

August 18, 2015

Dear Student and Parent(s),

Welcome to another exciting school year! I believe that what happens in our classroom this year will affect your future. Your time here will be well spent. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Ellen Cohen. I was born in New York City, but mostly raised in New Jersey. I received my Bachelor's Degree at Brandeis University and thoroughly enjoyed my time there. I earned my teaching credential from California State University at Northridge. This is my thirteenth year teaching full time at Millikan after two years as a substitute. I intend to make this a wonderful year. I find my profession truly fulfilling and rewarding. I hope to help you feel fulfilled and rewarded here as well.

The following information covers all the important aspects of our classroom this year. Please read this thoroughly and sign at the bottom indicating your understanding and support of these procedures.

Materials

Students need to have class materials in their backpacks. If your family has any problems obtaining them, please contact me directly. The following materials are required for class every day:

School Agenda (supplied by school)

Loose-leaf notebook with paper (3-ring binder)

Two pens (**black or dark blue ink only**)

Personal reading book

USB flash drive, any size (also called a thumb drive)

The following materials are required for your use at home:

Dictionary

Thesaurus

Notebook paper

Reading books

Work Habits

The following work habits are expected of every student:

All class work is to be done neatly and in DARK BLUE or BLACK pen. All final drafts of essays are to be typed using a computer. It is part of the California State Language Arts Standards that you be able to use a word processing program. If you do not have access to a computer, please use one of the computers in our school library or one of the school's computer labs. If you have use of a computer but not a printer, put your assignment on a USB flash drive, and bring it to me. I will print it out for you. If you need me to print work for you, please make sure that the format of the work is in Microsoft Word (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). This is very important; my computer won't open any other types of files. Please check before you come to me. MANY students don't check their files, and come to me with a file that I can't open. If that happens, it's your fault and not mine. Your grade may suffer for it. Don't come crying to me if your work is late because you brought in the wrong kind of file. Do yourself a favor and make sure your printer has plenty of ink so you can print at home.

While we're on the subject of typed work, I will be teaching you standard academic formatting for essays this year. I expect all typed work to be in this format. I WILL

NOT ACCEPT TYPED WORK THAT ISN'T IN STANDARD ACADEMIC FORMATTING.

This will serve you well in future classes throughout your school career. Almost all of your teachers will expect this type of formatting, from now through college.

I will assign book reports at least three times this year. I **never** accept late book reports. If you know you will be absent on the day the report is due, please turn it in early. If you are ill on the day the report is due, please have someone bring the report to school either to put it into my mailbox in the main office, or to bring it to my classroom. If you take the bus to school, I will accept the report on the day of your return **ONLY** with a note signed by both your parent and your bus driver. Since book reports carry a minimum of 200 points, please make sure I get the report on time. A 200 point zero **will** bring down your grade.

Regarding late work, I will accept late homework (NOT book reports) up to and including four days after the due date. Homework that is one day late will have its score reduced by 10%, two days by 20%, three days by 30%, and four days by 40%. I will not accept any late work past four days. If you are absent, the first day you come back to school is counted as "on time" for any work that was due while you were absent. Arrive to class on time. Tardies will not be accepted unless excused. When absent, obtain the day's notes and assignments from a friend, or from my website, which can be reached from

www.millikanmiddleschool.org. (Direct Link:

http://www.millikanmiddleschool.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=337121&type=u&pREC_ID=426696). Once you are on my website, please subscribe to your appropriate class period. When an assignment is missing, a student will receive a "zero" for that assignment. **All assignments, both classwork and homework, count towards your grade.**

If you miss a test or quiz because you were absent, you will be expected to make up that test or quiz the day you return to school. Remember, you are a student in my English class, and you are supposed to be in my class during your assigned period unless

a. You are out ill

b. You have a Permit to Serve that has been PREVIOUSLY signed by me.

I will not accept any last minute excuses. If your teacher needs to keep you late to make up or take a test, please have that teacher call me on his or her classroom phone for permission. **LAST MINUTE REHEARSALS WILL NOT BE EXCUSED. YOUR DRAMA/DANCE/MUSIC TEACHERS HAVE YOU DURING A DIFFERENT PERIOD OF THE DAY.** There is no drama, dance, or music section of the SBAC or SAT. Remember that. Of course, I will sign a Permit to Serve if it is given to me at least twenty-four hours in advance **and** if your grade in my class is in good standing (no Ds or Fs).

Graded Work

In our classroom, we have student portfolios in the back of the room, separated by class period. All graded work will be in these portfolios. You may check your portfolio either before or after class, not during class. If your parent or guardian wants to see your graded work, have them contact me, and I will send copies of the work home. If they only want to see the grades, I will send home a computer-generated progress report. Please keep in mind that I have over 200 students this year. Even one short assignment can take a few days to grade. Essays take much longer to grade because you deserve thorough feedback on your writing, and I am very careful to take the time to read and evaluate your papers. Please pay attention to the comments I write on your work. The purpose of these comments is to help you become a better writer.

Behavior

The following behavior is expected of every student during every class period:

Have a positive attitude about learning and working.

Be in your seat and working when the bell rings.

Follow the class rules of respect and responsibility.

Keep hands, feet, and objects in your personal space.

Keep your area clean.

Do not bring toys or personal grooming materials to class. If visible, they will be taken away and not returned. **YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.**

Raise your hand to speak or to get out of your seat.

You are dismissed by the teacher, not by the bell.

The following is my procedure for inappropriate behavior:

First offense – verbal warning

Second offense – movement to room 34 or room 33

Third offense – nutrition detention

Fourth offense – referral to counseling office and/or phone call to parents

Dress Code:

Since school started in the middle of summer this year, you may think that short shorts and a bikini top might be allowed at school. You are wrong if you think this. **DRESS CODE WILL STILL BE ENFORCED FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR.** Ladies, if you want to stay cool in the hot weather, I recommend that you wear a long, flowing, skirt. Long skirts are fashionable right now, and they circulate air to keep your legs comfortable. Skirts or shorts that are shorter than one inch above your knee are not appropriate for school, nor are strapless or spaghetti strap tops. Gentlemen, please keep the waist of your pants **AT YOUR WAIST.** Sagging pants are “code” in prison for a certain type of prisoner. Believe me, that’s not the message you want to send to the world. Shorts under sagging pants are **NOT** an appropriate substitute. If you are out of dress code, I will send you out of class to change into something more appropriate. If you have nothing appropriate, I will send you to the office to call home to **GET** something appropriate. You will still be held responsible for any learning or work done in class while you are out attending to this, which is something you could have avoided by dressing properly before you came to school. A school is a place of business; if you wouldn’t wear an outfit to a business meeting, then you shouldn’t wear it to school. It’s a respect thing. Respect yourself and the others around you.

Grading

Grades will be based on tests, quizzes, homework, classwork, and projects. The following grading scale will be in effect:

100-90 = A

89-80 = B

79-70 = C

69-60 = D

59 or below = F

Homework is worth 50 points.

Classwork is worth 50 points.

Tests and Quizzes are worth 100 points.

Projects are worth from 200 to 400 points.

There are no pluses or minuses on report cards.

If you need to know the status of your grade, ask me either **before** or **after** class.

Your work habits grade will be based on the amount of work you complete, and your attitude towards your work. If you miss more than two assignments, either class work or homework, you will receive a "U" on your report card in work habits. If you miss one or two assignments, you will receive an "S" on your report card in work habits. You will be excused from class work on days you are absent, but **not** homework.

Your cooperation grade is based solely on your behavior. Good behavior will earn you an "E" grade. Bad behavior will earn you a "U" grade. Behavior somewhere in between will earn you an "S" grade.

Grammar Goddess Tuesday

I am the Grammar Goddess, and Tuesday is my special day. Every Tuesday (with few exceptions) is Grammar Goddess Day. On this day, you will be blessed with a grammar lesson. On every Grammar Goddess Day there will be homework, due the following day. All Grammar Goddess assignments are available for download from my website if for some reason you no longer have the original assignment sheet.

The Telephone

There is a telephone in every Millikan classroom. **It is NOT to be used by students.** That doesn't mean sometimes. That doesn't mean you can use it in an emergency. THAT MEANS NEVER. Got it? Good. Your own cellular phones are also **not** to be used in class. It is district policy that all student cellular phones are to be turned **off** (not on vibrate or silent) from 8:00am until 3:03pm. If your phone rings in class, I **will** take it and give it to the dean. You may retrieve your phone only accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Communication

I will communicate general classroom notices and upcoming events in letters that I will send home with you for your parents to read. Please read them to understand important and exciting events in the classroom. Some of these notices require a parent signature, so please read through them carefully. I will also be using the school's computer-based phone system to send messages home. Some of these messages will be positive, some will be negative, and some will simply be reminders of due dates and quizzes. If your parents have concerns about you or the class, please have them contact me. I can be contacted by calling the school (818-528-1600) or via e-mail through the e-mail link on my website at http://www.millikanmiddleschool.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=337121&type=u&pREC_ID=426696. My direct e-mail address is ellen.cohen@lausd.net. All homework and other assignments are on this site. Visit it regularly. All documents on my website are in .pdf format, which can be opened with Adobe Reader, among other programs. If you don't have Adobe Reader, you can download it for free (both PC and mac) on Adobe's website. I will also call parents directly with concerns and good news, and am open to scheduling parent-teacher conferences throughout the year. My conference period is period four.

Sincerely,
Ellen Cohen

Parents, please sign below indicating your understanding and support of these procedures. In addition, please fill out the contact information section so I may have the best way to reach you regarding your child. Please return this ENTIRE page with your child by Monday, August 24th. If you have any comments, please note them below.

Thank you!

(for parent contact info, please make sure I know which parent goes to which number)

Student Name

Student Signature

Parent Name (s)

Parent Signature

contact phone number - home

parent #1 e-mail address

Parent #2 home phone number

parent #2 e-mail address

Parent #1 work phone number

parent #1 mobile number

Parent #2 work number

parent #2 mobile number

student e-mail address

student mobile number

comments: