Vernon Malone College and Career Academy

2200 S. Wilmington St.

Raleigh, NC 27603

(919) 856 – 8119

Anya Downey January 5, 2015

Honors Biology

Dear parents/guardians:

I am very excited to have your student in my Biology class at VMCCA this year. I anticipate this to be a challenging and rewarding year for your student.

I have outlined information about the course in the following pages. This information includes a course description, grading policy, materials required for class, operating procedures, behavioral expectations and a classroom materials wish list. Please take a few minutes to read and discuss this information with your student. The information sheet needs to be signed and returned by **Friday, January 9, 2015**.

Grades will be updated in HomeBase at least every 2 weeks. Students are encouraged to keep up with their posted grades.

Thank you,

Anya Downey

**Contact/Availability:** Parents and students are encouraged to contact me via email at ayasinovskaya-downey@wcpss.net with any questions or concerns. I check my email frequently and send out timely responses. Students may also request an appointment for staying after school. Mondays and Wednesdays are reserved for staff meetings. I strongly recommend that students come to me to ask for help and discuss any problems they may be having with the course or their overall workload.

 **School wide expectations**

1. Be on time, task, and target.
2. Be respectful to space, people, and property.
3. Be responsible and show integrity.
4. Keep a positive attitude and have fun.

Please review all of the material and fill out the form below – it will be detached and collected while the rest of the information will remain in the student’s Biology notebook.

Student Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (Print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Honors Biology, Spring 2015**

Anya Downey

funscience.weebly.com

**Description:** Biology will prove to be a challenging course in which we cover a wide array of topics including the cell structure and function, biochemistry, genetics, classification, ecology, and more. The majority of instructional time will be spent on practice and reinforcement, demonstrations, labs, and projects. Some instructional time will be spent on lecture and note-taking; however, students are expected to attend class having read the required readings and/or watched the required lecture videos. Failure to do so may cause them to miss out on the next day’s activities.

There will be 4 major unit tests throughout the course. Each unit will also have 2-4 quizzes, warm-ups, homework, labs, and activities. It is imperative that students keep up with the coursework in order to do well on the tests. The Biology End of Course Exam is required to count for 25% of the final course grade. Each quarter will make up 37.5% of the course grade.

We have a challenging but FUN semester ahead of us!

**Required Materials:**

 1” Binder for keeping notes (may be part of a larger binder) with paper

 Composition notebook (not spiral)

 Agenda (will be provided)

 Pens (no black or red)

 Highlighters

**Classroom Wish List:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TissuesHand sanitizerMulti-colored expo markersPencilsColored pencils | MarkersCrayonsNotebook paperPost it notesPrinter paper |

**Attendance Policy:** Daily attendance is critical to the success of your student in Biology. Missing one class can prevent a student from being able to understand and/or participate in the next day activities. Successful students accept responsibility for their own learning and check calendars or the class website for missed assignments, class notes and contact classmates or the teacher for help with material. (10 accumulated absences subjects students to failure)

Students are responsible for obtaining their missed work after an absence. Assignments and any documents that were distributed in class will be posted on the class website every day.

**Hawk’s Nest Tutorial:** This is a tutorial session during the second half of the lunch period. Any student who has below an 80 in class will be assigned to come for remediation during this period. Students may also elect to attend if they have specific concerns or problem areas. If a student is assigned to more than one class at any given time, they will follow the priority days: Monday – 1st period, Tuesday – 2nd period, Wednesday – 3rd period, and Thursday – 4th period.

**Additional Remediation:** I will hold tutoring sessions every Thursday after school until 4pm. Students will need to be picked up at 4pm or stay in my classroom until the activity bus arrives at 4:45. There is no need to schedule this tutoring session, just show up. Students *must* be in my room by 2:30.

**Grading:** Vernon Malone College and Career Academy faculty has reached a consensus on a school-wide grading policy that aligns with the new WCPSS School Board policy. In an effort to ensure that grades represent mastery of content, only summative assessments will be factored into the academic grade. Major assessments – 55%

 Minor assessments – 35%

 Homework assignments – 10%

Formative assessments may be updated online as well; however, please remember that these do not represent mastery so they will not count towards the academic grade.

**Behavioral Expectations:**

What the school-wide expectations mean in Mrs. Downey’s class:

**Be on time, task, and target.**

 Students are expected to be in class, seated, and working by the time class begins. There will be no bells so it is important for students to go directly to class and be aware of the time. Students who are tardy will be assigned a consequence. As per WCPSS policy, five tardies are the equivalent of 1 unexcused absence.

 Students should be prepared for class. This means they have their notebooks, writing utensils, and any assignments that are due as soon as they walk into class.

 Students must be 100% present in class. Live in the moment!!

**Be respectful to space, people, and property.**

 Students are expected to do their part in maintaining the cleanliness and order of the classroom. This means that no food or drinks will be permitted. Water in clear, closed containers only on non-lab days is allowed. Absolutely no gum is allowed. For students who use gum to stay focused on their work, they may use hard candies instead (for tests and quizzes only).

 VMCCA will continuously encourage students to practice professionalism. This includes wearing appropriate attire every day, using appropriate language, and communicating effectively with one another and with their teachers.

**Be responsible and show integrity.**

 Take responsibility for actions and attitudes. Acknowledge and be prepared to accept all consequences (positive and negative) that result from personal decisions and actions.

 All students are required to submit their own, original work. Plagiarized papers and assignments will receive an automatic “zero” grade! Students are encouraged to help each other understand difficult content, but they must still submit their own work. Cheating will not be tolerated and result in “zero” grades. Any and all instances of cheating will be reported to administration.

 Electronic devices must be used appropriately. Inappropriate use of electronics (used while not permitted, visiting unapproved sites, damaging equipment) will result in restrictions for use. Headphones are not to be used in the hallways!

**Keep a positive attitude and have fun.**

Learning can be fun!! Don’t get hung up on “never needing this information.” It’s fun to know how things around you work! And you never know, you just might end up on Jeopardy someday and need to know a human’s diploid number! ☺