



Academic Year 2025-2026

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the Academy for Success. I am excited about working with your child as their biology teacher, and I know we will have a productive year.

Biology is a year-long laboratory science course that provides students with a basic knowledge of living organisms, and the interaction of these organisms with the natural world. This course serves as the foundation for higher level science courses and also gives students science skills necessary for life-science related technical careers.

Classroom activities will include interactive PowerPoint presentations, demonstrations, discussions, relevant videos, student presentations, and various assessments. Laboratory activities will comprise approximately 20% of class time, but may be limited to simulations and demonstrations followed by student interpretations. These will consist of opportunities for problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, and applied learning with an emphasis on hands-on investigations whenever possible.

The textbook your child will be using *Biology*, Nowicki, 2018, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. This book is provided by the school. The only materials required for this course are writing utensils and paper. An interactive binder will be provided to your student. Students are expected to have the required materials with them for every class. I will provide your student with any take-home materials they need.

Students will be assessed based on classwork completion, quiz and test grades, interactive binders, and projects. Most daily work will be completed in students' interactive binders, which will be collected and graded each week. Each nine-week grade will be based on the following percentages: Classwork – 20%; laboratory work – 20%; interactive notebooks – 30%; quizzes, tests, and projects – 30%. The first semester grade will be based on the following: 1st nine weeks – 40%; 2nd nine weeks – 40%; midterm exam – 20%. The second semester grade will be based on the following: 3rd nine weeks – 40%; 4th nine weeks – 40%; final exam – 20%. The final course grade will consist of: 1st semester – 40%; 2nd semester – 40%; end of course state required exam – 20%.

Homework will primarily consist of completion of unit review questions and any classwork not completed during class time. Virtual work is not considered to be homework, even though it may be completed at home. Virtual work will be an extension of classroom work and will always be available in the Google Classroom.

In fairness to all, students will be responsible to complete all assignments in a timely fashion. Assignments (including laboratory work) missed due to an absence must be made up. All make-up work must be completed in accordance with the school make-up work policy which states:

All students have three school days after an absence to arrange for make-up work. Work must be completed within five days after the last recorded absence. It is the student's responsibility to secure and complete assignments within this timeframe.

At the Academy for Success we strive for a positive learning environment and our focus continues to be on PACK, which stands for Perseverance, Accountability, Cooperation, and Kindness. I will be paying attention to these four words in my class throughout the year, and if I witness your child exhibiting these traits, he/she will receive PACK points. PACK points can be used to purchase items from our Wolf Den Store which has items ranging from school supplies, clothes, and gift cards, to healthy snacks. PACK points are a part of the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) program. In this program, we focus on encouraging students through positive reinforcement.

We have a school wide discipline plan with expectations for all of our students. In the classroom, all students must: Respect the safety, health, and property of others; wear an appropriate mask when required; wear a visible ID at all times; be courteous and use appropriate verbal and body language; follow the directions of the teacher; and adhere to the dress code. If a child chooses to ignore an expectation, he/she is subject to consequences which could include verbal reminders, remaining after class to discuss behavior, parent contact, lunch detention, or parent conferences.

We also have a severity clause which states that "occasionally it is necessary for a teacher to issue an immediate disciplinary referral to a student without prior warning. This will result when a student poses a threat to anyone, disregards authority, or shows disrespect to an authority figure. When this occurs, the student will be removed from the classroom by an administrator." While this may sound severe, please know that your child's well-being and safety is our primary concern.

There are a couple of ways for us to communicate during the school year should you have questions about assignments or grades, or any other concerns. You can reach me via email at mbarfiel@lexrich5.org, or phone at 803-575-5300. If I do not respond immediately, I may be in class or a meeting, but rest assured I will respond. You may also request a parent-teacher conference at any time. You can either contact me directly about a conference, or speak to Ms. DeYoung in our front office at 803-575-5302 and she will schedule a time that is convenient for all of us.

I have attached a parent contact information sheet. Please take a moment to fill out your information. Also, please include anything you think I might need to know about any special needs or medical conditions your child may have. This will help me be better prepared to help your child be successful in my class. **Do not fill out anything you do not want to share, this information is optional, but know that anything you share will be kept confidential.** A signed and returned contact form indicates that you received this letter. Please keep this letter for your records.

This may be a challenging year for all of us, but I am committed to providing your child a quality learning experience, and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Mary Barfield
mbarfiel@lexrich5.org