

Classroom Policies & Procedures

Mr. Bigler, Lynn English High School

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Welcome to Mr. Bigler's physics class!

Physics will be fun, and probably different from most of the other classes and teachers you're used to.

"Is this class hard?"

Yes.

Physics is hard for several reasons. You need to *use* algebra, geometry and trigonometry—not just to get the right answers when someone gives you the equation, but to be able to visualize what the equation means, how each of the variables relates to the others, where it is going, and to be able to follow it in your head to see the answer. If you struggle with any part of this process, then physics will be a struggle all year.

"How can I survive this class if it's so hard?"

Do the homework. Always. If you don't know how to do it, try anyway. Do as much as you can. Set up the equations and leave room to add to them. Pay attention when we go over the homework! Ask questions about anything you don't understand. Make sure you understand how to do it by the time you leave class. If you don't, come in for extra help as soon as you can, because the next assignment will probably build on it.

Don't copy from other students or the internet, and don't just write down the solutions and assume that you can study by looking at them later. Just as you can't learn to play a sport or a musical instrument by watching someone else do it, you can't learn to solve physics problems that way either.

Don't panic. If you keep up with the homework and get the extra help you need, you will be able to earn a good grade. Over my fifteen years of teaching, my students have a 99.5% pass rate (roughly one failure every 2–3 years). The only students who end up failing are the ones who don't try.

Bring to Class

- A pen or pencil.
- Your copy of Mr. Bigler's *Class Notes for Physics 1* if you have one, and your binder/folder for worksheets, handouts, *etc.*
- Completed homework assignments.
- A scientific calculator that can handle exponents, trigonometry functions, and scientific notation. A TI-30, which costs about \$12, is sufficient. (If you already have a graphing calculator for math, you're all set.)

What You Should Do

- *Let students learn.* Be quiet and non-disruptive during lectures and discussions, so you don't prevent your classmates from being able to do well in the class. (This is one of my hot buttons.)
- Pick up handouts, if any, on your way to your seat. These will usually be on the demo table in the front of the room.
- Sit in your assigned seat until I have taken attendance. (Note that sometimes I take attendance by checking homework.)
- Wear your LEHS ID. Keep food & drinks out of sight. Make sure phones and other electronic devices are silenced and put away. These items are subject to confiscation if found. Note that failure to surrender your phone or other electronic device to a teacher is grounds for disciplinary action, including suspension.
- Get up out of your seat without asking any time you need to, as long as you are non-disruptive about it. (*E.g.*, to sharpen a pencil, get a tissue, get a cup of water or a fidget toy, move to the front of the room when we go over a homework problem you had trouble with, or move back to your seat so someone else can move to the front.)

- If you were absent, find out what you missed by checking the archives, checking with classmates, or by checking with me.
- Be *present!* Participate! Ask questions! Volunteer for demos! Take part in discussions! Respond to questions! You will learn much better if you do these things.
- If you can afford to, buy a copy of the class notes so you can write in and highlight them.
- Take notes on problems as we go over them. Complete and turn in any late work as soon as you can, because it's likely that the next topic will build on the current one.
- If you are confused, wave a “white flag of surrender” (piece of paper) to show that you're lost. This tells me exactly where I need to come back to when I go back to clarify.
- Use the ASL “toilet” sign for bathroom requests, so you don't interrupt the discussion.



- I do not use a lab safety contract—safety is required at all times. It's not something you have the option of agreeing to or not. I will make sure you know what the potential dangers are and how to keep yourself and everyone else safe. I expect that you will always work in a safe, sensible manner, and that you will follow instructions, ask proactively about anything you are unsure of, and above all exercise common sense! I do, however, recommend that you read the Flinn Scientific Lab Safety Contract (http://www.flinnsci.com/documents/miscpdfs/safety_contract.pdf) because it contains a wealth of information about potential dangers and how to avoid them.
- You must wear approved (by me) eye protection whenever instructed. Experiments that require eye protection may include working with liquids, powdered solids, heat, pressure, or glassware.
- I really dislike issuing consequences. Any time I try to talk you out of one, I am trying to do you a favor. Please take me up on it.
- If I ask (or tell) you to do something, please do your best to comply first and save questions for afterwards. (If it's something that one of us is upset about, it's best to wait for at least a 5-minute “cooling off” period before asking questions.) If I (or any other teacher) ever ask you to do something that would be inappropriate or unsafe to comply, go directly to your vice principal.

What You Should Avoid Doing

- Avoid doing anything that might disrupt the class or distract others from learning.
- Avoid doing anything I have just asked you or someone else not to do or to stop doing.
- Avoid asking to go the bathroom during the last 5 minutes of class unless you *really* can't wait. If I give you a bathroom pass during the last 5 minutes of class, you need to leave your books and bags in the room and come back for them afterwards.
- Do not use your phone during class, with the following exceptions:
 - You may use your phone to take a picture of notes or formulas on the white board, *but only if you obtain permission from me before taking out your phone.*
 - You may use your phone to take pictures or videos of interesting demos or activities, *but only if you obtain permission from me and anyone else who might appear in the pictures or videos before taking out your phone.*

Looking at or using your phone during a quiz or test will be considered cheating, and will result in consequences for cheating *in addition to* consequences for unauthorized use of your phone.

- Do not lie, cheat, steal, or antagonize your classmates (or me). If I catch you cheating (including using your phone) or plagiarizing, your parents/guardians will need to give me explicit permission to let you re-take the test or re-submit the assignment, for a maximum of 75% of the original credit.

- Do not leave trash (including food wrappers and gum) anywhere in the room other than the wastebasket. This includes drawers, sinks, cabinets, cubbies, under desks, on the floor, *etc.* (It's always OK to get out of your seat to throw something away, even if you weren't supposed to have it in class.)
- Do not argue with me about grades, *etc.* during class time. (If you want to argue or debate, you are welcome to do so after school; I enjoy a good argument and won't take it personally.)
- Do not put Kleenex Anti-Viral tissues in your mouth to find out if they taste like lemons.

Fire Alarms

- Be sure someone gets the "Save in case of fire" box. (It has sidewalk chalk and other useful things.)
- Turn *left* out the door, go down the stairs, exit the building, and continue to Goodridge Street.
- Check in with me outside to let me know you got out alive. This counts as a homework grade and I won't give out any toys until everyone has checked in.
- Anything you write or draw on the sidewalk must be school-appropriate.

School Security

In the event of a situation that requires increased security, it is important for everyone to be quiet so that announcements can be heard, and to follow instructions.

Lockdown: Close & lock all doors. Close & cover windows (including the window in the classroom door). You may either hide behind the lab tables in the far corner of the room, or you may get a weapon and assist Mr. Bigler in ambushing attackers if they come through the door.

Shelter in Place: Close & lock all doors. (No need to close or cover windows.) Otherwise, business as usual except that no one may leave the classroom.

Secure and Hold: Business as usual (classroom doors and windows may remain open), except that no one may enter or leave the building.

Grades

Grades are calculated as follows (based on the LEHS Uniform Grading Policy):

- Unit tests, formal lab reports, and major projects: 100 points each
- Quizzes, lab write-ups, and minor projects: 50 points each
- Lab experiments: 25 points for performing/participating in the experiment
- Day-to-day homework and classwork assignments: 5 points each
- Mid-term and final exams: honors: 200 points; CP1 ("regular"): 150 points

If you are unhappy with your grade on a quiz or test, you can take a re-test. You get to keep the better score, except that the maximum grade on a re-test is 90%. If you left something important out of a lab report or other major assignment, write the addendum on a separate sheet of paper, and re-submit *both* the graded original *and* the addendum. I will give you full credit for anything you add as a rewrite, up to a maximum grade of 90% for the assignment.

Each homework assignment is graded out of 5 points. The guideline for on-time homework is 5 points if substantially (at least 75%) completed, and 4 points if at least 50% completed. If you did not understand most or all of an assignment, I will usually let you make it up for full credit by the next class day. Late homework must be fully completed (with correct answers and work shown), and is worth 3 points if turned in before the test on the unit, and 2 points afterwards. (If you have to go to your locker to get your homework, it is late.) Except for extraordinary circumstances (usually involving a directive from a vice principal or guidance), late assignments will not be accepted after grades close for the quarter.

If you need an extension on an assignment or for a test, please ask *in advance* (unless something comes up that makes this impossible). I will usually say "yes" to any reasonable request.

Grades are calculated by the eSchool Plus grading system. In the past, there have been inconsistencies in the way eSchool Plus calculated grades, and changes were sometimes made to eSchool Plus without notice, resulting in unexpected changes to students' grades. If you believe that your grade was calculated incorrectly, it is *your* responsibility to bring it to my attention. If this happens, I will check the calculation and adjust your grade as appropriate.

Extra Credit

Extra credit points are called “up quarks.” You can earn them by impressing me during class, being the class archivist or receptionist for a week, coming in for extra help and working on physics for at least 20 minutes (except for re-tests, which already bring up your grade), or bringing in something for the “brag board”. Note that because there are ample opportunities to re-take tests, re-submit lab writeups, and and turn in missing homework late for partial credit, I do not give extra credit assignments. One up quark can be used as a homework pass once each quarter. Otherwise, each up quark adds $\frac{1}{4}$ point to your final grade for the quarter (up to a maximum of 3 points in a quarter).

Archivist: This is a week-long volunteer job that is worth 2 up quarks of extra credit. It involves writing down a brief description of what we do in class, what the assignments are, and any important announcements and giving a copy of that information to students who were absent when they return.

Receptionist: This is a week-long volunteer job that is worth 2 up quarks of extra credit. It involves answering the telephone if it rings during class, and meeting people who come to the door to deliver messages or request a student. (This allows Mr. Bigler to keep teaching during the interruption.) For obvious reasons, the receptionist needs to sit in the seat closest to the door.

Extra Help and Communication

I am available for extra help most days after school, except for Science Team meetings/competitions (usually on Tuesdays), or when I have faculty or department meetings (faculty meetings are the first Wednesday of each month and department meetings are usually the second Thursday of each month). If you plan to come in after school, check with me during the day to make sure I can actually be there.

The best way to communicate with me outside of school is via email. The best email address to use for me is MrBigler@MrBigler.com (which sends to my school email, my personal email and my phone), but you can send to BiglerJ@LynnSchools.org if you prefer.

Please be sure to tell me anything you want me to know. You'll find me to be friendly, patient and understanding, but I can only help you if I know that you need something. Even if you have an IEP or Section 504 accommodation that I should already be aware of, mistakes and omissions sometimes happen—it's always safest to talk with me specifically. Remember that throughout your life, *you* will always be your own best advocate. If you don't stand up for what you need, who will?

Finally, please be aware that your well-being is extremely important to me—far more important than the physics. If it appears to me that something might be wrong or bothering you, I will probably ask you if you're OK or if something is wrong. This is an invitation to talk with me to whatever extent you're comfortable, and an opportunity for me to offer whatever help I can (including but not limited to some flexibility around deadlines). I won't feel slighted if you decline to talk to me or don't want my help, but please do let me know if there is anything I can do.

Post Script

Do you talk like this in class?

Yes, and usually way too fast. Feel free to ask me to slow down as often as you need to.