***Sixth Grade Individuals and Societies***

*Class Expectations: 2017-2018*

2650 Sam Powell Trail  
 Signal Mountain, TN 37377

# August 10, 2017

Dear Student and Family,

What a special juncture in your life beginning middle school as a sixth grader, and I am honored to be a part of your first exposures to middle school! This is my 20th year teaching, and I look forward to the start of every school year because it is a time of new beginnings for all.

Social Studies for sixth grade will be a study of Ancient History! We will be studying Human Origins, Mesopotamia, Ancient China, Ancient Egypt, Ancient India, Ancient Israel, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, and the Rise of Christianity. We will be analyzing the geography and political, economic, social, and religious structures of all these societies. It is my hope to inspire your present life through the history of the past. Throughout history, the following universal paradox has been proven time and again: “You are free to choose, but you are not free from the consequences of your choice.”

Homework will be posted on my assignment board and on PowerSchool. On PowerSchool, please pay particular attention to assignment descriptions I post along with Dropbox links to handouts as well as individual comments I post about your performance on assignments. The grade will be a hyperlinked blue if I left an individual comment. All students will write their homework in their agenda-mate every class and should take their agenda home every day. Homework will be checked at the beginning of class. Any work not completed when the assignment is checked will receive a late grade which is a maximum of 90%. The assignment must be completed and re-submitted within 1 week to receive late credit. If it is not completed within the week, a zero “0” will be given. If your child is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to complete the missed assignment. The missed assignment is due within 5 school days.

This week, students will be setting up their online textbook account, and I will also issue hard copies of our textbook for reference.

My grading policy is HCDE’s grading policy which is as follows: Homework=10%; Classwork/quizzes=40%; Tests=50%. We will be having IB MYP summative assessments at the end of each unit. I love giving my students choice as to their project choice as well as their mode of presentation! These summatives will be graded according to the IB Assessment rubrics which can be found in the back of your ICB (interactive comp book) we will be setting up the first day of school. Summative grades will also be converted to MYP grades and posted on ManageBac as permanent record through your years at our school.

One of my favorite words is a Spanish one, *querencia*, which describes a place where one feels safe, a place from which one’s strength of character is drawn, a place where one feels at home. *Querencia* comes from the verb *querer*, which means to desire or want. As your teacher, I desire for you to feel “safe” in my classroom, to have the courage to take risks so that you grow. I want what we learn in class to be meaningful to your life, to make you want to be a better person. Alexandra K. Trenfor put it best when she said, “The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don’t tell you what to see.” My job is to awaken in you yourself, to awaken in you a desire to never stop learning and to strive to excel at all times.

My personal goal remains to motivate and develop the innate skills with which you were blessed. Our classroom culture will lend itself towards taking risks and learning together as a community of learners. As an International Baccalaureate school, the Middle Years Program IB Learner strives to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. You will have a voice, and it will be heard. Get ready to share your voice in Kahoot competitions, in projects you present to the class, during our class seminars, and when we are silly creating skits to review material. I can't wait for our teacher conferences when I get to have one-on-one time with you to see where you are in developing the skills we're learning each week. I enjoy individual time with you because that way I come to appreciate your singular voice away from the bustle of a classroom environment.

As with anything in life, this class will be what you choose to make it. I understand you are growing up, and while other things may be of primary importance in your mind at this time, I hope you will give me the chance to share my love of self-expression and the joy of expressing oneself in an educated manner. We have 180 days together to become sharper and better able to express ourselves clearly and uniquely. No one else can say or write something quite like you can. I can only hope something I present to you might inspire your inner voice to come out creatively and with pride.

Bruce Lee said, “Knowledge will give you power, but character respect.” As your teacher, I hope to set a positive example of being a lifelong learner, hoping to make a difference with you in the classroom which spills over into the world at large.

Warmly yours,

Ms. Jennifer McGann

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**P.S. You may keep this letter at home for future reference. ☺ I only write it because I want you to know my heart and philosophy as your teacher.**