

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

PARENT HANDBOOK
2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

Mission Statement:

Desert Springs Academy/ Charter School will encourage 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 strives to educate 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, kindness, caring discipline, and appropriate instruction.

Desert Springs Academy partners with families in sharing responsibility for the growth and development of the children. Parents should expect and appreciate direct and regular communication from staff regarding their children. Desert Springs Academy's parents should be responsive to teachers' suggestions for helping students.

As role models and instructors, Desert Springs Academy endeavors to hire faculty who are caring, intelligent, creative, loyal, and responsible.

The Director(s) and the Governing Board verify and endorse the mission statement and oversee its 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.

Student Rights:

- To feel safe in the school environment
- To take full advantage of the learning opportunities
- To learn in an environment free from disruptions
- To respectfully express his/her opinions, ideas, thoughts, and concerns

- To have a healthy environment that is smoke-, alcohol-, and drug-free
- To use school resources and facilities for self-betterment with appropriate supervision
- To expect courtesy and respect from all members of the community
- To be informed of all expectations and responsibilities
- To take part in a variety of school activities

Student Responsibilities: (See also Conduct and Discipline section)

- To treat all members of the school community with respect and courtesy
- To be caring and honest
- To do his or her best to master all that he or she can
- To respect school rules, regulations, and policies
- To be sure that personal expression does not interfere with the rights of others
- To follow laws and school policies concerning substance abuse
- To respect and protect school property, the property of others, and personal property
- To meet the expectations of the school community
- To refrain from vulgar language and gestures
- To follow the prescribed guidelines for participation in school activities
- To arrive on time for school each day

School Hours for Grades K-5: 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Friday Early Release: 1:45 p.m.

Arrival/ Dismissal:

Standard arrival time is no earlier than 8:15 a.m. Students should report immediately to their classrooms. If late, please sign in at the front desk. Students' standard dismissal time is 2:45 p.m., and students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be placed in the after-school program for a drop-in fee.

If your child is to ride home with someone other than the regularly scheduled driver, please send a note to the office giving 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 must leave promptly at dismissal time.

Alternate Dismissal Times:

Each Friday, dismissal is one hour earlier. The dismissal time for half days is 12:00 noon.

Before/ After School Care:

Before school care will be available from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. for a nominal fee. ALL students arriving during this time period MUST report to the Before Care Room.

After school care is available until 6:00 p.m. Please call Mrs. Alice (250-1235) for information regarding times and fees.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is important to a child's success in school and establishes good work habits and self-discipline. Therefore, please follow the policies below.

A call to the school is required for every absence, and should be made as early as possible (321-1709). Voice messages are acceptable.

Students arriving after 8:30 are considered tardy and must sign in at the front desk. (See discipline section.)

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. For emergencies, please notify the school prior to your arrival to minimize disruption.

Extended Absences from School:

Arrangements for extended absences should be made one week in advance, if possible. If teachers send work for the extended absence, the completed work should be turned in upon students' return. If work is not sent in advance, students will be given a reasonable time to complete missing work upon their return.

Absences of Three Days or Less:

Missed work will be provided to students upon their return. Students will be afforded appropriate time to complete their missed assignments.

Dress Code:

Desert Springs Academy's dress code was established 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, or shorts (walking short length), with navy blue or white shirts, with short or long sleeves and a collar. Uniforms must be a solid color and cannot have any logos (except DSA logos), monograms, stripes, or other markings showing on them.

Shorts, skirts, skorts, and jumpers must be at least one inch past the student's longest finger when the arm is relaxed and dropped straight down at the side. Spaghetti straps, strapless tops, sagging pants and/or clothes that expose undergarments or midriffs are not acceptable.

Students may be required to remove jackets and/or sweatshirts when entering the classroom and when outdoors in warmer months. Any appearance or accessories that interfere with or distract from the instructional process are prohibited.

For safety reasons, appropriate footwear, such as tennis shoes, must be worn at all times. "Flip-flops," open-toe shoes, and roller shoes are not permitted.

Patriotic Fridays:

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

Dress Down Days:

Only school appropriate attire is allowed. See above, under "Dress Code." 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 any time. Baseball-style caps must be worn with the bill facing the front.

Conduct and Discipline:

Students at Desert Springs Academy shall:

1. Comply with all DSA school policies, procedures, rules, and regulations relating to acceptable standards of student behavior.
2. Be responsible for assisting the school staff in maintaining a safe school.
3. Respect and maintain the school's property and the property of others.
4. Recognize and respect the rights of others.

Examples of unacceptable student behavior include but are not limited to:

- Use of disrespectful behavior/ language on campus or any off-campus events
- Bullying or harassment, on the basis of sex, race/color/national origin, or disability
- Cheating, dishonesty, plagiarism
- Disruption to the educational process
- Endangering the safety and welfare of others
- Excessive absences/ tardiness
- Possession/ use of a weapon, drug paraphernalia, or illegal substances
- Violating the dress code
- Theft
- Unauthorized use of school property
- Willful damage to school, staff, or student property
- Unauthorized use of electronics
- Any behavior deemed unacceptable by the Director and staff

All teachers will explain and disseminate the rules and accompanying rewards and consequences that govern all aspects of their classroom and Desert Springs Academy. Information regarding missed homework, inappropriate behavior, dismissal procedures, acceptable work, preparedness, and general citizenship will be conveyed to the students by each teacher.

Disciplinary Action:

Disciplinary consequences for infractions include but are not limited to:

- Conferences
- Community Service and/ or Restoration
- Removal of School-Related Privileges
- In-School Detention and/ or Short Term Suspension
- Out-of-school Short Term and Long Term Suspension
- Withdrawal

- Expulsion

While every incident is reviewed on a case by case basis, Desert Springs Academy utilizes a progressive discipline policy: repeated infractions of any nature will result in progressively increasing consequences.

If a student cannot or will not abide by DSA's policies, that student may be suspended or expelled. The Governing Board will review all requests for expulsion of a 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
- GANG-RELATED activities
- WEAPONS POSSESSION

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).

Honor Roll:

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

Third Grade—All A's and B pluses in content areas, and either S or S+ in all other areas, per grading period

Fourth and Fifth Grades—No grade less than one B+ in content areas, and either S or S+ in all other areas, per grading period

Illness/ Injury:

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

Weekly Newsletters:

Each week, teachers post online newsletters containing timely information. Please read the newsletters each week.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-Teacher conferences are held at the end of the first quarter. 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 child's teacher.

Fire Drills, Lockdowns, and Evacuation Drills:

Fire drills, lockdowns, and evacuation drills are conducted for everyone's protection and are required by law. During these drills, it is imperative that students remain silent, follow instructions given by the teacher, and carry out all directions in an orderly fashion.

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 Fifth grades. Should a classroom be at its capacity, students will be placed on a waiting list (by parental request).

Desert Springs Academy 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 need to provide a sack lunch for their children. If at any time, a catered lunch is available, parents will be notified. NO MICROWAVES OR REFRIGERATORS will be available for student's lunches. Therefore, the use of Thermoses and cold packs is recommended.

The above policies are subject to change at the discretion of the Desert Springs Academy School Board. Any questions in regards to policies should be addressed to Mrs. Shoffner, Director. All final decisions should be respected and supported.

With my signature I/ we understand and accept the above statements.

Signature Date

Signature Date

Student(s) Name(s) and Grade(s)