

September 5, 2023

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2023/2024 school year!

My name is Kathleen Johnstun and I'm looking forward to being your student's teacher this year. My true love is English Language Arts! I graduated from Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont in 2001 with a double major in English with a Poetry Concentration and Russian Language, and a Master of Arts in Teaching (English Language Arts) from Lewis and Clark Graduate School of Education in Portland, OR in 2013. This is not to say that I don't enjoy teaching math, however. I also enjoy linking literature to history/social studies.

The 2023/2024 school year will be my second year teaching 6th grade after teaching 4th grade for six years. In total, I've been working here at Hudson Park Elementary for nine years if you count my first year as a substitute. I'm thrilled to see some of my former students' faces again this year!

I live in St. Helens with my husband Jacob and 8-year-old my stepson Jess, who lives with us part-time. Other (furry) family members include Hamish the tabby cat, Figaro the tuxedo cat, Beatrix "Trixie" Basset Hound, our class mascot (who is almost 14 and still going strong!), a rescue Beagle named Bernard "Bernie," as well as a mixed flock of chickens, ducks, and one goose, most of which I hatched with my former 4th grade students! As you can probably tell, my favorite thing to talk about is pets! I also love horses. I also have a nearly 2-year-old Gypsy Vanner yearling named Frankie at a boarding stable in Hillsboro. My husband said I am "maxed out" on animals, but I disagree!

My educational philosophy is that good teaching is based upon good relationships. I strive to get to know each and every one of my students on a deep level and gain their trust and respect before I try to "teach" them. I know that they need to feel safe and respected, likewise, before we can mutually learn from each other. I work to emulate kindness and compassion and treat everyone the way I wish to be treated, so that we can have a positive, safe, and FUN learning community.

As humans, we all make mistakes, however, so the consequences for not following our school's "Four Bs" (Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful) include a verbal warning, a second warning whereby I write the student's name on a post-it note on my desk, a third warning whereby I will place a checkmark next to the student's name on a post-it, and a final fourth warning which is then followed by a period of refocusing for the student for a few minutes on the recess bench once recess begins. If this refocusing period does not help the student to improve his or her behavior, the next step would be for the student to fill out a Cougar Pause, or I might send a Cougar Track home for a parent signature, depending upon the student's infraction. I will contact parents if student behavior results in a cougar track. If a student obtains three or more Cougar Tracks in a 30-day period, a meeting would be organized for the

parent(s), teacher, and administration to attend and determine an appropriate behavior plan for the student.

Rewards in our classroom are gained from on-task behavior, such as helping and sharing with others, and respectful, kind, safe, and responsible actions. As their teacher, I hand out daily Cougar Credits to be submitted for our weekly classroom drawing on Friday afternoon. Winners of these drawings obtain prizes from our class Basset Hound prize jar. I often reward positive behaviors like quiet line walking with a "Mystery Walker" prize at the end of the day, as well. In short, I try to focus on praising positive behaviors.

When it comes to grading, the following percentages and language are used across Hudson Park Elementary's grade levels on our quarterly report cards.

- 90-100: 4 Exceeding Standard
- 75-89.99: 3 Meeting Standard
- 50-74.99: 2 Approaching Standard
- 0-49.99: 1 Below Standard

I am attaching a copy of the 6th grade report card for your reference.

Please contact me, Mrs. Johnstun, with any questions. Please know that I am available to all of you at any time, and texting me is often very convenient.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Johnstun

kathleen_johnstun@rsd.k12.or.us

Cell (206) 375-3177