

Desert Star Community School

2017-2018

Parent & Student Policies and Procedures Handbook

A charter school inspired by Waldorf Education

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the policies and procedures that support the day-to-day operations of Desert Star Community School. These policies are designed to support a healthy academic, artistic, and social environment in our school. Please take time to become familiar with the policies in this handbook including dress code, behavior and other areas that will help keep your school experiences positive and enriching. If you have questions about any of the information presented, please contact the office.

School Hours Monday-Friday

Kindergarten 8:30-12:30 Extended Day 12:30-2:30

Grade 1 8:15-12:30 Extended Day 12:30-3:15

Grades 2-8 8:15-3:15

Contact Information

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2017-2018 School Year Roster

Administration:

Administrative Director	Cheryl LeBlanc
Educational Specialist	Janis Williams
Receptionist/Registrar	Katie Anderson

Grades Faculty:

Kindergarten	Donna Sturgis
Kindergarten Assistant	Connie Calhoon
1 st Grade	Armida Cervantez
1 st Grade Assistant	Charissa Biederman
2 nd Grade	Kelly Marrow
3 rd Grade	Julia Kartman
4 th Grade	Frank Plucker
5 th Grade	Jovan Rameau
6 th Grade	Joseph Giuliatti
7 th Grade	Pam Bruehl
8 th Grade	Marc Bruehl

Specialty Faculty:

Woodworking & Movement Teacher Grades 5-8	Tom Cadigan
Handwork/Art Teacher	Karen Boehm
Handwork Assistant	Suzanne Lovejoy
Spanish Teacher	Myakka Holladay
Movement Teacher Grades 1-3	Rhonda Bierman
Support Teacher	Linden Sturgis
Violin Teacher	Mimi Papp

Support Staff

Academic Support	Danette McAfee
Reading/Math Specialist	Barbara Lasinski
Special Education	Sema Kelly
Speech Therapist	Becky Gewald
Bus Driver	David McCullough
Bus Driver	Hiro Yabuuchi

Welcome to Desert Star Community School

Waldorf Education

Waldorf education was founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1919. Waldorf education seeks to foster and develop a creative, educated, and healthful interest in life. People who develop skills of sensitivity and fortitude in childhood have the ability to contribute positively to all aspects of adult life as responsible individuals. The structure is based on a profound understanding of human development that addresses the needs of the growing child. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art that educates the whole child—the heart and the hands, as well as the head.

Teachers in Waldorf schools are dedicated to generating an inner enthusiasm for learning within every child. They achieve this in a variety of ways. Subjects are presented in a pictorial and dynamic manner. It allows motivation to arise from within and helps children have the capacity to live a life of joyful learning.

The Waldorf curriculum is broad and comprehensive and is structured on developmentally appropriate curriculum that integrates the arts and music with academic subjects. There are three developmental phases of childhood: from birth to approximately 7 years, from 7 to 14 years and from 14 to 21 years. Rudolf Steiner stressed to teachers that the best way to provide meaningful support for the child is to comprehend these phases fully and to bring "age appropriate" content to the children that nourishes healthy growth.

This unique approach touches and develops the feeling life of the child while enhancing the development of effort and will to participate. It enlivens the thinking capacities necessary for strong academic challenges in the world today. Desert Star provides a nurturing learning community that honors and respects the wonder of childhood. In this age of pervasive media and technological influences Desert Star offers a healthy, balanced alternative that draws upon both age-old traditions and cutting edge research to determine how to best teach children and meet their needs.

The Waldorf approach of “head, heart and hands” helps children to integrate and retain what they learn through experiential, multi-sensory and emotionally engaged learning experiences. Our educational methods and curriculum are designed to invigorate the mind intellectually, engage the heart through experiences with creativity, beauty and wonder and to work actively with the hands and body throughout the day.

As a public charter school, we meet Arizona State Standards and testing requirements and comply with health and safety regulations, as well as educational laws applicable to Arizona Charter Schools. Our DSCS Waldorf-Methods curriculum meets and, in many instances, exceeds the state standards in timing and content. Some specific aspects of our curriculum come in a grade before or later than is recommended by state standards. We consistently work through these challenges while striving to bring forth a Waldorf-Methods curriculum that supports joy with educational excellence.

Our goal is to inspire and empower students to reach their full academic and creative potential so they may lead fulfilling, purposeful lives and make positive contributions to the multi-cultural society and world community in which they live.

Admissions

A student is formally admitted only after the required school records have been received and space is available in the class. In accordance with the Arizona State Statute a prospective Kindergarten student must be the age of 5 and a prospective 1st grader must be the age of 6 by September 1st of the school year. Children whose birthdays fall shortly thereafter will have the ability to enroll the following year.

Required Forms for Admission

Arizona State Law and Desert Star Community School (DSCS) require the following forms to be completely filled out by the parent/guardian prior to admittance:



1. A DSCS Registration Form.
2. A certified copy of the child's birth certificate: Please bring the original and we will copy and certify it for our records.
3. A 'Certificate of Immunization' signed by a licensed physician certifying that the child has received age-appropriate immunizations as required by Law, or a 'Request of Exemption from Immunization' form signed by a parent or guardian. Please bring the original and we will copy and certify for our records.
4. 'ESEA Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced-Price Meals'
5. 'Home Language Survey'
6. An 'Emergency Medical Information' card. Please notify the DSCS office immediately upon change of address, daytime phone number, or emergency contact information.
7. A 'Transmittal for Release of Records' from the child's previous school.

Blank copies of all of these, except the birth and immunization certificate, are available in the school office.

Campus Arrival & Departure

Driving on Main Campus

In order to protect the safety of the children and be considerate of our residential neighbors, the speed limit at all times on the school property and Recycler Road is 5 miles per hour. Please drive slowly and carefully around the drop off area while watching for children who may be walking to and from cars. Please do not park and leave your vehicle unattended in the drop off circle during pick-up or drop-off. ***For safety, a running vehicle may never be left unattended anywhere on campus. An employee will have permission to turn the car off and remove the keys under these circumstances. *If your student(s) will be walking to or from school, please let administration know.***

Arrival

Kindergarten

Arrival begins at 8:15 a.m. Please bring your child into the cubby room. School begins at 8:30 a.m.

Grades 1-8

Arrival begins at 8:00 a.m. and is complete by 8:15 a.m. Students are not to be anywhere on campus except at their classroom unless accompanied by a parent or teacher. All students will greet their teachers at the classroom at 8:15 a.m.. Please be aware school starts promptly at 8:15 a.m.



Dismissal

Kindergarten

Parents should wait by their cars at 12:30 p.m. The children will be brought out to you. Parents picking up children after the extended day should wait by their cars at 2:30 p.m. Please arrive 5 minutes early.

Grades 1-8

The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. Please be prompt in picking up your child. Students not picked up at 3:15 p.m. will remain with their class teacher until a parent or guardian picks them up. Any student not picked up by 3:25 p.m. will be taken to the office and **parents will be charged \$5 per 10 minutes.**

Attendance

Attendance is a critical element of your child's education and has a significant impact on social well-being and achievement. One of the most important things you can do as a parent is to ensure that your child attends school regularly and arrives on time daily. Excessive tardies and early releases disrupt both the rhythm of the school day and the solidity of the classroom environment. Absences can negatively affect overall class progress.

Arizona Law states that 18 days absent in the school year (10%) could result in a student not being promoted to the next grade level. As a guideline, this is only 6 days per trimester. A student who is considered to be a habitual truant may be subject to dismissal. It is the expectation of DSCS that parents be strong partners in the area of attendance. Please call the attendance phone line (928-649-0316) if your child will be absent. When a child reaches 3 absences, a letter will be sent home to the parents to address the concern. A resource officer may be asked to perform a home visit when a student is approaching excessive absences.

Parents/guardians are reminded that public schools are funded through all of our state tax dollars and DSCS receives funding according to the average daily attendance. Every absence and tardy reduces state funding which negatively impacts our rich curriculum for all of the children.



Absences

Illness and Family Emergency (Excused Absence)

We recognize that under certain circumstances absence is unavoidable. If children are sick, by all means, they need to stay home. In order for an illness to be considered an excused absence you must please notify the office on each day that will be missed. Be sure to include your name, your child's name and the reason for the absence. *The state requires that the school have parents give a description of the illness symptoms, i.e.: fever, cough, respiratory, flu, nausea.*

If you expect your child to be absent for 3 consecutive days, contact the teacher to determine make-up work. A doctor's note will be required for illnesses extending beyond one week.



Vacation (Unexcused Absence)

We ask that you make every effort to schedule family vacations during our many school breaks. If this is simply not possible, it is imperative that you meet with your child's teacher well before the absence to develop a plan to accommodate missed work. You must notify the office in writing regarding the absence. If your vacation extends beyond 10 consecutive school days your child will be withdrawn from Desert Star Community School. If a child is withdrawn, Desert Star is required by law to accept children from the waiting list for that class, so there is a possibility there will not be a place in that class when the child returns. You will have to contact the office to re-enroll your child.

Please consider donating \$25 per day to help make up for the funding the school loses for an absence.

Unexcused Absence

If you do not call the attendance phone line and advise the school of your child's absence he/she will be marked as an unexcused absence. Seven consecutive unexcused absences may result in a meeting with administration. If a pattern of unexcused absence appears to be developing, a meeting will be set up with parents, the class teacher and administration to address this concern. (Students in grades 5 –8 may be asked to attend as well.) Students will be withdrawn after 10 consecutive days of unexcused absence. If a child is withdrawn, Desert Star is required by law to accept children from the waiting list for that class, so there is a possibility there will not be a place in that class when the child returns.

Tardiness

Students arriving later than 8:15 ARE LATE and **MUST** be signed in at the office by a parent/guardian/ (or carpool driver) and the student will be accompanied by a staff member to be admitted to class. The parent is not permitted to walk a tardy student to class. If a pattern of unexcused tardies appears to be developing, a meeting will be set up with parents, the class teacher and administration to address this concern. (Students in grades 5– 8 may be asked to attend as well.)



Individual Early Release Procedures

Parents/Guardians need to stop in at the school office and sign their child out if a student is being released before the school day ends. A faculty or staff member will go to the class to release the child. The student will meet the parent/guardian at the office to leave campus. Excessive early releases may result in a meeting between the family and the teacher involved to establish if further intervention is warranted. Please do not remove your child from school without signing him/her out first.

Student Planners/Folders

DSCS will provide students in Grades 2-8 with a student planner and Grades 1 with a student folder. Student planners/folders will go home on a daily basis and will be used for three primary purposes: parent/school communications, incomplete or unfinished work and homework, and off campus activity notifications.

The student planner/folder will allow parents to have ongoing daily communication with the school about student progress both academically and behaviorally by providing a secure and organized place for student work materials and school/parent communiques. The initial student planner/folder will be provided by the school at no cost. However, if the school needs to replace a lost or destroyed planner/folder, the parents will be responsible for the replacement cost of \$5.00. The student planners have been specially designed for their purpose and alternate folders may not be used as replacements.

The student planners are to be reviewed by the student's parent/guardian each evening and returned to the teacher the following school day. The teacher, in turn, will review the planner to determine if there is any communication from the parent. Since the student planners are so important, the following consequences have been put into place should a student not bring the planner to school each morning.

- ☐ *Failure to bring Student Planner day 1* - Warning issued to student
- ☐ *Failure to bring Student Planner day 2* - Loss of 5 minutes of recess
- ☐ *Failure to bring Student Planner day 3* - Parent/Guardian account will be charged for a replacement planner
- ☐ *Failure to bring Student Planner day 4* - Parent conference



Transportation

Policies and Procedures

It is our intention to ensure the safety and respectful treatment of all bus riders, personnel and drivers. This policy is established to provide positive behavior and a safe environment for all riders. All students who use the bus and their parents will need to return a signed bus policy to the office **prior** to riding the bus. The signed policy must include the assigned bus stop.

At the beginning of the school year a roster is created to designate which students ride the bus and the assigned bus stop location. If you need your child to ride the bus and their normal routine is to be picked up at school, you must follow the instructions below.

Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned stop unless the office is notified on the transportation phone line or in writing.

If you need to change the normal assigned dismissal routine:

- Call the Transportation/Attendance phone line at **928-649-0316 prior to 2:30 PM**
- Leave a message including the date, your name, your child's name, grade and the bus change that you are requesting.
- All changes must be received prior to 2:30 PM to ensure there is time to distribute the change to the class teacher and student.

Please be aware if you call the main school line to make any changes you will be redirected to call the Transportation phone line.

No changes will be made after 2:30. If a parent is repeatedly notifying the office multiple times a week with changes or calling the main school line too frequently with changes, suspension of bus privileges may result.



Fees

The fee for riding the bus is \$1.00 per ride per student (\$2.00/day roundtrip).

Transportation Fees are due on the 1st of every month:

- Monthly pass both ways \$36
- Monthly pass 1 way \$18
- Prepaid yearly pass both ways \$288
- Prepaid yearly pass 1 way \$144.
- If you have more than one child: 1st child full price, 2nd child ½ price and remaining children are free.

Non-payment will result in suspension of bus privileges. If you have any questions, please contact Cheryl LeBlanc at 928-282-0171.

Transportation Policy

Riding the bus is a privilege - not a right.

Expected student behavior on the bus:

1. Students will follow all directions from the bus driver and monitor promptly and without argument.
2. Students will remain in assigned seat, facing forward, feet on the floor, when the bus is in motion- ***no exceptions.***
3. All personal belongings will remain in backpack on the floor by student's feet. Only exception is a reading book.
4. No eating, drinking, chewing gum allowed on the bus. Water is acceptable with permission.
5. Treat all riders with respect— ***No swearing, teasing, inappropriate body gestures, loud talking or inappropriate touching, including pushing, fighting, shoving at any time.***
6. Keep yourself and objects inside bus windows at all times.
7. Arizona Law forbids the following items on school buses: weapons, knives and other dangerous items, glass containers, animals, tobacco, drugs or alcohol.
8. No vandalizing. The student will be held responsible and bus privileges suspended until restitution.
9. Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned stop. ***Student must give a note to the office from their parent/guardian to get off at any other location.***
10. Students will need to be at the pickup points on time—the bus will leave at the designated time and will not stop along the route to admit latecomers.
11. Students are permitted to use electronics to listen to their personal music with headphones. Using an electronic to play games, take pictures or videos is prohibited and will result in the loss of privilege to use electronics on the bus.

Consequences for Student Infractions

Depending on infractions one or more of these may be enforced:

- Seat change
- Community service
- Suspension from the bus

Dependent on the severity of the infraction, a suspension may be immediately enforced until a thorough investigation has been completed by the Administrator.

Parents will be notified verbally or in writing. Parents will meet with the Administrator, Bus Monitor and Bus Driver if necessary, regarding the behavior. The number of days suspended will be determined based on the severity of offense or number of infractions occurred in the current school year.

Upon reinstatement, further infractions may result in permanent suspension of bus privileges.

Parent will be notified by a note for each infraction in the student planner and the note will need to be signed and returned to the office.

Consequences for Late Pick-up at Bus Stop

Parents must arrive promptly at the bus stop after school to receive students. If a parent is late the child may be left alone at bus stop. It is the responsibility of parents to make arrangements to have a child(ren) picked up on time. You **MUST** call the office if you will be late.

If a chronic pattern of late pick-ups develops the police may be notified.

Continued infractions of this policy may result in suspension of bus privileges for an extended period of time.

Bus Stop Locations and Times

Please be at your bus stop on time and be aware times may vary due to unforeseen circumstances. Times will be posted on the website and on the bus policies and procedures given in the school packet.

<i>Cottonwood Route</i>	<i>Morning Pick-up</i>	<i>Full Day Drop Off</i>	<i>Friday Afternoon Drop-Off</i>	<i>Half Day Afternoon Drop-Off</i>
<i>Living Waters Church-Cottonwood Mingus Ave & 14th St</i>	<i>7:50</i>	<i>3:35</i>	<i>1:05</i>	<i>12:05</i>
<i>Kindergarten campus on Cornville Rd / Fuller Ln.</i>	<i>8:00</i>	<i>3:25</i>	<i>12:55</i>	<i>11:55</i>
<i>Youth Center/Pima St-Cottonwood Mingus Ave & 14th St</i>		<i>3:45</i>	<i>1:15</i>	<i>12:15</i>
<i>Main Campus</i>	<i>Arrive 8:05</i>	<i>Leave 3:20</i>	<i>Leave 12:50</i>	<i>Leave 11:50</i>

<i>Sedona Route</i>	<i>Morning Pick-up</i>	<i>Full Day Drop Off</i>	<i>Friday Afternoon Drop-Off</i>	<i>Half Day Afternoon Drop-Off</i>
<i>Posse Ground Park West Sedona Parking lot across from skate park</i>	<i>7:30</i>	<i>4:00</i>	<i>1:30</i>	<i>12:30</i>
<i>Weber's IGA 100 Verde Valley School Rd. Village of Oak</i>	<i>7:50</i>	<i>3:35</i>	<i>1:05</i>	<i>12:05</i>
<i>Main Campus</i>	<i>Arrive 8:10</i>	<i>Leave 3:20</i>	<i>Leave 12:50</i>	<i>Leave 11:50</i>

Carpooling

Desert Star strongly supports carpooling and will make every effort to assist families in developing carpools. Our commitment is to reduce the number of cars coming onto our campus as much as possible. The benefits of carpooling are an important part of Desert Star's mission: less stress on families, stronger community connections, less pollution and improved relations with our neighbors. We ask that everyone make a concerted effort to carpool with at least one other family whenever possible. Please note that the office does not coordinate carpools but will provide school rosters to assist. Always make arrangements for pick up prior to the school day.

Dress Code

DSCS recognizes that all students are valued based on who they are and not what they wear. We strive to create a positive environment in which the focus can be on learning. Students are actively involved in their learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Clothes worn to school must meet the criteria of being safe, free of distractions and clean/hygienic.

Teachers may request that students turn their garments inside out or change. Students may be given "loaner" clothes to cover problems temporarily. If the situation is unable to be remedied at school, a call will be made from the office to bring a change of clothes or footwear.

Items that will not meet the school criteria include:

- Flip-flops, sandals with no back strap (students wearing inappropriate footwear will not be allowed to participate in recess, games, or hikes).
- Distracting hairstyles and non-natural hair colors
- Violent or suggestive clothing
- Face piercings
- Wearing hats or sunglasses inside classrooms



Change of Clothes

Kindergarteners and First graders should bring the following items to have on hand if needed: extra shirt, pants (or shorts), socks and underwear. The classrooms and office do not have any spare clothing available.

Environmental Science

Due to desert hiking and safety concerns, students without proper required equipment, clothing, shoes and water, WILL NOT be able to join their class on nature walks. Please be certain your child is properly equipped. A change of shoes may be kept in your child's cubby.

Electronic Devices and Personal Property

The use of cell phones and electronic devices by students is not permitted during school hours unless approved by a school employee. Students who bring electronic devices and/or who will use them on the bus, will be asked to sign an electronic device guideline form at the beginning of the school year. If a student is found using an electronic device without authorization the device will be brought to the office. A parent or guardian will need to come to the office to retrieve the device. Toys and games should not be brought to school unless authorized by the teacher.

Pets

No pets are permitted on the school campus, on or off leash, for health, safety and liability reasons. The only exception is if specific permission is given from administration and the teacher.

Lost and Found

A lost-and-found box will be kept on campus. Please check it regularly. Unclaimed items left for longer than one month may be donated to charity.



Lunch and Nutrition Guidelines

Students in grades 1 – 8 need to bring a snack and lunch every day except on half days when children will only need a snack. Kindergartners will need to bring a lunch only if they are staying for the extended day.



Please follow these guidelines when packing your child's lunch:

1) Include a full re-usable wide-mouthed water bottle. Although drinking water is readily available at school, it is necessary to have a water bottle easily accessible during outdoor activities.

2) We ask that parents supervise the packing of lunches and make sure the lunch is fully prepared. Teachers do not have the facilities or assistance for heating or cooking. Warm soups can be sent in a thermos.

3) Send perishable food in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack.

4) Pack a well-balanced lunch focusing on whole and healthful foods. Include proteins, healthy carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables so that your child has good energy for the afternoon. We highly recommend avoiding lunchables and other pre-packaged lunches and snacks. Some children are sensitive to the artificial ingredients, preservatives and food coloring used in processed foods. Please eliminate or limit these items as much as possible.

5) Please only send foods low in sugar. No candy or sugary treats/drinks please. **Gum is not allowed.**

6) Please make an effort to reduce the environmental impact of packaging waste and use reusable containers. This includes using a reusable lunch bag instead of paper or plastic bags which often end up blown onto the playground by the wind.

At this time, the school does not provide lunch or snack. Students who arrive at school without a lunch or not enough in their lunch will call home for food to be brought to school. Students should not share their lunches with other students' due to allergy issues and lack of permission by parent to do so. Our policy is to have each student pack meals in and out so parents can monitor their child's food intake during school hours.

If your child has special nutritional needs or if you have questions about any of these guidelines, please let your child's teacher know. Food allergies must be listed on the emergency medical form and be made known to the teacher at the beginning of the school year.

Birthday Celebrations

Each class has their own birthday protocol to honor students. The school strongly recommends that you check with the teacher about this. If bringing a snack to share, we recommend sugar-free snacks such as popcorn, vegetables, and homemade goods.

Do not send invitations to school unless **all** of the students in the class are invited or all the girls or boys.



Health and Safety Policies

Keeping your child at home when ill:

Children should be kept at home under the following circumstances:

- 1) The child is not well enough to play outdoors.
- 2) The child has any of the following symptoms: fever, sore throat, yellow/green discharge from the nose, congested cough, discharge from the eyes, rash, fever over 100 degrees or vomiting.
- 3) The child has a communicable illness, such as chicken pox, strep throat, lice, rash, etc. **In this case, please notify the school immediately so that we may inform others as necessary.**

If your child becomes ill or majorly injured during the school day, he or she will be sent to the office for care and you will be called. In the event that we are unable to reach you, we will call the emergency contacts you have provided. Please be sure you keep the office up-to-date with any changes in contact information. Students who are ill must be picked up within 45 minutes since we do have a secluded area for students to wait for pick up.

Behavior Policy

Student Discipline Guidelines

The Desert Star student body, faculty, staff and administration work with socially inclusive models for school-wide positive behavior and discipline, and observe the following school rules:

1. We are Respectful
2. We are Responsible
3. We are Kind
4. We are Safe

Discipline at DSCS is to be considered an aspect of social guidance and student accountability. The purposes of discipline are:

1. To provide a classroom situation conducive to learning.
2. To promote character training, i.e., to cultivate the virtues that ensure ethical living and to redirect misguided behavior.
3. To develop self-discipline.

In order for a discipline program to be consistent and effective, parents and guardians are expected to support teachers and administrators.

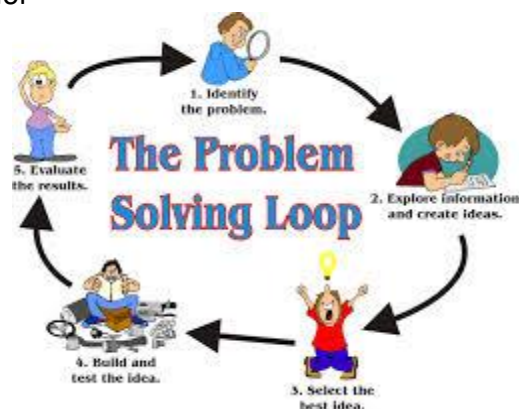


General Classroom Rules

1. Raise hand to speak in class and request to get out of seat.
2. Strive for courtesy at all times.
3. Interrupting is not permitted.
4. Vulgar language is not permitted.
5. Outdoor behavior (running, loud talking, ball play, etc.) is unacceptable inside the classroom.
6. Food or drinks, other than water, are not permitted during class time.
7. All classroom materials and furnishings need to be handled with care.
8. Students shall not operate air conditioner/heaters, lights, or fans, nor open and close windows without permission from the teacher.
9. Follow the dress code.
10. Hats are to be removed in classrooms.
11. The classroom is to be kept neat and all personal and school materials are to be stored in an appropriate manner.
12. Snacks and lunches must be cleaned up prior to the next activity.
13. Going into other students' or teachers' desks, packs or jackets is not permitted without permission from the person.

When a DSCS student chooses not to follow the rules and guidelines of the classroom, playground, or other school facility, a choice will be made for the student by the adult responsible for the supervision of the children, i.e., the teacher, playground monitor or administrator. At times, removal from the group is necessary to protect the student and/or the learning environment of the school. This removal is necessary when a student:

1. is irrational or unreasonable,
2. puts another in danger,
3. pushes beyond the limits of respect in speech or actions,
4. has continued and chronic lack of responsibility
5. has chronic misbehavior



If possible, the adult will work to help the student regain self-control. If regaining control does not happen, the following discipline cycle will be set in motion.

Step One: A student referred to the office will meet with the administrator, an incident report/referral form will be completed by the attending adult, and the administrator may inform the student's parents of the meeting by telephone or letter. Documentation of the behavior will be entered into the school's student behavior data system and a hard copy placed in the student's file.

Step Two: If a student has chronic misbehavior, a conference with parents/guardians, teacher, student and the administrator will be scheduled and a contract will be drawn up listing actions that will be taken by each participant in the conference. A date to review the contract will be scheduled. If a student is sent to the office repeatedly, or in severe cases the administrator will proceed directly to step three..

Step Three: The student will meet with the administrator and the administrator will notify the student's parents/guardian that a suspension has been imposed. The administrator will determine the length and type of suspension (in-school or out-of-school). A conference will be held with student, parents, teacher and administrator in attendance and a written plan will be created to assist the student with self-control. This plan will be monitored within specified time limits. A recommendation may be made to have the family visit with a counselor or other specialist. All school work missed must be completed and a probationary time period to monitor and review progress will be set once the student is ready to return to class.

Step Four: When little or no behavior change is evident and school personnel have exhausted all available means to effect change, the student will move to Step Four. The administrator will recommend expulsion or permanent removal from the school. The student's parents/guardian will be notified in writing, the reasons for removal will be given, and the right to request a hearing will be explained. The expulsion may be reconsidered by the administrator when a written request for a special hearing is made by the student's parents/guardian.

Serious Misbehaviors Warranting an Incident Report/Referral Form or More Severe Responses:

1. Obscene or abusive language.
2. Gossiping about, teasing or harassing another student.
3. Stealing.
4. Showing disrespect, lying to, or deceiving a faculty member or other adult.
5. Cutting classes.
6. Leaving the school grounds without an adult.
7. Fighting-including hitting, kicking, scratching, biting, spitting, pushing.
8. Defacing school property.
9. Throwing hard or pointed objects, such as rock or sticks.
10. Physical or emotional abuse towards peers or adults.
11. Possession of tobacco, alcohol, or any intoxicating or controlled substance.
12. Possession of firearms, knives, or other weapons.
13. Possession of sexually explicit subject matter.
14. Persistent misbehavior or disregard for school rules.

Substance Abuse: Substance abuse is an extremely serious matter and is not to be considered lightly. All rumors of substance abuse, regardless of how petty or where the alleged abuse took place, will be investigated, including the questioning of students involved and the reporting of the allegations and findings to their parents/guardians and, if necessary, the police.

Weapons: The possession of firearms, knives (with the exception of approved pocket knives on camping trips), or any other weapon or other item that can be construed as a weapon is prohibited on campus or at school events. Any student found in possession of such an item risks the most severe disciplinary response. Any conversation between students, including joking, about the possession or use of a weapon will be thoroughly investigated and reported to the student's parents/guardians.

Anti-Bullying Rules

HB2368 was signed into law and became effective Aug. 12, 2005. ARS 15-341(A)(40) requires all public school governing boards “to adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment, bullying and intimidation of pupils on school grounds, school property, school buses, school bus stops and at school-sponsored events and activities.”

The purpose of the Desert Star Community School anti-bullying policy is to outline our community’s responsibilities as noted below as staff, faculty, students, parents/guardians, and families to eliminate social, emotional, and physical intimidation and bullying in any form within the Desert Star community.



Faculty and Staff Responsibilities

- ❖ Be a positive role model in word and action at all times,
- ❖ Work to remove opportunities for bullying and/or harassment through active supervision at all times,
- ❖ Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying and/or harassment,
- ❖ Intervene appropriately when acts of bullying and/or harassment are suspected or observed,
- ❖ Report suspected or observed incidents of bullying and/or harassment to the appropriate administrator, faculty/staff member, and to parent/guardian,
- ❖ Complete documentation when appropriate,
- ❖ Work to build, support and maintain a bully-free campus environment,
- ❖ Attend annual policy manual meeting. Read, sign, and uphold policy.

Student Responsibilities

- ❖ Treat others with respect, kindness, and courtesy,
- ❖ Be aware of how your words and actions affect others,
- ❖ Uphold the Desert Star anti-bullying policy,
- ❖ Refrain from participating in acts of bullying and/or harassment,
- ❖ Report suspected or observed acts of bullying and/or harassment to the appropriate administrator, faculty/staff member, and/or parent/guardian,
- ❖ Work to build, support and maintain a bully-free school environment.

Parent Responsibilities

- ❖ Be a positive role model in work and action at all times while on the Desert Star campus, on school trips or at school sponsored events,
- ❖ Demonstrate respect and courtesy in all Desert Star relationships,
- ❖ Read, sign, and uphold the Desert Star Community School anti-bullying policy,
- ❖ Discuss and clarify the policy with your child/children,
- ❖ Take an active interest in your child's social relationships and friendships,
- ❖ Watch for signs of distress in your child or sudden changes in their behavior or demeanor. Any of these may indicate a potential problem.
- ❖ Communicate with Desert Star administrators, faculty/staff members about suspected, observed, or reported incidents of bullying and/or harassment,
- ❖ Commit to working with Desert Star personnel when your child is involved in a bullying and/or harassment incident.



Students are prohibited from bullying on school grounds, school property, school buses, at school bus stops, at school sponsored events and activities, and through the use of electronic technology or electronic communication equipment on school computers, networks, forums, phones, or mailing lists.

Disciplinary action may result for bullying which occurs outside of the school and the school day when such bullying results in a substantial physical, mental or emotional negative effect on the victim while on school grounds, school property, school buses, at school bus stops, at school sponsored events and activities or when such act(s) interfere with the authority of the school system to maintain safety and order. Suspected violations of the law may be reported to local law enforcement.

Reporting Bullying Behaviors, including Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Molestation

Any student, employee, volunteer or school community member who believes he or she has been the victim of any form of bullying or sexual harassment by another student, employee, volunteer or school community member should report such incident to the school administration. If the school administrator is the alleged perpetrator of the incident or incidents, then the report should be made to a member of the Board of Directors.

Bullying:

Bullying is when a student or a group of students engage in any form of behavior to intimidate, harass, embarrass, or harm another person or to cause submission. It occurs when there is a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength. Most students with bullying behaviors single out people who stand out in some way. Almost any quality (positive or negative) can become the focus of attention. It can be manifested through written, verbal, physical, or emotional means and may occur in a variety of forms including, but not limited to:

Physical –pushing, throwing objects, hitting, unwanted touch, spitting, tripping, biting, pinching, disrespectful actions etc.

Verbal –threats, racist/sexual comments, taunting, insult, inappropriate language, name calling, cruel jokes, disrespectful comments towards students or adults, lying, etc.

Social/Relational – peer pressure, gossip, harassment, rumors, exposure to social exclusion or ostracism, ignoring, avoiding, shunning, hurting feelings, creating embarrassment, shaming etc.

Criminal Behavior–cyber bullying (social networking (ie.Facebook), etc., instant messaging, texting/sexting, blogging, etc.); vandalizing school property, taking and distributing inappropriate pictures, stealing personal belongings.

Cyber Bullying: Cyber bullying is, but not limited to, any act of bullying committed by use of electronic technology or electronic communication devices, including telephonic devices, social networking and other Internet communications, on school computers, networks, forums and mailing lists, or other school-owned property, and by means of an individual's personal electronic media and equipment.



Harassment: Harassment is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that is disturbing or threatening to another student or group of students. Intentional behaviors that characterize harassment include, but are not limited to, stalking, hazing, social exclusion, name calling, unwanted physical contact and unwelcome verbal or written comments, photographs and graphics. Harassment may be related, but not limited to, race, religious orientation, sexual preference, cultural background, economic status, size or personal appearance. Harassing behaviors can be direct or indirect and by use of social media.

Intimidation: Intimidation is intentional behavior by a student or group of students that places another student or group of students in fear of harm of person or property. Intimidation can be manifested emotionally or physically, either directly or indirectly, and by use of social media.

A student who threatens to cause physical injury or serious damage to property, or intimidates another person, by word or conduct, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. Threatening to commit any physical injury to a school employee or student; threatening to damage any school property, school employee's property, or student property may result in any or all of the following: Report to the police, suspension or expulsion. All incidents will be reviewed and handled on a case-by-case basis and will include review protections afforded by special education law for special education students.



Consequences for bullying and/or harassment

May include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ Meeting with administrator and/or appropriate school personnel,
- ❖ Mediation,
- ❖ Removal from classroom, playground, and/or classroom activities,
- ❖ Individual behavior plans/contracts,
- ❖ Disciplinary hearing,
- ❖ Short term suspension,
- ❖ Long term suspension,
- ❖ Expulsion

Consequence Guidelines

Behavior	1 st offense	2 nd offense	3 rd offense
Defiance Disrespect toward school authorities Non-compliance	-0-3 day suspension -parent contact -serve teacher assigned consequences	-0-5 day suspension -parent contact -serve teacher assigned consequences	-3-9 day suspension -parent contact -serve teacher assigned consequences
Dress code	-wear alternate article -parent contact	-1 day in school suspension -wear alternate article -parent contact	-3 day suspension -wear alternate article -parent contact
Excessive tardiness	-parent contact	-parent contact	-parent contact -0-9 day suspension
Excessive/inappropriate public display of affection	-warning -parent contact	-warning -parent contact -0-3 day suspension	-warning -parent contact -0-3 day suspension
Fighting	-0-5 day suspension -parent contact -possible notify police	-3-9 day suspension -parent contact -possible notify police -recommend counseling	-5-9 day suspension -parent contact -possible notify police -recommend counseling - long term suspension - expulsion
Truancy or out of class without permission Leaving school grounds without permission	-3 day suspension -1 day in school suspension -parent contact -refer law enforcement	-5 day suspension -3 day in school suspension -parent contact -refer law enforcement	-5 day suspension -1 day in school suspension -parent contact -refer law enforcement
Cell phones and electronic devices	-item taken, parent retrieve	-item taken, parent retrieve	-item taken, parent retrieve -possible suspension
Cheating/plagiarism	-zero on work -parent contact	-zero on work -parent contact -academic support	-zero on work -parent contact -academic support -1 day suspension -possible summer school

Consequence Guidelines

Behavior	1st offense	2nd offense	3rd offense
Vandalism	-0-3 day suspension -parent contact -restitution -possible notify police -possible community service	-0-3 day suspension -parent contact -restitution -possible notify police -possible community service	-5-9 day suspension -parent contact -restitution -possible notify police -recommend long term suspension expulsion
Selling/Possession/Use of drugs or other substance and paraphernalia	9 day suspension -notify police -parent contact -recommend expulsion		
Possession or use of firearm, taser, or destructive device	-9 day suspension -notify police -parent contact -recommend expulsion		
Assault Aggravated assault Sexual assault Hazing Death threat Public sexual indecency	-9 day suspension min -notify police -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion	-9 day suspension min -notify police -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion	-9 day suspension min -notify police -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion
Arson Bomb threat Biological/Chemical threat Fire alarm misuse	-0-9 day suspension min -notify police/fire -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion	-5 day suspension min -notify police/fire -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion	-9 day suspension min -notify police/fire -parent contact -recommend community service counseling long term suspension expulsion
Homicide Armed Robbery Kidnapping	-9 day suspension -notify police -parent contact -recommend expulsion		

- ❖ The consequences listed and others not be listed above are subject to administrative discretion depending on the severity of the action, regardless of the lack of any prior offenses
- ❖ All rules apply to students while on school grounds and during school sponsored activities on/off campus

Special Education Students

When a special education student engages in misconduct that could result in suspension or expulsion, Desert Star shall follow the State Board of Education rules governing suspension and expulsion of special education students. Pursuant to the rules, if the misconduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability, standard school discipline procedures shall apply.

Academic Policy

Desert Star Community School (DSCS) bases its curriculum on the needs and capacities of the developing child as this is understood in Waldorf Education. We strive to bring age appropriate subject matter to students using styles of teaching suitable to their developmental stages. We also strive to challenge the children while at the same time not rushing them into some aspects of learning too soon.

The academic achievement of the students at DSCS is assessed by teachers through daily observations, portfolio assessment, quizzes, tests, and standardized state tests. The social, emotional, and physical health of the children is also of prime importance to the teachers, and every effort is made to give the children the opportunity to grow and develop in these areas. We also recognize that a vibrant artistic and musical experience at school supports creativity, intellectual growth, and emotional health.

As a charter school in the state of Arizona, the teachers and staff of DSCS are also cognizant of state requirements and state standards. Some components of the Waldorf approach to education should not and need not be compromised. Other aspects may be modified in order to responsibly prepare the students for the state tests.



Education at Desert Star Community School, as our name implies, is a joint effort of teachers, students and parents. Parents will support a healthy childhood and educational experience by providing the following:

- Proper nutrition
- Adequate sleep
- Minimal media
- Quiet time
- Time in nature
- Chores at home
- Appropriate dress
- Cultivation of reverence
- Support of your child's education
- Support of the class community

Regular attendance and timely arrival at school each morning also give the students the vital support that they need to be successful.

Academic Expectations and Academic Probation

In order to enable the students to achieve their very best, DSCS holds high standards of academic achievement. When students fail to meet these standards, we seek to put in place support systems that will allow them to succeed.

When academic achievement of students in grades 2 -5 falls below the category we designate on the report card as “approaching standards” or falls below a grade of C for students in grades 6-8, the student will be placed on a “probationary warning” status. This status could also include a student who is not completing class work and/or homework.



Probationary Warning Status

Students given a “probationary warning” status will be offered an academic improvement plan. This plan will outline supportive steps to help the student meet the academic goals set by the teacher. This plan will be developed by the class teacher in coordination with the administration. The student and parents will meet with the class teacher to review and agree to the improvement plan.

The following steps may be outlined in an improvement plan:

- Improved student attendance
- Completion of classroom assignments
- Participation in class
- Supervision of homework by the parents
- Participation in after school tutorials

When the student has met the goals of an improvement plan, a “letter of achievement” will be written by the class teacher. This letter will be attached to the improvement plan and placed in the student’s file.

Grade Matriculation

Since the Waldorf curriculum addresses not only the intellectual needs of the growing children but also seeks to meet their physical and emotional needs, every attempt is made to place students entering the school in classes with children of similar ages. We strive as a school to give each student the best possible chance for success in our educational setting.

There are times when a student's grade placement might come under review. Retaining a child is given the greatest consideration by the class teacher, faculty, and parents. At the center of this discussion is what is in the best interest of the child.

Factors that will be considered in any such discussion are:

- Student attendance (State law sets minimum attendance requirements.)
- Academic performance
- Consideration of the student within the normative developmental picture
- Student success with adaptive learning supports offered by the school

When the question of promotion arises, a formal parent conference will be held with the class teacher. A letter summarizing issues addressed in that meeting will be written by the class teacher. The class teacher and parent will agree on an "assessment period." A student's ability to meet clearly defined benchmarks will be considered by the class teacher and the administration. Promotion will be determined by the class teacher and the administration.

Field Trip Policy

All field trips must be specifically approved, in advance by administration. Before any student is taken from the school grounds on a field trip, written permission must be obtained from a parent or legal guardian. Teachers may sometimes request items students must bring on the field trip like sunscreen etc. The school may require students to pay all or part of any admission fees, meals, or other expenses.



Field Trip Approval Protocol

1. When planning a field trip, teachers must check in with office to verify date is available without any conflict with other school activities. Requests for field trips should be approved at a minimum 2 weeks in advance from the scheduled day of departure.
2. Once date is confirmed, teachers are to complete the field trip form.
3. The field trip form is then approved and signed by the Administrator. Copies of the form are made and sent home for parental permission.
4. Teachers are to collect and verify that they have obtained ALL student permission forms prior to leaving on trip. A student missing a form will remain at school.
5. All forms signed with parental consent are to be copied prior to leaving on trip. The copy remains with the teacher and the original remains in the office.
6. All volunteers need to check into the office and complete the field trip volunteer form prior to departure. If a volunteer does not have a fingerprint card on file, they may not attend the field trip. A volunteer may not bring any other person(s) with them on any field trip.
7. Teachers may not bring their own children or allow any siblings of their students on the field trip.

Field Trip Driver Protocol

1. All drivers (including teachers) must check into the office on the day of the field trip.
2. The following items will be verified:
 - a. A valid fingerprint card is on file in the office.
 - b. A copy of a valid driver's license is on file in the office.
 - c. A copy of current automobile insurance is on file in the office.
3. All drivers will complete and sign the field trip volunteer form prior to departure.

No adult may attend a field trip unless a fingerprint clearance has been completed at DSCS through DPS.
NO EXCEPTIONS.

Media Policy

In our society, the media in all its forms (T.V., movies, video games, computers, computer games, portable CD players, etc.) is an ever-growing presence in our lives. We as educators and parents face the difficult choice of deciding how much to let the various media into our lives and how to use them wisely.

With growing children, this question becomes even more urgent. Current research increasingly points to a direct adverse effect on brain development from excessive exposure to media. In schools as well as the home, we are confronted by many forms of attention deficit disorders and other learning disabilities. We also see a fading of the powers of imagination and wonder. Young children are by nature “doers.” The media exposes children to an artificial world that allows no engagement of their own will and imagination. This evokes unnatural responses in a child’s being and stunts the seeds of human development. Not only is the nature of the media foreign and directly harmful to the child’s developing brain and inner being, the content of most television programs, video games and movies is glaring in its disregard for what childhood really is meant to be. Because of this, exposure to the media works at cross purposes with what Waldorf education aims to bring.

Our recommended guidelines regarding media use are as follows:

1. For grades K – 5: No television, video games or movies during the school week; minimal parent-directed media use on weekends and during vacations.
2. For grade 6-8: No television or video games in the morning before school; minimal parent-directed media use during the school week; parental involvement in determining appropriate media and computer-use choices at all other times.



Playground Rules

The following guidelines apply generally to all play areas. More specific guidelines may be provided by on duty teachers or supervision staff.

Supervision

1. A minimum of 1 staff person per class is to be on duty at all times on the playground during school hour recess periods. Each class teacher will be assigned a post.
2. No students are to be sent out before an adult is on duty.
3. People other than DSCS staff and approved volunteers are not allowed on the playground during school hours, unless they are on tour or have been granted permission from the administration.
4. The teachers on duty are to be vigilant in making sure only appropriate equipment is being used and that it is being used in the proper way.
5. Teachers on duty need to encourage the most efficient use of playground space for all users and their respective activities and may ask groups to adjust, as needed, for the safety and fairness of all.
6. Teachers and yard supervisors will guide appropriate play among age groups with an eye to suitability, roughness, etc. If teachers/supervisors see something that makes them uncomfortable – whether or not it falls within general guidelines – they will confer with that student's class teacher, if the teacher is present. If the teacher is not present, the teacher/supervisor on duty will intervene and discuss the incident with the class teacher later on.



Equipment and Play Structures

1. A variety of sports and play equipment may be used such as jump ropes, hula hoops, etc. Playground balls, basketballs and footballs may be used in the field/basketball court area only. Regular baseball bats and hard baseballs present safety concerns and are not allowed.
2. Equipment may be brought from home if it is deemed acceptable by the class teacher. Students who bring equipment should be advised that breakage is not the responsibility of the school.
3. Equipment needs to be brought in at the end of recess by the students who used it and put into its designated storage space.
4. Ropes may be used as jump ropes ONLY and may not be tied from branches in trees or play structures.
5. No skateboarding is allowed on school property during school hours.
6. No climbing on fences, trees or play structures is allowed.
7. Sticks are not allowed to be used and will be removed from the playground area if there are problems.
8. Shoving, pushing, tackling, or use of excessive force is not allowed.
9. Students are not allowed to throw objects such as stones, sticks, dirt clods, or sand on the school grounds.
10. Physical contact with a student who is hanging from any climbing bar is not allowed.
11. No riding on the backs or shoulders of other students is allowed.
12. Weaving between moving swings is prohibited.
13. No walking on see-saws without adult supervision and permission.
14. Any student identified as having damaged school property will participate in the restoration or replacement process.



Team Games

1. Participation in team games such as soccer requires all students to demonstrate good sportsmanship, which means playing cooperatively, fairly, and safely and communicating respectfully. Students who cannot meet this standard may be required to sit out.
2. The general rule is to encourage inclusive play amongst the various grades with age appropriate games. except the soccer field.
3. There may be a limited number of players for certain games. Additional students who want to play should be allowed to rotate in. The teacher on duty needs to support the students in maintaining a fair method for accomplishing this.
4. Clear boundaries need to be established for team games. The on-duty teacher may need to help establish and maintains these. Traffic cones can be obtained from the PE teacher for this purpose.



Supervision After School

After school hours, supervision of students is the responsibility of parents. It is the school's expectation that parents ensure that their children are following the playground rules and remain in their general eyesight while on campus. Students may never be in any of the classrooms or office unless an adult accompanies them.

Pathway of Communication

Addressing parent concerns is a high priority at Desert Star and all concerns will receive prompt and thoughtful attention. The health and harmony of our school community depends on all parties taking a responsible and constructive approach to raising and resolving concerns. When raising a concern, it is essential to speak directly to the person(s) involved. Speaking directly may be difficult but it is the most effective way to resolve a concern. When you go directly to the person involved and let them know of your concern you can work together to find a solution. It is not appropriate to discuss your concerns with others in the community before you speak directly with those involved.

Before raising a concern, parents are encouraged to do the following:

- Take some time to reflect on the true nature of the concern. Is it a personal issue which may be better resolved outside of school or is it an issue that requires action within the school?
- If the concern raises strong emotions, take time to allow these emotions to subside so that it is possible to engage in a constructive discussion.
- If the concern involves existing school policies, take the time to understand these policies and their purpose.
- Come up with a proposed solution for the concern and consider how this solution may affect all parties involved.



Concerns regarding teacher issues

1. Speak directly to your child's teacher and try to find resolution at this level. If you are unable to find resolution after speaking to the teacher, the next step is:
2. Call the office and make an appointment to speak with the Administrator.
3. All approaches to resolving concerns and conflicts, including mediation, will be considered, if needed.

Concerns regarding classroom & student issues

1. Speak directly to your child's teacher and try to find resolution at this level. If you are unable to find resolution after speaking to the teacher, the next step is:
2. Set up a meeting with teacher and the Administrator.
3. All approaches to resolving concerns and conflicts, including mediation, will be considered, if needed.

Concerns regarding bus issues

1. Call the office and make an appointment with the Administrator.
2. All approaches to resolving concerns and conflicts, including mediation, will be considered, if needed.

For concerns regarding school operations and policies it is best to contact the office and make an appointment with administration.

School Organization

Parents of students at Desert Star Community School are given the opportunity to grow with their children in a unique educational environment. Parent participation is an essential and integral part of a child's educational experience and serves to unify families and create a strong sense of community. Many of the activities and programs at Desert Star rely on the skill and generosity of parents. For this reason, it is vital to the success of the school that families actively participate in various school events and activities. The following are the main bodies of the school, their responsibilities and how you can become involved.



Board of Directors

Desert Star Community School has a Board of Directors that is responsible for deciding legal, financial, personnel, and policy issues of the school. The Board consists of parents, faculty, staff and other community members, who serve 2-year, staggered terms. The bylaws of the Board are available in the school office. Board meetings are held monthly or more often if necessary, and agendas are posted on the school office window at least 24 hours before a Board meeting. If you would like a Board meeting agenda emailed to you before each meeting, please contact a Board member. Board meetings are public meetings and all are welcome to attend. The entire school community votes to fill open Board seats every fall. Those interested in running for open Board seats are welcome and invited to contact the Board. There is a procedure in place for the petitioning for the removal of a Board member where there is just cause.

Administration

Administration is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, supervises the teachers, works to ensure compliance with State requirements, and is available to assist parents with questions or concerns. The Receptionist/Registrar works at the front desk and supports daily office routines. The Office Coordinator supports the work of the administration. Administration meets regularly with faculty to discuss upcoming events and any concerns brought forward.

Parent Involvement

Parent Volunteers

It is requested that all families contribute a minimum of 50 hours per year in service to the school, that's about one hour per week of school. To volunteer in the classroom, please contact your child's teacher or class parent representative. Volunteers must sign in and out at the office. Please write your volunteer hours in the volunteer log book located in the office. If you are unable to volunteer, you may choose to make a financial contribution in support of the school. Some ways to help are:

- Campus care
- Field Trips
- Plays
- Festivals
- Weekly cleaning of classrooms (speak with class teachers for specific needs)
- Coordinate box tops or Escript programs
- Childcare during school meetings

Please note that parent volunteers who are directly supervised and within eyesight of a teacher will not need a fingerprint card. Those who are alone with students in a classroom, the playground, or on a field trip will be required to have fingerprint clearance on file. Also parents who attend school sponsored overnight field trips are required to have fingerprint clearance. If you are planning on volunteering regularly or attending field trips, please come to the school office for fingerprinting instructions and forms. This precaution is for the safety of your child and all the children in the school.



Communication Builds Community

Desert Star Community School uses the following methods to communicate and to strengthen our community.

Parent/Teacher Conferences & Conversations

We have regularly scheduled dates throughout the school year for parent/teacher conferences. There may be other times that teacher or parent would like to share observations with respect to a child's participation in our program. At such times, a parent/teacher conversation may be arranged by appointment. All teachers are available for parent conferences during the school week. Contact individual class teachers for an appointment. Please do not engage your class teacher in a lengthy conversation when children are present or directly before school begins. It is important for teachers to keep their focus on the students before and during the school day.

Newsletters and Updates

Notices about upcoming events, classroom activities, and committee/faculty/Board information are sent home in newsletters and email updates on a regular basis to keep parents up-to-date and involved.

Bulletin Board

The bulletin board is located outside the office. Here you will find posted a school year calendar and monthly/weekly events. You will also see photos and press releases of recent school and student activities. Important announcements will also be posted here.

Desert Star School Website

Our website is another way to stay up to date with what is going on in our school community. We are working to update our website regularly with important information for parents. Please check it as often as you can.

Class Meetings

Each class teacher will schedule a minimum of three class meetings throughout the year. It is extremely important for each family to be represented at these meetings. Content may include:

- Outline of the year
- Daily schedule
- Characterization of the child at this age
- Discussion of the current block
- Social issues
- Questions and concerns from parents

These meetings help to cultivate the culture of your child's class with teacher and parents working together.

Why Fundraising is Essential at Desert Star

Desert Star relies heavily on our parents' support to continue to serve our community. As an Arizona State Charter School, Desert Star is not eligible to receive State funds to acquire, build, maintain or remodel our facility. The school you see today is the product of the hard work and commitment of many dedicated volunteers from our community. Charter schools are also at a disadvantage in comparison to district schools because they are not able to participate in general school district bond issues or to access override funds. There is a lack of government funding available to charter schools for special education, business/financial services, administrative and custodial services, all of which are available to district schools. Charter schools all depend on their enrollment, student attendance and parent contributions for continued financial support to survive.

The good news is that despite the financial hurdles charter schools must endure, Desert Star can bring a highly valued Waldorf education to all, at no charge. As you may know, obtaining a Waldorf education in a private Waldorf school in this country costs at least \$10,000 per year. To have access to this type of education for free is a rare opportunity that we are blessed to have here in Arizona. We count on your continued support via annual State Tax Credit donations, cash donations, in-kind donations and your valuable time and expertise to keep this educational option alive for children now and in the future. The school is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation, so all donations are tax-deductible.

Parent Behavior Guidelines

Any person on the school campus is expected to uphold the behavior expectations outlined in the Behavior Policy. In addition, parents must follow these guidelines when interacting with students on campus or during any school sponsored activity, (on or off campus):

1. We are a drug and smoke free campus. Drugs, alcohol and tobacco may not be consumed on campus or in the presence of students, including on field trips.
2. It is expected that everyone interacting with students use appropriate language at all times. Profanity is not permitted.
3. Any person chaperoning a field trip or school activity is under the direct supervision of the class teacher. Make sure you have a clear understanding of this policy and the teacher's expectation of you in this role. If you are not functioning in an official chaperone or supervision capacity, do not take it upon yourself to discipline any student.
4. Be aware of the conversations you are engaged in around the children. For example, it is not appropriate to discuss a concern about a teacher or other staff member in the presence of students. This also includes negative "parking lot" talk.
5. Teachers are on campus to teach our students. Please respect their work. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classroom activities; however, these visits must be pre-scheduled with the teacher and/or the office. All parents must sign in at the office and get a name tag. Parent guidelines for visiting classrooms will be given.
6. We ask that you follow the guidelines set forth in the Nutrition Guidelines section of this handbook when contributing food or drinks to a school activity, including class trips. The class teacher should approve any food or drink that you plan to bring.

Recommendations to Support Learning

- Have children arrive on time for school
- Read with your children every day for 20 minutes
- Do mental math problems with your children
- Have a nighttime routine and have children get adequate sleep
- Feed your children nutritional meals, especially breakfast
- Allow children to be independent and use their acquired skills
- Be engaged and ask children about their homework and review the homework is complete

Student Assessment

Desert Star Community School uses many assessment tools to monitor the growth and development of students. These include:

- Teacher observation (daily interaction that allows teachers to see where students excel, where they are challenged, what works, what does not, not only academically, but also socially and artistically)
- Portfolio assessment (analysis of a collection of student's work over time which shows the level of progress being made)
- Informal tools (quizzes, activities, etc. that teachers make or find to help determine how well students are grasping material being presented in class or how they are progressing with basic language and mathematical skills)
- State and federally mandated Standardized tests.

These assessments help teachers continually adjust to meet the individual needs of students and also allow Desert Star to monitor how well we as a school are meeting our goal of providing an exceptional learning environment. Throughout the year, parents are informed of student growth in the following ways:

1. Informal conversation (your child's teacher will let you know how and when to contact him or her to touch base as to how your child is doing)
2. Parent evenings
3. Twice a year parent/teacher conferences
4. Mid-year written progress report
5. End-of-the-year progress report



Standardized Testing

As a charter school, Desert Star is required to administer standardized tests annually. Currently, students in grades 2 through 8 are being tested per Arizona Department of Education guidelines. In addition to meeting state requirements, these tests can be a valuable tool to the school, when viewed in light of a multi-faceted approach to assessment. Our expectation is that the students will approach their experience of standardized testing in the same joyful, confident way that they approach any other aspect of their school life.

Child Find

All Public agencies must have in place an effective method to locate and identify children birth through 21 years of age who may have delays or disabilities and may require an evaluation in order to receive needed early intervention supports or special education services. For complete information on regulations of Child Find, you may review the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which is located in the Desert Star Community School office.

Right to Know Teacher Qualifications

Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teacher. You have the right to know the following:

- Whether the Arizona Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the Arizona Department of Education has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Teachers' aides' or similar paraprofessionals' qualifications.

You may request any of the above information from our office and it will be given to you in a timely manner.

FERPA Notification of Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate.

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal [or appropriate school official], clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

[Optional] Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.]

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-590