Laboratory work is often an exciting and interesting way to learn science. All labs are designed with student safety as the highest priority. By following common rules for science labs, students can help ensure that our experiences continue to be safe and educational.

1) Students will follow the School Rules and Honor Code of The Rice School/La Escuela Rice at all times, especially rules prohibiting Eating, Drinking, and Chewing Gum in the classroom. Horseplay is strictly prohibited, and may result in removal from the lab. Many materials and chemicals in the lab should not be eaten, and having food or drink in our lab is unsafe.

2) Reading all instructions and background information before beginning the lab will help students to progress through the lab safely and efficiently. Our lab area must remain Clean and Organized. Personal belongings should be stored under the lab tables or on the counters during labs. Students must assume responsibility for understanding each procedure before doing it, and have all materials and equipment necessary.

3) Young scientists may be given Laboratory Aprons or Safety Goggles to wear, which must then be worn correctly throughout the whole experiment. No Exceptions! Aprons are sometimes necessary to protect uniforms, and goggles protect one’s eyes from harm. Use caution to make sure that all long Hair or loose Jewelry does not touch chemicals or get caught in equipment.

4) Students are asked to do only those procedures that are Authorized at that time. Working ahead can be dangerous if something is done incorrectly.

5) Use care when handling Glassware. Hot glass looks like cold glass, so place the back of your hand near the glassware before touching it to check for heat. Students should notify their teacher if glassware is accidentally broken, and I will put the pieces in a special container. Placing broken glass in the regular garbage is unsafe, because it may cut the custodial staff as they handle the garbage bags.

6) Scientists never taste, touch or smell Chemicals unless it is specifically required for a particular lab and safe to do so. If required, waft the air above the chemical toward your nose. Never put your nose to a chemical to smell it! Mixing chemicals without authorization can produce dangerous results, and must never be done. Store chemicals in their containers until needed. Students must notify their teacher about any spills. Some chemicals should not be disposed of in the sink, and may need to be put in a special container.

7) Handle Sharp Instruments such as scalpels and pointed probes with care. A student must notify the teacher immediately if he or she is cut.

8) Scientists always know the locations of Safety Equipment. It is important to know the locations of the fire extinguisher, fire blanket, fire exits, eye wash bottle, and nurse’s office.

9) Finally, every student must Clean Up his or her laboratory area fully when done, returning all materials and equipment to their original place. Keep in mind that laboratory cleanliness and organization of the lab will sometimes be graded during performance assessments.