

# **PRINCIPAL'S LETTER**

## **WELCOME ACACIA OWLS!**

Acacia Elementary is an Arizona A+ School of Excellence and a National Title I Distinguished School. We achieved our A+ honor from the Arizona Educational Foundation in 2010 and were named a distinguished school in 2013. We are very proud to be one of the best elementary schools in Arizona! Acacia is a neighborhood school that operates through the collaboration of parents and community partnerships. We are proud of the many programs we have to offer and welcome you! As a student of Acacia, it is your responsibility to know about the privileges and responsibilities expected of each student. These guidelines for good citizenship have been established for the benefit and welfare of the entire campus--students and staff alike. This handbook contains most of the information you need to know to make you a responsible and successful student. When there is new information for your handbook, it will be distributed and discussed in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of the contents of this handbook and keep your handbook for future reference. Parents, your suggestions for change or improvement are always welcome.

This is your school. By working together as a team, we can accomplish more. Please plan on getting involved and have a successful, happy year.

Sincerely yours,  
Christine Hollingsworth  
Principal

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**School Address:** 3021 W. Evans Drive, Phoenix

**School Web Site:** <http://acacia.wedschools.org>

### **Important Phone Numbers:**

Office: 602-896-5000

Health Office: 602-896-5010

Attendance: 602-896-5010

KidSpace: 602-896-5015

**School Hours:** 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

**Office Hours:** 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Acacia Elementary, in partnering with parents and community, is to provide a safe, comfortable and cooperative environment ensuring that **all** students develop the knowledge, skills and character necessary to achieve their **highest potential**; and to become productive members of an ever-changing society.

### **Student Arrival/Dismissal**

#### **Arrival at School**

Students may NOT arrive at Acacia Elementary earlier than 7:55 a.m., the time when staff playground duty begins. The school **cannot** assume responsibility for the safety of students who arrive before that time. If parents' employment obligations so require, arrangements for early supervision should be made with neighbors or Acacia extended day services, KidSpace 602-

896-5015. As always, the safety of your children is our primary concern.

We are extremely concerned about safety at Acacia, particularly at arrival and dismissal times. **All students must be picked up and dropped off in the pickup lane of our north parking lot.** We would like to ask that parents do not use Evans Drive to park unless EVERY spot in our parking lot is full. **Children should not be encouraged or allowed to cross the street except at the crosswalk.** Please do not allow your child to jaywalk across the street or accompany him or her in this way. Although the child may be safe with you, the child may attempt it alone next time since it seems acceptable.

### **School Dismissal**

**Acacia has several options for after-school pickup:**

1. **Driving and having your child loaded in the car for you:**  
If you choose this option, you must follow the driveway that enters from 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue and loops around the playground to the front/north parking lot where we load. The first five to six cars will be loaded by teachers as you pull up to the loading zone. **Please do not get out of your car and go to the gate.** We will be unable to release your child from this area unless we place him or her in a car. Although there is a little wait when school is just getting out, we do our best to load all students as quickly as possible. Reminding your child to watch for your car will assist us in loading in the shortest amount of time.
2. **Parking and walking over to get your child: If you would like to park and then walk over to get your child from the east/intermediate playground, please understand that due to safety reasons your child will be kept on the playground until you walk to the teacher on duty to pick him or her up.** Students will not be allowed to run to parents/adults standing at the gate as this is not safe. Enter the parking lot from the 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue entrance or park around Acacia Park. Take the short left turn after entering and stay in the left lane that circles **around the playground to park.** Walk over to pick up your child from the east/intermediate playground. Please do not park on the north side of Evans and motion for your child to run across. This is dangerous and will not be permitted. Also, the pull-up lane in front of the **covered canopy is for loading of day care vans and buses only.** Students will not be permitted to load in this area.
3. **Students who are walking home or riding their bike will be dismissed through the walking gate. Students from the same family who walk together should meet on the southeast/intermediate playground and leave campus once all together.**
4. **Kindergarten students who are not being picked up by car at Gate A will be under the overhang of the building right by the cafeteria until parents pick them up. No kindergartners will be at Gate B on the east/intermediate playground.**

#### **Additional information:**

When exiting our parking lot, you must turn left onto Evans Drive if you are leaving in the left lane and right on Evans Drive if you are in the right lane. Please **do not cross lanes** to turn the

other way. This presents a dangerous situation, and we want our students to be as safe as possible.

#### **Other Options:**

1. Ride your bike safely.
2. Walk with friends/neighbors.
3. Park on a side street. Have child meet you at designated area.

#### **Early Student Pick Up**

Daily student attendance is essential to academic success. We understand, though, there are situations that may require a student to leave early from school such as a doctor's appointment and family emergencies. In order to maximize student attendance we suggest the following:

- Make appointments at times that minimize academic disruptions.
- Avoid pulling students out for nonhealth-related or nonemergency situations.

As a courtesy, please send written notification to the school if your student will be leaving before dismissal time. This will help the teacher and front office prepare accordingly for the dismissal.

Students will no longer be excused from class if the time falls within 30 minutes of dismissal, unless there is an urgent matter or medical appointment. The final minutes of any class serve as a time to review and explain homework. Students who habitually leave 15-30 minutes early suffer from a lack of information and directions that are essential to their academic success.

#### **Breakfast/Lunch Times**

Breakfast is served from 8:15 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. in classrooms, free of charge to all students.

Lunchtimes are as follows:

Kindergarten	10:30 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	10:45 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	11:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	11:20 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11:35 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11:50 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Noon – 12:40 p.m.

Guests are welcome to join students for lunch after signing in at the office and obtaining a visitor pass.

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **Breakfast and Lunch Information**

#### **Breakfast Program**

Acacia Elementary has a breakfast program that provides no-cost school breakfast to our students regardless of income. In order to maximize the no-cost breakfast benefit for the children, the Acacia Nutrition Services staff provides breakfast in the classroom at Acacia. All students are invited to participate in this no-cost program.

#### **Lunch Purchases**

Lunch may be purchased either by cash or through our debit account system. Please make arrangements in the cafeteria

between 7:45 and 8:15 a.m. Debit numbers are issued to each student. Credit is applied to the account through the deposit of money, a minimum of \$7.50, sent in by parents to the cafeteria cashier. There is no limit on the credit that may be applied to an account. You can also visit the Web site [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com) and follow the directions listed to apply money to your child's account online. When one lunch remains on the account, students are notified that additional funds are needed. Debit accounts are also set up for those students whose families qualify for federal assistance.

#### **Lost and Damaged Textbook Charges**

Acacia Elementary provides textbooks for each student. Textbooks in the required subject areas are issued each fall and collected at the end of the term and checked for damage. Books that are lost or severely damaged must be paid for by the student or family. Charges are one-half the book cost for damage and full cost for loss.

#### **Tardiness**

If your child comes to school tardy, he or she MUST stop into the office to pick up his or her tardy slip BEFORE entering the classroom. This is the only way the health tech knows the child is in school. We realize that the child may have no control over his or her being tardy. A tardy, however, is still considered unexcused if the parent overslept or was "running late," if the student couldn't find his or her shoes or clothes, if he or she had to do homework or chores, etc. The importance of making sure your child is in attendance at school on a daily basis cannot be stressed enough. Children miss important knowledge and classroom discussions when they are out of school. **If your child is absent, please call 602-896-5010 to report the absence and the reason for the absence.** Voice mail is available 24 hours a day.

#### **Attendance/Tuancy**

In order to assure students are successful and meet current state legislation, which requires all students to attend 90% of the school year, WESD has implemented a Truancy Prevention Unit (TPU). The TPU will work in conjunction with the City Justice Courts to identify students who are chronically absent or are truant.

When a student reaches five unexcused/unverified truantries, 10 total absences or 10 unexcused tardies, the school will make a referral to the TPU for appropriate actions (see District guidelines). In order to avoid this eventuality, there are several precautions to take: (1) reinforce being on time and good attendance, (2) call the school each time a student will be late or absent, (3) present any medical documentation to the nurse and/or attendance clerk if illness will be a consistent, foreseeable issue.

A letter will be sent by the school to the families of students who are approaching or pass the midway point for unexcused absences, excused absences and tardies. Parent cooperation is of the utmost importance in assuring student success.

#### **Dress Code "Dress for School"**

Any student's dress or personal appearance that distracts or interferes with the learning process will be considered inappropriate. The administration reserves the right to determine which types of dress or accessories are not acceptable. Students must adhere to the following guidelines for all school-related activities:

1. Hats, caps, visors, bandannas, beanies, and hairnets are not allowed on campus or at school-sponsored events. Prohibited items will be confiscated and returned only to a parent. (However, hats, caps, and visors will be allowed **outside** during recess and PE).
2. Makeup, hair spray, perfume, combs and brushes are not to be used in classrooms or the cafeteria.
3. Sunglasses may not be worn in the classroom.
4. Socks must be of the same color and worn at the same height. Pant legs cannot be worn with one leg up and one leg down.

### Miscellaneous Information

- Contact sports requiring tackling or pushing are prohibited.
- Possession or use of guns, knives, pocketknives, sling shots, fireworks, lighters, matches, explosives or other potentially harmful objects is prohibited.
- Use of chewing gum, candy, seeds, toothpicks is not permitted on grounds or in buildings.
- Possession or use of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol is prohibited.
- Misuse or vandalism of playground or other school or private property is prohibited.
- Radios, tape/CD players, iPods, pagers or any computerized game or pets should not be brought to school. Loss of these items is not the responsibility of the school.
- If a child has a cell phone that must be brought to school, it must be kept in a backpack or purse and turned off until he or she leaves school. Loss of the cell phone is not the responsibility of Acacia School.
- No toys of any kind may be brought (except for "Show and Tell").
- Leave school area immediately when dismissed.

### Policy for Class Changes

After receiving a request, the principal, teacher and parent meet to discuss areas of concern. If differences are not reconciled, a letter is written by the parent, of the concern. If agreed, the child is moved to another classroom. The student must be in the class for two weeks before a change is made.

### Special Area Requirements

#### Physical Education

Students are required to participate in physical education classes unless formally excused for medical or other acceptable reasons. Children are required to dress properly for PE. Footwear must be "sneakers" not sandals, hard shoes, boots or shoes with an elevated heel.

### Volunteers (ARS 15-512)

1. A volunteer who is not a parent or guardian of a student in your class must be within sight of a certified staff member at all times while providing services to pupils.
2. If a volunteer is not a parent or guardian of a student, he or she must be fingerprinted and a background check performed prior to allowing him or her to provide such volunteer services directly to students.

3. The child of the volunteer must be in the group for whom he or she is providing services.

The above also includes field trip chaperones.

## HEALTH/SAFETY

Acacia has a crisis/lockdown plan in place in the event of an emergency.

If a need to evacuate the school should occur, Acacia students will be evacuated to Calvary Church, 12612 N. Black Canyon Highway. Parents, guardians and designated child-care people will pick children up at that location.

### Safety/Bicycles/Parking Lot

Students in grades 1-6 are allowed to ride bicycles to school.

Bicycles are to be walked, not ridden, on school sidewalks and on street crosswalks and should remain off the parking lot and grass areas. Bicycle riders on the street should observe the same rules that apply to automobiles when approaching crosswalks. Disregard of bicycle rules may result in bicycle privileges being rescinded. Bicycles should be individually secured in the bike racks. Please understand if skateboards or scooters are ridden to school, they must be kept in the bike rack. Because these items are difficult to lock, they will not be secure. The racks are locked at 8:00 a.m. and are opened at both dismissal times. The school cannot accept any responsibility for damaged or stolen bicycles, scooters, skateboards, etc.

We all understand the importance of having safe walking paths for our children. Acacia Elementary has crossing guards and two crosswalks for all walkers to utilize. To help ensure everyone's safety, we ask that all walkers use a crosswalk on their way to and from school.

Parents are permitted to park in the parking lot and walk along the sidewalk to pick up their student at the playground. An adult **must** accompany students while in the parking lot. Whether walking to or from a car, the adult **must** be with the student.

**As always, for the safety of our students, parents or visitors may not enter playgrounds or classrooms without first going to the office to sign in the visitor's book and to get a visitor's pass.**

## HONORS/AWARDS

### Principal's List (Grades 4-6)

Recognized quarterly

1.0 grade point average (No "4s" or "5s," No "Us")

### Honor Roll (Grades 4-6)

Recognized quarterly

1.1 - 2.0 grade point average (No "4s" or "5s," No "Us")

### Campus Courtesy Celebration (Grades K-6)

Recognized quarterly (No "Us")

Three students are chosen from each classroom each quarter for a celebration with the principal.

In keeping with our philosophy of a positive educational experience, the "N" descriptor on midterms and report cards

will no longer be viewed or intended as having a negative connotation. The descriptor “N” simply means that a student needs additional help or increased effort to improve his or her understanding of a subject area. We want all students to understand that all people need improvement and that it is part of a lifelong process.

### **Perfect Attendance**

Perfect attendance is recognized each quarter in classrooms. Students must have attended the entire school day, each day, to be considered for awards. The school will take religious observance into consideration.

### **Other Honors (Grades K-6)**

All students have the opportunity to be recognized for “Caught You Being Good,” which is positive recognition from all staff members, as well as the Acacia Pride Principal’s Award for good behavior, good citizenship, being helpful and other positive interactions with others. Other honors are awarded by individual teachers at grade levels on an annual basis. These may include awards for reading, physical education, art and other areas.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Newsletter**

The school will send home a bi-monthly newsletter with information about upcoming events, past successes and general information about school. Please read this for important information. Feel free to visit our school and District Web sites for more information.

### **PTA/APL**

#### **Acacia Parent Link-Parent Teacher Association**

Parents can expect occasional communications directly from the APL. These will take the form of reminders about upcoming events, requests for assistance/volunteers, sign-up sheets and similar communications.

Acacia Elementary is proud to benefit from an active, successful and involved parent organization. The PTA will send home information about membership in their organization. We urge you to join this group, attend their monthly meetings and volunteer for our school for the benefit of our students.

#### **Student Telephone Usage**

The school phone is a business phone, and it is not to be used to make personal arrangements. These arrangements should be made at home the day before, not at school.

As a reminder, teachers are teaching children during the school day. They will not be answering the phone. They will, however, check messages daily and return calls.

Students are not to use the classroom phone to call home if they are not feeling well. They must get a pass to go to the health office. If the student has a fever or other reason to be sent home, the health tech will call home for someone to pick up the child.

## **SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS/ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS**

### **Student Government/Student Council**

Acacia maintains a student government organization. Comprised of intermediate grade representatives, the Student Council performs several important functions under the advisement of staff members. These functions include advising the administration on issues of concern, sponsoring and supervising student activities, volunteer work and fund-raising to benefit the school.

### **School-sponsored Events**

Students are expected to follow all school rules at events held before and after school. This includes school-sponsored events held at other locations such as field trips and special outings. Violation of any school rule may result in consequences such as detention, suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the infraction. When appropriate, the police will be notified.

### **Head Start/Extended Day Programs**

Acacia Elementary has Head Start (602-896-5043) and extended day (KidSpace) (602-896-5015) programs on our campus.

## **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY**

“Campus Courtesies” will be reviewed and followed by all. Acacia students follow the rule of “respecting each others’ personal space”. This rule encourages our students to “use their words” to settle disagreements.

1. Teachers and their classes prepare classroom rules and consequences. A copy is submitted to the principal, and copies are sent home for parent signature. Each classroom has a partner room for a time-out area.
2. When a child is referred to RTC, a discipline referral form must come with the student.
3. Detailed records will be kept in the office noting who was sent by whom and for what.
4. Positive proactive discipline will be practiced throughout the school.
5. The school will conduct a detention program during lunchtimes.
6. Discipline incidents will be handled according to Washington District Discipline Policy.
7. Activities or dress deemed to be gang-related (according to the District’s resource officers) will be handled according to the school dress code, rules for behavior and any other measures recommended under District policy.
8. Students referred to the office will become the responsibility of the principal who will apply consequences fitting the nature of the infraction and the record of the student. Teachers will be informed at all times of the disposition of referrals.