occasionally have special days where we bring stuffed animals or other items. I will let you know about these days in advance, and students will be responsible for their own items.

Water Bottles

Students should bring a refillable water bottle each day. An insulated water bottle works best so it does not "sweat." This can only be filled with water (no juice, milk, etc.). Please be sure to have your child's name on the water bottle. Also, work with your child

at home on opening/closing their water bottle so they are able to refill it by themselves. The water in our classroom is filtered, and students can refill their water bottle during the day if needed.

Work Sent Home

You may notice that your child will not bring home a lot of “papers” that they have done at school. Most of the learning we do in kindergarten is based on experiences, games, hands-on activities, etc. so often there is not a “product” to bring home. However, that does not mean we are not learning, or that the papers brought home represent everything we are doing! The best way to see what we are learning and working on each week is to read the newsletter. This will include objectives and information about what we will be doing for the week. The pictures and videos I post on SeeSaw will also give you great insight into what your child is learning!

