

# **Desert Star Academy Scholar and Parent Handbook**



**Academic Scholars, Citizens and Leaders of our World**

**2022 - 2023**

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## **Mission Statement:**

Desert Star Academy, a college preparatory school will provide all children in the community an educational foundation rich in student engagement and rigor that will empower all scholars to become excelling and accountable scholars, productive citizens in their community and future leaders of society.

## **Core Values**

- All scholars will use their strengths to grow emotionally and academically to achieve excellence.
- Desert Star Academy will provide a learning culture where excellence is the standard.
- Each scholar will learn in a safe, nurturing environment where self-confidence will be developed and where the scholar is encouraged to take educational risks, accept challenges and learn new concepts.
- Collaboration among scholars, teachers, families, and community partnerships are responsible for educating a college bound scholar to achieve excellence.

## **Family Involvement**

Desert Star Academy acknowledges the family as the first source of learning and instruction. That process should not stop when each scholar begins school. The family **MUST** remain an important asset throughout the learning process. Desert Star's commitment to the family will be demonstrated monthly during school hosted parent meetings and events providing an opportunity for each scholar to present their academic accomplishment to their family. Parents will have the opportunity to network with each other and the school staff will promote collaboration and commitment to the education experience that is so richly embedded in the school culture at Desert Star Academy.

## **Governing Board Members**

Margie Montgomery, President  
Julia Goodwin  
Kylee Melcher  
David Rubio  
Mijung Lombardi

## **Administration**

School Director, Margie Montgomery  
Assistant Director, Kylee Melcher  
Elementary School Principal, Deann Osuna  
Middle School Principal, Chris Barton

### **A Successful Scholar will:**

1. Strive for **Academic Excellence** in the classroom by maintaining grades of 80% or better.
2. **Demonstrate Citizenship** by participating in school and community events.
3. **Become Leaders** by setting great examples for other scholars, following all rules and directions and attending school every day.
4. Invite **parents** to **volunteer at school** or work on homework and projects with you.

### **Attendance / Absence Policy**

Arizona state law requires that all school age children attend school on a regular basis. Arizona Revised State Statute 15-803 B states:

**A child who is truant habitually or who has excessive absences may be adjudicated an incorrigible child as defined in section 8-201. Absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the required attendance days prescribed in section 15-802 subsection B, paragraph 1.**

Desert Star Academy requires all scholars to be in class on a daily basis from 8am to 3:30pm for elementary scholars, 7:30am to 3:45pm for middle school scholars, Monday through Thursday. In the event of an emergency or illness a scholar can be excused from school with a doctor note, phone call or note from a parent or guardian stating the reason. Parents or guardians are expected to notify the school no later than 11am the day of the absence. If a parent or guardian does not call the school, or a doctor note is not presented, the scholar will be marked unexcused. Each scholar is required to make-up all work from the day(s) absent in a timely manner, one day to make-up work for each day absent. Any work or assessment due on the day of the absence will be made-up the first day the scholar returns to school. **Scholars are required to be promptly picked up by and not earlier than 3:30pm for elementary, 3:45pm for middle school, Monday through Thursday. Scholars will not be released during the last 30 minutes of the day unless prior arrangements have been made with the front office.**

### **Excused Absences**

Absences will be considered excused for the following reasons: Doctor / Dentist, family emergency, illness, legal / religious, bereavement, and pre-planned vacations. A pre-planned vacation form must be received and approved by the principal before the vacation takes place. Forms will be available in the front office.

## **Unexcused Absences**

5 Days Unexcused: Attendance warning note will be mailed home.

10 Days Unexcused: A parent meeting with the teacher and an administrator will be scheduled. The scholar will be placed on an attendance contract.

The school year consists of 144 scheduled school days. Therefore, any scholar who misses more than ten percent of the available school days, may be prosecuted under the above statute and/or be subject to disciplinary action or retention. All absences must be documented by a signed note from the student's parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence. In the case of a medical appointment or a serious medical condition the scholar must bring a note signed by a medical doctor.

If a scholar becomes injured or ill during the school day, the parent will be notified by phone so the child may be picked up. **If there is no phone, school MUST have on record an emergency phone number for a neighbor, friend, or relative that can be reached to care for the child.**

Scholars may not leave campus after arriving at school unless they are checked out by a parent or legal guardian.

## **Tardiness**

Any scholar arriving to school after the first period bell rings must report to the front office for a pass. Scholars arriving post attendance after school start time must obtain a pass through the front office. Any scholar who enters a classroom after the bell has rung without written excuse from the front office, staff or administration will be considered tardy. Excessive tardies may result in a discipline referral for unexcused absences for truancy

## **After School Program**

Desert Star Academy Elementary offers an after school program for a fee of \$5.00 per day. The program will run from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday for grades K-5. It will be located at the Elementary Campus (5744 Highway 95). **All scholars MUST be picked up, no later than 5:30 pm.**

**\*Before your scholar can attend this program, the parent or guardian must sign and fill out the After School Program application.**

Desert Star Middle School offers a variety of sports, clubs and after school tutoring programs after school. Tutoring and clubs meet from 3:45pm to 4:45pm Monday-

Thursday. Please check with your scholar's athletic coach on start and end times of practice. Sports physicals are required. Scholars must be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of practice. Parents will be given a verbal warning after the first offense, second offense scholars will not be allowed to participate in the extracurricular programs.

### **Make-Up Work**

The scholar is responsible for getting assignments and making up all work missed because of an absence. A scholar will have the same number of days to get the work done and handed in to the teacher, as he/she was absent (up to five days). Any work not completed within the make-up window will result in a scholar attending Friday school. If the scholar does not attend the assigned Friday school, all missing work will be entered as a zero and no credit given.

### **Mandatory After School Tutoring**

Desert Star Academy believes all scholars shall strive for excellence by maintaining grades of 70% or better. If a scholar has a D or F or did not meet their grade level benchmark goals will have mandatory after school tutoring. Scholars will be working with teachers on reteach of missed standards, complete missing assignments, or possible retake of assessments. Scholars will need to attend mandatory after school tutoring till they are at grade level for reading and math and/or all grades are at 70% or better. Communication will be sent home if your scholar has to attend mandatory tutoring. Failure to attend mandatory tutoring may result in retention of your scholar.

### **Friday School**

Friday School will be mandatory for scholars with outstanding assignments until their work is completed, per admin discretion. This does not apply to make-up work from excused absences. Mandatory Friday School will also be assigned based on benchmark and state testing results to reteach standards where scholars are not at grade level.

### **Athletic Programs**

Interscholastic sports constitute a part of the total education program as scholars will learn the game basics, teamwork and leadership skills. The goal of Desert Star Academy is to involve as many scholars as possible in a wide variety of interscholastic sports and activities, developing their skills in a competitive environment in order to prepare them for high school both as scholars and athletes. Eligibility is determined by try-outs. The amount of playing time is not guaranteed. The athletic code of conduct for

each sport will be established by the coaches and approved by the site administration. The coaches will hold the scholars accountable for academic and behavioral performance. Desert Star Academy's Interscholastic Sport Offerings are football and volleyball, cheer and cross country in the fall, boys and girls basketball in the winter and baseball, softball and track in the spring.

### **Athletic Participation Packet**

An Athletic Participation Packet must be completed and verified before a scholar may participate in the practice of an athletic sport. This packet requires basic scholar demographic information, permission to participate, a physical examination, health insurance information, and permission to treat in an emergency. Individual coaches may ask for additional information as deemed necessary per activity. Scholars/Parents may pick up packets from their coach, the front office or download the attached link below. All packets must be returned to the front office before a scholar may participate in extracurricular sports. Scholars must pick up, and return a completed athletic packet to the office before they can try-out or practice with a team. Most sports require scholar try-out. All participants must pay a \$50.00 athletic fee per sport upon selection to a team. Scholars will get two weeks from the date of team selection to pay in the front office. Failure to pay athletic fees will result in dismissal from the team.

### **Athletic Rules and Regulations**

The academic policy shall apply to all scholars who choose to participate in the school's interscholastic programs. Grade checks will be conducted weekly and/or prior to the game. Scholars failing one or more classes will be ineligible for that week's events including core classes and electives. Scholars will be offered an opportunity to improve grades and return to eligible status the following week. After two weeks of eligibility the scholar will no longer be able to be on the team. To participate in extracurricular activities (practices, rehearsal, performance, competition), the scholar is required to attend all classes the day of an activity. Should an activity be scheduled on a Saturday, Thursday's attendance will apply. The only exceptions allowed will be circumstances beyond the control of scholars, as determined by the coach, athletic director, or unavoidable absence verified by parent and/or school administrator. Any scholar suspended from campus (OSS) is ineligible to practice, participate, or compete for the duration of the out of school suspension. Coaches will establish rules for game day participation. Scholars may be benched from starting or participating on a game day based on academic eligibility, disciplinary status, or the team contract.

### **Academic Excellence Recognition**

Each quarter scholars will be recognized for their academic performance. The Honor Roll will recognize academic excellence. To be eligible for the Honor Roll a scholar must obtain at least a "B" average with no "C's" "D's" or "F's" for that grading period. The Principal Honor Roll recognizes students with a straight "A" report card. No grade must be below an "A-" to earn this award.

**Academic Excellence Trip:** Scholars earning Principal's Honor Roll AND scoring a "Meets" or "Exceeds" on the benchmark tests will earn a reward field trip to a surprise location.

### **Homework Policy**

Scholars should set aside time each day for the completion of homework assignments. We believe that in this fast-paced world, families should be able to spend quality time as they choose. Because of this, homework will be minimal. Scholars will also have thirty minutes at the end of the day to ask questions from their teachers. Parent/child interaction is vitally important to a successful education program. **Please read with scholar nightly!!!** Homework not turned in on the due date will be subject to credit reduction on the total assignment. Credit will not be given for homework turned in on the 11th day past the due date. No exceptions.

### **Criterion for Promotion**

- Each scholar must achieve a 70% or higher overall in each subject area listed above in order to be promoted to the next grade level. The overall grade will be based on a weighted average 70% from scores on the Common Core Standard assessments and 30% from classwork and projects.
- Each scholar must achieve a minimum score of 80% on all individual Common Core summative and formative assessments to be promoted to the next grade. The teacher will reteach and assess each scholar until an 80% mastery level is achieved.
- A scholar will not be promoted unless all content areas meet the above requirements or a special meeting with the school director, teacher and parent is held to decide otherwise.

### **Criterion for Retention**

- Each scholar will be retained when one or more of the above content areas fall below a 70% for one or more quarterly grading periods.

- Each scholar will be retained if all individual Common Core summative and formative assessments are not passed with a 80% or higher within a quarterly grading period.
- A scholar must pass each Common Core Standard assessment within the quarterly grading period before moving on to the next standard without an intervention plan and support.

## **Communication**

Parents are encouraged to check their scholar's assignments and Parent Vue each day. We encourage parents to call the teacher and set up an appointment at (928) 770-4523 to discuss any concerns

**\*\* Parents: Please notify the school office immediately if there is a change in address, phone, email address, employment or emergency contact information\*\*\***

## **Enrollment Policy**

Desert Star Academy will adopt the following enrollment procedures complying with ARS 15- 184

All families interested in enrolling their child(ren) at Desert Star Academy will be required to complete the following steps and participate in the following enrollment process:

- Families submit an enrollment application during the Open Enrollment Period. This period lasts from the first Monday in February through March 31st of each year.
- If application exceeds the number of available spaces, Desert Star Academy students, the school will hold a random, public lottery. All prospective students must participate in the lottery.
- Lottery occurs on the first Thursday of April at 7:00 PM.
- Once all of the open seats in a grade level have been filled, Desert Star Academy will draw for the order of the waiting list.
- All families are notified in writing within one week of the lottery of their child's status.
- Families complete and submit Intent to Enroll paperwork within two weeks of the lottery date, including a signed acceptance letter and enrollment packet.
- Preference will be given to children of Board members, faculty and staff of the school and siblings of already enrolled scholars.



- Desert Star Academy will limit the enrollment of scholars per class as follows:
  - 24 kindergarten and first grade students per class
  - 24 students in grades 2 through 8 grade

## **Visitors**

**All visitors must report to the school office when arriving on campus, and must sign in and wear a visitor badge at all times.** Parents or Guardians who wish to volunteer may sign in whenever school is in session and we will put you to work! Those wishing a conference with a teacher should call for an appointment or send a note with a student.

## **Volunteers/Visitors/Tours**

In accordance with the Arizona law, all visitors must check in at the office and receive a visitors badge. The school does not allow visiting friends to attend school with scholars. Parents may visit their child's classroom for observation and/or visit but are encouraged to make prior arrangements with teachers. Legal identification (e.g. drivers license) is required.

**Volunteers:** All adults who work with scholars in the classroom, on campus, on field trips or as chaperones at school events must have prior fingerprint clearance on file in the office. Application information is available at the school office.

**Tours:** Call front office for appointment at 928-770-4523

## **Scholar Drop-Off**

Scholars should not be dropped off before 7:30 AM unless they are participating in the extended day program. Classes do not begin until 8:00 am for the elementary school, and 7:30 am for the middle school. There will not be an adult on campus to watch your child if they come before 7:30 AM.

## **Scholar Pick-Up and Sign-Out**

Scholars may not be picked up early for convenience purposes. If you need to pick your scholar up early due to a Dr. appointment or any other excused reason, you must sign them out at the front office and our receptionist will notify their teacher. You are not allowed to walk to their classroom and pull them out yourself as this is very disruptive to other scholars and classrooms. Scholars will only be released to the adults listed on their contact list. If you need your scholar to be signed out with another adult, you must provide a signed note ahead of time. Scholars will not be released during the last 15 minutes of the day unless prior arrangements have been made with the front office.

## Withdrawal From School

If it is necessary to withdraw a scholar from school during the school term, parents or guardians must come to the school office and complete a withdrawal form for the records.

## Closed Campus

Scholars are not permitted to leave the school campus at any time before the end of the school day without permission from parents/legal guardians. A parent/legal guardian must provide a written signature on a sign out sheet when a student leaves the school early. Scholars leaving the campus during the school day without permission are truant and are subject to disciplinary action.

## Personal Appearance and Dress Code

1. All scholars are required to wear the school approved Desert Star Academy shirts with black bottoms (for elementary scholars) or tan bottoms (for middle school scholars) EVERYDAY. School approved spirit clothing may replace a school shirt on Thursdays. If a school spirit shirt is worn, bottoms other than black or tan may be worn as long as they are appropriate within the dress code. If the regular school shirt is worn the bottoms must be black for elementary and tan for Middle School. Shirts must be neat, clean, free of any markings, and in good repair. Shirts must also be worn appropriately and as designed, unaltered. Shirts are not to be cut, tied, or rolled up. During the cooler weather, school approved jackets and hoodies with the school logo are permitted.

2. Skirts/Shorts must be black (for elementary scholars) or tan (for middle school scholars), hemmed or rolled with no fringes. The bottom of the shorts or skirt must not be shorter than mid-thigh. Pants, shorts and skirts must be in good repair without holes.

Bottoms must be the appropriate solid color, a small side seam stripe or small logo is acceptable. Spandex shorts are not acceptable dress code.

3. Hair should be neatly groomed and clean. Only natural hair colors are allowed. Mohawks and faux-hawks are not allowed.

4. Elementary scholars are not permitted to wear make-up or novelty costume style headbands (i.e. cat ears, unicorn horns, etc).

5. Shoes must be worn at all times. Shoes must have a heel back for safety. **Slippers, flip-flops, slides, and roller shoes are prohibited. If scholars wear crocs the back strap must be worn.** Scholars must wear tennis shoes and socks for middle school PE class.

6. Hats and sunglasses are not to be worn indoors. Students who violate this rule will have these items confiscated until parents can pick them up.

7. Clothes should be clean, neat, and acceptable.

8. No pajama bottoms, or oversized jeans. Profanity and inappropriate logos will not be allowed. No below the hip jeans will be allowed. Body piercings will be permitted but may not be inappropriately displayed. Piercing may not include non-commercial jewelry items like nails or safety pins. School administrators will determine appropriateness. Tattoos, henna or writing/drawing on skin are not permitted.

9. Occasionally, Desert Star will have Free Dress Days or Dollar Dress Days for scholars to dress as they choose. The clothing must still be in compliance with our dress code. Shorts and skirts must not be shorter than mid-thigh. Tanks tops are not allowed.

10. Occasionally, Desert Star Academy has overnight field trips and water day that require swim attire. Scholars will wear board shorts or swim trunks and a rash guard or swim shirt.

**\*\*Principals will determine if a student is not in compliance with the uniform policy. Final decisions rest with the principals.**

**Reminder: TOBACCO OF ANY FORM IS NOT PERMITTED ON SCHOOL GROUNDS. Police will be notified if this law is violated.**

### **Emergency School Closing**

In the event of severe inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, school may be closed or starting time-delayed. Please listen to the local radio station for an announcement of school closure. Also, an email will go out to all contacts in our database.

### **Phone Calls**

Telephone callers need to have after-school plans and lunch accommodations before coming to school. Scholars are not permitted to use school phones except for legitimate emergencies related to their health and welfare.

### **Lunches**

Currently Desert Star Academy is not equipped to offer lunches. Scholars should bring a nutritious lunch to school and eat a nutritious breakfast prior to coming to school.

Parents and guardians may sign in as a visitor to eat lunch with their scholar in the designated lunch area.

## **Child Find**

Child-Find is a program that seeks to identify and provide special services to disabled children ages 1-21 who qualify, who live within our school district, and who are not currently enrolled in school. Disabilities may include hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disabilities, speech impairment, or developmental disabilities. To obtain more information notify school employees or contact the Special Services Director through the main office.

## **Health**

**Over- the Counter Medications:** Scholars must have written permission from a parent/guardian to take any medicine from school. Scholar medications must be stored and administered in the Health Attendant's Office.

**Prescription Medications:** Medicines prescribed by a physician must be in the original container and properly labeled. Before the Health Attendant administers medication, a district form completed by a parent/guardian must be on file in the Health Office.

**Contagious Disease:** Any scholar suspected of being contagious will be sent home by the Health Attendant and will not be permitted to return without a written statement by a physician.

## **Lice and Nits**

Desert Star Academy has an absolute "no nit" policy. Any scholar having head lice will be sent home. The scholar will be excluded from school until the child's hair is free of lice and nits. The scholar, upon returning to school, must be accompanied by an adult and must report to the health attendant's office where a detailed examination will be made. If there is no evidence of active lice or nits the health attendant will issue a signed approval of reentry.

## **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

Is a federal law that protects the privacy of all scholar's educational records. Please ask for a copy of the notification for all details.

## **Textbook-Materials**

Scholars will be issued textbooks at the beginning of the school year. The school will hold scholars accountable for any damage or loss of texts. **Scholars should bring required classroom materials everyday, (i.e., paper, pencil, notebook).** Scholars should also bring a bottle of water every day.

## **Field Trips**

Field Trips to places relating to studies can enrich a scholar's classroom lessons.

### **Requirements:**

**Scholars are required to have written permission from their parents or guardians before they are permitted to go on such trips.**

**\*Elementary scholars are also required to wear the neon yellow Field Trip Shirts with black pants on any Desert Star Academy Field Trip. Middle school must wear the collark school shirt on all non-overnight trips. Scholars must not have any D's or F's on any report card.**

Scholars must ride the bus with their class to the field trip and also return with their class to school. Chaperone spots will be very limited, if at all.

The following will prohibit all scholars from attending any trip (local, out of town or overnight trips):

1. Vandalism
2. Stealing
3. Lying to Administration
4. Physical Altercations
5. Attendance
6. **Any referrals/ suspensions with in the current quarter of the field trip**

**Any prepaid field trips will not be reimbursed to the scholar's family if the scholar has any D's or F's or out of school referrals and/or suspensions. Unless there is ample time to fill in the spot with another scholar or payments have not been made.**

Grade deficiencies, discipline, or attendance problems may be grounds for ineligibility to attend field trips.

## **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

A notification of the scholar's progress will be sent home at mid-quarter. Scholars will also receive a report card each nine weeks. Parents are asked to sign and return these promptly. If a conference is needed, parents are requested to call the office to set up an appointment before or after school. **Parents or Guardians will be expected to attend at least one conference with their scholar's teacher each year.** ParentVue is available online to all parents and guardians to sign up and monitor scholar's progress and communicate with your scholar's teachers. Scholars who have not been in attendance all quarter will have a comment on their progress report of when they started at Desert Star Academy.

## **Bike/Scooter/Skateboard Rules**

All scholars riding bikes or skateboards to Desert Star Academy are encouraged to wear safety helmets. Bikes or skateboards are **not allowed** to be ridden on school grounds. There is a bike rack and storage provided for skateboards. Desert Star Academy is not responsible for lost or stolen bikes or skateboards.

Scholars who walk to school or ride bicycles are encouraged to practice safety. Go to or return home with a friend when possible. Avoid talking to strangers. Cross at the intersections when traffic allows. Look both ways and step onto the road when you can cross safely.

## **Nuisance Items**

Please do not bring expensive or collectable items, such as trading cards to school. Also, avoid sending large amounts of money. Electronic devices are **not allowed** in school. These include personal CD/DVD players, boom boxes, walkmans, electronic games, tape recorders, **cell phones**, beepers, MP3 players, GPS systems, and laser pointers. **The school is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices.**

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthday treats and party invitations brought from home for celebrations should be enough to include all scholars in the classroom and should be pre-approved by the teacher. Parents and guardians should ask their scholar's teacher if any scholar has food allergies in the classroom.

## **Police Involvement**

School officials have the option to notify police authorities and, in cases of major or repeated violations, press charges. If the police authorities are notified, parents or legal

guardians will be contacted. Any action taken by police authorities will be in addition to action by the school. School officials are not required to initiate or complete due process procedures nor contact parents prior to notifying police authorities. School officials, guided by school policy, will cooperate with police authorities during investigations.

### **Crisis Prevention Intervention Program (CPI)**

All teachers and school personnel will be trained in the CPI. This process addresses the need for safe, respectful, noninvasive methods for behavior management of students. The Nonviolent Crisis Intervention program, developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), not only teaches staff to respond effectively to the warning signs that someone is beginning to lose control, but also addresses how staff can deal with their stress, anxieties and emotions when confronted with these challenging situations.

### **Scholar Write-Ups and Referrals**

Yellow referrals. Scholar will be removed from the classroom for a conversation with the discipline director and time for behavior reflection. Scholar will be allowed back in class only after an apology has been given to the teacher and granted permission from the teacher to return to the classroom.

Red referrals. All red referral notices will be sent home and must be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to school on the next school day.

1st referral = reflection page to be written by the scholar.

2nd referral = 1 day suspension.

3rd referral = 3 days suspension.

4th referral = 5 days suspension and a behavior contract.

5th referral = 7 days suspension pending board hearing

Suspensions will result as follows.

Field trips: 9 weeks of no field trips from the date of the suspension.

Sports: Scholars will not be allowed to continue to practice during suspension. Scholars will NOT be allowed to participate in games, travel with the team, or wear their uniform for 10% of the season for every day suspended.

## **Scholar Suspension/Expulsion**

A scholar may be temporarily removed from contact with other students. The administrator has the authority to suspend a student for up to ten days after an informal hearing is held. If a scholar presents a danger to other scholars or staff members, the administrator may remove the scholars or staff members, the administrator may remove the scholar from school immediately. Parents will be notified prior to the removal, with a notice and hearing following as soon as possible. Each suspension must be reported to the charter boards within five days by the administrator. The administrator shall make recommendations for expulsion to the charter board. The charter board is the only entity that has the authority to expel a scholar. All requests for expulsion sent to the charter board shall have been followed, interventions used, and resources used by the teachers, staff and parents to help the scholar.

## **Consequences for Rule Violations**

The Desert Star Academy Discipline Policy disciplinary actions may be taken into action for each infraction. A minimum and maximum range is listed, as well as an action for the first occurrences and for repeated occurrences. Some consequences involve Scholar Solution and School Contracts. A Scholar Solution is an agreement between the Principal and the student that allows the student to make a positive change in their own behavior to solve a problem. A school contract is a probationary document that indicates a scholar may be removed from school for a future infraction. (This option is used when a scholar has a major rule infraction or repeated infractions) Both the scholar solution paper and school contract are signed by the parents and principal.

## **Bullying**

Bullying will not be tolerated. Any scholar caught bullying will be subject to extreme disciplinary action. Scholars who record an altercation or negative incident as interpreted by the administration will receive a minimum two days Out of School Suspension. Scholars identified actively observing a scholar altercation or fight will receive a minimum one day In School Suspension.

## **Internet/Computer Use**

The use of school computers and the Internet is a privilege and as such usage must adhere to the policies set down by the Governing Board. Scholars and parents must sign and agree to the conditions set forth in the district Acceptable Use Policy before a scholar is allowed to use a school computer (Permission Slip). Scholars are expected to follow the computer lab rules and refrain from viewing or downloading inappropriate material from the Internet. Any scholar who willfully violates established computer lab



rules or knowingly views or downloads inappropriate material will be subject to disciplinary action and/or risk revocation of computer privileges for the remainder of the school year. Connection to the Internet is to be used for educational research and other specific assignments made by teachers only. Scholars must have a signed parental permission slip.

### **Cell Phones and Tablets**

Cell phones may only be used before and after school. At all other times, they must be stored in their locker. Violation on this cell phone policy will result in the following:

- 1st offense: The cell phone will be taken and the scholar can pick it up at the end of the day.
- 2nd offense: The cell phone will be taken and the parent must pick it up.
- 3rd offense: The scholar will no longer be allowed to bring a cell phone to school.

Tablets and Chromebooks may be brought to school for classroom usage only.

Any scholar(s) involved in any inappropriate group messages or airdrops will result in disciplinary action as determined by school administration based on their participation.

### **Safety**

Emergency Drills: Each year at least one emergency action drill will be conducted. Those drills may involve scholars and /or employees at Desert Star Academy. Scholars are expected to follow the directions provided by their teachers or staff at the school. Scholars are expected to exit the room and remain orderly during all emergency drills. Disciplinary action may be imposed on scholars who interfere with the orderly conduct of any emergency skills. In addition to emergency drills, fire drills are conducted monthly. An escape plan is posted in each room.

### **Accidents**

If scholars are hurt while on campus during the school day, report the accident to a staff or faculty member. An accident report will be filled out if necessary.

**Non-discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you are been treated unfairly.**

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture Policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint for discrimination, write to USDA Director, Office of Civil

Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 140 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 (voice or TTD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Desert Star Academy wishes to provide to all scholars, parents, and staff members Notice of Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all programs and activities, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability by Public Elementary and Secondary Educational Systems, public institutions of Higher Education and Vocational Education and Public Libraries. Desert Star Academy will serve as the Designee to coordinate compliance. The Principal can be reached at: Telephone (928)300-3207 or Fax (928)788-3987

### **Lockers - Middles School Only**

#### **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

All lockers on the school premises are the property of the school charter. These lockers are made available for use in storing school supplies and personal items necessary for use at school, but the lockers are not to be used to store items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause an interference with school purposes or an educational function or which are forbidden by state law or school rules.

The use of the locker does not diminish the school charter's ownership or control of the locker. The school charter retains the right to inspect the locker and its contents to insure that the locker is being used in accordance with its intended purpose, and to eliminate fire or other hazards, maintain sanitary conditions, attempt to locate lost or stolen material and to prevent use of the locker to store prohibited or dangerous materials such as weapons, illegal drugs or alcohol.

All backpacks/lunch containers will be kept in the scholar's locker and not taken to class.

#### **LOCKER RULES**

In order to implement the school charter's policy concerning student lockers, the school board adopts the following rules and regulations:

1. Locks. The school charter will retain access to scholar lockers, by keeping a master list of combinations and/or retaining a master key. Scholars may not use their own locks to prevent access to lockers by school officials and any unauthorized locks may be removed without notice and destroyed.

2. Use of Lockers. Lockers are to be used to store school supplies and personal items necessary for use at school. Lockers shall not be used to store items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause an interference with school purposes or an educational function or which are forbidden by state law or school rules, such as drugs, drug paraphernalia, beverage containing alcohol, any flammable substance, bomb or explosive device, any pungent acid or nauseous chemical, any library book not properly checked out or overdue, non-returned gym or athletic equipment, any stolen items or any obscene material. Scholars will be expected to keep their lockers in a clean and orderly manner.

3. Authority to Inspect. The school charter retains the right to inspect lockers to insure they are being maintained in accordance with the conditions for Rule No. 2. All inspections of lockers shall be conducted by the principal or a member of the administrative staff assigned in writing by the principal. (For example: assistant principal, guidance counselor, and custodians)

4. Inspection of Individual Student's Locker and/or Backpack.

(A) The inspection of a particular locker and/or backpack will not be conducted unless the principal or his/her designee has a reasonable suspicion to believe that the locker to be inspected contains items which cause, or can reasonably be foreseen to cause an interference with school purposes or an educational function or which are forbidden by state law or school rules. "Reasonable suspicion" as used in these rules may be based on a number of factors including (1) information received by the principal or designee from teachers or scholars, law enforcement officer(s), or detection devices including trained dogs, (2) the past records of the scholar whose locker is to be inspected, (3) the seriousness of the problem to which the search is directed, such as violence or drug use in the school, and (4) the behavior of the scholar, for example, indications that the student is intoxicated.

(B) Before a particular scholar's locker is inspected, the scholar (or scholars if more than one have been assigned to a locker), if present on the school premises, shall, where possible, be contacted and given the opportunity to be present during the conduct of the inspection unless circumstances require that the inspection be conducted without delay in order to protect the health and safety of others present on school premises. Whenever an individual locker has been inspected under this rule without the student's presence, the principal or his designee shall notify the student of such inspection as soon as practicable thereafter.

## 5. Inspection of all Lockers.

(A) An inspection of all lockers in the school, or all lockers in a particular area of the school, may be conducted if the principal, superintendent or assistant superintendent believes that such an inspection is necessary to prevent, impede, or substantially reduce the risk of (1) an interference with school purposes or an educational function, (2) a physical injury or illness to any person, (3) damage to personal or school property or (4) a violation of state law or school rules. Examples of circumstances justifying a general inspection of a number of lockers are:

- (a) when the school corporation receives a bomb threat
- (b) when evidence of scholar drug or alcohol use creates a reasonable belief of an unusually high level of scholar use
- (c) at mid-term, end of grading period, or before school holidays or other time to check for missing library books or lab chemicals or school equipment,
- d) where scholar violence or threats of violence creates a reasonable belief that weapons are stored in the lockers.

(B) If a general inspection of a number of lockers is necessary, then ALL lockers in the defined

inspection area will be examined. Scholars will not necessarily be given the opportunity to be present while a general inspection is being conducted.

6. Scholar Material. When conducting an inspection pursuant to these rules, the inspector shall take care to avoid unduly disrupting the contents of the locker or intruding unnecessarily into any scholar's written material located in the locker. In addition, the inspection will be kept to the minimum level necessary to determine that such material is not in itself, or being used to conceal contraband.

7. Disposal of Confiscated Contraband. All contraband confiscated from lockers may be disposed of by the principal or designee as he or she deems appropriate, including (a) return to the proper owner or place, (b) use as evidence in a scholar discipline proceeding if possession of the contraband constitutes grounds for suspension or expulsion (c) delivery to the appropriate law enforcement officials for purposes if possession of the contraband constitutes evidence of a crime, or (d) destruction.

## 8. Involvement of Law Enforcement Officials.

(A) The principal, superintendent or assistant superintendent may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to assist the school administrators in inspecting lockers or their contents for purposes of enforcing school policies only if such assistance is required:

(1) to identify substances which may be found in the lockers, or

(2) to protect the health and safety of persons or property, such as to aid in the discovery and disarming of bombs which may be located in the lockers.

(B) If a law enforcement official requests to inspect a scholar's locker or its contents, the principal shall require the production of a search warrant before allowing such officer to inspect.

(C) If a law enforcement official requests the principal to make an inspection of a locker or its contents on behalf of or in the place of such official, the request shall be denied.

(D) The principal may cause a locker inspection to be performed for school purposes if information supplied by the law enforcement officials gives rise to a reasonable suspicion that a locker or lockers contains contraband.

9. Locker Cleaning and Repair. Nothing in these rules shall affect members of the custodial staff who, at the direction of the principal, clean out (a) lockers from time to time in accordance with general housekeeping schedule, or (b) the locker of the student no longer enrolled in the school. Further, the custodial staff may open a scholar's locker during any vacation period if they have reason to believe such a locker contains rotting, spoiling, or mildewing items such as food, wet clothes, etc.

10. Publication of Rules. A copy of these rules must be provided to each scholar and his/her parents/guardian at the start of the school year or as soon as possible after the scholar's enrollment in the school. Copies of these rules shall be posted in the principal's office and other prominent places generally used for announcements to scholars.

## **Parent Volunteer Opportunities**

# **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

- Organizing a Social Event
- Volunteering for the Booster Club
- Baking Items for Activities
- Attending Parent/Teacher conferences
- Organizing/Using a carpool
- Helping in play performances
- Organizing a fundraiser for the school
- Volunteering cleaning services after activities
- Calling other parent volunteers
- Making posters, decorating bulletin boards
- Planning and Organizing breakfast or lunch for honor students
- Making copies or running errands for teachers
- Being a tutor during the day, evening or Friday School
- Painting/carpentry/cabinet making
- Organizing Teacher Appreciation Days
- Supervising scholars during lunch
- Getting free coupons from business for student awards
- Locating community donations for the school
- Attend and Participate in the Parent Advisory Team

### **Six Non-negotiable Rules of Conduct**

1. Fighting
2. Possession of weapons, illegal drugs, or pornography
3. Profanity, threats, or degrading language directed towards the school faculty, staff members, or other scholars
4. Continuous classroom disruptions
5. Truancy
6. Damage or theft of school property or property of others

Scholars who record an altercation or negative incident as interpreted by the administration will receive a minimum two days Out of School Suspension.

## Desert Star Academy Discipline Policy

All policies Governed by Arizona Revised Statutes ARS Title 15

INFRACTION	DISCIPLINE
<b>Drugs, Weapons, Gangs:</b>  Use, distribution or unlawful possession of illegal or prescription drugs or inhalants, knives, guns, or any object capable of inflicting serious physical harm; any gang related affiliation or activity	<b>ZERO TOLERANCE</b>  <b>Suspension Pending Expulsion Hearing</b>  (No Exceptions)
<b>Alcohol, Tobacco</b>  (Possession, Distribution, and/or us)	Minimum 2 days OSS and Discipline Hearing, police notification, School Contract, Suspension and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Teacher Disrespect/Defiance/Class Disruption/Defamation/Use of Profanity/Assault/Gum Chewing</b>	Parent conference, Detention, Police Notification, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Assault/Fighting/</b>  Endangering the Health or Safety of Another	Minimum 2 days OSS and Discipline Hearing, possible police notification, School Contract, Suspension and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Theft/Unauthorized Entrance/Extortion/Cheating/Forgery</b>	Parent conference, Detention, Police Notification, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>

<b>Vandalism/Defacing School Property</b>	Parent conference, Detention, Police Notification, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Threats/Threatening Behavior/Harassment/Bullying/Racial Disrespect/Sexual</b>	Parent conference, Detention, Police Notification, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Cell Phones/Cameras/Electronic Device</b>	Parent conference, Detention, Loss of right to possess electronics on campus, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Inappropriate Dress/Contraband</b>  (such as Pornography)	Confiscation of Item, Parent Conference, Detention, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>
<b>Arson</b>  Setting of Fires, Possession of Matches, Lighters, Fireworks, Tampering with Alarms.	Parent conference, Detention, Police Notification, Suspension, Discipline Board, School Contract, and/or Expulsion  <b>Repeated: Expulsion</b>

**\*Detention will be served after school.**

**\*Suspension can mean In School Suspension (ISS), Out of School Suspension (OSS), and Long Term Suspension (LTS).**



## DESERT STAR ACADEMY HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. School policies and procedures can change at any time. I understand that changes in School policies may supersede, modify or eliminate the information summarized in this handbook. As the School provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I hereby acknowledge that I have been given a copy of the Desert Star Academy Scholar handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the rules, policies and procedures defined in this handbook.

The above rules and regulations were written and approved by the Desert Star Academy faculty and Governing Board members. They are fair and to be taken very seriously.

I \_\_\_\_\_(scholar) have read, understand and agree to follow all of the rules stated in the scholar handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Grade & Teacher

I (we) \_\_\_\_\_ (parent(s) / guardian(s)) have read, understand and agree to follow all of the rules stated in the scholar handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

