

Dear Mentor Teacher,

My name is Lara Smith and I will be in your class for my practicum this year! I look forward to getting to know you and your students during our time together.

I am in my second year of the Elementary Curriculum program at the University of Victoria. Throughout my first year, I completed a variety of courses to gain general knowledge in History, Elementary-level Math, Science, English, and Psychology. Through this past year, I am taking courses tailored to learning about how to teach certain subject areas and the British Columbia curriculum. One of my courses in the first semester involved me getting hands-on experience in a grade one/two split at Panorama Park Elementary in Surrey. While I was there, I assisted my mentor teacher by helping students with their work and leading small activities with the class. This position was the first time I have been in an elementary classroom as a teacher. I learned how to support children with their work in a helpful way, which included using a growth mindset and correcting students when they believed they could not complete the work on their own. I also learned how to structure a classroom within the first month of school to ensure children know how the classroom will work for the rest of the year. During my practicum, I plan to use these skills to foster a community in the classroom, where the students know I believe in them and keep day-to-day activities consistent.

In the past, I have been certified in different programs that will improve my skills in the classroom. I am certified in Standard First Aid and CPR-C and *HighFive's* Principals of Healthy Childhood Development and Healthy Minds for Healthy Children. With these certifications, I plan to make the classroom a safe place for all kinds of students, where they feel included as a member of our class community. Also, throughout high school, I was a Rhythmic Gymnastics coach. It was there that I learned how to be patient, and support children throughout the year as they work towards their goals. These experiences have furthered my understanding of teaching since I was able to be a role model for different children in the community and was in-charge of my own teaching environment. I learned how to guide children through their mistakes and help them grow from their past experiences. The children in my gymnastics class felt safe enough to tell me about their lives, which allowed me to build memories and connections with them.

My teaching philosophy includes keeping a healthy and positive mindset while in the classroom. One of the ways I can ensure this happens is by teaching growth mindset strategies to help children believe in themselves. From experience, I know that if a child does not believe they can do something, it will inhibit their ability to get the task done. In my classroom, children will shift from "I can't" to "I can do this with some help", therefore, allowing children to believe in themselves and know that nothing is impossible with some help from others.

Through this practicum I plan on exploring different techniques I have learned throughout my years as a University student. The students will benefit from the different learning strategies I have learned as a teacher candidate since I will be able to modify them to fit the needs of the class. I would very much like to thank you and your school so much for inviting me into your classroom this year! I hope under your guidance and through my learning, I will be able to create a successful learning environment and obtain new skills for overseeing my own class.

Best wishes,

Lara Smith