

STUDENT SAFETY CONTRACT – FIELD BIOLOGY

Much of the learning we do in this class will take place outdoors. The Blue Valley Wilderness Science Center, the Overland Park Arboretum, and other outdoor learning environments will sometimes function as our science classroom. Safety in the science classroom is the #1 priority for students, teachers, and parents. To ensure a safe science classroom, a list of rules has been developed and provided to you in this student safety contract. These rules must be followed at all times. The last page of this contract must be signed by both you and a parent or guardian before you can participate in the lab activities or field trips. The Safety Contract is to be kept in your Field Biology notebook as a constant reminder of the safety rules.

General Guidelines for the Indoor Science Classroom

- Conduct yourself in a responsible manner at all times in the laboratory.
- Follow all written and verbal instructions carefully. If you do not understand a direction or part of a procedure, ask the instructor before proceeding.
- Never work alone. No student may work in the laboratory without an instructor present.
- When first entering a science room, do not touch any equipment, chemicals, or other materials in the laboratory area until you are instructed to do so.
- Do not eat food, drink beverages, or chew gum in the laboratory. Do not use laboratory glassware as containers for food or beverages.
- Perform only those experiments authorized by the instructor. Never do anything in the laboratory that is not called for in the laboratory procedures or by your instructor. Carefully follow all instructions, both written and oral. Unauthorized experiments are prohibited.
- Be prepared for your work in the laboratory. Read all procedures thoroughly before beginning the laboratory. Never fool around in the laboratory. Horseplay, practical jokes, and pranks are dangerous and prohibited.
- Observe good housekeeping practices. Work areas should be kept clean and tidy at all times. Bring only your laboratory instructions, worksheets, and/or reports to the work area. Other materials (books, purses, backpacks, etc.) should be stored out of the way.
- Keep aisles clear. Push your chair under the desk when not in use.
- Know the locations and operating procedures of all safety equipment including the first aid kit and fire extinguisher. Know where the fire alarm and the exits are located.
- Be alert and proceed with caution at all times in the laboratory. Notify the instructor immediately of any unsafe conditions you observe.
- Labels and equipment instructions must be read carefully before use. Set up and use the prescribed apparatus as directed in the laboratory instructions or by your instructor.
- Keep hands away from face, eyes, mouth and body while using chemicals or preserved specimens. Wash your hands with soap and water after performing all experiments. Clean (with detergent), rinse, and wipe dry all work surfaces (including the sink) and apparatus at the end of the experiment. Return all equipment clean and in working order to the proper storage area.
- Experiments must be personally monitored at all times. You will be assigned a laboratory station at which to work. Do not wander around the room, distract other students, or interfere with the laboratory experiments of others.
- Students are never permitted in the science storage rooms or preparation areas unless given specific permission by their instructor.
- Know what to do if there is a fire drill during a laboratory period; containers must be closed, gas valves turned off, fume hoods turned off, and any electrical equipment turned off, then proceed to the nearest fire exit.
- Handle all living organisms used in a laboratory activity in a humane manner. Preserved biological materials are to be treated with respect and disposed of properly.

- When using knives and other sharp instruments, always carry with tips and points pointing down and away. Always cut away from your body. Never try to catch falling sharp instruments. Grasp sharp instruments only by the handles.
- Any time chemicals, heat, dissecting instruments, or glassware are used, students will wear laboratory goggles. There will be no exceptions to this rule!

Accidents and Injuries

- Report any accident (spill, breakage, etc.) or injury (cut, burn, etc.) to the instructor immediately, no matter how trivial it may appear. If you or your lab partner are hurt, immediately get the instructor's attention.
- If a chemical should splash in your eye(s) or on your skin, immediately flush with running water for at least 20 minutes. Notify the instructor immediately.

Handling Chemicals

- All chemicals in the laboratory are to be considered dangerous. Do not touch, taste, or smell any chemicals unless specifically instructed to do so.
- When transferring reagents from one container to another, hold the containers away from your body.
- Never remove chemicals or other materials from the laboratory area.

Handling Glassware and Equipment

- Carry glass tubing, especially long pieces, in a vertical position to minimize the likelihood of breakage and injury.
- Never handle broken glass with your bare hands. Use a brush and dustpan to clean up broken glass. Place broken or waste glassware in the designated glass disposal container.
- Inserting and removing glass tubing from rubber stoppers can be dangerous. Always lubricate glassware (tubing, thistle tubes, thermometers, etc.) before attempting to insert it in a stopper. Always protect your hands with towels or cotton gloves when inserting glass tubing into, or removing it from, a rubber stopper. If a piece of glassware becomes "frozen" in a stopper, take it to your instructor for removal.
- When removing an electrical plug from its socket, grasp the plug, not the electrical cord. Hands must be completely dry before touching an electrical switch, plug, or outlet.
- Examine glassware before each use. Never use chipped or cracked glassware. Never use dirty glassware.
- Report damaged electrical equipment immediately. Look for things such as frayed cords, exposed wires, and loose connections. Do not use damaged electrical equipment.
- If you do not understand how to use a piece of equipment, ask the instructor for help.

General Guidelines for the Outdoor Science Classroom

- Please view your visit to any natural area as if you are visiting a friend's home. Treat it as you would anytime you go in someone else's home or, as you would want someone to treat your home. Disturb as little as possible, treat the natural area with respect, and try not to break anything. In a sense you are visiting a home, not a traditional home, but a very fragile home that can be damaged and upset a delicate balance.
- Stay on trail--A quick glance around can help to explain how continuously getting off the trail will cause damage to plant and animal life. A look at the difference between the area where people or animals walk on a regular basis can help explain why we need to stay on trails. Little or no growth is evidence of a heavily traveled trail compared to an area with little regular traffic. However, there are those times when the instructor may need to get off the trail for a teachable moment. And there will be those rare times when students will be given the "ok" to leave the trail. Please understand that these are the exceptions and it should not be practiced every time you are at the center.

- Collect nothing--Remember "take only photographs and leave only footprints." Everything that is part of the nature center is needed to continue the natural cycles within the wilderness area. All of our individual needs are supplied elsewhere. The rationale is very simple. One class collecting seeds may not have much of an impact, however, if 10 or 20 classes collect seeds every year we could easily have an impact on the natural growth and succession of the ecosystems.
- If you pick up a rock, a log or anything please put it back exactly as you found it. Rocks and logs provide habitats for many living things. Even if disturbed we can at least replace the rock or log so that it can continue supplying a habitat.
- Do not pick flowers or break branches off trees. When you pick a flower you prevent it from completing its life cycle. By breaking a branch or peeling the bark of a tree you damage the protective outer layer.
- If you should see a snake, DO NOT PICK IT UP! Try not to scream, give the snake plenty of room. Let the snake pass by standing well away from it or go somewhere else away from the snake. If you should find an injured or abandoned animal LEAVE IT ALONE. Report it to the wilderness center facilitator. Do not approach any wild animal. Observe from a distance.
- If you or someone else gets hurt, immediately get the instructor's attention. Report any accident or injury to the instructor immediately, no matter how trivial it may appear.
- All students are expected to dress appropriately for being outdoors, including long pants and closed-toe shoes. If necessary, you can store these items in the classroom and change before class.

**STUDENT SAFETY CONTRACT/COURSE DIRECTIVES
PARENT CONFIRMATION FORM**

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT:

1. Do you wear contact lenses? _____ YES _____ NO
2. Are you color blind? _____ YES _____ NO
3. Do you have allergies? _____ YES _____ NO
 If so, list specific allergies below.

AGREEMENT:

I, _____, have read and agree to follow all of the safety rules set forth in the safety contract. I realize that I must obey these rules to insure my own safety, and that of my fellow students and instructors. I will cooperate to the fullest extent with my instructor and fellow students to maintain a safe lab environment. I will also closely follow the oral and written instruction provided by the instructor. I am aware that any violation of this safety contract that results in unsafe conduct in the laboratory or misbehavior on my part may result in my being removed from the laboratory, a detention, receiving a failing grade, and/or dismissal from the course.

I also confirm that I have read and agree to follow the Course Directives provided for this class.

Student Signature

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We feel that you should be informed regarding Blue Valley Northwest High School's effort to create and maintain a safe science classroom/laboratory environment. With the cooperation of the instructors, parents and students, a safety instruction program can eliminate, prevent, and correct possible hazards. You should be aware of the safety instructions your son/daughter will receive before engaging in any laboratory work. Please read the list of safety rules attached. No student will be permitted to perform laboratory activities unless this contract is signed by both the student and the parent/guardian and is on file with the teacher.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this Student Safety Contract as well as the Course Directives provided for this class. By signing below, you confirm that you are aware of the measures taken to insure the safety of your son/daughter in the science laboratory and will instruct your son/daughter to uphold his/her agreement to follow these rules and procedures in the laboratory.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date