**Welcome to Kindergarten**

**Mrs. Bussard’s Busy Birds**

We are Busy Birds flying to new heights in reading, writing, math, science

and as a life-long learner!

Your child is preparing to experience one of the most important milestones in his/her life, the first days of school! I realize that you and your child may meet this adventure with excitement or apprehension (or a little of both). I hope that this packet will help you to know what to expect in Kindergarten and answer any questions you may have.

I would like to tell you a little about myself. My name is Kathy Bussard. This is my thirteenth year teaching at Willard Central. My degree is in Child and Family Development with a certification in Early Childhood Education from Southwest Missouri State University. I live in Springfield with my husband Scott, but I originally grew up in Kansas City Missouri and I am the youngest of five children to Robert and Jean Hayward. I have three sisters and one brother. I am the proud aunt of 4 nieces, 4 nephews and 3 great nieces. This is going to be a great year. I encourage you to become involved in whatever way is possible for your family. It may be by coming in to help with classroom projects, or parties. It may be stopping in to eat lunch with your child. Soon, I will offer you the opportunity to come into the classroom when we feature your child as star student of the week. I am looking forward to working with you and your child.

***Parent/Teacher Communication***

I believe that a good parent-teacher relationship is essential for maximum school success. Throughout the year I will communicate with you through notes, telephone calls, newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences. I encourage you to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You can call me at school (831-4440) or send me a note. You may also e-mail me at kathybussard@willardschools.net.

**W.O.W Folders**

We will use these folders to carry important papers, homework, notes and money. These books will help us to communicate with each other, as well as teach your child responsibility.

***School hours***

School starts every day at 8:15 and dismisses at 3:40 p.m. Children are allowed in the classroom at 8:15 a.m. Any child dropped off before 8:10 will be sent to Tiger Tales and you will be charged for their supervision.

**Early Release Mondays**

School will dismiss early every Monday at 3:10 p.m. for Professional Development for teachers.

**Arrival**

At arrival the children will drop W.O.W folders in basket, hang up backpacks and prepare to go to Community time.

**Community Time**

We begin each day at Central with Community Time. Community Time is a special time, we celebrate birthdays, achievements, new students. We also sing our school song, say the Pledge and sing our patriotic songs. This is a great way for our entire school to begin each day together as a school family. Community time begins at 8:20 a.m. You are welcome to visit anytime.

***Special Classes***

We attend Special classes from 10:45 to 11:40 –

Mondays – Art Tuesday- Music Wednesday – Lib. /Comp. Thursday- P.E. Friday – Lib./Comp.

***Counselor***

Our School Counselor Mr. Gann will visit our classroom every other Week. He meets with the children to give various lessons that support your child‘s emotional development. His visits to the classroom give the children the opportunity to get to know him, so if they have days when they need extra support they will be comfortable in talking to him. He is always available to support our children when the unexpected difficult things in life occur.

***After School Care***

Tiger Tales is our after school program for children. If you would like information regarding Tiger Tales please contact 417-831-4440.

***School Attendance***

Your child’s regular and prompt attendance at school is crucial to his/her success. I can’t emphasize this point enough! Most Kindergarten learning activities are hands on, interacting with classmates in large and small groups. Therefore, it is next to impossible to make up work at home. Please view school as a priority, and have your child attend every day except in cases of illness or emergencies.

***Transportation Needs***

Children needing to make a change in the way they go home must bring in a note from their parent, or you must phone the office to alert us of the change. I will not change your child’s mode of transportation unless I hear from you through a note or phone call. Reminder: Place all notes in front zipper pouch of W.O.W. folder. I do not check back-packs. Also, if you child needs to leave school early or is coming in late, please notify me of these changes.

You will be asked to submit instructions for your child if school is ever dismissed early due to inclement weather. Announcements for weather-related school closings will be made over the radio and television, not by phone. Snowstorms during the school day don’t come often, but when they do, decisions have to be made quickly. It is crucial for every family to have a written emergency plan on file at school for such situations.

***Money***

On occasion it will be necessary for your child to bring money to school. Always send money in a sealed envelope with the following information written on it:

1. Your child’s first and last name

2. The amount of money

3. The purpose for the money (lunch, book order, etc.)

4. Teacher’s name (Mrs. Bussard)

Please place in front zipper pouch of W.O.W. folder. This helps me tremendously and reduces the likelihood of errors.

***Food***

Breakfast $1.25 Lunch $2.30 Extra Milk $.35

**Menus**

Each month a Breakfast/Lunch menu will be sent home in W.O.W. folder, or you can look at the menu on our Willard District site as well.

**Paying for meals**

You may pay with cash or checks. You may also pay online. If sending money in with your child, please make sure to send in a sealed envelope and write student’s first and last name, purpose for money and amount. All payments are sent to the cafeteria, so if not labeled we cannot guarantee it will be credited to the right account.

**Eating Lunch with your child**

You are welcome anytime to eat lunch with your child. We eat lunch at 11:45 – 12:10. When you eat lunch with your child, there are a few procedures we need you to be aware of. You will sign in at the office and wear a visitor’s badge. Once signed in walk down to cafeteria; we will come directly from Specials to lunch. Adult lunches need to be paid when you come to lunch, not charged to your child’s account.

**Brain Snacks**

Each day I would like to offer the children a nutritious snack to help nourish their brains for learning. I would welcome donations of healthy snacks that we can share as a class. If you are able to help with a donation, please send in your child’s backpack.

**Water Bottles**

Research shows it is important for our brains to be well hydrated for optimal learning. Please send in a water bottle for your child to use at school. It really helps them to get more water, plus if they are not sharing drinks at the water fountains it helps them to stay healthier and not share germs.

**Lunchboxes and Clothing**

It helps tremendously if your child’s name is clearly printed on the outside of your child’s lunchbox. Please label the tags of sweaters and jackets when cooler weather approaches. It would be helpful for your child to keep a change of clothing at school (shirt, pants, underwear, socks and shoes) in case of accidents or illness. We will leave these extra clothes in their backpacks.

***Toys***

Please help your child remember that their toys must be left at home. Children will be given a warning if they bring a toy to school, and then with their second offence, the toy will be place in our “oh no” bucket and I decide when they are able to have it back. Please also keep in mind that watches, bracelets, hair pieces etc… often become distractions for your child during learning. Please help them to make wise choices for optimal learning for all.

***Outdoor Recess***

We have recess at 1:30 – 2:00 p.m. The children will go out for recess every day unless it is raining or extremely cold (below 32 degrees and/or 20 degrees wind-chill). Keep this in mind when helping your child to select clothing for the day. Our playground tends to be very windy, which makes it even colder. Also, we are fortunate to have a variety of playground equipment, including several pieces for climbing. Please consider this when selecting shoes.

At times the children have problems with their peers on the playground. Please know that we are watching the children to keep them safe, however with the size of our playground we do not see everything that happens. Please communicate to your child, that if they are having a problem with a peer, they need to let a teacher know. We appreciate your support in this area, so that we can assure safety for all children.

***Birthdays***

We know birthdays are special, so we are happy to celebrate at school. If your child wishes, he/she may bring a simple treat for everyone. The treat must be store bought. We have just about 10 minutes for snack, so the key is to keep it simple. Please do not send in decorations. We will enjoy the treat as our schedule permits, so you may send in with your child, or drop off at the front office. Those children with summer birthdays may celebrate on their half birthday (51/2)

***Discipline***

Establishing good classroom discipline is essential to each child’s success, confidence and well-being. Every child should feel that the classroom environment is safe and secure, free from all threats of physical or emotional harm. In addition, it is important that each child learn to develop self-discipline and good work habits to resolve conflicts peacefully, and to think independently. For these reasons, the discipline plan I use has several components. First, the children will learn the purpose of learning, growing and becoming friends. Through classroom discussion and rule making, the children and I will compose a list of classroom rules that protect each student’s right to safety and respect, as well as, outlining the responsibilities that each child has in maintaining class order. New rules will be added throughout the year if the need arises. The second facet of the discipline plan includes the logical consequences that will occur when class rules are broken. We use the Love and Logic Discipline system. Love and Logic is about giving and receiving respect and having choices. Each behavior situation is dealt with individually based on the needs of each child. Consequences will fit the action. Examples of giving child choices might be . . . If child is not completing work, I would ask the child would you like to finish your work now or during free choice centers. A child not sitting quietly for group learning will be asked would you like to sit quietly now or practice at recess. This puts the responsibility back on the child. If classroom rules are severely or persistently broken, parents will be contacted by note (to be signed and returned) or by telephone. A visit to the principal’s office is rarely used, and a last resort. A third practice of our discipline is that we will have to solve our own problems. Children having problems during learning will be asked to walk think laps at recess. They will be asked to walk around the basketball court and think about how to fix their problem. When they finish walking and thinking, they have to talk to me about their plan to fix their problem. In the classroom they may be given quiet minutes to think about what they need to do to be a part of class activities.

***Curriculum***

Kindergarten is about beginnings! We are beginning to learn how school works, how we work with others, how we read, write, experience math, science and social studies. We learn in Kindergarten through active manipulation of objects, real work reading and writing, helping others, exploration, trial and error and we learn from our peers. Each child brings their unique experiences and contributes to the overall learning environment. Our learning is hands on, we experience our learning. You will not see multiple worksheets in your child’s backpack, because that it not how Kindergarteners learn. Please keep in mind the learning is in the process not in the final product. Please do not be discouraged when you do not see a lot to papers coming home. We will provide opportunities for you to see your child’s learning in action. I have included more information on curriculum in our curriculum handout.

***What can a parent do to help?***

Read to your child at home daily

Talk with your child about what they are doing at school

Take part in school to home projects and homework

Help your child to get organized from school, perhaps the night before.

Ma sure your child has lots of sleep, especially in the beginning

Have your child eat a nutritious breakfast

Thank You again for your support, our working together will assure the best experience for your child’s beginning school career. We are partners in the education of your child!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Bussard