

DESERT SPRINGS ACADEMY/CHARTER SCHOOL
10129 E. SPEEDWAY BLVD.
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85748
(520) 321-1709

PARENT HANDBOOK
2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR

Mission Statement:

Desert Springs Academy/ Charter School will allow each student to achieve maximum growth in academics, citizenship and personal responsibility, in a positive environment that allows each student to progress at his or her own pace.

Educational Philosophy:

Desert Springs Academy/Charter School educates children to become successful, productive, and independent members of our society. The curriculum incorporates the best of tradition and modern innovation, stressing solid preparation in the fundamental academic skills of reading and phonics, writing, and computation.

Our teaching effectiveness emanates from a well-structured learning day that sets and maintains an appropriate educational tone from beginning to end.

Desert Springs Academy is committed to the personal care of the children entrusted to us, realizing that we hold in our hands those journeying through the most impressionable years of their lives.

Every child is capable of achieving his or her potential to the fullest extent when afforded respect, fairness, kindness, caring discipline, and appropriate instruction.

Desert Springs Academy believes that between the family and school we have the primary responsibility for the growth and development of our children. Therefore, parents or other guardian adults should have direct input and inclusion in their education.

The Director and Governing Board verify and endorse the mission statement and oversee the implementation in the school. In their capacity as policy makers and community leaders, these administrators and governing board members advance Desert Springs Academy's role as a charter school committed to children.

As role models and instructors, Desert Springs Academy's teachers are valued by students and parents for their caring attitudes. Intelligence, creative teaching, loyalty, and responsibility are characteristics of the faculty.

Parents expect and appreciate direct and regular communication from faculty regarding their children. Reciprocally, Desert Springs Academy's parents should be responsive to teacher suggestions for helping students.

School Hours for Grades K-8: 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

FRIDAY EARLY RELEASE 2:30 p.m.

During the Day:

Parents should transport their children to school for arrival no earlier than 8:15 a.m. A staff member will greet the children upon arrival each morning. Students may stand quietly and visit with friends until the opening of the school day. **LATE ARRIVALS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO BEGIN AN ORDERLY SCHOOL DAY.** If late, please sign-in at the school office.

Before-school care will also be available beginning at 7:30 a.m. for a fee of \$3.00/day.

IN THE INTEREST OF YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY and teacher's preparation time, please pick up students by 3:30 p.m. Parents should meet their child at the DESIGNATED PICK UP AREA. NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER A CAR PARKED IN THE PARKING LOT.

If your child is to ride home with someone other than the regularly scheduled driver, please send a note to the office giving written permission for the driver to pick up your child. Please instruct the driver to go directly to the office to present identification.

Students who walk or ride their bikes to school are encouraged to go directly home following dismissal. Students who linger at the school or stop to visit with friends on the way home cause undue worry for parents and staff.

Afterschool care is available until 5:30 p.m. (\$100.00/month). Please call Ms. Alice at 250-1235 to make arrangements.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is important to a child's success in school and establishes good work habits and self-discipline. Also, a child who has had a proper night's rest is better prepared to learn. Establishing a regular bedtime helps students appreciate that school is an important endeavor and requires adequate rest.

All absences are to be verified by a call to Desert Springs Academy from a parent or guardian on the morning of the absence. If you must take your child out of school early, please inform the teacher at least one day in advance. This includes medical and dental appointments. Students who are dismissed early are required to sign out at the school office.

Parents planning to take their child on a trip that will take them out of school **SHOULD NOTIFY THE TEACHER AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE TRIP.**

No work will be given before extended family vacations. Assignments will be collected during the student's absence. The student has the same number of days as absent to complete assignments, to a maximum of five days. Students who miss an announced test during their absence over material covered will take the test the day they return. In fairness to teacher's planning time no exceptions will be made to this policy.

Illness:

If a student becomes ill during school, he or she should notify the teacher, who will help make appropriate arrangements with the school office for the student's care and/or parent pick-up.

Class work/Homework Assignments:

Assignments for absent students may be picked up from the school office. Please call the school office before noon and the teacher will be informed of your intended class work pickup.

Weekly Newsletters:

Each week teachers post on line weekly newsletters containing timely information. Please read the newsletters each week.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. These are established times when parents and teachers meet to discuss student progress. Parents are expected to attend these important meetings. Parents and teachers, of course, are welcome to schedule a conference whenever necessary. If you wish a conference, please contact your teacher.

Fire Drills:

When the bell sounds for a fire drill, all persons go quickly and quietly to the nearest exit (determined by the classroom teacher). Students proceed as a group to the parking lot or playground area next to the school. The last person exiting a classroom should turn off the lights and close the door. Students gather silently with their classmates while the teacher takes attendance. When the return signal is given, everyone should return quietly to the classroom.

Tuition:

Desert Springs Academy is a state funded Charter School and is tuition free.

Enrollment:

Desert Springs Academy/Charter School will accept all timely applications for students in Kindergarten through Eighth grades. Should a classroom be at its capacity, students will be placed on a waiting list (by parental request).

Desert Springs Academy/Charter School may elect not to admit students who have been expelled from another school. If the school discovers a student has been previously expelled, that student's enrollment may be terminated.

Student Lunches:

Parents/Guardians will need to provide a sack lunch for their child. A catered lunch is also available daily. Parents who wish to order may pay one month in advance; order forms are sent home monthly with students.

Dress Code:

Desert Springs Academy's dress code was established to provide a consistently attractive and neat appearance for all students and to avoid peer pressure in matters of dress. All students will be required to wear uniforms consisting of: navy blue or khaki dresses, jumpers, slacks, shorts (walking short length), with navy blue or white shirts (knit shirt or blouse with collar will qualify). For safety reasons, sensible shoes (tennis shoes or like kind) need to be worn.

Patriotic Fridays: Every Friday is Patriotic Friday! Students must wear regular uniform bottoms, but may wear other shirts without collars that are red, white, and navy blue/patriotic. Shirts that have symbols, emblems or messages that are not patriotic will not be allowed.

Caps are allowed only for medical reasons and for protection from the sun while on the playground; they must NOT be worn INSIDE the building at anytime.

Electronics:

Electronic devices are not allowed at school.

Grading:

Students receive number/letter grades for all assignments. The grading scale is as follows: A+(100%), A (99-93%), A- (92-90%), B+(89-88%), B (87-83%), B- (82-80%), C+(79-78%), C (77-73%), C- (72-70%), D (69-65%), F (64% or below).

Conduct and Discipline:

Education is the primary mission of the school. All of Desert Springs Academy's teachers recognize that the conduct of the students in their classroom affects behavior outside the classroom.

With that in mind, all teachers explain and disseminate the rules and accompanying rewards and consequences that govern all aspects of classroom behavior. They address tardiness, missed homework, inappropriate behavior, dismissal, acceptable work, preparedness, and general citizenship.

Disciplinary Action:

Disciplinary Action can be summarized in five steps:

1. Reprimand (The teacher gives a reprimand to the student in private with the Director in attendance, if the situation warrants).
2. Written incident report/referral if warranted
3. Detention
4. Suspension
5. Expulsion

To ensure that learning is not interrupted by behavioral disruptions, Desert Springs Academy enforces a policy of administering referrals and detentions. The goal is to work with parents to reinforce and support agreed-upon standards of courtesy, respect, and behavior, which are an important aspect of children's education, and to prevent the loss of valuable instructional time. The maintenance of an orderly and harmonious classroom is essential to learning, and the policy of referrals and detentions reflects the Academy's educational philosophy.

Detentions are assigned as warranted. In an attempt to keep communication open, parents will be contacted when a write-up is issued. A teacher or the Director may request a parent conference after the student has served a detention.

Infractions that result in a referral or detention include the following:

1. being disrespectful to a teacher, peer, or visitor
2. fighting or roughhousing
3. exhibiting inappropriate or boisterous behavior
4. speaking out in class without permission
5. being out of an assigned seat unnecessarily
6. being unprepared for class by not bringing books, or materials necessary for the class
7. violating the dress code
8. cheating, lying or committing plagiarism
9. tardiness
10. any behavior deemed unacceptable by the Director or faculty

Suspending a student from school is reserved for the most serious offenses or the most constant misbehavior. It is instituted at the request of the Director in consultation with the appropriate teacher(s) and parents. Suspended students are expected to complete missed class work by the start of school the following day. Standards for return will be drafted at the start of the suspension period, during a parent conference with the Director and teacher.

If a student cannot or will not abide by the foregoing rules, that student may be expelled. After consultation with parents, student, and involved faculty, the Director may acknowledge that all other corrective avenues have been exhausted and recommend to the Governing Board expulsion of the student.

Any illegal activity occurring during regular school hours, within school vicinity, or while participating in any school project, will be met with ZERO TOLERANCE, resulting in IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION and includes but is not limited to: TOBACCO or ALCOHOL possession or use; DRUG-RELATED activities; ILLEGAL GANG-RELATED activities; WEAPONS POSSESSION and ABUSE.

Reward for Positive Citizenship:

Realizing most students respond to positive reinforcement, teachers reward students with fine citizenship records.

Honor Roll:

The Honor Roll is published in the teachers' newsletters/web pages, and students receive special recognition at one of the ceremonies opening the school day.

Kindergarten, First and Second Grades will not participate in the Honor Roll.

Third and Fourth Grades: no grade less than A- and one B+ per grading period in all content areas, and no mark less than a S+ in effort and work-habit areas.

Fifth through Eighth Grades: no grade less than A- and one B+ per grading period in all content areas, and no mark less than S+ in effort and work-habit areas.

