Dear Parents/Guardians:

During the month of February we celebrate Valentine’s Day, and in doing so, we take time to think about the love we have for our family and others close to us whom we hold dear to our hearts. Of course, the first step is to be sure we openly communicate that love to our children. Love can be shown in many ways – both material and non-material. To many of us, the non-material gestures have been far more important and memorable and they don’t cost a cent. As Valentine’s Day quickly approaches, hopefully, you will think about memorable times spent with your family during your childhood. Moreover, if you haven’t already done so, perhaps you will consider performing some of the following acts of love for your child - I’m sure that your child will remember them well into his/her adult life. Hug your child every chance you get. Tuck love notes in his/her lunch box and under their bed pillow. Bake heart-shaped cookies from time to time. Arrange for special times for you and your child to do something that he/she loves … a game of checkers, a nature walk, watch a family movie together.

I wish you all a Valentine’s Day filled with lots of love and happiness! Mr. Orwig
Encouraged During Random Acts of Kindness Week

In what we hope becomes an annual campaign, the teachers and staff at Culbertson Elementary School are encouraging everyone in the school family to participate in the 17th national Random Acts of Kindness Week during the week of February 11 through 17. Each year this observance takes place in communities from coast to coast, including thousands of schools, city governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Random Acts of Kindness Week is intended as a counterbalance to the random acts of violence we constantly hear about in the news. We hope that this new attitude of kindness to others will become contagious and that our students will begin to look for ways to practice random acts of kindness in all areas of their lives, including home and community.

Important Dates:

FEBRUARY
2/4 – 2/8  2013 ELA: Writing Field Test – grades 3, 4 and 5 only
Tues., 2/5  PTO meeting in cafeteria @ 7:30 PM
Fri., 2/15  No School
Mon., 2/18  No School
Mon., 2/25  Common Core parent information session @ PHMS; 6:30 – 8:30 PM
Tues., 2/26  PTO School Store during lunches

MARCH
Fri., 3/1  End of second marking period (grades 1-5)
          Read Across America Day
Mon., 3/4  Kindergarten registration 6:00 to 8:00 PM
          Cougar Paw collection begins
Tues., 3/5  Kindergarten registration 9:30 to 3:00 PM
          PTO meeting in cafeteria @ 7:30 PM
Wed., 3/6  Woman’s Club of Newtown Square Festival of the Arts in cafeteria @ 7:00 PM
Fri., 3/8  Report cards to students (grades 1-5)
3/11 – 3/14  PSSA Writing exams – grade 5 only
Fri., 3/15  Dads and Donuts @ 8:30 – 9:15 AM
Tues., 3/19  PTO School Store during lunches
Wed., 3/20  “Yellow Day” – last day for Cougar Paw collections
Fri., 3/22  PTO Variety show at PHMS @ 7:00 PM
Parents who are thinking of sending a special delivery to their child at school on Valentine’s Day need to be selective in what is sent to the school. For safety reasons, students are prohibited from carrying certain items on school buses. We would appreciate all cards and/or treats be delivered to the main office during the AM arrival time for students.

Glass containers, such as flower vases, are not permitted on school buses because of the potential for injury should such an object break. Also, please don't have latex balloons sent to the school because we have many students who are allergic to latex. Helium-filled balloons are also banned from school buses because of their potential to block the vision of the driver.

Parents who would like to have either of these items delivered to their child as a special holiday greeting may want to plan to have the items delivered to the child at home. If you decide to have them delivered to the school, please be aware that you will need to plan to transport your child and his or her gifts home from school by car. We appreciate very much parents’ understanding of these important safety policies regarding the transportation of our students on the school bus.

In an article called “How to Equip Our Children for Success,” author Peter C. Scales suggests several ways parents can help their child to be motivated:

**Support.** Children need to know that we care deeply about whether they succeed or fail and if
someone is proud of their successes and their efforts.

**Boundaries and Expectations.** Kids need adults who act like adults. Parents who are firm and loving have children who do better at school, feel more self-confident, and get into less trouble than kids whose parents are too strict or too lenient.

**Empowerment.** All people need to know they make a difference. Encourage children to provide service to others. Make sure that they take part in school, community, or religious organizations or projects that give them the chance to do community service.

**Constructive use of time.** After school kids still need to be involved in constructive activities. Rather than just sitting and watching television, involving children in sports, music, dance, hobbies, and other activities give children a physical and emotional outlet, promote positive peer relations, and boost self-esteem.

*Source:* Scales, Peter C. "How to Equip Our Children for Success"

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**5th Graders to take Writing Test in February**

During the week of February 4th, our fifth graders will participate in the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment. The purpose of this standardized test is to determine each student’s developmental stage of writing skills. Each student will be assigned writing “prompts” or topics on which to write and twenty multiple-choice revising and editing questions.

Once testing is complete, students’ writings are sent to an assessment center operated by the Georgia Department of Education. Their papers will be scored by trained raters using a holistic and conventions scoring system. Each student’s writing will be evaluated to determine which of the identified developmental stages that the writing represents.

After scoring is completed, results will be returned to the school. Each student’s parents will receive a report explaining the different developmental writing stages and the identified level of the student’s writing sample.
Additional information has been sent home to the parents of fifth graders. Parents are encouraged to mark these dates on their calendars so that they can ensure their fifth graders are at school and on time on the testing dates. For more information about the assessment, see the Pennsylvania Department of Education website.

**When Johnny Can Read— But Won't**

Much attention has been given, as it should, to the needs of those children who can't read, or who don't read very well. But what about the children who can read but won't unless it's absolutely necessary?

Parents who treasure the gift of literacy are concerned because their children don't seem to enjoy reading. Their fears are well-founded. Many elementary school-aged children develop an indifference or dislike of reading, even though they can read competently.

The trend accompanies a similar one among adults. Some researchers have estimated that 40 percent of teenagers and young adults, 44 percent of adults and 70 percent of older adults who can read a book will choose not to do so. Literate parents who are too busy to read don't realize that they may be passing their disinterest in reading to their children, who have learned to read but have not learned to enjoy it.

What can parents do? Plenty! As always, parents have the power to supplement classroom reading and to strongly influence their children's reading abilities to read, understand what they read, and enjoy it.

If you once loved to read but no longer take the time, be kind to yourself and fit reading into your life again so your children will have a good example. If you read well but never read for entertainment, try it—you might enjoy it. If you have problems reading, it's never too late to attend an adult reading clinic.

**Other Ideas of What Parents Can Do**

**Read together.** Try to read aloud to each other often. The half-hour before bedtime is ideal for children. Start with something brief—short stories, fairy tales, poetry, legends, myths—before trying a longer book, or perhaps a play.
Monitor TV and video game time. Limit the time children may watch TV and play video games. These pastimes provide instant entertainment while reading may take longer to provide gratification. Help them learn to savor some quiet time and to enjoy their own company so they can concentrate on reading.

Talk together. The love of language is encouraged by talking—about feelings, fears, goals, problems, experiences. Writing (letters, diaries, notes) also builds reading appreciation. Demonstrate how necessary reading is in daily life and in careers, and how rewarding it is as a leisure activity. Discuss the meaning of new words (keep a dictionary handy).

Keep it fun. Don't criticize a child for not liking to read. Reading should be a pleasure, not a punishment, so encourage, don't pressure. Word games like Scrabble and working crossword puzzles can be fun and useful.

Use the public library. Most children are proud to have their own library cards. Nurture a lifelong pleasure by taking your children to the public library each week to browse among the books. Try to keep a sampling of books, newspapers, and magazines within easy reach at home.

Get to know your children. Appreciate each child as an individual with specific interests, experiences, abilities and problems. Let children choose reading materials that interest them.

Be tolerant. A child who catches on to reading may spend a long while reading one type of literature—all science fiction or mysteries, for instance. These choices may not appeal to you, but eventually he or she will be ready to move on.

Be patient. This will continue with your children through high school. But the reward may be that reading will continue to provide many hours of pleasant conversation with your children after they are grown!

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Please make sure that your cell phone, beeper, etc. is on silence when you are visiting the elementary schools.
Students are dismissed at the end of the day and asked to report to designated areas for walkers, car riders and bus rider. If a child is not going home in the usual manner on a particular day, the parent/guardian is asked to send a note to the homeroom teacher. A child will not be released to a third party unless that person is on the authorization pick-up list.

With winter approaching, our students will begin looking forward to several snowfalls during the season. When such weather occurs, we are frequently forced to close schools due to road conditions. Please tune to one of the stations listed below for closing information. Please do not call the schools. Announcements are made as early as possible, preferably by 6:00 AM.

In the event of inclement weather in the coming months, official announcements about Marple Newtown Area School District (ID #454) closings will be broadcast on KYW radio1060; WCAU 1210; WIP 610; WCOJ 1420; WCHE 1520 and all local television networks.
*In the event that schools are closed during regular daytime hours due to inclement weather, all evening events will also be cancelled.

**KINDERGARTEN SNOW PROVISION**

In the event of a late start due to inclement weather, a **MODIFIED KINDERGARTEN SCHEDULE** will be followed.

**2 hour delay**

- AM Kindergarten 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- PM Kindergarten 1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

*Please remember that the school personnel cannot contact parents directly of an early dismissal. If inclement weather is predicted, be sure a responsible person will contact you if there is an early dismissal of students. The teacher will use the “emergency early dismissal” form that you signed at the start of school as direction to handle how you want your child to go home.

**Sick Child?**

If your child is sick and is going to be absent from school and you are requesting homework, please call the main office before 9:00 AM so that the teachers have ample time to prepare the assignments:

**Culbertson Elementary  610 – 359 - 4340**

When your child is absent, an excuse must be sent in to school within 3 days or their return to school or the absence will be marked unexcused. Also, when your child is absent, homework can be picked up after 3:00 PM. It is difficult for the teachers to have the homework ready prior to that time.
Please keep your child home if he/she currently has or has had these symptoms in the last 12 hours:

Temperature of 100° or more *** Sore Throat *** Chills *** Diarrhea *** Earache
Vomiting *** Persistent Cough *** Rashes (including any of the following)
  - itching or spreading rash
  - chicken pox
  - impetigo; students must remain out of school until 24 hours after beginning medication
  - strep throat; child may not return to school until 24 hours after beginning the antibiotic treatment and the fever has resolved
  - pink eye; students will be excluded from school until seen by a doctor and treated for 24 hours. If no treatment, child is permitted to return to school only if there is no pus in the eyes.

Everyone’s cooperation with these guidelines can lead to fewer illnesses for your child.

**Communication HELP Wanted!!**

If your child is not going home in the usual manner on a particular day, the parent/guardian is asked to send a note in with the child to give to the homeroom teacher. When you call in the afternoon with a change it disrupts the class when we need to call into the classroom with your message.

A child will not be released to a third party unless that person is on the authorized pick-up list.
Throughout the winter months, we will make every attempt to send the children outside for recess whenever possible. Recess will be cancelled when the wind-chill and/or the temperature is 20 degrees or below. If going outside is not an option due to the temperature or inclement weather, appropriate videos, indoor games, activities, and quiet work will be provided for the children. Children will not be permitted to go outside if they are not dressed in proper attire for the cold weather.

Kindergarten Registration

In order to effectively plan for the upcoming 2013-2014 school year, the district requests that parents inform us as soon as possible of their intent to enroll a child in either kindergarten or first grade.

Please contact Mrs. Johnson at (610) 359-4340 if you have a child who will be five years of age (kindergarten) or six years of age (grade 1 and not currently enrolled) on or before the designated first day of school which will be determined by the MNSD School Board.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Kindergarten Registration Dates:

All incoming kindergarten students will be registered at Culbertson Elementary on one of the following dates:

- Monday, March 4  6:00 – 8:00 PM
- Tuesday, March 5  9:30 – 3:00 PM