

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to **8th grade science**! I am looking forward to working with you this year. I hope you had a restful and enjoyable summer and are ready for a new year of school to begin. My name is Stacy Matthews, and I am excited to start my sixteenth year at Heatherwood Middle School. This will be my 22nd year teaching middle school.

Curriculum:

Last year during second semester the school district adopted **Open Sci Ed** curriculum for middle school. Each unit starts with an [anchoring phenomenon](#) and continues to explore the same investigative question throughout the unit. Open Sci Ed is an open source, [NGSS](#)-aligned curriculum that focuses on the [three dimensions](#) of the Next Generation Science Standards.

Some of the units we will cover this year include:

- **Motion and Contact Forces:** Open Sci Ed Unit 8.1 Investigative Question — Why do things sometimes get damaged when they hit each other?
- **Sound Waves:** Open Sci Ed Unit 8.2 Investigative Question — How can a sound make something move?
- **Forces at a Distance:** Open Sci Ed Unit 8.3 Investigative Question — How can a magnet move another object without touching it?
- **Earth in Space:** Open Sci Ed Unit 8.4 Investigative Question — How are we connected to the patterns we see in the sky and space?
- **Genetics:** Open Sci Ed Unit 8.5 Investigative Question — Why are living things different from one another?

Science Journals: Students will be maintaining a science binder in class. Most classroom work will be completed and stored in 3–ring binders until ready to submit for grading. (1-1½ inch binders are recommended)

Expectations:

For optimal learning, students must be active participants in all class activities. Science involves experiential participation, group work, and sequential activities. To maximize the quality of our time together, it is important for all students to be in their desks and working on the opening assignment when the bell rings.

Attitude, behavior, and attendance are very important for the progress of individual students, their group members and the class. Students who work daily to create a positive work environment for themselves and others will improve the classroom experience for all.

Students who are struggling to help maintain a positive learning environment may need extra support as detailed in the Heatherwood [student handbook](#).

If students are absent, they will need to make arrangements to make up missed activities. It is important to do this in a timely manner to keep pace with group members, stay current with the curriculum and not lose access to equipment that needs to be put away.

In Room 106, we will adhere to all Everett, Heatherwood, science department and teacher expectations.

The Everett Rights and Responsibilities [handbook](#) can be found on the district website.

The Heatherwood Student Handbook, which includes the school's progressive discipline policy, can be found on the Heatherwood website, along with the bell schedules.

Please read *Lab Science Safety* available [here](#).

We will be going over expectations in class. These include the Heatherwood school and classroom expectations below.

Expectations for the Classroom:

Be Respectful

- ◆ Be kind to everyone!!!
- ◆ Follow teacher expectations/norms
- ◆ Collaborate with classmates
- ◆ Use appropriate language
- ◆ Listen and participate actively
- ◆ Stay engaged on learning activity
- ◆ Come to class with positive mindset

Be Responsible

- ◆ Come to class prepared
- ◆ Be ready to start learning prior to bell
- ◆ Use electronic devices as directed (No phones or personal electronics)
- ◆ Clean up after yourself
- ◆ No gum! No gum! No gum!

Be Part of the Solution

- ◆ Be kind to everyone!!!
- ◆ Support the learning of others
- ◆ Be a problem solver
- ◆ Be a positive leader
- ◆ Be truthful

GRADING: Student grades are determined by three weighted categories:

- ◆ *Learning Opportunities:* Science journal entries, classwork, some online work (20%)*
- ◆ *Formative Assessment:* Online quizzes or intermediate assignments (30%)
- ◆ *Summative Assessment:* Multiple choice or written tests and projects (50%)
- ◆ *Feedback Only:* An additional, *unweighted category for assignments that have **no** impact on the grade.*

**Learning Opportunities* assignments may be selected at random for grading. Students will not be told in advance which assignments will be graded, so all work must be completed in a timely manner and made up after school or during lunch if students are absent.

Overall grade values will be determined by averaging assignments in each category.

Late Work — Completing work in a timely manner is an important part of developing conceptual understanding. Activities are presented sequentially, with one foundational idea logically leading to another. Students should make every effort to complete and turn in work by the due date.

However, I do accept late work (until 2 weeks after the due date) because I want students to complete assignments to enhance their learning. Students need to recognize, however, that there must be reasonable expectations for completing work on time. If work is consistently late, students may need help developing better organizational strategies.

Revising Work — If students revise their work while reflecting on how their understanding has changed, learning is enhanced. The grade should reflect a journey toward understanding, therefore grades for **some** (although not all) assignments may be changed by staying after school (by appointment) and engaging in a meaningful revision process. In some cases, such as online quizzes, students may have unlimited retakes at any time.

If you have questions or concerns, [email](#) is preferred since I can usually reply within 24 hours. If you leave a phone message, clearly state your name, your student's name, and a callback number.

It is important to monitor student progress with the [LMS online portals](#). If you need assistance with online grades, please email: lms@everettsd.org.

I look forward to working with you this year!



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