

Classroom Management Plan

Mr. Bigler, Salem Academy Charter School, 2010–11

1 What Mr. Bigler Believes

Welcome to Mr. Bigler’s 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 a passing grade.

School is not real life; it is a simulator for real life. Each of you will spend more than 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 Mr. Bigler’s class, 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 taught in this course, which are based on the SACS curriculum, but are also influenced by the Massachusetts DOE and/or the College Board, other high school teachers, and college professors, and in the case of chemistry classes, the American Chemical Society.
- 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 honors chemistry and honors physics students, preparing for the SAT Subject test.

Most students want to know, “Is this class hard?” The answer is both yes and no. Some of the skills you need will probably be difficult to master, and others probably won’t. For many of my students, my class is their hardest, but also their favorite, and the class they get the best grade in. The only students who fail my class are the ones who don’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-83) for your math class you can use it. If you don't already have a calculator, buy one that can handle scientific notation, logarithms, and trigonometry functions (sine, cosine and tangent). 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 most high school science classes, 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 any time I don't have a class or meeting. I can also arrange to meet you before or after school, but you need to make an appointment with me in advance.

3 Classroom Procedures

Bring to Class

You are expected to bring the following items 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.
- Binder for class notes and handouts.
- Blank paper for “do now” problems, note-taking, *etc.*
- Lab notebook (on lab days).
- Scientific calculator on days when we are studying topics that involve calculations.

Notice that your textbook is not on this list. You will sometimes have reading assignments out of your textbook, but we will almost never use the textbook in class, so you do not need to lug it around.

When you Arrive

1. Pick up copies of handouts from the counter at the front of the room.
2. If you were absent, check the class archive notebook 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. Hand me any make-up work that you want me to grade, read, look at, *etc.*, or anything that needs to be dealt with before the end of class.
4. Sit in your assigned seat and start on the “Do now.” If you arrive after class has started, pick up any handouts and go directly to your seat as stealthily and non-disruptively as possible.

If You Need to Leave the Room

If you are excused from part of my class, show me your pass or dismissal slip 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 and show me the pass as you walk towards the door as a reminder.

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. Your homework is late if it is not on on your desk when I check, whether or not you’re in the room at the time.

If at all possible, use the bathroom during the “Do now”, or at 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 with a “thumbs-up” or “okay” sign, and I’ll place a blank hall pass on the corner of the table at the front of the room. As soon as I do this, come get the pass, fill it out, and bring it back 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 under most circumstances, my hall passes are valid for 5 minutes. If you are out of the room for more than 5 minutes, you will be marked tardy (unexcused) for the class. If you are out of the room for more than 20 minutes, you will be marked truant for the class, and I will report the absence as a class cut. Any exceptions to this rule (other than unforeseen circumstances) must be approved in advance.

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 choose a quick and simple benchmark to go over during the first 2–3 minutes of class, and never mention it again until the assessment, for the sole purpose of catching tardy students who don't get the notes.

During Class

- If you need to get up out of your seat to do something in the room, such as sharpen a pencil, get a drink of water from the dispenser, borrow a fidget toy, or hand in a paper, please don't interrupt class to ask permission. Simply get up and do what you need to do quietly and non-disruptively and return to your seat as soon as you finish.
- If you get lost during a lecture or discussion, hold up a piece of paper and wave it gently 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.
- SACS rules prohibit food and drinks (other than water) in the classroom.
- Absolutely *nothing* that goes into your mouth (including water!) is permitted in the lab area during experiments that involve laboratory chemicals. Whenever lab chemicals are out, you must put your water bottles away inside your backpack. (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.*
- Personal grooming (brushing your hair or teeth, applying makeup, deodorant, *etc.*) 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, or you believe I misgraded an assessment, feel free to ask me about it before class, while the class is working on something quietly (such as the “Do now,” practice problems or homework), or outside of class time.

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 (especially the gas supply to the Bunsen burners) 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, do so in an orderly fashion and go to our gathering point. Once we arrive at the gathering point, each student must check in with me *in person.* Checking in counts as a homework assignment; failing to check in is equivalent to a missed 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.

- At the end of class on your last day as archivist, remind the following week's archivist that he/she is archiving next week.

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 can 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.

Assignments

Daily homework assignments are due at the beginning of class. You must show all steps/work, and you must attempt each problem. Day-to-day homework assignments are for *you* to get the practice and experience of doing them. Assessment questions will be substantially similar to homework questions. If you work hard at understanding the homework, the assessment questions will be challenging, but straightforward. If you don't do the homework, it is highly likely that you will have trouble with the assessments. Working on homework in groups is encouraged, but everyone must turn in separate copies.

Chemistry is considered a 10th grade class, so the 3rd Form homework policy applies to *all students* in chemistry.

Physics is considered an 11th grade class, and Environmental Science is considered a 12th grade class, so the Final Form homework policy applies to *all students* in these classes. However, note that the 3rd Form homework policy *may* be applied individually to any 3rd Form student who repeatedly fails to complete his/her homework.

Major assignments such as lab notebook writeups and formal lab reports *must* be done individually unless I have specifically told you otherwise in advance. If two or more students turn in lab reports or other major assignments that have substantially identical sections, it will be considered plagiarism, and will be handled accordingly.

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 an ancient word processing program from the 1980s 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.

Also, note that I am aware of some of the clever tricks for extending a deadline, such as turning in a corrupted file or changing the document language to Greek, Russian, or Chinese. If I am unable to open a document you sent me, consequences will be the same as if you did not turn it in at all.

Finally any document you turn in electronically (to me or any other teacher) should be saved as **Rich Text Format (*.rtf)**. This format works interchangeably with all of the word processing programs that I am aware of.

Extensions

Please talk with me *in advance* if you need an extension on an assignment or assessment. You need to ask at least two school days in advance, and you need a good reason. Having major projects or tests 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-Assessments

If you have not passed a benchmark after three assessments, you may ask for an additional assessment. This assessment must be completed *outside* of class time (*e.g.*, during tutoring, during APLC, or after school).

If you have not passed a benchmark after four or more assessments, you may ask for a replacement assessment, which will *replace* the final assessment of the benchmark. You must meet the following conditions for a replacement assessment:

- All outstanding homework assignments relating to the benchmark must be completed (regardless of whether or not credit is still available).
- You must attend a review/tutoring session with me on the concepts relating to the benchmark.
- You must take the replacement assessment outside of class time (*e.g.*, during tutoring, during APLC, or after school)
- The maximum grade on a replacement assessment is 3.5.

4 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 in accordance with the policies outlined in the SACS student handbook.

Tardiness is unexcused unless you arrive with a valid pass.

Hall passes from me are valid for 5 minutes. If you return after the 5 minute grace period, you will be marked tardy (unexcused) for the class. If you are gone for more than 20 minutes, you will be reported as truant for the class. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved *before* you leave the room.

Cheating

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

- A grade of zero for the test or assignment.
- Parental notification.
- Disciplinary action as outlined in the SACS student handbook.

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.

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 assume that you must have plagiarized it, and all SACS policies regarding cheating will apply.

As dictated by SACS policy, If an assignment appears to be plagiarized from another student, the SACS policies regarding cheating 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.

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. Note also that I will not write college recommendations for students who have cheated or plagiarized.

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 or other open-toed shoes.) If you do not have appropriate footwear, you will need to wear plastic bags over your feet to protect them from spills.

Your shirt and pants *must* overlap. In addition to being a violation of the dress code, exposed midriffs are dangerous because your midriff is approximately the same height as the lab bench.

You must wear safety goggles at all times when performing any experiment that involves liquids, powdered solids, heat, or pressure. *There are no exceptions to the eye protection rule! Repeated offenses may result in being banned from the lab area for the remainder of the experiment and receiving a grade of zero for the experimental portion.*

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, 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 doing something or have 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 removal from class and disciplinary action.

5 Extra Help and Communication

If you need extra help, to make up a test, *etc.*, I am available any time I don't have a class or meeting. (It's always a good idea to check with me in advance.) I can also arrange to meet with you before or after school.

The best way to communicate with me outside of school hours is via email. The best email address to use for me is mrbigler@mrbigler.com (which sends to my personal email, my phone, and to JBigler@salemacademy.org). 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.) You are welcome to leave me voice mail through the school's voice mail system, but please be forewarned that I or after schoolsometimes forget to check it for days at a time.

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. If there are problems at home or with your friends, I can temporarily give you extensions and flexible deadlines while you work things out. If you need a reasonable accommodation but you don't have a documented IEP or 504 accommodation, I may be able to give it to you anyway. The more you can tell me about your specific situation and what your needs are, the more I'll be able to help.

Never assume that I am aware of a problem or concern or accommodation you need if you haven't told me about it. Even if you have an IEP or Section 504 accommodation that I should already be aware of, mistakes and omissions can sometimes happen—it's always safest to talk with me specifically. Remember that throughout your life, *you* will always be your own best advocate. If you don't stand up for what you need, who will?

6 Inclusion of Student Handbook, Supersession and Severability Clauses

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

In case of any discrepancy, SACS 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, remember that the ultimate authority in the classroom is the teacher, not the rules. To the extent permitted by SACS, 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 ever have a concern about any teacher's or administrator's instructions, do your best to comply with the instructions first (unless it would be unsafe to do so), and follow up with the teacher or an administrator afterwards.