**Mrs. Mitchem’s Fourth Grade Class 2018-2019**

Welcome to Mrs. Mitchem’s fourth grade classroom! I hope everyone had a restful summer. I am eager to get to know your child and begin our educational journey together. This year promises to be an excellent one. I guarantee that your child will feel safe, confident, and successful.

**About Mrs. Mitchem**

I was born and raised in Tallahassee and worked at Kate Sullivan Elementary for 5 ½ years. I moved to Shell Point Beach in 2015 and have been teaching at CES since then. I taught second grade my first year here, and then I went back to my stomping grounds (fourth grade) two years ago. I’ve been married for over six years and my husband and I have a very personable dachshund. We enjoy fishing on our skiff, venturing off to S.G.I, and doing anything outside. My favorite hobbies include traveling, gardening, reading, running, and cooking.

**Class Website**

[**http://mitchemk.weebly.com/**](http://mitchemk.weebly.com/)

My website is a great tool to use frequently! There, you will find subject information, newsletters, wellness updates, a calendar of events, and more information. I also have a “Wish List” for anyone who wants to donate items.

**Homework Policy**

In my eight years teaching, I’ve learned that homework policies can be tricky. I’ve read plenty of research that shows that only respectful (not time-consuming) and relevant (not rote memorization) homework is beneficial. The homework students are expected to complete is a nightly Reading Log. Students are expected to read 30 minutes every night (including one day over the weekend: five nights a week) and have their logs signed by a parent or guardian. Weekly spelling homework is optional; I recommend having your child write the words down Monday at home, and if he or she struggles, he or she can practice throughout the week for our Friday tests. Math practice is also optional. Every Monday, a newsletter will go home briefing you on what we’re studying that week. You can use that as a guide to help your child at home with math.

**AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Book**

AVID is a program dedicated to helping students achieve their goals of going to college and/or having alternative higher education (trade school, military, etc.) post high school graduation. AVID helps achieve these goals by teaching students ways to better organize themselves and their thinking. This year students will be organizing their work in their AVID Organization Binders. All classwork, reference sheets, notes, etc. will be kept in the AVID Organization Binder. Students are expected to keep it organized using the AVID methods that will be taught throughout the school year. They will be evaluated on organization and whether or not they have all of their materials and/or notes for every subject in their binders. Students and parents will be notified when an evaluation will take place. Teachers will work with students and provide strategies to maintain binder organization daily. See reference sheet in binder for specific information pertaining to what is required to be in AVID binders and how they will be evaluated.

**Class Dojo**

I will be using Class Dojo as my management plan this year. If you are familiar with Class Dojo, then you know it’s awesome! Instead of sending home paper evaluations weekly, you can get daily or weekly updates on your child’s behavior on your Class Dojo app. Class Dojo is meant to be a positive reinforcement, with students earning more points than losing. Students will “cash in” their points on Monday (from the previous week) and receive coupons to use whenever they choose. Example: five Dojo points in a week = no shoes, wear a hat, etc. Ten points = show and tell, specialty drink, and so on. However, if a child does continue to lose points in a day, then I will follow my behavior plan as mentioned next.

**Behavior Plan**

* First offense: warning
* Second offense: lose a Dojo point
* Third offense: lose second Dojo point; conference with teacher
* Fourth offense: lose third Dojo point; lunch detention
* Fifth offense: all of the above plus time out in another classroom; parent contact
* Sixth offense: all of the above; referral to the principal’s office; additional loss of privileges

**Snack**

We will have a working snack every day during centers. Children will be working together in groups and may eat as they work. You may send your child to school every day with his or her own snack. Snacks must be healthy; cookies, sweets, or sugared drinks are not permitted as this has a negative effect on the brain at 10:30 AM. I encourage snacks and water throughout the day. I do not want children going hungry while their brains are in full mode! (Only water is allowed in class. Water bottles are encouraged!)

**Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)**

Since your child just graduated from third grade, you are familiar with the state test that takes place around March/April. However, in fourth grade, students do not just test on reading and math, they also test on writing. Fourth grade is a big transition into text-dependent writing. Students will be taught how to read 2-3 informational texts and then respond to a prompt, using text evidence and elaborating on that evidence. Prepare to see some exceptional samples coming home! (FSA Writing takes place in February.)

**Renaissance Place**

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a big part of your child’s reading success. He or she will have an AR goal every nine weeks and he or she will be motivated to meet this goal. On my website, I have a link to Renaissance Place. Here, you can check your child’s AR progress and even be notified when he or she takes an AR test. Students who do not meet goals will not be penalized; however, students who do meet their goals will be rewarded every nine weeks. Some initiatives I’ve done in the past are: water balloon/water fight, kickball tournament, Silly String the teacher, electronic day, pie the teacher in the face, field day, and plenty more! Reading every day is critical. As Dr. Seuss says, “Read every day!”

**Professional Mission**

All children do not learn everything the same way or on the same day. It is necessary to differentiate my instruction in order to meet the needs of all of my students. I am constantly monitoring my students’ progresses and making changes every day to meet their individual needs. I am also a firm believer in a cooperative (students work together, discussing, problem-solving) and active classroom. Students will not sit in their seats all day doing seat work. I have a very lively classroom where we incorporate movement, music, arts, and most of all, fun! I look forward to a year of teamwork with you and your child. I am very communicative; I respond quickly to emails and phone calls, and I will do my best daily to make sure we are all working toward the same academic and social goals. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason throughout the school year! Thank you for allowing me to share this journey with you and your child. Let’s begin!

Very Sincerely,

Mrs. Kelly Mitchem

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