

Classroom Management Plan

Mr. Bigler, WHS, 2008–09

1 Beliefs & Goals

Welcome to Mr. Bigler’s chemistry class. As your teacher, I believe that:

- All students can learn.
- All students *want to* learn.
- Learning requires interesting, relevant work.
- Work needs to be challenging, but not impossible.
- Students of all learning styles must be able to learn the concepts and do the work.
- Any student who learns the material and makes a good effort to do all of the work should be able to earn at least a C, and usually an A or B.

School is not real life; it is a simulator for real life. Each of you will spend a total of approximately 12,000 hours in the simulator, from kindergarten through grade 12. When you graduate, you get a diploma, which is just a certificate that proclaims that you successfully completed the requirements of the simulation. In chemistry, you will be required to acquire and demonstrate some of the knowledge and skills that you need for the simulation, for college and for the “real” world.

Here are some of my goals for you. One of my jobs is to help you achieve all of these goals.

- Understanding and applying scientific thought, principles and methods.
- Developing and improving your ability to read scientific and technical writing and take effective notes.
- Understanding the principles of chemistry, based on curricula mandated by the Massachusetts DOE and/or the College Board, the recommendations of the American Chemical Society, other high school chemistry teachers, and college chemistry professors.
- Designing and performing laboratory experiments, recording information into a laboratory notebook, and writing formal laboratory reports.
- The ability to solve complex problems that combine multiple concepts.
- For AP Chemistry students, preparing for the AP Chemistry exam in May.

Most students want to know, “Is this class hard?” The answer is yes, at times it will be. Some of the skills you need are difficult to master. However, I will never ask more of you than you are capable of. (However, I may ask more of you than you feel like!) For several of my students, my chemistry class is both their hardest class, and the one they get the best grade in. The only students who have ever failed my class have been the ones who didn’t try.

2 What You Need

In order to do well in this class, you will need the following:

- A positive attitude. If you don't have this, you'll need to at least do a good job of pretending.
- A 3-ring binder (preferably at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick), so you can keep your notes, handouts, tests, *etc.* organized by *topic*. (I give a lot of handouts and worksheets. My students have found that loose-leaf binders work better than spiral-bound notebooks.)
- A composition book, with non-removable pages, to use as your laboratory notebook. You will need to number the pages as you go.
- A scientific calculator. If you already have a graphing calculator (such as a TI-89) for your math class you can use it. If you don't already have a calculator, buy one that can handle scientific notation and logarithms. A popular model is the TI-30, which costs around \$10–15.
- A willingness to come in and ask for extra help as soon as you think you might be starting to have some difficulty. In chemistry, each topic builds on previous topics. It's essential that you straighten out any confusion or misunderstanding quickly, so you don't fall behind.

I am available for extra help during any period when I don't have class, including second lunch Monday–Thursday, first and third lunch on Friday, and during G block. I am also available most days after school until 3:30. If necessary, I can arrange to meet you before school, but you need to make an appointment with me in advance.

3 Classroom Procedures

Bring to Class

- Completed assignments
- Pen and/or pencil. I recommend a pencil for notes, homework and tests, but lab notebooks must be filled out in ink.
- 3-ring binder for class notes and handouts, including blank paper for taking notes
- Lab notebook (on lab days)
- Scientific calculator when we are learning topics that involve calculations

If you forget a pen or pencil, I often have a few extras that you can borrow; please return them at the end of class. Note that most of these are pens and pencils that I have found on the floors and hallways of the school, so it would be a bad idea to chew on them. . .

When you Arrive

1. Pick up copies of handouts from the counter at the back of the room.
2. If you were absent, check with the class archivist for handouts, assignments, and for a description of what was covered. (Note that the description in the class archive is not a substitute for getting the actual notes from a classmate.)
3. Place anything you want me to grade, read, look at, *etc.*, in the inbox on my desk. Hand me any items that need to be dealt with before the end of class, such as excused absence slips.
4. Sit in your assigned seat in time for the start of class. If you arrive after class has started, spindle your pass, pick up any handouts at the back of the room, and go directly to your seat as stealthily and non-disruptively as possible.

If You Need to Leave the Room

If you are dismissed from school during class, hand me your dismissal slip to look at and make a note of before class starts. When it is time for you to leave, you do not need to ask; simply get up and leave quietly and non-disruptively.

If you need to go to the bathroom when you arrive in class, ask for a pass as soon as you arrive. Leave your homework on your desk for me to check while you are gone, and be back in your seat within five minutes. If your homework is not on on your desk, it will be marked late.

If at all possible, try to plan your bathroom trips for the first five minutes (during attendance and homework checking), or for the end of class after the lecture portion is finished and you have time for practice problems or working on homework. However, I know that you can't always schedule your bladder; if you absolutely need to go to the bathroom during lecture, raise your hand with the ASL sign for "toilet."



The reason for using the ASL sign is so that bathroom requests do not interrupt the lecture or discussion. Usually, I will acknowledge non-verbally by placing a blank hall pass on the corner of my desk. As soon as I do this, fill out the pass and put it back on my desk for me to sign. If we are in the middle of something important, I may sometimes hold up a finger, which I use to mean "please wait a minute—this is important."

If you need to leave the room during class for some other reason, please raise your hand and ask as you normally would.

Finally, please note that hall passes are valid for 5 minutes. If you return after more than 5 minutes, you will be marked tardy (unexcused) for the class, and if you return after more than 20 minutes, you will be marked absent (unexcused) for the class. Any exceptions to this rule (other than the nurse's office) must be approved *before* you leave the room.

Late Arrival

Any time you are late to class (regardless of the reason), make sure you get the notes for anything you missed before you arrived. I have been known to go over something during the first 2–3 minutes of class and never mention it again until the test, for the sole purpose of catching tardy students who don't get the notes.

During Class

- If you need to leave your seat to do something in the room, such as sharpen a pencil, get a drink of water from the pitcher, borrow a fidget toy, or hand in a paper, you don't need to ask permission. Simply get up and do what you need to do quietly and non-disruptively.
- If you get lost during a lecture or discussion, hold up a piece of paper and wave it slowly back and forth like a "white flag of surrender." When I see a "white flag," I'll stop at the next convenient opportunity and go back to try to clear things up. It's *always* OK to wave a white flag; any time you're lost, you're almost certainly not the only one.
- WHS rules prohibit food and drinks (other than water) in the classroom. If you sneak a cookie or cracker out of your backpack, I will probably look the other way, but I will ask you to get rid of any noticeable, messy, or distracting food items. Chewing gum is permitted except during lab experiments, as long as it stays in your mouth and doesn't make any noise. When you are finished with your gum, get up out of your seat (in a non-distracting way) and put it in the trash can. Sticking gum to the bottom of your desk is never acceptable; if I catch you doing this, I may assign you a desk-cleaning session after school.
- Absolutely *nothing* that goes into your mouth (including chewing gum and even water!) is permitted in the lab area during experiments. (This is an important safety rule and there are no exceptions!)
- School rules prohibit hats and electronic audio and video equipment, such as cell phones, headphones, *etc.* All such items must be kept off and out of sight during the school day. If I see a contraband item, I may ask you to put it away, or I may ask you to place it on my desk. At my discretion, I may choose to keep the item locked in my prep room for the day, or I may choose to deliver it to your housemaster with an accompanying blue slip.
- Personal grooming and other distracting activities are not permitted during class.
- Do not take up class time discussing grades with me. If you need to discuss your grade, ask about something you believe I misgraded, or want me to print out a progress report, feel free to ask me either before class, while the class is working quietly on practice problems or homework, or outside of class time. You can also leave a note in the inbox on my desk describing what you need.

Fire Drills

In the event of a fire alarm, lockdown, or other emergency, *immediately stop what you are doing and listen for my instructions.* If you are in the middle of a lab experiment, turn off *and unplug* all equipment and make sure all chemical containers are *labeled*, covered, and placed in a non-precarious position, away from the edge of the lab bench. If we need to evacuate the building, go to our gathering point (down the stairs immediately to the right and outside the back door), each student must check in with me *in person*. Checking in counts as a free homework grade; failure to check in will result in a zero for the assignment.

If you are near an open window during a fire alarm, please close it. If you are near the "save in case of fire" box, grab it and hand it to me on the way out.

Archivist

Each class has an archivist. The archivist's job is a one-week rotating duty. The archivist's duties each day are:

- If there are any filled-out “missed work” slips in the pocket in the front of the binder, distribute them to the appropriate students.
- Fill out a “class summary” sheet with a brief description of what occurred during the class. (*E.g.*, “lecture/notes on mole conversions”). Be sure to list any handouts, assignments, and important announcements. On the back of the form, mark students who are absent with an “A” in the box next to their names.

Place this summary sheet in the class binder, along with one archival copy of each handout.

- Fill out a “work missed” slip for each student who is absent, with the same information that you wrote on the class summary sheet.

Staple a copy of each handout (notes, assignments, and anything else) to each of the “work missed” slips, and place these packets in the pocket at the front of the class binder.

- Mark assignments on their due date on the class calendar on the bulletin board.
- At the end of class on your last day as archivist, remind the following week's archivist that he/she is archiving next week, and ask me for your mole points.

Each archivist receives two “mole points” of extra credit at the end of the week for successful completion of the above duties. (Mole points are described in detail elsewhere in this document.)

If you ever lose your notes, look in the archive binder for copies of handouts and assignments, and a description of each day's class. You will be able to download most handouts from mrbigler.com.

If you are absent, *you* are responsible for checking to see what you missed. If the archive does not have anything for the day you were absent, be sure to see Mr. Bigler, because *you* are ultimately responsible for finding out about the work you missed and making it up, even if that day's archivist did a poor job.

Test Bank

Any time you come up with a question that you think would make a good test question, write it on a sheet of paper, 3-hole punch it, and give it to the archivist to put in the “test bank” section of the archive. I will use appropriate test questions from the archive for up to half of the test, so the more you contribute, the more of the test questions you will be able to find out in advance. (However, be forewarned that I will change the questions around and will use different numbers in questions that involve problem-solving. This means you will need to be able to answer questions that are *related* to the ones in the test bank; simply memorizing answers won't help you.)

4 Assignments & Grading

All grades are weighted on a point system. The point weightings are:

Item	Points
Tests & Formal lab reports:	100
Lab notebook write-ups:	25
Quizzes:	25
Homework:	5
All extra credit combined:	$\leq 5\%$ of grade

Your grade is the points you earned divided by the total possible points. The number of possible points will vary from one marking period to the next, depending on the number of tests, quizzes, homework assignments, *etc.*

“Mole points” are extra credit points. These are printed like dollar bills. I’ll give you one if you do something that impresses me (in a positive way). Examples of ways to earn mole points include coming up with something brilliant during a class discussion, being the archivist, coming in for extra help outside of class time (for at least 15 minutes), or bringing in something for the “brag board.”

Each mole point is added to your point total for the quarter, and is equivalent to one point on a test. Mole points are worth full value during the current quarter, or half value if used in a later quarter. Mole points are non-transferrable.

When you get a mole point, write your name on it and place it in the inbox on my desk. I will put it in your folder, and add it to your grade at the end of the quarter. Mole points may not be given to another student.

All extra credit combined (no matter how many mole points you have) may never exceed 5% of your total grade for the marking period.

Assignments

Daily homework assignments are due at the beginning of class, and are graded $\checkmark+$ (100%), \checkmark (90%), or $\checkmark-$ (80%), based on how much of the assignment you attempted.

Day-to-day homework assignments are for *you* to get the practice and experience of doing them. Working in groups on homework is encouraged, but everyone must turn in separate copies. However, major assignments such as lab notebook writeups and formal lab reports must be your own work unless I have specifically told you otherwise in advance.

If you do not have your assignment at the beginning of class (*e.g.*, if you had to retrieve it from your locker), the maximum grade is a $\checkmark-$. Assignments turned in after we have gone over them in class are worth a maximum of 70% (“L”) if turned in before the test on the topic, and 50% (“H”) if turned in after the test, but before the end of the quarter.

Additionally, you may not take a re-test unless you have turned in all homework assignments relating to the topic(s) covered on the test.

Lab write-ups, formal lab reports, and other major assignments will lose points if turned in late. Late penalties are documented on the rubric for each assignment and are usually about 3–5% for up to two days late, and about 10% for more than two days late.

Turning in Major Assignments Electronically

Major assignments such as formal lab reports may be turned in on paper before the end of the school day, or as an email attachment (to hw@mrbigler.com) until midnight on the due date. Any email sent to this address will receive an automated reply, which is your receipt. If you turn in an assignment via email, you must bring in *both* of the following the next school day to ensure proper credit:

1. A printout of the electronic receipt.
2. A printout of the assignment, or an electronic copy on a memory stick or CD-ROM.

If you choose to turn in an assignment electronically, you assume all technology-based risks. Technology-based excuses such as “My computer has a virus,” “I sent it to the wrong email address,” “It’s in my email account, but I can’t access it from school,” or “I wrote it using EasyWriter 1.0 (which came out in 1980) and saved it on this 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ” floppy disk.” will not be accepted. You are welcome to test the process by sending a test message with an attachment *before* the due date to make sure I receive it and am able to open the attachment.

Assignments turned in electronically must be in one of the following formats:

- plain text
- rich text format (.rtf)
- HTML (.htm or .html)
- Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- Adobe PostScript format (.ps)
- Microsoft Word (.doc)
- Microsoft Works (.wps)
- T_EX, L^AT_EX, or DVI formats

Extensions

Please talk with me *in advance* if you need an extension on a test or assignment. You need to ask at least two school days in advance, and you need a good reason. Having tests (not just quizzes) or major papers (at least 3 pages) due in at least two other classes on the same day counts as a good reason. (See me for a form to have your other teachers sign.) Extension requests after the two-day cutoff will usually be denied.

Re-Tests & Re-Writes

If you do badly on a quiz or test, you may take a re-test. Re-tests must be taken:

- outside of class time (*e.g.*, after school)
- within (2) weeks of the original test date
- at least three school days before the end of the quarter

Note that you must take the *entire* re-test (not just the parts you had difficulty with). Only the better grade will count, but the maximum grade on a re-test is 90%.

If you are unhappy with your grade on any major assignment such as a lab report, you may re-write it. Rewrites are due no later than two (2) weeks after you receive the graded assignment back, and must be turned in along with the original graded assignment during the current quarter. The maximum possible grade on a rewrite is either 1.5 times the original grade (up to a maximum grade of 90%) or the lateness penalty that would have applied if the rewrite had been turned in as the first draft, whichever is lower. (Note, however, that a rewrite can never erase a late penalty; if the original assignment lost points because it was late, the same late penalty will be applied to all rewrites.)

5 Policies

Absences & Tardiness

If you are absent, you must discuss a schedule for making up missed work (including lab experiments) with me on the day you return to school. If this discussion does not take place, all work must be made up within five school days, as specified in the WHS student handbook. If you fail to take a test within the make-up period, you will receive a grade of zero on the test. (If this happens, you may, of course, take a re-test.)

Tardiness is unexcused unless you arrive with a valid pass (other than a pink “unexcused tardy to school” slip). If you arrive with a pass, spindle it. I will go through the passes on the spindle after class.

Hall passes from me are valid for 5 minutes. If you return after the 5 minute grace period, you will be marked tardy (unexcused) or absent (unexcused) for the class, depending on how much of the class you missed. Any exceptions to this rule (other than the nurse’s office) must be approved *before* you leave the room.

As described in the WHS student handbook, three (3) unexcused tardies in a quarter equals one unexcused absence. Also, as described in the WHS student handbook, if you miss more than 20 minutes of a class, it counts as an absence from the class. (If you have a valid pass, it will count as an excused absence.)

Remember that WHS policy dictates that six or more unexcused absences in a quarter may result in a grade of “N” (no credit) for the quarter. This includes any absences assigned due to excessive tardiness or missing too much class time.

Cheating

I am not lenient in instances of cheating. If an instance of cheating occurs, all students involved (including those who knowingly allow someone else to copy their paper or test) will be subject to the WHS policies regarding cheating, including:

- no credit (a grade of zero) for the test or assignment
- a blue slip
- parental notification

If any part of an assignment (lab reports, homework assignments, papers, *etc.*) contains quoted *or paraphrased* information from *any* source (including another student or the internet), you *must* give credit to that source, in the form of an appropriate citation. (I don’t care about the format, but

your citation must include the author's name, the name or title of the work, the URL (for internet sources) or name of the periodical (if applicable), the date the work was written or published (or the date you accessed it for internet sources).

If some part of your assignment doesn't sound like your own writing and is not attributed, I will ask you to show me the source material that it came from. If you are unable to produce the source materials, I will have to assume that you plagiarized it, and all WHS policies regarding cheating (including parental notification) will apply.

As dictated by WHS policy, If an assignment appears to be plagiarized from another student, the WHS policies regarding cheating (including parental notification) will be applied to *both* students.

For the rules hackers in the class, if you turn in another student's work for all or part of an assignment, but you include all of the proper citations, it is, of course, not plagiarism. However, you will receive credit only for the parts of the assignment that you did yourself.

In most cases, I allow re-tests or re-writes for first offenses, but with a full letter-grade (10%) penalty, *after* applying the re-write/re-test cutoff.

Finally, please note that I remember instances of cheating when nominations for National Honor Society are circulated, and I describe any and all instances of cheating by NHS nominees to the NHS committee. This almost always prevents the nominee from being inducted.

Appropriate Clothing for Laboratory Experiments

Because some of the chemicals we use in laboratory experiments may be hazardous or irritating, you need to protect yourself from exposure. Some of your protective equipment is your own clothing.

During laboratory experiments, you must wear shoes that enclose your toes. (*I.e.*, no sandals, flip-flops, or other open-toed shoes.)

Your shirt and pants *must* overlap. Exposed midriffs are dangerous, because your midriff is approximately the same height as the lab bench. If your clothing exposes your midriff, you will need to wear a lab apron during the experiment.

You must wear approved safety goggles or safety glasses (with side shields) at all times when performing any experiment that involves chemicals, heat, and/or pressure. *No exceptions!*

If I instruct you to wear a laboratory apron (which I will do when we are working with chemicals that may be hazardous or irritating), you must do so.

If you have appropriate clothing elsewhere in school, such as in your locker or gym locker, I will give you a pass to get it. However, if you are unable to obtain proper clothing in time to perform the experiment, you must remain in the classroom portion of the room during the experiment, and you will have to make up the experiment outside of class time.

Mr. Bigler's Hot Buttons

Every human being has “hot buttons.” Here are some of mine, which may be cause for removal from class without warning.

- Intentionally rude, unkind, or insensitive language or behavior towards *anyone*, including yourself.
- Distracting or disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) excessive non-sequiturs, talking without being given the floor, side conversations or excessive noise, excessive fidgeting, or anything else that is distracting to your classmates or to me.
- Arguing or debating after I have asked you to stop or attempted to end the discussion.
- Doing something I have just asked you *or someone else* to stop doing (or not do).

Any of the above behaviors may result in my asking you to leave the room and writing you up with a blue slip.

6 Extra Help and Communication

If you need extra help, to make up a test, *etc.*, I am available during any period when I don't have class, including second lunch Monday–Thursday, first and third lunch on Friday, and during G block. I am also available most days after school until at least 3:30 P.M., and often later. You don't need to make an appointment, but it's always a good idea to check with me during the day, in case I have a meeting. I can also meet with you before school, but you need to make arrangements with me in advance.

The best way to communicate with me outside of school hours is via email. My email addresses are `mrbigler@mrbigler.com` and `JeffreyBigler@k12.waltham.ma.us`. I also have an AIM screen name, `MrBiglerChem`, which I use for extra help. (Note that this screen name is for educational purposes only, and all conversations are logged.) Please do not leave me voice mail through the school's voice mail system—I often forget to check it for days or weeks at a time.

If you need any special accommodations, please mention them to me privately or leave a note in the inbox on my desk, *whether or not these accommodations are documented in an IEP or section 504 plan*. Teachers are required to receive a list of accommodations at the beginning of the school year, but mistakes and omissions can sometimes happen. Also, note that teachers are permitted (and, in fact, encouraged) to give students any accommodations they need, even if the student does not have a legally mandated accommodation. It's important that you tell me what you need, so I can give it to you.

Finally please be sure to communicate anything else to me that you think I need to know, so that I can act on the information in an appropriate and timely fashion. If you have needs that are not being met, either temporary or ongoing, please speak to me privately. Never assume that I am aware of a problem or concern if you haven't told me about it. Throughout your life, you will always be your own best advocate. After all, if you don't stand up for what you need, who will?

7 Tacit Inclusion of Student Handbook

This document shall be deemed to tacitly include any and all policies and procedures documented in the WHS Student Handbook, regardless of whether or not those policies are mentioned in this document.

8 Supersession and Severability Clauses

In case of any discrepancy, WHS policies, and all local, state, and federal laws take precedence over this document.

The invalidation of any portion of this document shall have no effect on the validity or enforceability of the remainder of the document.

Finally, the teacher is the authority in the classroom, not the rules. To the extent permitted by school, state, and federal rules, laws, and guidelines, a teacher's or administrator's specific instructions, whether given orally or in writing, supersede any published rules. If you have a concern about a teacher's or administrator's instructions, comply with the instructions anyway (unless it would be unsafe to do so), and follow up with the teacher or an administrator as appropriate afterwards.