

8/19/14

Dear NVA Parents and Guardians,

 My name is Bryan Van Norden. My students call me Mr. Van Norden or Mr. V for short, but you are welcome to refer to me as Bryan. I originally hail from the New England area, specifically New Hampshire. I have a Master of Arts degree in Elementary Education K-8, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing, with a minor in Psychology. I have a personal interest in nutrition, as I have ascribed to a plant-based diet since 2006. Another huge passion of mine is music. You may likely hear some classical music playing in the background of our classroom while the students are working.

 Now that you know a little more about me, I would like to share with you some pertinent information about our 2nd grade classroom that was not in the welcome letter. As a class, we came up with a list of rules (or values, if you will) to which we agree to adhere. I helped my students keep them as positive as possible. They are:



**Our Classroom Values:**

1. Safety first.

2. Be kind.

3. Be honest.

4. Listen to the teacher.

5. Clean up.

6. Have fun.

These are displayed everyday in our classroom. Because I have high expectations for all my students, I expect them to follow their own established rules.



**Snacks:** We eat snack every day at 10 am. *Please remember to pack your child a snack, so they do not feel left out.* As we are a Health and Wellness-based charter school, I ask that you consider the nutritional value of the snacks you are packing. No junk food! Also, please DO NOT send your child with a snack containing peanuts or tree nuts due to the allergies in our classroom this year.



**Health & Wellness:** Speaking of nutrition, I am a huge advocate of encouraging health and wellness, which is one of our charter goals. I include it as its own subject right alongside Science. With the high rates of childhood obesity and diabetes in this country, I find it crucial to instill good lifelong eating and exercising habits unto my students at an early age. This is also why as a class I have my students run a timed lap around our track every morning, and why I encourage you to only bring in healthy snacks such as carrots, raisins, applesauce, or the like during snack. This will do more for each one of their learning developing brains than a sugar-laden treat.



**Homework:** Yesterday you child received their first homework packet. I have decided, in the interest of everyone’s busy weeknights that often fill up with extra curricular activities, to give my students 7 days to complete it. I hand the packets out on Mondays, and they are not due until the following Monday. I also try to keep their length to a maximum of 10 pages. Please make sure you READ every night with your child! Not only is it part of our school’s Backpack Reader program (the directions to which I sent home yesterday), but this will play a crucial role in their becoming fluent readers.

**Headphones:** Although these were not listed on the second grade supply list, every student MUSThave their own pair. They need these to complete the Discovery Education state-mandated Reading and Math tests, to use in the computer lab, as well as a whole slough of other computer related centers in the classroom. Please DO NOT buy the ear bud type, but instead purchase ones that will cover your child’s ear. This will reduce the background noise they often create. To save money, you may use the ones purchased from last year. All headphones will be labeled with your child’s name and will be returned at the end of the year.



**Classroom Website:** I am still working on updating my website from last year, but in the meantime it can be accessed through the school website <http://www.nvanm.org/> by clicking on the header Communities, then Faculty/Staff, and lastly by clicking on my name. Or you may just go to <http://bvannorden.weebly.com/>. As the year progresses, I will always have any letters I send home posted under the News header, as well as Thursday Folder information (which is also listed on the school website). This is intended as a convenience to you, should your child misplace one of these items.

 As always, your thoughts, questions, and concerns are most welcome as the year progresses. Communication is key! My door is always open. It has been my distinct pleasure to meet all of you, and I look forward to enabling the academic progress of your children.

Sincerely,

Bryan Van Norden

2nd Grade Teacher,

bvannorden@nvanm.org

505-998-0501 Ext. 115