
Model Letter to Parents

To: Parents/ Guardians of _____

Subject: Science and Society

Your student is enrolled in the course _____.

As part of this course, we will be learning about issues related to science and society, and discussing them in class. I am very excited about the course, the issues to be discussed, and our class format. Most importantly, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to teach and exchange dialogue with your sons and daughters in our academic setting. This class will be discussing some very controversial issues and that has served as the primary initiative behind this letter.

This course will investigate the dilemmas that science and technology have created in modern society. Students will be expected to investigate and actively problem-solve selected issues that are currently being debated by scientists, politicians, and philosophers. Upon completion of this course, students will have a heightened awareness of the impact that scientific discoveries have on society.

Students will be expected to present their ideas in a structured and analytical way, and this course will strive to introduce philosophical reasoning into their intellectual growth. We will not advocate any one position in the issues we address – rather, we will try to investigate the perspectives of many different stakeholders. By learning about different ethical perspectives, points of view, and decision-making models, students will have tools to approach controversial issues systematically and thoughtfully, and be better-equipped to be effective citizens in our democratic society. We will respect and honor the family and cultural values that students bring to our discussions at all times.

Enclosed you will find the course syllabus, which lists the topics that will serve as the focus for class debate, discussion, and research. Some students may, with prior permission, elect to research topics not on the syllabus.

We will be using the following text: (list text if appropriate, and indicate whether the text has been approved by the district's Instructional Materials Committee). We will also be using materials for class discussion from various sources including newspapers, periodicals, professional medical journals and several bioethics publications. I will supplement the issues with films that are related to the topics being discussed. Should you wish to review the reference materials, I will have them available in my classroom. Feel free to call and come by to visit.

I am personally committed to making this class a meaningful one that will provide your student with the thinking skills necessary to resolve some of these issues as they confront them in their personal lives. I am looking forward to an exciting semester, and your student is what will make it all worthwhile. Thank you for the opportunity to be a teacher for them.

*Based on a letter provided by William Monahan, Eastlake High School,
Lake Washington School District, Washington.*