Dear Students and Parents:

Welcome to Ms. McKnight’s Science class and to the Dolphin Team. I am excited to be working with you this year! Dillard Drive Middle School is a GREAT place to LEARN!! In this welcome letter I will try to provide you with some tips to help you have a successful year in science.

Communication: You are most successful when we communicate openly and work together. If you ever feel confused or overwhelmed, please come to see me right away! Do not be afraid to talk to me about your concerns. I care about you, and I am here to help you! I can’t help you if you don’t let me know you are having a hard time though. If you need extra help, I will work with you to see if we can work together during smartblock, lunch, or after school. We just have to schedule it in advance so we find a time that works for all of us. If you can’t talk to me in person…

Email (preferred!): nmcknight@wcpss.net You may also leave a message with the front office at 919-233-4228 and I’ll return your call at my earliest opportunity. Please allow two full business days for me to respond to your inquiries.

Parent-Teacher conferences – In middle school, teachers do not automatically schedule a parent-teacher conference for every student. We will request a conference with a student’s parents when the team has a concern about your child’s performance or behavior. A parent may request a conference when they have concerns or need additional information. As Dolphins Team Leader, Mr. Houghton will schedule parent-teacher conferences. Please email him at shoughton@wcpss.net or leave a message for him at 919-233-4228 to schedule a conference. We cannot accommodate "drop-in" appointments. The Dolphin teachers meet with parents as a team.  We believe you and your child will gain the greatest benefits when you are updated on your child’s progress in all of his/her core classes at the same time. If we think your child will benefit by attending the conference, we can make those arrangements.

Website: <http://msnancymcknight.weebly.com> You can also get there by going to the DDMS website (https://www.wcpss.net/dillarddrivems), clicking on “Our School,” then clicking on “Faculty and Staff Directory and Search” then clicking on “drop down box” next to “Last Name” then clicking “McKnight” from the drop box choices. A link to my website is at the end of my information. Please use it frequently to see important announcements, daily homework assignments, class work objectives and activities, some notes, some power point presentations and handouts, study guides for upcoming tests, grading guidelines, expectations, class wish list, PTA fundraising, my background & experience, and teacher contact information.

Monitor your grades frequently with our computerized grading program that allows you to see current grades in all subjects. This is a very important tool to ensure your success. Parents must sign up in DDMS front office if you haven’t already done so. Students will be given their own log-in information that is different than their parents’ log-in information.

Team Email List: Please be sure to provide us with your email address on the first day paperwork so we can put you on our team email list. Weekly updates are sent to all on the email list. They include upcoming tests, projects, field trips, and other important information.

Basic Classroom Expectations: Every student has the right to learn in a safe and orderly environment. To ensure optimal student learning, our team has high expectations for academic and behavioral performance. Students are expected to follow classroom guidelines and procedures. My classroom expectations will use the acronym, “Dolphins.” I will be using the DDMS discipline procedures which can be found on my website under Other, then Powerpoints, then Transition Camp Presentation.

 D-Do what you are asked the first time you are asked

 O-On-time, seated and prepared

 L-Leave other people and their property alone

 P-Permission required to speak or leave your seat

 H-Homework completed and out at the start of class

 I-If you don’t understand something, raise your hand and ask

 N-NEVER give up

 S-Set a positive example through your actions and words

Attendance: Students who are frequently late or absent miss valuable instructional time and can fall behind in their classes. When a student returns from an absence, they must bring in a note to the office explaining the reason for the absence. The office staff determines whether the absence is excused or unexcused. The student will then be given a pass that will allow them to attend class. Please see my website for the DDMS Tardy Policy concerning discipline for tardiness to class. It will also be found in the Transition Camp Presentation.

Leaving class room – Students have 4 minutes between classes to use the restroom or get a drink of water (or go to locker if necessary.) Students are discouraged from leaving the classroom during instructional time.

Grading and Assessments:

We will use the DDMS grading system that can be found on the DDMS Orientation powerpoint.

*Late work*: Late work will be accepted, for up to one week without a penalty. Work that is later than 1 week will not be accepted.

*Failure to submit assignment*: Assignments that are not turned in by the late work deadline will receive a 0.

*Homework*: Expect it a few times per week for Science. When no formal homework is assigned, students are expected to review their class notes in preparation for upcoming tests and quizzes.

Be sure to put your full name (first and last) on your papers. No name = No credit! Any papers received without both first and last names on them will be placed in the “No Name Bin” at the back of the room.

We will occasionally require internet access for some activities. If you do not have home access to the internet, please plan to use the school or public library facilities. Homework assignments will be posted on my class website. In the rare instance that I am unable to post the assignments on the website, it is still your responsibility to know and do your homework on time! Homework will always be posted on the board in my classroom.

Absences: It is your responsibility, immediately after an absence, to obtain and complete missed assignments; I will not chase you down to make up your work!  Daily objectives, activities and homework are posted on my website. Missed notes are available from a classmate, or from me. Missed worksheets and materials are available from me when you return.

Class Structure

*Essential Question and Warm-ups:* As soon as you arrive in class, sit quietly, take out your completed homework, sharpen pencils if necessary, and have all other required materials ready. This is not socializing time! Look at the essential question(s) on the board to see what we will be working on, then silently begin working on the warm-up assignment. You will have approximately 5 minutes to complete these tasks.

*Class Dismissal* is by the teacher, not by a bell or the clock. Continue working until you are asked to stop. Do not pack up early or get out of your seat until you are instructed to do so. **Be sure to copy your homework assignment from the board into your agenda before you leave the room!**

Supplies: **Every day you should bring** at least 2 sharpened pencils; eraser; hand-held pencil sharpener with cover to contain shavings; 2 different colored pens; pencil pouch, one white board marker (dark color), colored pencils; highlighter; a glue stick, your science notebook, and a sturdy folder with pockets. The important thing is you must be able to quickly locate and turn in work when it is called for. You will not be able to go to your locker because you “forgot” the materials you needed for class. You will need to use your agenda every day (you should receive the first one for free at the beginning of school) If you lose your agenda, you will have to purchase another one. **When requested, you will need to bring** index cards; crayons or markers; and a flash drive. You will be asked to bring in various supplies from home from time to time, to increase the number of hands-on activities we can do in the classroom. The list of items requested and due dates will be spelled out in our team weekly email newsletter and posted on my website. **Please Note: Except for bus room, book bags will NOT be allowed in the classroom and book bags with wheels do not fit into our lockers.**

Notes: Students are expected to take notes every day. That includes videos or guest speakers. You are required to keep an organized notebook, including your notes, handouts, graded homework, quizzes and tests. I may surprise you sometime and allow you to use your notes on a quiz or a test. If you never took the notes, or if you did, but you lost them, then you will be at a big disadvantage compared to the rest of your classmates. I may grade your notebook periodically (sometimes unannounced), so be sure your notebook is always in good order. **Students should not purge their work or throw anything away until instructed to do so. You will have to take a test at the end of the year on everything you learned in science!!** That old work will be needed for your end of year review.

Volunteers: Many opportunities exist to volunteer at DDMS-class or lab help, administrative help, field trip chaperones, being a speaker, help with supplies, etc. If you would like to be able to help in a way that involves students, you must sign up as a volunteer in the DDMS main office. You must sign up each year, and at each school you wish to volunteer at. Higher level clearances take longer to process, but allow participation in events with more student contact.

PTA: Please consider joining. The PTA offers opportunities for volunteering; They also head up fundraising including “easy fundraising”-boxtops for education and linking grocery cards. They have a link on the DDMS website.

Current wish list: Jolly Ranchers and other individually-wrapped candies for my rewards box, dark dry-erase markers, ziplock baggies in sandwich, quart and gallon size, gift cards for Target, Walmart, and grocery stores that can be used to purchase team rewards, tissues, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes, colored copy paper, extra pencils, pens, glue sticks, & class supplies for students in need.

Drinks: I allow my students to drink water (out of clear water bottles that close securely) during class as long as we are not working on a lab. Students must be responsible around others’ property.

I look forward to a fun and successful year with all of you!

Sincerely,

Ms. Nancy McKnight, Dolphin Science Teacher

Dear Parents and Guardians:

You and your child are asked to please sign and return this part of this page to signify that you have read and understand the information on Ms. McKnight’s Science class welcome letter.

Sincerely,

Nancy C. McKnight,

6th Grade Science Teacher, DolphinTeam

Dillard Drive Middle School

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Print Name

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 Signature Date

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Print Name

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 Signature Date