

6th Grade Science Student and Parent Handbook

2018-19



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Welcome Letter

Dear 6th Grade Families,

I am very pleased to be your child's Science teacher this year. It will be an exciting year for your middle schooler! The 6th grade students will be experiencing new surroundings and challenges. Transition and organization skills will be a key focus during the first few weeks of school. The BELL Academy Family will be here to support them through their first days of middle school.

It is important to remember that all successes, big or small, are meaningful. Each child will progress at his or her own rate, developing skills when he or she is ready. Preserving each child's self-esteem and building a secure, respectful foundation for growth will always remain priorities in my classroom. My grading policy is structured to provide students with multiple opportunities to succeed.

From the beginning of the year students will be using a planner provided by the school. It will be used to help your child remember the assignments they need to complete for each class. I will be using Jupiter to post HW and Projects as they are assigned, but it is still the student's responsibility to record his/her assignments in the planner in the event that an Internet connection is not available at home. Please encourage your child to sign into Jupiter at least once a week to monitor his/her grades. Doing so will ensure that your child is taking an active role in his/her learning and is accountable for his/her educational responsibilities.

Communication between parents and teachers is extremely important. I will be using Jupiter messages to notify you of late or missing projects (HW will be updated on Jupiter) and send reminders when we have long term projects due. If I have a concern about your child's academic progress or behavior I will contact you. If you have a concern you would like to discuss with me, the most effective and timely way to communicate with me will be through Jupiter. In the event that I receive a phone message on one of my busier days, please allow me a few school days to return your call.

Once you have had the opportunity to review this document with your child, please send the signed Contract for Success back to school.

I look forward to sharing a dynamic and productive year with your child. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns!

Sincerely,

Ms. Contona

acontona@thebellacademy.com



Units of Study

Unit 1: Scientific Investigation and Simple Machines

(~10 weeks)

How do different forms of energy transfer and/or change matter? In what ways can energy be effectively conserved? How do machines use energy to do work? What would energy-efficient machines look like? What strategies/ideas can we pose to promote the effective use and conservation of energy?

- Students will acquire the skills necessary to engage in scientific thinking and discussion. They will work towards the end of year goal, which is to be able to independently design and carry out a scientific investigation.
- Students will explore the concept of energy transformations while utilizing the Scientific Practices outline in the NGSS.



Units of Study

Unit 2: Classification of Living Organisms

(~5 weeks)

Which tools do scientists use to classify and study living organisms?

- Students will continue to utilize and refine the Science Investigation Skills and Scientific Practices they acquired in Unit 1.
- Students will explore what it means for an organism to be alive through the study of cells. They will use microscopes to view microscopic organisms and various types of cells.
- Students will learn how to classify organisms using a dichotomous key.



Units of Study

Unit 3: Plants in Your Gas Tank?

(~5 weeks)

Can plants provide an efficient alternate form of energy for human use?

- Students will learn how structures of plants and plant cells contribute to photosynthesis.
- Students will conduct research to learn about the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of energy.
- Students will formulate claims supported by evidence in order to construct an explanation.
- If time allows, students will participate in an enrichment activity.



Units of Study

Unit 4: Disruptions in Ecosystems

(~10 weeks)

In what ways are living organisms and nonliving things dependent upon each other? What factors affect the interdependence of living organisms and nonliving things?

- Students will continue to utilize and refine the Science Investigation Skills and Scientific Practices they acquired in Unit 1.
- Students will explore the relationships among organisms in a food web. They will analyze and create diagrams that illustrate the complex relationships that occur among producers, consumers, and decomposers.
- Students will closely analyze how the living organisms within an ecosystem interact with the nonliving factors in their environment. This involves the study of how environmental changes can affect humans and other living organisms.



Units of Study

Independent Scientific Investigation Projects

- Students will demonstrate their ability to carry out an investigation that they will independently design.
- These required projects will begin mid April/early May and students will be given support throughout the design of their investigations.



Learning Resources

Students will be learning the majority of our content through the use of hands on learning activities, student to student discussions, and teacher guided and student led research.

- I will provide differentiated resources for students to choose from. Most of the reading we do in class is available online and is either currently posted on my [LiveBinders](#) page or will be posted on contonascience.weebly.com, Jupiter, and/or google classroom.
- Vocabulary words will be posted in the classroom and on a website called [Quizlet](#). Please see the “[RESOURCES](#)” section of my website for details on how to access the Internet resources we will use throughout the year.
- Throughout the school year additional resources will be posted on google classroom and Jupiter.

Course Websites

- contonascience.weebly.com
 - This is where I will post announcements, important documents, links and resources we use in class, etc. I will have our current unit of study along with links that students will need to access on a regular basis.
- <https://login.jupitered.com/login/>
 - This is where you will find your grades and important documents. You can also send me and your other teachers direct messages from the site.
 - ***You will get your account information in class. You can also request login information via email. Please make sure you and your parent(s) sign up by 9/17!***



Grading Policy

Homework: 25%

Class Work: 25%

Assessments: 50%

The details of each assignment will be posted on Jupiter as the work is assigned. It is important that both students and parents check Jupiter at least once a week to make sure that students do not fall behind on their work. The report card grade should not be a surprise at the end of each marking period.

Homework will be given on most school nights.

- Homework will be posted as it is assigned on Jupiter (information about Jupiter will be provided shortly).
- If HW is present and completed with effort on the day it was checked, you will either see a number grade or “not graded yet” in Jupiter.
- Homework will be marked “**Missing**” in Jupiter if it is not present on the day it is due. If the HW is submitted within 1 week of the due date it will get half credit and be marked as “LATE.” After one week the assignment will remain a 0.



Grading Policy

Class Work will be mostly based on student participation, preparation, and engagement during class work periods.

- Students are required to have a **GREEN** folder, and a marble notebook with them each day that are dedicated only to Science.
- Students will self assess their participation, preparation, and engagement based on a rubric that is on [page 13](#) of this document.
- Some class work assignments will be collected and assessed based on effort, completion, and/or accuracy of information.

Assessments include long-term projects, writing assignments, and exams/quizzes.

- Projects will be counted as 30% of the grade, with a 5 point penalty per school day they are handed in late.
- Projects will not be accepted more than 1 week late.
- Students will be provided with an opportunity to create study materials called a “study guide.” If the completed study guide is brought to class on the day of an exam or quiz, 5 points of extra credit will be added to that exam or quiz.
- If your child would like to improve his/her grade, “corrections” for exams and quizzes will be available.
- Students will be shown how to create a study guide and how to complete corrections before and after our first assessment.



Grading Policy

Extra Help will be offered during select lunch periods before quizzes and upon request.

- If you are struggling with something, please ask for help.
- You can also send me messages with any questions you may have.
- I will respond within 2 school days (Monday-Friday) of receiving messages/emails.
- Do not wait until the night before an assignment is due to ask for help!

Absences If you are absent, you must make up the work that you missed.

- You can check Jupiter for assignments that you need to hand in when you return.
- If you are not sure what to do, please contact a classmate or ask your teacher what the assignments are upon your return.
- **You will initially receive a temporary 0 when you are absent which will appear as “**Absent**” in Jupiter. When you hand in the completed work you will get full credit for the assignment(s). If you have an extenuating circumstance (illness, family emergency etc) please speak with me to arrange a new due date that is reasonable.**
- If absent work is not submitted within a reasonable amount of time (ex: 2-3 days for a 1 day absence), the “**Absent**” in Jupiter will become a permanent 0.



Participation Rubric

Participation will be self assessed at the middle and end of each marking period using the provided rubric below.

5 points: Always (100% of the time)

4 points: Frequently (About 90% of the time)

3 points: Sometimes (About 70-80% of the time)

2 points: Rarely (Less than 70% of the time)

1 Point: Never (0% of the time)

Rubric Components (Parts):

1. Volunteer answers during partner, whole class and/or group discussions
2. Come to class on time with all necessary materials (pencil, planner, notebook, folder, homework, resources, etc.)
3. Follow all class rules and routines without disruptions
4. Complete all class work assignments and stay on task during activities
5. Work cooperatively with classmates using roles effectively
6. Display a positive attitude towards yourself, peers, teachers, etc.
7. Be considerate of others and school property
8. Take responsibility for assignments if absent and/or hand in all assignments on time



Classroom Expectations

Daily Routine: Upon entering the classroom, students are expected to immediately sit in their assigned seats and do the following:

1. Take out your folder, planner, and notebook.
2. Take out any assignments that are due today.
3. Take out a writing utensil (pencil or black/classic blue ballpoint pen-please no bright colors or markers!).
4. Place your backpack on the floor next to or under your chair.
5. Update your planner to reflect new or upcoming assignments.
6. If there is not a handout for the day, write your heading on a new page in your notebook.
7. Answer or complete the “Do Now” activity.
8. If class has not yet begun, sit quietly and review your notes until Ms. Contona is ready.

Please note: There is a lot to do each period. If you have a non-emergency please wait until our class work begins to use the restroom. Please bring a water bottle if you know you get thirsty throughout the day. Use of the sink in our classroom is reserved for lab activities.



Classroom Expectations

Behavior Policy: Students are expected to follow all classroom routines, rules, and procedures on a daily basis in order to maintain a safe and productive learning environment for all students. Students who exhibit exceptional behavior will be rewarded. Failure to follow the rules will result in consequences.

Rules:

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Act in a way that is respectful to others.
3. Raise your hand to ask/answer a question, ask to use the restroom, or ask to get out of your seat for any reason.
4. No food, candy, gum, or drinks are allowed in the classroom. Clear water is the only beverage allowed in the classroom.
5. If any electronic device is seen *or* heard, the device will be turned in to the Dean of Students, and will be subject to our school's electronic device policy.



Classroom Expectations

Rewards

Students who consistently follow the rules will be rewarded by receiving “Contona Cash” to redeem for positive rewards. Rewards include a positive phone call home, snacks at lunch with a friend (or chip in for delivery for lunch), full credit for 1 day late HW, class work extra credit etc. See your Contona Cash for more details. Each student will get 1 to start during the first few days of school!

Consequences

Consequences for breaking rules are as follows in order of severity: verbal warning, hallway chat, removal from classroom with a written assignment (you will go to a nearby classroom with another teacher), phone call/note home and/or lunch detention with me, referral to dean, meeting with AP and/or parent, in school suspension, and suspension at another site. Students who do not behave well will be required to bring their own chaperone on class trips. Entire classes that do not behave well will not attend class trips with me (I know this will not happen!). Please see the [NYC Discipline Code](#) for more information.

Teacher Oath to Students

I promise to maintain a safe, fair, and productive learning environment for all students. I will assist students who seek help, and do my best to improve the skills of all students during classroom work periods, lessons, and small group conferences.

X *Ms. Contona*



Battle of the Classes

Each marking period all classes will participate in the Battle of the Classes. For the first marking period all classes who reach 50 stickers will get a party. The first class to reach 50 will get 2 parties. For marking periods 2, 3, and 4 only the first class to reach 50 will get a party.

How do you earn stickers?

- Your class will earn 1 sticker for each 4 you earn in Science or Health.
- Your class will earn a bonus sticker for each day EVERYONE completes their HW.
- If your class earns 4's in Science/Health for a straight week, you will get 2 bonus stickers.
- I will pick a rule of the day. If you all follow that rule, your class will earn a bonus sticker!

Name _____ Class _____

Contract for Success

Ms. Contona: **Science** acontona@thebellacademy.com

Please make sure you review the [Science Handbook](#) that is located at contonascience.weebly.com. Please read each line and initial next to it to indicate that you understand what you have read. Sign when you are finished.

Student Contract:

I, _____, have read the [Science Handbook](#) that explains Ms. Contona's grading policy, routines, expectations, and behavior policy.

___ I understand everything that I have read.

___ I accept full responsibility for my education and understand that in order to maintain a passing _____ average I must complete and hand in the assignments given to the best of my ability, ask for help _____ when I need it, use Ms. Contona's websites as a resource, and prepare for exams and quizzes.

___ I understand that in order to maintain the average I hope to achieve I should sign into Jupiter at least once a week to monitor my grades.

___ I understand that if I break school and/or classroom rules, there will be consequences for my behavior.

X _____

Student Signature

_____ Date

Parent/Guardian Contract:

I, _____, have read the attached handout that explains Ms. Contona's grading policy, routines, expectations, and behavior policy.

___ My child understands the information in the [Science Handbook](#) .

___ I understand that I can access my child's grade online through JUPITER, as well as important dates, weekly homework assignments, important files, and information about long-term assignments.

___ I will help my child with his/her assignments to the best of my ability, and if I am not able to help him/her, I will encourage my child to ask for extra help during lunch.

___ **My child and I have set up Jupiter, the google permission form has been signed, and we have visited contonascience.weebly.com to complete the Contact Information form.**

X _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

_____ Date