

SECOND GRADE ADVENTURES

My name is Jessica Swires, and I would like to welcome you to the second grade! I am very excited to have your child in my classroom this year. I love teaching children (especially this age group), and my greatest joy comes from watching them succeed.



Our second grade team is looking forward to a great year full of fun and learning. We have put together this packet with important information to help you understand the details of second grade. I believe that good communication between the parent, student, and teacher is essential in creating an effective learning environment. Throughout the year, you will receive newsletters and emails from me to keep you updated on our second grade adventures. Please do not hesitate to come and speak with me if you have any questions or concerns. I feel privileged to work with you and your child, and I look forward to partnering with you on this educational journey.

About Me:

This will be my second year teaching 2nd grade and my third year working at Carbon Valley Academy. I graduated from Wheaton College in Illinois with a B.A. in Elementary Education. My husband Justin and I moved to Colorado in August of 2009. He grew up in this beautiful state and wanted to share its beauty with me. Although I am originally from New Jersey, the state of Colorado is slowly winning my heart. I love the mountains here, and in our spare time we enjoy skiing in the winter and hiking and biking in the summer. Justin and I have been married for just over two years. We currently don't have any children or pets, but we might be inheriting a pet ball python from my brother-in-law this fall. Some of my interests include reading mystery novels, playing board games, sewing, traveling, and learning new languages.

Contact Information:

The easiest ways to contact me are through email or phone. I usually check my emails and voice messages before and after school and also during my planning time in the afternoons.

Email - swiresj@cvamail.com

Phone - (303) 774-9555 x110

Communication:

- **Newsletter** - Every Friday, a newsletter will be sent to you by email, unless a hard copy is requested. Please take the time to carefully read our class newsletter because it will provide you with information about upcoming events, field trips, volunteer opportunities, and information about what your child is learning in each subject area. The newsletter will also be available on my website each week.
- **Newsbook** - Your child will bring home a Newsbook each Friday, which will contain papers from the school and a letter written to you by your child, telling you about the week. After reading your child's letter, please write a letter responding to your child on the next page of the Newsbook.
- **Friday Flyer** - CVA sends an electronic flyer to parents every Friday through email with updates about school activities. There is a link to sign up for this flyer on the CVA website.

Language Arts/Math:

For language arts and math, we will determine which class level will best benefit your child, according to various beginning of the year assessments. The groups that we form at the start of the school year are by no means permanent, and we often move students to different classes as their needs and abilities change throughout the year. For language arts, Ms. Cox will teach the beginning group, Mrs. Swires will teach the middle group, and Mrs. Grotzky will teach the advanced group. For math, Mrs. Grotzky will teach the beginning group, Mrs. Swires will teach the middle group, and Ms. Cox will teach the advanced group.

Science/Social Studies:

Your child will be taught science and social studies by his or her homeroom teacher. We will alternate between these two subject areas; we will study a science topic for a few weeks and then switch to study a social studies topic for a few weeks. Our planned field trips will enrich our studies in these areas.

Specials:

Students will rotate between P.E., Art, and Music depending on whether it is an A, B, or C day. See the school website for a complete calendar of the A, B, and C days for the year. Please be sure that your child wears or brings P.E. shoes on A Days. Spanish will be every Monday and Wednesday, and Technology will be every Tuesday and Thursday.

Homework:

- Reading - Second graders should be reading about 20 minutes a night. They can read independently or with a parent, sibling, or friend.
- Math - Homework will be sent home every Tuesday and will be due one week later on the following Tuesday. There will be no homework due on the first Tuesday that we have school.
- Library Books - Students are responsible for keeping track of their library books and returning them to school each Wednesday.
- Writing - Writing homework will not begin until the third quarter. We will send home additional information when the time comes. A packet of writing prompts will be sent home, and students will choose a prompt to respond to each week. Writing will be due on Thursdays.
- Spelling - Each week there will be a spelling list attached to the Friday newsletters. Please see the newsletter of your child's LA teacher for the correct word list. Spelling tests will be given each Friday.
- Science/Social Studies - There will be one home project this year which will be due sometime in January. It will be a cultural assignment exploring your child's heritage. There may also be one or two small science and social studies homework assignments throughout the year. Please look for details in the Friday newsletters.
- Parent Homework - Your child will write a letter to you every Friday describing his or her week. Your homework is to respond to your child's letter each week before the following Friday. There will also be an additional parent homework assignment sent home on the first day of school.

Tests:

There will be spelling tests every Friday. In math, there will be chapter tests that will be announced ahead of time in the newsletter of your child's math teacher. In second grade we will also be introducing science and social studies tests. Starting in the third quarter we will begin sending home simple study guides so that your child can review at home.

Grading Scale:

The second grade report card uses the following scale to grade students in each subject area and in citizenship and work habits:

4 = 90-100% Advanced

2 = 65-79% Partially Proficient

3 = 80-89% Proficient

1 = 0-64% Unsatisfactory

Classroom Policies:

Missing Homework:

In second grade, the students need to be responsible for their own homework. Help your child to come up with some organizational strategies, such as establishing a specific place to put homework. You can even have them plan to turn it in a day early just in case. Any homework that is not completed on time may result in the loss of morning recess. Your child will spend that time writing a plan for how to complete homework on time. This missing homework sheet will be sent home to be signed by a parent or guardian. Homework is part of your child's grade, and there is a section on the report card to reflect late or missing work.

Days Absent:

If your student will be absent from school, please notify CVA by email (attendance@cvamail.com) or by phone (303-774-9555). It will greatly assist our office staff if they know that your child is accounted for. When a student is absent, the 2nd grade teachers will fill out a "Make-up Work" sheet explaining what was completed in each subject area. Because we will often need to collect make-up work from more than one teacher, the work may not be ready to pick up until the end of the school day. Please let me know if you would like the work to be delivered to a sibling; otherwise, we will give the make-up work to your child when he or she returns to school.

Class Meetings:

There will be weekly class meetings held to practice giving and receiving "I Messages," to work through problems together, and to practice the roles of a speaker and a listener. We also use this time to celebrate positive behaviors. Students can write notes to me and place them in my mailbox if they have a suggestion for a class meeting topic.

Morning Snacks:

We will take a break each morning for a short snack and recess. Please send students with a snack in their backpack that is separate from their lunch. **We have both dairy and nut allergies in second grade, so please do not send morning snacks containing either of those two items.** However, students are allowed to eat dairy and nuts with their lunch in the cafeteria. Also, please make sure that the morning snack you send with your child is healthy so

that it will give him or her energy to make it through the day. We prefer low or no-sugar snacks. Some examples of healthy morning snacks include:

- fresh or canned fruit
- raw vegetables
- hard boiled eggs
- raisins
- dried fruit
- fruit juice
- cereal - unsweetened
- unbuttered popcorn
- tortilla chips and salsa
- muffins
- small sandwiches
- granola bars
- pasta salad
- rice cakes

We also encourage students to bring a labeled water bottle to school for proper hydration. Our class would appreciate donations of extra snacks in case a student forgets to pack one.

Birthdays:

We do allow sugary treats to celebrate your child's birthday. If you would like to bring in something special to celebrate a birthday, please let me know ahead of time which day you will be coming. We typically prefer to celebrate birthdays at the end of the school day, around 2:45. Summer birthdays can be celebrated any time during the school year, but it is best not to try to celebrate them all during the last few days of school. If your child has a summer birthday, it may be fun to bring in treats on his or her half-birthday.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up:

In the morning, your child will find me outside on the south side of the building on the blacktop in front of the playground. The designated area for my class is one of the last parking spots, closest to the door. I will escort my students to class from this area at 7:55. At the end of the day, I will bring the students outside to the same spot. When students hear their names called or see a parent, they must shake my hand before they leave so that I know they are safe.

Classroom Discipline:

In general, I believe in acknowledging students' positive behaviors and encouraging their internal motivation to work hard. Classroom discipline will vary greatly depending on the individual student and the situation. Students will typically be given multiple chances to change their behavior. In some scenarios, students may be asked to leave the room to refocus, and they will finish work in another classroom. For small, repeat offenses, the teacher will

contact you, and a behavior plan may be filled out. When behaviors are more severe, the principal will be involved, and she will contact you directly.

Volunteering:

Parent volunteers are vitally important to our school. There are many different ways you can help, which include: preparing classroom materials, working with small groups of students, supplying extra snacks, donating materials, organizing and contributing to class parties, chaperoning on field trips, assisting at a school event, helping to beautify our school grounds, etc. I love to have parents helping in the classroom, but I do ask that you let me know ahead of time when you will be coming so that I can plan lessons for you to help with and work for you to do. Also, be sure to pick up a visitor sticker at the front desk whenever you come in to volunteer. At Back to School Night I will have a sign-up sheet with different volunteer activities.

Mystery Readers:

Another way to volunteer your time is to be a Mystery Reader for our class. A Mystery Reader is a parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling, relative, etc. who comes in to read their favorite picture book to the class. The Mystery Reader is to remain anonymous until he or she enters the classroom on the designated reading day. Even your own child cannot know that you will be reading to the class. Since you are a "mystery" to the students, I am hoping you will be willing to write 3-5 clues about yourself that I can give to the class as hints before you come. Mystery Readers will have to be available to come in on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday at 2:40. We will try to have about one Mystery Reader a week.

Volunteer Opportunities for Mrs. Swires's Class

Party Planner

Halloween (coordinate food and activities) _____

Thanksgiving (coordinate food) _____

Valentine's Day (coordinate food and activities) _____

Two Library Helpers _____

Every Wednesday 2:25-3:00 (help students choose books)

One Friday Folders Helper _____

Every Friday morning (sort student papers)

Math

Flexible days, 8:15-9:15 (working with students in groups or one-on-one)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Science/Social Studies

Flexible days, 11:55-12:40 (help with science projects and simulations)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Take Home Work

Cutting, tracing, etc.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Mystery Readers

Read your favorite book to the class on a Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday at 2:40

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

More Mystery Readers can sign up on the back of this sheet.