Hello 4th Grade Parents!

This week our class will begin a year-long activity that we call “Private Eyes.” This is a phenomenal activity that builds classroom community and relationships between students, while also helping our class as a whole set and work towards important goals.

***Here is how it works:***

On Monday mornings, students will come to my desk and randomly choose a classmate’s name from a jar. They must NOT TELL ANYONE whose name they have picked.

For the rest of the week, their job as a “Private Eye” is to discreetly spy on this person and to catch him or her doing positive things. Each week our class will have a goal that we work on together, and this is one of the many positive things the Private Eye can be on the lookout for.

On Thursday nights (or the night before the end of the week), each student is required to write a Private Eye letter to the person they spied on. It should be in friendly letter format and should be about one paragraph (5 sentences) in length for the body of the letter. In this letter they mention all the great things they noticed during the course of the week. They sign it WITHOUT their real name, just “Sincerely, Your Private Eye.” (See example below) If they would like to type it or ask a family member to write the final draft in order to disguise handwriting, that would be fine.

On Friday morning, they turn in their letters to me. On Friday afternoons, we begin our weekly class meeting as I distribute each person’s letter from his or her private eye. The students take turns reading the letters they received from their Private Eye out loud, and we find out who was spying on each person.

In order for this to work as well as it does, it is VERY important that each student makes sure that no one finds out who they are watching. It is also essential that each student takes the time to write a thoughtful letter on Thursday nights, so that everyone gets a chance to feel appreciated for all of their contributions to our class. Because of this, the students know that if they let it slip who they are watching and ruin the surprise, or if they neglect to write a letter (or turn in a half-hearted letter), that they will not be able to participate in the Private Eye activity for the following week. It is a responsibility that we will all take seriously.

The students and I have already talked about this activity and are excited to begin. Thank you in advance for your guidance in helping your child write the first letter this Thursday night – it will be easier and easier throughout the year for them to notice positive things and write specific, thoughtful letters, but they will need some assistance in the beginning.

\*\*\*Also, students always want to know if they can include a little gift with their letter. Our answer is that they can, but that if it gets out of hand, we also reserve the right to end that practice. A few appropriate examples would be: a sticker, a cute eraser, a bookmark, a nice drawing, a TINY treat (think Tootsie roll or Jolly Rancher), etc.

EXAMPLE LETTER:

GREETING

Dear Susie,

INDENT

This week I saw you volunteer to wipe your lunch table before your table teacher even asked anyone. I also noticed you had good sportsmanship during gym because you said “Good try” to everyone when we practiced basketball shots. I also saw that you did really good with our class goal this week of keeping our materials organized. You even helped Bobby at your table and reminded him in a friendly way about where to put his books. At recess, when Sally fell down, you offered to go to the nurse with her.

At least 5 sentences giving specific examples

Sincerely,

Your Private Eye

Signature, without the real name of the author