Dear student and guardian,

Chemistry is significantly different from previous science classes. Most of you will have taken biology by now, or are concurrently enrolled. A few of you might be enrolled in physics this year. Chemistry is the study of the interaction of really small bits of matter. In many ways, it's just like physics, but the stuff you're studying is smaller. Most of the time, the unit of matter we will be studying will be too small to see – we'll have to infer what's happening from the information we can see. In order to do this well, one needs to experience events first hand – so we'll do labs. The things I want you to see, but can't have 30 experiments going in the room without setting off every alarm in the building (ask someone over 40 about carbide cannons), I will demonstrate.

This is a UC approved college prep laboratory class. There will be homework every night. If you are diligent, you will do well. If you are not, you will do poorly. For many students this is the first challenging course they will have taken. Not everyone will be able to get an A by simply working hard. You may have skated through biology on a bit of memorization and good test skills, but it just doesn't work in chemistry. There will be some kids in every class who try to handle chemistry like other, less demanding classes. I suggest you start off working very hard, and let off if you are happy with your performance. Underestimating the difficulty of this course can lead to harsh lessons. Further, nearly all of what we will do builds linearly on work you will have done before. If you miss too much early, it becomes very, very difficult to do the new stuff. It's more like algebra than biology in that way. We will spend some time on science specific study skills early in the course. If you put some effort into them, you may learn a few methods that allow you to study less than you would otherwise need to.

Grades: Assessment of understanding and participation will be through the following means.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>65%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework/labs</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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There will be “surprise” Homework Quizzes. They are based entirely on homework and will often include computations. Do the homework and your quiz scores will be great! Don’t do it, and bad things will happen . . .

Grade Scale: Tests and quizzes are the biggest factor in your grade by far.

- 90 to 100% A
- 80 to 90% B
- 70 to 80% C
- 60 to 70% D
- less than 59% F

The grades will be posted online in Q. It is essential that you understand that the grade you will see will always be calculated the same way, but it can often be misleading. Its easiest to think of your grade as a pie chart that always has the same slices, but earlier in the semester those slices are relatively empty, and later they’re both “fuller” and may have extra ingredients. The best example of this is that after your first 30 point quiz, that quiz will account for 65% of your grade. After Finals there will be around 750 points of tests, accounting for 50% of your grade and a final exam grade that will be the other 15%. So in the first month one quiz makes up almost everything in your grade – at the end there may be 10 quizzes, probably 8 tests, some lab practical grades, and the final exam. That’s a much more complex “piece of pie”.

Start of class, homework, and Quizzes: As soon as you arrive in class, you need to take out your homework and begin whatever exercise is on the board. You will do this independently and in small groups or pairs in about equal exercise proportion. Sometimes it will count as a quiz. You won't know when that is . . . I'll check your homework while you're doing it.
**Phones and Ipods:** You can’t use them – most of the time. You all bring ‘em most of the time, and every once in a while we’ll take advantage of that. If you take it out to do anything I did not specifically approve, I’ll dock you participation points. Sometimes, you may need to use it. Come tell me ahead of time if, for example, your mom is going to call to let you know when the dentist appointment was changed to. That’s fine as long as you don’t abuse it. Ditto for your Ipod, apple watch, subdermal implants, etc.

**Tips for success:**

- You will have a lot of homework. Try to find 5 minutes to look over your chapter outlines or notes sometime before class to refresh your memory. Remember the Warm Up quizzes will be based on the previous class discussion or reading form the night before.

- Communication is important to me. I want you to ask a question if you are confused in class. Feeling confused is good – it means you’re about to learn something. If I move on to a new idea, but you still don’t get what we were just covering, raise your hand! If you were paying attention but just didn’t get it, I’m not doing my job. I’m a teacher, and if I’m not teaching you we need to try some other way. Whether I change the way I deliver the information, or we change the way you’re looking at it does not matter. What does matter is that you get it somehow. If you need extra help, just let me know after class and we’ll set up a time you can come by in the morning.

- If you or your guardians want to discuss anything, please send me an email at cjones@pleasantonusd.net. Phones just don’t work in classrooms. Imagine telling 30 teenagers that are paying attention to just hang on a minute while you answer the phone . . . it simply doesn’t work. I check email many times daily and will respond quickly. If we need to set up a phone call or a meeting, we can do that too, but email will allow for the fastest initial response.

- Come to class. Any missed material due to an excused absence will need to be made up. If you miss class, be sure to get the notes from another student. Missed quizzes will not be made up. Your lowest score on the other quizzes will be assumed. Any tests missed will be made up on the Quarter “make up” test. If you never missed one, that test can replace a lower score. Smart kids who know they are going to miss an exam set up a time to take it early, and thus retain their ability to take the make up test and replace a low score…

- That’s it. You show up ready to go, and I’ll make it interesting (and maybe even fun) to be in class for the hour or so I see you each day.

NOW, SINCE YOU REALLY DID READ THIS AS INSTRUCTED, PROVE IT. Go online to www.foothillfalcons.org, click on the faculty and staff tab, find my name and open the class web page. Print the homework that is due tomorrow and fill it out. See you then!