

September 2004  
Morgan Park High School  
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8<sup>th</sup> Grade Environmental Science

Dear Parents,

I am looking forward to teaching your son/daughter this school year. At this time, I would like to share some important information regarding this science course your child is now enrolled in. The following describes who I am, the course, what is taught, what a student is expected to learn, classroom rules, and an explanation of the grading standards.

I graduated from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade program at Morgan Park in 1990 and from Morgan Park High School in 1993. I earned my Bachelors of Science from DePaul University in 1997 with a major in Education and a minor in Physics. My endorsements consist of General Science, Physical Science, Language Arts and Social Studies. I have taught Physics, Environmental Science (at the high school level and at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level) and Earth – Space Science at Morgan Park High School since 1998.

This year, your child and I will be covering many topics found in Environmental Science. Environmental Science is the study of the dynamic interactions of matter and energy on the planet Earth. This course will help students to appreciate the world around them, and to allow them to make scientifically sound decisions about local, national and global issues, both current and future, based upon the scientific method.

Throughout their study of science, students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge of scientific inquiry by designing experiments, interpreting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions. Mastery of these skills will be assessed on a daily basis. Therefore, it is imperative that students use scientific problem solving strategies in all course work. These include:

- Follow safety practices and procedures pertaining to laboratory and field work.
- Using an orderly approach to solving problems through controlled experimentation to produce conclusions supported by repeatable, reliable, and verifiable data.
- Evaluating different information sources to add validity, unbiased reporting, and evidence to scientific claims.
- Designing experiments using a wide variety of scientific instruments and methods to make observations, measure, and to record data from experiments.
- Organizing data using tables, charts, and diagrams.
- Graphing, analyzing, and interpreting data to support valid conclusions.
- Applying the use of the International Systems of Units in data collection and in writing about research findings.
- Applying ethical standards to scientific methods and conclusions.

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Please sign below to indicate that you have read the above syllabus, and return just this bottom portion to  
Mrs. Kerfin.

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Student Signature

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Students should expect a test at the end of each chapter, nightly homework, and weekly grade reports. All assignments are expected to be turned in on time and complete. Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student was personally ill, had a family emergency or a death in the family which would cause the student to miss class. It is the student's responsibility to make up assignments if they have missed a class.

There will be a \$15.00 class fee. This fee will be used to cover materials that are used and consist of but are not limited to: dirt, snails, seeds, toothpicks, charcoal, pepper, modeling clay, chemicals and food coloring. A more complete list of the needed materials will be provided if requested.

The grade for a semester is based on the numerical average of two quarters. Course grades will be determined using the following:

- 10% is based on class participation and cooperation
- 20% is based on quizzes and tests
- 20% is based on labs
- 20% is based on homework
- 30% is based on science fair

Regulars Scale	Honors Scale
100% - 90% = A	100% - 93% = A
89.9% - 80% = B	92.9% - 83% = B
79.9% - 70% = C	82.9% - 73% = C
69.9% - 60% = D	72.9% - 65% = D
Below 60% = F	Below 65% = F

SEMESTER 1 will cover the topics of: Ecosystems, Water and Land Resources

SEMESTER 2 will cover the topics of: Air Resources, Populations, and Energy

The instructor retains the right to vary this syllabus if the school schedule changes or, as the instructor deems necessary due to unforeseen circumstances.

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