**PLEASE KEEP THIS LETTER TO REFERNCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!!!!**

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2016-17 school year! I can’t believe the summer is already over and it is time to begin again.

I am SO excited to have your child in my classroom this year. It is truly going to be an amazing year.

We have lunch from 11:10 – 11:35. You are welcome to come join your child for lunch, but I would like to request that you not do this until September. This allows the students to become familiar with the rules and expectations in the cafeteria. I would also like to remind you that NO restaurant food is allowed. This is a school rule, not mine.

Our Special Area will be from 12:45 – 1:45 and is as follows:

A – Music B – Computer C – Chinese D – Art E – P.E. \*\*\* Please wear tennis shoes.

F - Library

I have several things I wanted to share and go over so please make sure to read this entire letter.

1. First grade is an exciting year, but it is very different from kindergarten. I do not have an assistant to help me in the classroom so the students will be expected to be more independent this year. I am unable to check their backpacks and folders. I simply don’t have the time in the morning to check 26 backpacks and 26 folders. Don’t worry, I give them plenty of assistance and reminders along the way, but they will be expected to be more independent. I will have a basket that they will be expected to put all homework, paperwork, and money in each day. Please talk to your child about this daily, if needed.
2. I am a big communicator, maybe more than you would like, but I believe that we are a team. Your child’s academic success does not just depend on me; it depends on all of us working together. I have several things in place to make this easier along the way.
	1. Please sign up for our **Remind** messaging account. From your cell phone, text @mitch106 to the number 81010. This will add you to our class account. I will send out text reminders, similar to those you receive from Hite. It is very important that you sign up to receive these messages so you don’t miss important information. I would suggest both parents signing up for this. Please know that you can’t text me back so if you have a question please e-mail me at my school address: autumn.mitchell@jefferson.kyschools.us
	2. I have set up a classroom **Facebook** account. It is: Mrs. Mitchell’s Class 106. Please join our classroom as soon as you can. I will use this to post pictures from the classroom and events. I will also use this as another form of communication and reminders. This is also a great tool for you to contact other parents. I would encourage you to use this if you have questions about homework or other assignments versus using the Hite FB page. The Hite page is for the entire school and our page is just for our classroom. It will be more relevant for you to post on our page.
	3. Please check your **Parent Portal** account and make sure all of your information is up to date. I post all of the students grades through Parent Portal. If you do not have a Portal account, please log on to the JCPS website and sign up for one. I also send out all of my e-mails through the teacher side of Parent Portal and if your email address is not current, you will not receive them.
	4. I will send out a weekly Newsletter, but it will be through e-mail. Again, this will be through Parent Portal so please make sure your information is current or you will not receive it.

I also ask that you keep me in the loop as well with your kiddo. I do not need to know everything going on in your house, but if there is something significant that is going on and it impacts your child, please let me know. I have two children of my own and I know that there can be things that can absolutely impact them at school. We are a TEAM and I want us to act as such. If there is something going on, I will do everything I can to help. If you simply need me to pray for your family, just let me know. If your kiddo is dealing with some extra stress and anxiety and you need something from me, all you have to do is ask! I am flexible and always willing to do anything I can, but I have to know about it first. ☺

1. I am changing many things in my room this year and trying many new things. I am VERY excited about these changes, but with changes come bumps in the road. I ask you to please be patient with me as some of these changes occur ☺
	1. One of these changes includes starting a Mystery Reader in our classroom. If your child attended Hite in kindergarten, you are probably already familiar with this program. I am super excited about this program. You will find that I LOVE children’s books. We have an extensive library in our classroom and I love sharing those books with my students. One of the best gifts you can give your child is a book! I plan on starting this in September, if all goes well. I am have included a sign up calendar with this packet. Please pick 3-4 choices that would work for you. If you have preferences, please mark a 1-4 beside them in order that works best for you. We will have our readers on Friday mornings at 9:30. You will bring one picture book to read to the class. It shouldn’t take more than 10-15 minutes ☺
	2. Another change the 1st grade team will be working on this year will be the use of a Blog in and out of the classroom. The students will be expected to use it in the classroom and out of the classroom for homework and other assignments.
	3. We are going to try more project based learning this year. This may be one of the biggest changes logistically. My hope is to do all of it at school, but there may be some help needed at home as well. I will send more information home as we figure it out.
	4. I am changing my homework this year. I am trying to make it as simple on you as possible. On Monday your child will bring home a fluency passage. You will time them while they read it Monday – Thursday. There is a place at the bottom that you will be able to write their time and how many correct words they read per minute (cwpm). This will be turned in Friday morning. Your child will then read it with me and receive an assessment grade for it. Most of these passages shouldn’t take more that 1-2 minutes, which should make homework pretty easy for you ☺ These passages include important sight words that they need to learn throughout the year. They will also receive passages based on their reading level throughout the year.
	5. The last change, that I can think of right now, will be the addition of interactive notebooks. I am excited about this, but again it is new and will take some getting used to.

As you get to know me, you will find that I am incredibly approachable and easy to talk to. That being said, it is very important to me that you always come speak to me first about any issue that you may have. It isn’t fair to me and I surely can’t address and fix something if I don’t know about it. Please do not go above my head without giving me a chance to even address something first. You aren’t going to upset me by coming to me with something. I am human and I make mistakes. I’m not too proud to admit it, but I have to be allowed to try to fix them.

Makeup Work Folders will be sent home when your child misses any days. All paper work that was missed will be in that folder. Please return that folder with the completed work inside. This will make things easier for me to know what is make-up work when it comes back.

Our team will be using a Clip Chart system for behavior this year. You will find an attached copy of what each color means. Your child will bring home a Monthly Behavior Calendar each day. They will color in which color they ended the day on and you will initial each night to let me know that you have seen it. Please return this to school EACH day with the folder. I will check it off once you have signed it. Please refer to the attached sheet to know what each color represents.

This is my 12th year of teaching and I still get just as excited on Day 1 as I did on my first day. I love teaching and I can’t wait to work with you and your children this year.

Sincerely,

Autumn Mitchell

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Matthew 5:16  Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.