

**SEPTEMBER 2011**  
**GR. 2 --- MRS. VANDE KRAATS**

Dear Parents,

“Yippee!!!” It’s back to school time and I am looking forward to a wonderful year with you and your child. I am writing you this letter to introduce myself as your child’s teacher. My name is Susan Vande Kraats and I come to Jacob Beam from Caistor Central Public School, where I taught for 10 years. I am returning from a full year Teacher Financed Leave, which I took to have the time to travel, volunteer in my children’s school and spend some quality time with my family. My husband and I have two children, ages 5 and 8. I am eager to return to the classroom and get back into the swing of things.

At the beginning of each month I will be sending home a classroom newsletter and calendar that shows: when your child will be having gym and library, when birthdays are, what themes we are studying, special events, and little things you can do to help with particular skills. If there is anything to add after the calendar has gone home I will send home a separate note in your child’s agenda. If you do not receive a newsletter or calendar within the first week of the month please let me know.

**Agendas:** Agendas should have come home on Tuesday with your child and money should be returned for them as soon as possible. These agendas are essential to your child’s learning and essential for us to keep in touch about important issues. Important notes (ie. getting picked up at the end of the day or early), money for special lunches, newsletters, homework, etc. will be found in these agendas. They are to be **returned daily** to school, where I will sign (stamp) them, and I will send them home nightly where **you need to sign them** to let me know you have seen them as well. This process is a part of your son/daughter’s homework completion mark and will be tracked daily. If you notice that your child’s agenda is not getting stamped or signed by myself on a daily basis, that is because **they** are not handing it in to me. Agendas will be a part of your child’s school career, at least until grade eight, so setting a routine up now will help make this journey an easier one. I will remind them over the first month or so, however after that it will be their responsibility to remember once the routine is set. Together, we can make this an easy, everyday process.

**Take Home Folders:** Starting on Tuesday, with your child’s agenda and important documentation, your child’s work, agenda, and any correspondence from this class or the school will be sent home in the zippered folder this letter came in. Your child’s name is on this folder and therefore anything they are taking home should be theirs and arrive in one piece. **I would ask that you empty these folders nightly and return them the next day to the class so that they can be used again when more correspondence goes home.** Please try to keep them neat and as clean as possible as they should last your child the whole school year. If the name tag gets lost please replace it with a new piece of paper to make handing them out easier.

**Parent Volunteers:** I would greatly appreciate any help that you would like to give in our classroom. If you are interested in being a regular volunteer, or occasional helper, please let me know and I will contact you soon. My plan is to start having volunteers in around the middle of October. I would like to get the students into a routine before this begins.

**Footwear/Gym Clothing:** Please make sure your child has a second pair of “running shoes” that can stay at school and double as their gym shoes. These shoes will be worn inside only in order to keep our classroom/school floors as clean as possible. Hard soled shoes, sock feet or bare feet are not allowed in the gym for safety reasons, therefore gym shoes are necessary for participation in gym classes. The shoes you provide for your child for indoors or outdoors should be a kind that they are able to do up independently (**ie. if they can not tie up laced shoes buying Velcro ones would help them be more independent**). A change of clothing for gym class is also necessary for your child so that they can continue the rest of their day in clean, sweat free clothing. I would suggest leaving a set in your child’s bag at all times and switching them after they have gym class. This has worked for my daughter and has caused less worry about if that day is a “gym day.”

**School Supplies:** A list of school supplies that your child will need for this year was attached to the June school newsletter. Unfortunately, our school budget does not allow us to supply all of the necessities for each child and therefore the list that was sent home was created. If you would like another copy of this list please let me know. It is important that you communicate with your child about their supplies and if they need replenishing (ie. they make great Christmas gifts too). If I notice that your child is in need of something I will also drop you a note in his/her agenda.

**\*\*\*\*Food Allergies:** **It is extremely important that you be aware that we have students in our school that have severe nut allergies (not just peanut, all nuts). Jacob Beam Public School is a nut free building. Please choose nut free products for your child’s nutrition breaks to ensure that our school is a safe place for all of our students to be.** Please let me know immediately if your child has any allergies or diet limitations, as treats and food preparation activities are often brought into many themes and activities. I did receive a list of students with allergies in my class; however extra verification (just a quick note in their agenda) would be appreciated for my own knowledge.

**Personal Belongings:** Please make sure any clothing, playground equipment, or lunch containers that your child brings from home are labeled with your child’s name on it. This will ensure it gets back home with the correct child.

**Homework:** Homework will be a part of your child’s year in my classroom. Activities related to all subject areas will be assigned, some routinely, while others sporadically. All of these assignments are meant to assist in your child’s learning. If you have any questions or concerns about assigned homework or other issues please feel free to contact me at the school, by phone, or by email ([Susan.Vandekraats@dsbn.edu.on.ca](mailto:Susan.Vandekraats@dsbn.edu.on.ca)). Your child should be spending, at the most, 20 minutes, on these types of activities a night. Nightly reading, I consider, is an activity that should be done in addition to these minutes. If it is a book that is being reread, it could be done as their bedtime story, but if it is an “unseen” book that I haven’t worked through with them then bedtime is probably not the best time to work through it. Homework is tracked as part of a report card learning skills assessment. Thank you in advance for your homework support.

**Holiday Parties:** During the year there are a number of holidays that we will be celebrating as a class and this usually means there will be “goodies” brought in to share with the class. To prevent a huge amount of food from arriving at each one of these events I have attached a list of the holidays that might need these “goodies.” It would be appreciated if you would fill in two choices (you will only have to bring in for one of these), if you want to, of when you would like to provide one of the “goodies” for the class. I will inform you of the final list later. If you could return this to me before the end of September, it would be greatly appreciated so that I can send home a final list to everyone at that time. At our celebrations drinks, a healthy snack (1<sup>st</sup>) and then sweets are provided. Your support in this endeavour is greatly appreciated.

**Curriculum Coverage:** These are some of the topics we will be focusing on this month and here are some of the overall expectations the students are required to meet: Specific expectations for these concepts can be found in the Ministry’s curriculum documents and will be listed on your child’s overall evaluation at the end of each unit. **Mathematics:** A separate note outlining specific expectations for the first unit will be sent home early next week. **Social Studies:** - demonstrate an understanding that the world is made up of countries, continents and regions, use a variety of resources and tools to gather, process and communicate geographic information. **Language:** Each day your child will be receiving instruction in reading, writing and oral language. Specifics on these programs will be provided at the Open House and in letters sent home at a later date.

**Things You Can Do To Help:** For each Mathematics unit you will be receiving a letter home that talks about each unit and what you can do to help. Our first math unit will begin next week and that note will come home in the next couple of days. In Language, sitting with students and reading to and with them will help them develop an interest in literature. Reading can be a shared task in order to prevent frustration with more difficult texts. Having access to various materials to write on (sticky notes, paper, etc.) or with (crayons, markers etc.) will encourage your child to write more often. Specifics on text form focuses, formats, genres etc. will be provided in the near future. Weekly Word Wall Words (Spelling Words) will begin coming home in late September or early October. Asking your child to tell you about their day and encouraging them to give details by asking questions, will build their oral expression capabilities. Pointing out and using interesting (different) words that you encounter and explaining their meanings to your child will also broaden their vocabulary. Thank you for your support!!!

# Holiday Treat Sign Up Sheet

Please sign up for 2 of these choices (you will only have to do one) to help provide special treats for our classroom celebrations. It would be appreciated if the drinks were drink boxes or something in individual containers (it is easier to hand out). Healthy snacks could include cheese and crackers, veggies, fruit or other things you think are healthy. Treats can be anything you would like, however keep in mind we do have some milk allergies in our class. The last day of school has more treat spots to accommodate all of the students in the class for signing up, as well, that day is often filled with celebration and extra snacks could be helpful. I will send home a completed sign up sheet early in October and separate reminder notes for each celebration prior to them. Thank you for your support in advance.

## Halloween

\*drinks \_\_\_\_\_  
\*healthy \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_

## Christmas

\*drinks \_\_\_\_\_  
\*healthy \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_

## Valentines

\*drinks \_\_\_\_\_  
\*healthy \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_

## Easter

\*drinks \_\_\_\_\_  
\*healthy \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_

## End of the School Year

\*drinks \_\_\_\_\_  
\*healthy \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_  
\*treats \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Please return by the end of September.**