



Saint Ambrose Catholic School

Ms. Jennifer Blaine – Grade 3

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! The Third Grade is an important transitional year for your child and I look forward to working with all of you to make it as smooth and productive as possible. Together we will work to build upon your child's successful academic foundation, while also meeting their spiritual, emotional, social and physical needs.

Included in this packet you will find classroom information that is supplemental to the guidelines and procedures outlined in your Parent-Student Handbook.

Birthdays

Birthdays will be celebrated in class with a treat and a short class game or fun activity. Please send a note or email to arrange these with me in advance so that I can plan for them. Parents can provide cupcakes or cookies, juice box drinks, and napkins. These should be dropped off in the office on the morning of the celebration.

Classroom Expectations

My classroom management style is based on positive reinforcement. Students are grouped into teams and are rewarded for cooperating with one another and following directions. I focus all behavior management on Gospel values and the teachings of the Church—honoring our parents with our school behavior, speaking and acting kindly to one another, honoring the Holy Spirit in others, and remembering that we are all created in the image and likeness of God.

At the end of each week, students are asked to complete a “Reflection and Self Assessment” of their overall performance for the week. This process encourages them to take responsibility for their actions, recognize aspects of their school life where they are successful, and devise an “action plan” for areas that need improvement. Unless there is a significant issue, these are not sent home so that students will feel comfortable being completely truthful in assessing themselves. I allow the students the first opportunity to correct their own behaviors. If they are unable to do this without teacher and/or parent intervention, I will contact you so that we can monitor this more closely. A copy of the “Reflection and Self Assessment” is attached.

Communication Folders

These folders are sent home with the oldest child in each family on **Thursdays** and will contain important information from the office. Please establish a routine of checking your child's bookbag **each Thursday** for this folder and return any necessary paperwork by the next day.

Curriculum

The curriculum for elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Washington is standards-driven. The Academic Standards are specific skills and benchmarks that students are required to master in order to be promoted. Textbooks, workbooks and supplemental materials are used as a reference point to address the standards. The 3rd Grade textbooks and workbooks are listed below with their replacement cost should they become lost or damaged.

Title	Replacement Cost
Houghton Mifflin Reading (textbooks 3.1 and 3.2)	\$27.00
Houghton Mifflin Reading Practice (workbooks 3.1 and 3.2)	\$15.00
Loyola Press Christ Our Life Series, We Believe (workbook)	\$20.00
Loyola Press Voyages In English (textbook)	\$57.00
Loyola Press Voyages In English (workbook)	\$15.00
MacMillan-McGraw Hill "Timelinks" Social Studies (textbook)	\$50.00
MacMillan-McGraw Hill "Timelinks" Practice/Activity (workbook)	\$ 7.00
Modern Curriculum Press (Pearson) Spelling Workout (workbook)	\$20.00
Pearson Interactive Science (consumable textbook)	\$26.00
Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workshop - Level Green (workbook)	\$13.00
Sadlier-Oxford Progress in Mathematics (workbook)	\$16.00
Saxon Math Program (no textbook, worksheets are provided)	
Zaner Bloser Handwriting (workbook)	\$15.00

E-mail

Feel free to contact me with questions and/or concerns: msblainesas@gmail.com

Grading Scale

The grading scale is as follows:

93-100	Excellent
85-92	Good
77-84	Satisfactory
70-76	Improvement Needed
69 and below	Unsatisfactory

Final grades for Reading will be based on:

Weekly Fluency homework completion	20%
Quizzes	20%
Reader's Theater Performance	30%
Unit Tests	30%

Final grades for all other subjects will be based on:

Classwork	20%
Homework completion	20%
Quizzes	20%
Tests and Projects	40%

Friday Folders

These folders are the yellow St. Ambrose School folders and are sent home every **Friday**. The folder will include your child's graded work as well as important classroom information. Please establish a routine of checking your child's bookbag **each Friday** for this important folder. You may remove and keep any communications from me, such as notes and newsletters. Each test, quiz, or graded assignment in the folder should be signed and returned in the folder by the following Monday.

Grade 3 News

The newsletter will come home every two weeks. Issue No. 1 was sent home on the first day of school. Issue No. 2 will be sent home on Friday, September 11th. Please read it for important reminders, test/quiz dates, and upcoming events. **Post the newsletter at home for easy reference.**

Homework

Homework will typically be given Mondays through Thursdays and will always be a reinforcement of concepts and skills we have covered in class. As a general rule, homework should take your child approximately 30-40 minutes of time on task.

These assignments are a valuable assessment tool for me to determine how well your child has understood the topic covered in class and how successful they are in remembering and applying it independently. Therefore, it is important that it be the child's work. Parents are welcome to review and assist in correcting mistakes, if necessary. However, if your child is having a great deal of difficulty with an assignment, please write a note on it informing me that they needed your help to make corrections or feel free to leave their mistakes so that I can see where their misunderstanding lies. This aides me in determining if additional time should be spent reviewing or if your child has mastered a concept and is ready to move forward. If your child is struggling with homework and required a significant amount of assistance from you and I am not made aware of this, I will receive an assignment that is all correct and assume that your child has mastered that particular skill.

Students will be given credit and a homework grade for completion of the assignments and will not be penalized for mistakes.

Homework Folders

Homework folders (purple plastic) will come home each night with your child's assignment/agenda book. If there are worksheets to complete, they will be in the folder. If there are written assignments to be completed on paper, they should be returned in the folder.

Lost and Found

Clearly label ALL of your child's belongings with their name, including backpacks, lunch boxes, school and gym uniforms, sweaters, jackets, and supplies.

Reader's Theater

Third graders are natural actors and wonderful performers when given the chance to have a part in a play. Reader's Theater plays allow students to strengthen listening skills, build reading fluency, practice public speaking, and build confidence. They create excitement and fun in the classroom and are non-threatening for even the shyest student. These plays include very few, if any, props or costumes and students read directly from their scripts so no memorization is required.

We will hold Reader's Theater every 2-3 weeks and students will be rotated through the schedule. They will cast as a character in the play and bring a script home for repeated practice.

Cast members in a Reader's Theater play will receive a performance assessment grade using a scoring rubric. Points are earned for volume, fluency, expression, preparedness, and respect for other cast members. A copy of the scoring rubric is attached.

Schoolrack.com

Please visit our classroom website at www.schoolrack.com/msblaine for resources and information. This web page will be updated periodically. Currently, you may read the 3rd Grade Academic Standards for each subject, as well as links to valuable resources. Click on "notify me when this page updated" and you will receive an email message each time I post new information on the page.

Special Classes

Monday	Physical Education (Mr. Steward) mrstewardsas@gmail.com
Tuesday	Computer (Mr. Conner) mrconnersas@gmail.com Art (Mrs. Matics/Mrs. Headley) mrsmaticssas@gmail.com mrsheadleysas@gmail.com
Wednesday	Physical Education (Mr. Steward) Music (Mrs. Fitzmaurice) mrsfitzmauricesas@gmail.com
Thursday	Library (Mrs. Porcari) mrsporcarisas@gmail.com
Friday	Spanish (Mrs. Woods) mrswoodssas@gmail.com

Uniform Policy

Please review the uniform policy in the Parent-Student Handbook and help your child to comply. Belts are required for students in grades 3-8. A **clean** gym uniform should be worn on Mondays and Wednesdays. Any student not in proper uniform will be issued a uniform violation. After 3 violations for the same infraction, a new uniform item will be provided for the student and you will receive a bill from the office.

Warrior Challenge!

The Warrior Challenge is an optional program for students who are interested in extending their learning above and beyond what is taught in the classroom or covered by academic standards. This program will be introduced in the 2nd Quarter. It is a series of 100 challenges designed to broaden students' knowledge base, provide them with extensive research practice, and arm them with a wealth of useful information. One point is awarded for each challenge completed and students' names will be posted in our Warrior Challenge Hall of Fame. This is an excellent use of time for light homework nights, long weekends, or inclement weather days.

No grades are given for participation in this program. Students will attain bronze (1-30 challenges), silver (31-60), or gold (61-100) status in the Hall of Fame based on the number of challenges they complete. At the end of the year, students will be awarded bronze, silver, or gold medals depending on the highest challenge level they have reached. They will also have created a binder full of valuable information that they will keep as a reference (to help them win that college scholarship as a Jeopardy champion one day!)

Weekly Fluency Homework

Each Monday, your child will bring home a short reading assignment that asks you to listen to him or her read **out loud** to you and answer a few easy questions targeting a specific reading skill. Each passage is accompanied by a short, explanatory note to parents. The skills practiced are correlated to National and Archdiocesan reading standards. **Reading out loud to an adult has been proven to improve reading fluency and comprehension.**

Since these assignments require a short period of parent time and attention, you will have a few days to schedule it into your week. Weekly fluency homework assignments are due on Thursdays. Like other homework assignments, students will be given credit and a grade based on their completion.