

White River School
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Dear Families:

September Writing

Soon your children will bring home some of the writing they have done during the first few weeks of school. This first month of school we have focused on the routines of writing workshop time, and getting started as a community of writers. I've taught students to write about things they have done, to write about small topics (finding a seashell at the beach rather than about the whole vacation), to write about things they care about-- and in doing so they will find many potential stories (many of them have multiple different stories they have written about adventures with a pet or a sibling), leaving spaces between words (we'll keep working on it!), beginning to use mostly lower-case letters, adding to pieces that don't have much writing on them, planning a sentence before writing it and then rereading every one or two words to remember what comes next, stretching words out to hear and write all the sounds (first graders do not spell conventionally, but during writing time are encouraged to do the best they can with stretching words to hear sounds, using the word wall and other resources in the room to spell some words, and being held accountable for sounds and spelling rules we have learned), and including their name on every piece. I am proud of the foundational work we've done in writing workshop so far; it will be relevant throughout the school year. The next unit we will be working on is writing "small moments" stories—stories stretched across a few pages of a small "book" about a small moment in their lives with details. I can't wait to see what they can do!

I wanted to let you know that if you misplace a letter I've sent home or just want to make sure you are up to date, all my class letters are also posted online. Go to <http://www.hsdvt.com/> then Schools / White River School / Classes / 1st Grade / Mrs. Ehret's Class / "Visit our class web page." There you will find links to everything that has gone home so far.

Sharing Days

Next week we will begin having scheduled sharing days for students. Each child has a set day of the week every week when she will have a chance to share during Morning Meeting. Sharing is a chance to tell a brief story about something that they have done recently, or share some news. I decided years ago that sharing time didn't feel terribly engaged or productive when students brought in toys or other belongings as a show and tell. *Please not send toys/trophies/etc in for sharing.* Sharing is for the

purpose of getting to know each other better, and to practice the art of caring conversation—speaking clearly, making eye contact, listening respectfully, asking good questions, and making meaningful comments. Thus their sharing can be a short story they tell of something they did or something that happened (I went apple picking, or I taught my dog a new trick, or We had my favorite thing for dinner last night for example). The exception to not bringing in “stuff” to share is if they have *made* something—written a story or made a piece of pottery or artwork or some other creation—they could bring that to share and tell about. Or, if they have a photo of themselves doing something that would help them tell about it that is fine. Otherwise, please try not to send in *things* to share. I have modeled sharing anecdotes with the students and having them ask questions, and they have each had an opportunity to practice sharing. It can be helpful for some students if they plan with you, perhaps in the morning before school, what they will tell about so they are ready.

Beginning next week, _____ weekly day to share will be _____.

Have a good weekend.

--Amanda