



Lanikai Elementary **First Grade**

Aloha and welcome to Open House. This year is off to a wonderful start. We are glad to partner with you assisting in the educational journey of your child. As your partners, we value your input and feedback and will be communicating with you via weekly newsletters. Look for them on Mondays in your child's homework folder. We welcome any questions or concerns you have.

We are very fortunate to have kind and capable educational assistants working with the children in our class. Doreen Yasukochi (Ms. Doreen) and Wailea Staudinger have been with Lanikai for many years and will be with us full-time. We also have a University of Hawaii student teacher observing our class and assisting us two days a week this year.

Our child-centered classroom utilizes the best practices of several different disciplines. A very important component to our program is to have a calm, nurturing environment in which children can gain confidence through patterns of success. Our classroom environment allows for center-oriented, self-directed learning as well as direct teacher instruction in small group and whole class situations. Your child will be exposed to a balanced environment of freedom and structure, as one cannot exist without the other. We are also using some superbly designed developmentally appropriate manipulative materials for your child to explore at his or her own pace to reinforce abstract concepts being introduced at this developmental stage. In addition, we'll be using an excellent series of phonics, mathematics, and reading textbooks. Children will be required to complete daily homework assignments to reinforce concepts, to extend the learning environment, and to have the opportunity to practice responsibility. At this key developmental stage, children need parental support and a quiet, well-lit area for the homework process to be most successful. But most of all, having support from the home can help to ensure your child's success with class work as well as homework throughout the year.

Our language and literacy curriculum will be multifaceted. We will utilize an excellent literature based basal reader and workbook in conjunction with a multi-sensory phonics program called "Total Reading". Lessons will be sequential. Thanks to the kindness of parent volunteers, small twice a week reading groups will provide a safe place for children to practice reading to and with their peers. There will also be many opportunities for children to derive meaning from text using picture and context clues through the selection of books that interest them on an individual level from our own classroom library. And finally, self-expression will be encouraged throughout the year through the use of creative writing journals. Spelling tests will be held on Fridays. Spelling sounds, phonograms, and words will be practiced throughout the week and you will see them in your child's homework journal.

This year we continue to use our school wide math textbook series. This series from Scott Foresman is aligned with national and state mathematics standards and uses the latest research on how to best introduce abstract mathematics concepts to kids.

We refer to the Social Studies portion of the curriculum as “Geography and Culture”. It will be broadly based on the seven continents found on our planet, and the many diverse cultures and communities past and present and the landforms and water forms on our planet. Our Science units will be based on nature and the world around us. Children will be encouraged to carefully observe, note details, ask questions, and come up with inferences of their own. A reverence and respect for nature and people of all cultures will be reinforced through all units of study.

As a component of character education, we will be introducing your child to many different and important people from history (scientists, artists, philosophers, composers..) who have made a positive impact on our planet. Although these individuals are culturally diverse and lived during different eras, they share some admirable characteristics: a strong belief in oneself and a simple, peaceful life can bring greatness. These characteristics are found as easily in first graders as they are in world leaders!

At Lanikai, we have on staff a wealth of wonderful enrichment teachers. We will be having computer class, art class, P.E., music, and Hawaiiana as enrichment to our curriculum. We are very fortunate to have so many kind adults working together to help shape well rounded and well informed keiki!

Birthdays are very special milestones in the life of your child. You may wish to celebrate with friends in class by bringing in a simple treat. Another wonderful way to celebrate is by donating a book to our class library. Any book donated will be gratefully accepted and a nameplate with your child’s name and birthday will be placed inside. The book will also be read that day in honor of your child

School policies are in the Lanikai Handbook found on line. Please write us a note in your child’s folder if you have any questions. We’d like to encourage you to take family trips or vacations during the school breaks to maximize learning potential for your child during the time when school is in session. If emergencies arise, please let us know as soon as possible.

Lanikai is a great place for children to learn and grow. We look forward to working with you this year. Mahalo for your support.

Aloha,

V. Villegas and S. Ciano
First Grade Teachers

* We have a student with an allergy to dairy. Please check labels before planning class treats. If in doubt, please see Mrs. Villegas! Thanks.