

Dear students and parents/guardians,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year and your last year of middle school! I am so excited to be your 8th grade science teacher!! I look forward to us growing together throughout the year as we dive deeper into what you have already learned during 6th and 7th grade science. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Ms. Argall, and I joined Centennial in March of 2016 as a 6th grade science teacher. I am a Pittsburgh native and graduated from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania in 2011. I have spent the last 6 years teaching math and science, mostly in grade 8 in Wilson and Pitt counties. Please read through this letter and the safety contract and sign at the bottom stating that you understand the expectations for 8th grade science.

Our school year will be beginning a little unconventionally. I have been selected by the NC Museum of Natural Sciences as an Educator of Excellence and will be taking part of a tropical ecology institute in Belize from July 25-August 2. I will return to school on August 3. Mr. Kuch, a former Centennial teacher that many of you know from last year, will be your substitute while I am away. Things will function just as if I were there so we will not fall behind. I encourage all of you to follow my trek through the ecology blog found at <https://belizeinstitute.wordpress.com>. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, and I am excited to bring my learning back to the classroom and relate it to many of our unit topics. I will not have any type of technology with me during this time, so if you have questions, you may send them via e-mail and I will respond when I return to the US.

GRADING SCALE

Major Assessments: 70% including lab reports, tests, projects

Minor Assessments: 30% including quizzes, warm ups, class work, homework, vocabulary

A: 90-100 B: 80-89 C: 70-79 D: 60-69 F: 59 and below

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: bargall@wcpss.net

Remind: text @argallsci to the number 81010

Website: msargall.weebly.com

Remind is the preferred method of contact. These messages go directly to my phone as a text message and allow us to communicate safely via text message without exchanging phone numbers. I encourage students, parents, and guardians to enroll in the Remind class as I will send out reminders using this messaging system most days.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

All students should have one marble front composition notebook (the fancy kind do not have enough pages), 3 prong folder, colored pencils, scissors, and lots of glue sticks.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

In this classroom we display HOWL (Honor Order Wisdom and Leadership) at all times. Lab safety protocol should also be followed at all times, including no gum, food, or drink.

HELPFUL HINTS

<p style="text-align: center;">DON'T BE LATE</p> <p>Make sure you are seated at the start of class. If you are late, you should have a signed agenda.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BEFRIEND YOUR AGENDA</p> <p>Agendas are necessary for success at CCMMS. Your agenda acts as a rule book, calendar, schedule, and form of communication. Make sure you bring your agenda and fill it out DAILY!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ORGANIZATION IS KEY!</p> <p>Due to our EOG, we will have a rigorous pace and need to look back through earlier work. Make sure you keep track of your ILJ and keep it up to date to stay organized.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COME AND VISIT</p> <p>The more time you spend with the material in 8th grade science, the easier it becomes. For extra help, please visit me starting at 7:05 after checking in with your homeroom teacher.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">!:) LAPTOPS/BYOD</p> <p>We are fortunate to be 1:1 with laptops this year for use during class activities. Additionally, your own device may be used as part of our BYOD program. This is encouraged so you can continue to work at home.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ABSENT? YOU'RE IN CHARGE!</p> <p>If you are absent from school, it is your responsibility to visit my website, Google Classroom, and pick up the resources from the absent work folder if need be.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STUDY STUDY STUDY!</p> <p>8th grade science can be difficult and full of new vocabulary that builds on the science you have learned from kindergarten through 7th grade. Reviewing material is a must to be successful.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">USE YOUR RESOURCES</p> <p>PowerSchool will be updated regularly with grades. Students and parents are encouraged to check weekly to stay up to date.</p>

FLIPPED CLASSROOM

This is a flipped classroom; this means that the direct instruction (lectures) happens through short video lessons or readings outside of class time. Flipping the classroom allows for class time to be spent participating in hands-on labs and project based lessons. Due to the nature of the flipped classroom, it is necessary that students complete any flipped video or reading assignments by the given due date in order to be successful in class. A note taking guide (foldable) will be given for each flipped assignment, and students are expected to complete it as they complete the video or reading. Videos will be accessed via EDpuzzle which will include a quiz at the end of the video. You can watch the video as many times as necessary in order to be successful on the quiz. These will count as minor homework grades.

LABS

As part of science instruction, students can expect to complete labs in class frequently. During labs, students are expected to treat all lab materials with respect and stay focused on the lab as well as following all procedures. Failure to follow lab procedures can become a safety issue and will result in the student being removed from the lab and given an alternate assignment.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM

Student work will be stored on Google Classroom, so this is the best way to obtain extra copies of assignments. Google Classroom is the primary way assignments are given and submitted. For parents/guardians with e-mail addresses listed in PowerSchool or in our student database, Google Classroom will send you an e-mail asking if you would like to receive weekly notifications regarding assignment completion.

ON TIME/LATE WORK/ABSENT WORK POLICIES

For absences approved in advance where work is given to be completed while absent, work is due the day the student returns to class or it becomes late (see below). For all unexpected absences between 1 and 3 days, students have 1 day to make up the assignment per day absent. For absences longer than 3 days, students have 2 days for each day absent to make up work.

Any assignment not submitted on time, will earn a score of "0." Late work is the result of a student being present in school but not submitting the work by the due date when it is collected. Late assignments will be accepted up to one week beyond the deadline. Assignments submitted without names are placed in the recycle bin as if they were not turned in.

Late work submission procedures:

- ★ Assignments not submitted on time earn a score of "0"
- ★ Verbally tell me that you are turning in late work so I know to check the basket.
- ★ Place your assignment in the correct basket.

HYDROSPHERE:

- ☼ Where is our water located on Earth? Where is the majority of Earth's freshwater found?
- ☼ How much clean, fresh, usable, water do we have access to on earth?
- ☼ What is water scarcity? How does the idea of stewardship play a role in water scarcity?
- ☼ Where does our drinking water come from in North Carolina?
- ☼ What is ocean water made up of?
- ☼ Why are dissolved gases important for marine life?
- ☼ What is an estuary? What ecological roles do estuaries serve?
- ☼ Why is safe water vital to human health?
- ☼ What factors do we test water to make sure it is potable?

INTERACTIONS OF MATTER/ CHEMISTRY:

- ☼ What is matter?
- ☼ How are elements, compounds, and mixtures different?
- ☼ What do atoms look like and what parts are they broken into?
- ☼ How could we determine the state of matter a substance is currently in by looking at how its atoms are arranged?
- ☼ What physical and chemical properties help us to distinguish different elements?
- ☼ What is the difference between a physical and chemical change?
- ☼ What is the law conservation of mass?
- ☼ How does the law of conservation of mass help us balance chemical equations?

DISEASES AND BIOTECHNOLOGY:

- ☼ What is a pathogen? How is it different from a parasite?
- ☼ How do diseases spread and how are they treated to prevent disease?
- ☼ What is the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic?
- ☼ How do diseases evolve over time?
- ☼ How can we define biotechnology?
- ☼ How does biotechnology play a role in agriculture?
- ☼ Why is biotechnology controversial? What types of biotechnology research are currently taking place?

USING NATURAL RESOURCES:

- ☼ How can we define sustainability?
- ☼ What is the difference between a renewable and a nonrenewable resource?
- ☼ How do we obtain, transform, and distribute different forms of energy (solar, wind, hydroelectric, coal, etc.)?
- ☼ What are the environmental consequences of different types of energy?
- ☼ Why is it important to continue investigating energy resources?

EVOLUTION OF LAND AND LIFE:

- ☼ What is a fossil? How are they made?
- ☼ What evidence do we use to help determine the age of Earth?
- ☼ How do we use rock formations, fossils, ice cores, and comparative anatomy to discover Earth's history?
- ☼ What evidence is used to support evolution?
- ☼ How does genetic variation relate to adaptation?

ENERGY AND NUTRITION:

- ☼ How do we get energy from food?
- ☼ How does food give us the material to "rebuild" our bodies?
- ☼ Why are a healthy diet and exercise important to our body's functions?

POPULATIONS AND ECOSYSTEMS:

- ☼ What is the difference between biotic and abiotic factors in an ecosystem?
- ☼ How do biotic and abiotic factors affect populations within an ecosystem?
- ☼ What is the relationship between producers, consumers, and decomposers?
- ☼ How do symbiotic relationships define interactions within an ecosystem?
- ☼ How does energy flow through food chains and food webs?
- ☼ How does the flow of energy through an ecosystem relate to the cycling of matter in an ecosystem?