Dear Parents,

My name is Heather Burnette and I want to welcome you and your child to my First grade class here at Plato Academy. First grade is a fun and challenging year. I am a graduate from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg with a Bachelor’s Degree in Education. I am certified in Elementary Education and Exceptional Student Education, and have endorsements in English for Speakers of Other Languages and Reading. This is going to be a fantastic school year, and I am really looking forward to getting to know you and your child more!

My educational philosophy focuses on children learning and developing their skills and abilities in a positive, safe, and engaging learning environment. Our classroom will be a risk-free setting so each child will be confident and successful in reaching their highest potential in all areas, including reading, writing, math, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and problem solving. I believe it is important to develop each child’s social, emotional, and behavioral capabilities in addition to their academic prowess. In our classroom children will participate in hands-on activities to help inspire a love and curiosity for learning. Children will partake in a variety of both independent and collaborative tasks to nurture responsibility, yet create a caring classroom community of learners. As each child progresses, he or she will enjoy a sense of self-worth and look forward to each day’s educational offerings.

Additional information will be attached in the folder. Please read through each paper carefully and make sure to complete each document that requires a signature to indicate that you understand and support our classroom system.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me (burnetteh@platoacademy.net). Once again, I am looking forward to being your child’s teacher and working with you to make this an enjoyable year packed with learning!



Sincerely,

Heather Burnette

**Classroom Rules, Expectations, and Behavior**

**Classroom Rules**

Our class rules to establish a safe and fun year of learning are:

1. Listen and follow directions the first time they are given
2. Raise your hand before speaking
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
4. Be respectful to yourself and others

When the students follow the rules: Students will receive praise, verbal reinforcement, happy notes home, special recognition by administrators, and a happy rewarding year!

When the students choose not to follow the rules, specific consequences related to the action will occur. For example if after a verbal warning a student is continuing to use unkind words with classmates, the consequence may involve writing an apology letter to their peer during recess.

**Classroom Expectations**

In our classroom, we:

Treat others how we want to be treated

Take responsibility for our actions, behaviors, and choices we make

Are honest and truthful

Always try our best

These classroom expectations are characteristics that we will all strive to meet each day. These are different from classroom rules, as they will not be connected with specific consequences, but will be guidelines that we will keep in mind and adhere to in all we do.

**Classroom Management**

A peaceful classroom is a caring environment where students are safe and able to learn, be productive, and feel good about themselves. To make sure this is maintained in our classroom I will be encouraging children to use Conflict Resolution methods in solving disputes. These methods will also enable children to be successful and independent problem solvers. Each child will be reminded of the rules on a regular basis. We will work on a color chart each day and this will help the children in learning to monitor their own behavior.

**Conflict Resolution!**

Talk it out Walk away

Walk it off Make a plan

Use your words and tell them to stop Move your spot

Share and take turns Make a compromise

Ignore

**Behavior Management System for our Classroom**

Our class will be using a color system to help monitor and improve classroom behavior. Students may move up or down the scale each day, therefore if a child makes a poor behavior choice and moves down the chart to yellow, orange, or red, they have the opportunity to make better choices and possibly move to a “higher” color. The children will keep track of their daily behavior using the monthly calendar in their D.O.T. (Daily Organizational Tool) binder. Each day they will be responsible for coloring in their day on the calendar. When students remain focused on learning and stay on task, they will experience success, happiness, and improved self-esteem. Please be a part of this **TEAM** effort, and consistently help monitor your child’s learning and behavior, so that he or she will be successful this year.

**Behavior Rating Scale**

**Pink: Role Model Student-** Your behavior is outstanding. You are following all classroom and school rules, meeting our classroom expectations, and have additionally shown a commitment to practicing good character. (You earn 4 Burnette Bucks)

**Purple: Super Choices-** You are making the right choices; you are on the right track. You are following all classroom and school rules and meeting most classroom expectations. (You earn 3 Burnette Bucks)

**Blue: Good Choices-** When you are making good choices you will be here. You are following all classroom and school rules. You are meeting some classroom expectations. (You earn 2 Burnette Bucks)

**Green: Ready To Learn-** This is where you will start each morning, being here means you are ready to learn. (You earn 1 Burnette Buck)

**Yellow: Warning-** This serves as a warning. You need to think about slowing down and looking at the choices that you are making. You will move to yellow after I have noticed you are not following a classroom or school rule even though you have been given verbal and non-verbal cues.

**Orange: Consequence-** Before moving to orange, you will have been warned about making better choices and have been given several verbal and non-verbal cues. You need to think about how to improve your behavior. You may lose up to 10 minutes of recess. We will need to have a discussion about the choices you are making and how you can change your behavior.

**Red: Contact Home-** You are not making good behavior choices, following classroom or school rules, or meeting classroom expectations. Learning was interrupted for your child and classmates. When you get to red we will have to contact your parents and you will fill out a behavior reflection paper. You will not be able to participate in recess.

**Burnette Bucks**

When students make good choices throughout the day they have a chance to earn Burnette Bucks, our classroom money. This money can be earned each day by following our classroom and school rules, but additionally for showing positive character, such as helping a friend or showing initiative and self-motivation, or as a reward for being engaged and on-task during learning activities. Burnette Bucks are used to reinforce and reward positive behavior choices and I will provide specific praise to help students recognize and meet the high behavioral standards we have at Plato Academy. This pairing will encourage children to become intrinsically motivated, versus solely relying on rewards given by others. Burnette Bucks can be used by the children to “purchase” items from our class store (like a treasure box) as well as behavior coupons, allowing them special privileges such as wearing sunglasses in the classroom.

**Field Trips and Volunteers**

**Field Trips**

First grade is planning to take exciting field trips this year! When we take a field trip, your child will need to have a parent permission form filled out in order to participate. Field trip information will be sent home prior to field trips. Hard copy forms will be sent home in your child’s D.O.T. binder.

All students are required to ride on the bus to and from each field trip.

Parents or guardians who wish to chaperone on field trip(s) are required to complete both Level 1 and Level 2 clearance by state/county laws. This not only requires filling out a volunteer form and providing a copy of your driver’s license, but also having a background check and complete fingerprinting. Further information is available on the Plato Academy Clearwater website.

If you are chaperoning, you will help in the responsibility for the children assigned to your group. You must be willing to supervise students in addition to your own child. There are **no siblings allowed on field trips.** We need your full attention with helping to chaperone the students. Please be sure to carry your cell phones, but not be on them during the excursion.

**Parent Volunteers**

In addition to chaperones for field trips, I will be asking for assistance in several ways from you all as parents in order to involve you in your child’s education and to create a strong and supportive bond with each of you. Please allow me some time to get to know your children, get our school year under way and running smoothly, and identify ways that your participation would be most beneficial for your children and myself. I will be providing a volunteer sign-up sheet and notifying each of you when I do, so be on the lookout for updates via all our communication methods. I look forward to getting to know each of you and I appreciate your help!