

**IMPORTANT
INFORMATION
FIRST GRADE
2026-2027**

Welcome to DPES

First grade will be one of the most exciting years in your child's educational career. Our year will be filled with wonderful experiences and activities. My classroom goal is to provide a safe, nurturing environment that meets individual needs and promotes a foundation for life-long learning.

Components of the Day:

- Language Arts

Language Arts will be taught using the Open Court and Brainspring reading series. This will be a block of time in which reading, spelling, writing, and grammar will be covered. I will teach the class using whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings. We will cover vocabulary words, phonics, comprehension, and high frequency/sight words in whole group and then break into small groups where I can focus on the skills needed in each group. During this time, the students will do "pencil and paper" work, creative writing, Accelerated Reader, centers, and read many books. You will find all reading materials needed for the week (story, homework, high frequency words, and spelling lists) in your child's binder. It is important for you to go over these materials at home each night. This will allow your child to be more successful. We will be focusing on becoming fluent readers and the more you do at home, the better. You can have your child write the high frequency words for the week and keep them on the refrigerator and flash cards are always great for sight words and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. More information will come about reading.

- Math

In our classroom, I will promote mathematical interaction through problem solving, communication, journaling, estimation, connection, and reasoning. Our math program is based on the philosophy that students should develop natural thinking skills and exchange points of view while engaging in hands-on mathematical investigations. I use the Envision math series along with a standards-based curriculum to enhance my lessons. I will work in whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings.

- Science/Social Studies

We are learning about each other and our world through themes that are interesting to young children. We will cover all objectives in the Alabama Course of Study through hands on activities and projects. We will not cover both subjects in one day. I will alternate throughout the year teaching both subjects and I will always let you know what subject and what skills we are working on. In addition to other resources, I will use the Mystery Science lessons to enhance our learning.

- Grading System - One of the biggest differences between first grade and Kindergarten is that the students are given grades on tests and daily assignments. The students will be given a grade for Reading, Language Arts, and Math.
 - **The grading scale is below:**
 - **90 - 100 - A**
 - **80 - 89 - B**
 - **70 - 79 - C**
 - **60 - 69 - D**
 - **59 and below - F**
- *Any papers labeled with a "D" or "F" will be copied and kept on file. Daily papers (papers that are not put in the gradebook) will be checked as a class or marked with a smiley face.
- *Students must pass **both** READING LANGUAGE ARTS and MATH with a yearly average of 60 or higher in order to be promoted to second grade.
- **The subjects of Reading and Math are averaged with the following categories:
 - 60% Major Grades (Tests)
 - 40% Minor Grades (Daily Grades)
- *Handwriting, Conduct, Science, and Social Studies will be given grades of S, N, or U, like in kindergarten.

Other Information:

- Homework- Your child will have reading homework materials in his/her binder that will be sent home weekly. The reading materials will contain the high frequency words, spelling words, stories, and homework for each story. Math homework will be sent periodically. Reading homework is typically given on a Friday afternoon and expected to be completed and returned by the following Friday. Therefore, students are given a full week before the reading homework is expected to be completed and returned. For math homework, I will write the due date at the top.
- Management Plan - Please see our classroom website for specific information on this. The same information is also on a sheet in the folder from Open House.

Our rules are:

- 1. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.**
- 2. Raise your hand to talk.**
- 3. Listen while others are speaking.**
- 4. Be kind and respectful to everyone.**
- 5. Follow Mrs. Howell's directions the first time.**

*Students are held responsible for their daily behavior. Each student will mark their daily behavior on the behavior log. Please be sure to check and initial your child's behavior log. This shows your child that Mrs. Howell and his/her parents are working together as a team to help them be successful in school!

- BEE Binders

Your child will come home with their BEE binder each day. This is a reminder for them to "Bring Everything Everyday." The first thing in the binder will be a zipper pouch that you will use to send any money or notes to me. This way I will be able to see through the pouch. Anytime you send something to school, please remind your child to give it to me. I will do my best to check the zipper pouches, but they can get overlooked. I will label each pocket of the binder with "Leave at Home" and "Bring Right Back." Items in "Leave at Home" will contain graded papers from me, any information coming from me, or information coming from the school. The other pocket will be labeled "Bring Right Back" and I will put anything that needs to be signed or filled out and returned in there. The next thing in the binder is the plastic folder. I will place page protectors that will contain the reading materials, reading and math homework, and any other resources for your child to use at home. I try to get the new reading homework in on Friday so that the students can get a head start if they want to. The last thing in the binder is the behavior chart. Your child will mark his/her folder each day with the appropriate color. I will always mark on the date if there was a problem that day. Please try to look over your child's behavior sheet each night and initial at the bottom of each day. It is so important that you check the BEE binder nightly. Information comes home on a daily basis and it is imperative to check the binder to make sure you are staying up to date on things going on in the room and in the school.

- Attendance- Good attendance is vital for success in school. Illnesses will always occur, and I will make every effort to help your child understand the missed concepts that were taught and make up assignments. In order for travel to count as an excuse, Mr. Thornton must approve it **PRIOR** to the trip. Death and family illnesses are exceptions to this procedure; however, an excuse from home must be turned in upon return to school. Your child may arrive as early as 7:15 each morning. He or she needs to report to the yellow hallway. Students are dismissed to go to the classrooms promptly at 7:45 a.m. Please have your child at school prior to 8:00 so that they can complete morning duties before the day begins! Please keep in mind that students are marked tardy if they are not in class promptly at 8:00 a.m. Please be aware that students will receive a zero on graded assignments for unexcused absences. Please see the school handbook for further information. You may send in a total of SEVEN parent excuses. After you have reached this amount, all additional excuses will need to come from a doctor's note. Please read the attendance section in the handbook on pages 9 and 10.

- Breakfast and Lunch- All food (breakfast and lunch) is free this year. If you send a lunch from home, please do not send carbonated beverages. If you need to fill out a free/reduced lunch form, please go to www.danielpratttelementry.com, click on "Parents" and find "Lunchroom." Parents will have one day per semester to come and eat with your child. These dates will be posted on the DPES website and my weekly newsletter when the time is close.

- Snack - We will eat snack daily. Your child can choose to purchase snack and juice in the "Snack Shack" or choose to bring them from home. Please do not send in carbonated drinks or candy. Please label money each day for snack in an envelope with your child's name, what the money is to be used for, and the monetary amount. You may NOT write checks for snack.

○ **EXAMPLE: Jane Doe**
Mrs. Howell
Snack \$2.00

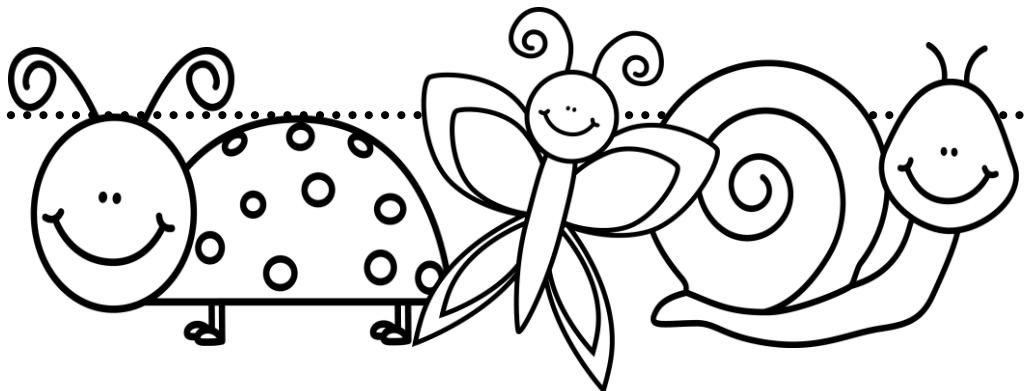
- Labels- Please place your child's name on his or her backpack, lunchbox, and all outer garments. I also ask that you send ANY money in an envelope with both your child's name and the monetary amount written on the front. Please send lunch money and snack money in separate envelopes!
- Birthdays - It is the school's policy not to celebrate birthdays during instructional time. Parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school are asked to do so in an alternative manner. You may send in store bought, individually wrapped snacks for the students and I will pass them out during snack time.
- Timely Tips for the First Week
 1. You may walk your child in on the first day of school. I will let you know our assigned time. There will be a schedule posted on the school's website. You may enter the building to walk with your child to the yellow hall. Please walk your child to the classroom and then exit the building before our assigned time ends. A picture and a hug good-bye are always fun!
 2. Yellow Transportation Tags: The students will need to wear bus tags pinned on their bookbags the first 2 weeks of school. Please be sure to indicate whether they are a walker, car rider, 1st load or 2nd load bus rider, or day care van rider. You will receive the yellow tag at Open House. Bus questions should be directed to the Transportation Office @ (334) 361-3897.
 3. Car rider doors open for students at 7:10 in the morning. The front doors will open at 7:15 for walkers.
 4. Notification is required for ANY transportation change- you can send me a message on ParentSquare!
- Parental Communication - I am your partner in education. I believe very strongly that parents and teachers have to work together and have good communication. If you ever have questions or concerns, I will be available to conference with you. The best way to get me is through email. You may call and leave a message with the secretary in the office and I will do my best to get back to you during PE or after school. You may also send notes in your child's zipper pouch.

*** 2026 OPEN HOUSE TIDBITS ***

- I will send a newsletter home every week. This will give an overview of what is going on for the week.
- I am available for phone and in-person conferences during PE (12:55 - 1:45).
- If you send a message on ParentSquare, I will do my best to answer by that afternoon.
- Please send in an excuse when your child is absent so I can give make-up work.
- Anytime we collect money, all deadlines are final.
- Please do not let your child bring fidget poppers, spinners, toys, etc. to school. We will have "show and tell" days and other fun days, but if it is not a special day, these things need to stay at home. Unless it is a special planned activity, toys consistently brought to school will be taken up and returned at the end of the semester.
- If your child is a walker, there are outside signs for you to wait at for your child. Please do not wait under the breezeway.
- Check the "Parent" section of the school website - there is SO much information there!

"I promise you that every day your child will learn something. Some days they will bring it home in their hands. Some days they will bring it home in their heads. And some days they will bring it home in their hearts."

-Valerie Welk



TRANSPORTATION

Please let me know how your child will get home both the first day of school and the remainder of the school year. If there is a transportation change during the year, **you must inform me in writing.** Thank you for your careful attention to this matter.

Student's Name: _____

Transportation the First Day of School:

____ bus rider (bus number _____/ 1st Load ____ or 2nd Load ____)

____ car rider, being picked up by a parent/relative

____ YMCA camper

____ day care rider (name of daycare: _____)

____ walker

Transportation the Remainder of the Year:

____ bus rider (bus number _____/ 1st Load ____ or 2nd Load ____)

____ car rider, being picked up by a parent/relative

____ YMCA camper

____ day care rider (name of daycare: _____)

____ walker

