



PLEASE READ THE DISTRICT AND THE CACTUS WREN SECTIONS WITH YOUR CHILD(REN). BOTH SECTIONS APPLY TO ALL CACTUS WREN STUDENTS.

Welcome to Cactus Wren

Dear Parents and Students,

We would like to welcome you to Cactus Wren Elementary School. The staff, Site Council and PTO at Cactus Wren are excited about beginning a new school year with you. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you and your student with information about the general organization, operation and policies of your school. We encourage you to read this **with your child because changes are made each year**. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask a staff member or call the office for additional information or explanation regarding any material in this handbook. Please know that you are always welcome to come in or call with questions or concerns.

Cactus Wren is proud to have served this community since 1970. For many years the families have partnered with educators to meet the needs of all children. We look forward to continuing to serve your family, and we hope that you will continue to support your school. We are delighted to have you share this educational partnership with us.

Sincerely,

Kaylene Ashbridge, Principal,

Cactus Wren Faculty, Staff and Site Council

Mission and Core Commitments

The mission of Cactus Wren Elementary School is to provide a safe environment that promotes academic excellence while developing personal responsibility.

Core Commitments

- 1. We will work in collegial and collaborative instructional teams.**
- 2. We will differentiate instruction utilizing the abilities of each student to achieve success.**

3. We will hold every student and staff member to a high standard of behavior and education.

4. We will use effective teaching strategies to ensure students meet/master standards.

School Improvement Plan

School improvement is an ongoing process involving the collaboration of staff, the Site Council and the community. A copy of the School Improvement Plan is available in the Cactus Wren office. Cactus Wren participates actively in the WESD school improvement process. This process includes identifying needs and developing action plans and professional development goals for staff learning. This occurs on our PLC Wednesdays and at morning meetings to improve student achievement.

We continue working on Focused and Effective Instructional Practices. Teachers will incorporate and utilize systematic, scientifically research-based instructional strategies and practices to meet the needs of a diverse student population, with an emphasis on literacy and math instruction.

Daily Schedule

Office Hours: **6:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

7:15 a.m. Teachers on duty on playgrounds and students may be on the playground.

7:25 a.m. Students assemble for classes.

7:30 a.m. Students in seats in classroom.

Arrival Times/Dismissal Expectations

Please arrange your student's departure from home so that he or she **doesn't arrive at school before 7:15 a.m.** *Students may not be on campus without supervision, and our teachers' workday officially begins at 7:15 a.m.*

All students are expected to leave campus at dismissal time unless they are **attending an adult-supervised after-school program** and have the **written permission from either parent or staff**.

Primary and Intermediate Arrival/Dismissal

Kindergarten-6th grades 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

PLC Early Release: 1:00 p.m.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Address

9650 N. 39th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85051

School Web site: <http://cactuswren.wesdschools.org>

School Phone Numbers

Office 602-347-2100

Health Office 602-347-2110

Cafeteria 602-347-2115

Attendance 602-347-2111

KidSpace

The Washington Elementary School District prides itself in being able to provide before- and after- school care for its students. We recognize that quality care is essential to children's growth and development. At KidSpace, we look forward to providing your child with opportunities for personal and academic growth in a fun, safe and nurturing environment that extends beyond the school day. You can be assured that the safety and well being of your child are top priorities, and you will notice the high standards that are present at our Cactus Wren site. We offer a wide range of activities that are exciting and fun and at the same time build on educational classroom experiences. For more information, you may call 602-347-2115.

Reporting Absences

If your child is to be absent, please call the school attendance office at 602-347-2111 regarding his or her absence. Please indicate the specific reason for your child's absence, i.e., stomach, respiratory, fever, flu, etc. Do not just say "ill." This is a requirement of the state law for funding purposes and to ensure the safety of your child. If you do not call and report the absence, school personnel will try to verify your child's absence by phoning you at home or at work.

Attendance/Truancy

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 truancies, 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.

We will **not** be allowing students to be dropped off in the north parking lot as has been the custom for late arrivals. This will require all of us working together to follow the same rules and expectations. Please know that it is not an excused absence for your child even when it may be an adult reason for arriving or picking up late. We are working hard to develop standards that will support your child's lifelong skills to arrive at school and eventually work on time! We also need to receive doctor's notes to substantiate the absence. Parents are responsible for ensuring that such documentation is given to

our attendance clerk. Students will be marked as an unverified absence until such expected documentation is provided. This is a school and work expectation!

Lost and Found

The lost and found box is located in the cafeteria.

Textbook Charges

Equipment, Books and Supplies

Textbooks, notebooks, dividers, pencil pouches, pencils and paper are furnished for your children free of charge. Students are held responsible for the care of school equipment and supplies. **Students are expected to pay for replacements if a book is damaged or lost.** Some teachers may request an optional supply list at the beginning of the year.

Breakfast/Lunch Information

Breakfast

Breakfast is free and served in the classroom each morning.

Lunch

Cactus Wren serves balanced meals planned by a dietitian, offered at a reasonable price. The menu for 2013-2014 includes a "super-deal" program, which enables students to make selections in different categories for \$1.60. You will be notified of any changes in pricing that cannot be predetermined. Menus will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. All a la carte items are selected based on their nutritional value.

- Meals – \$1.60 per day including milk
- Milk – 25 cents a carton
- Lunch (five days) – \$8.00

Please check with the food services cashier for further information.

Closed Campus

All schools in the Washington Elementary School District are considered to be closed campuses. Students may not leave the school grounds during school hours, including lunchtime.

Visitors

You must check into the office when you are visiting the campus, sign in and wear a nametag. There are no exceptions.

Dress Code

Students at Cactus Wren Elementary are required to dress in the proper uniform attire. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure compliance with the school dress code. All students must be in uniform the **first day of school**. There is a two-week grace period for new students to purchase uniforms.

Students must wear the designated school uniform clothing. Clothing may not be altered by slits, shredded hems, etc. Baggy or over-sized uniforms are prohibited.

SHIRTS:

- Short- or long-sleeved, collared, cotton polo shirts
- Colors worn may include white, light blue, navy blue or hunter green.
- Shirts may not have logos on them (except school logo purchased through CW PTO).
- Solid color, long-sleeved shirts free of logos and/or designs may be worn under polos.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times, except during PE or recess.
- Cactus Wren red spirit shirt may be worn on Friday (purchase through PTO-\$8).

BOTTOMS:

- Colors are navy blue and/or khaki.
- Uniform shorts or pants may have a small logo on belt or back pocket.
- No cargo shorts or pants (pockets on sides of shorts or pants). Boys may wear uniform-style walking shorts or pants.
- Girls may wear uniform-style bottoms, including walking shorts, pants, skirts, skorts (shorts with a skirt front), capris or jumpers. Girls may wear solid colored tights/leggings under skirts or jumpers. This is especially appropriate when students are active for the sake of modesty.
- No jeans of any kind are permitted.

OUTERWEAR:

- Jackets, sweaters, hoodies
- Minimal logos will be acceptable (no larger than the size of child's closed hand).

UNDERGARMENTS:

- Should not be visible.
- Solid matching socks.

FOOTWEAR:

- Students need to keep their shoes secure on their feet. This means tying laces and closing Velcro or other straps.
- No flip-flops or open-backed shoes are allowed for student's safety.

No backpacks or cloth binders. Due to health and safety concerns, students are asked to utilize paper or plastic folders to support home/school communication.

Media Center, Facilities and Policies

The Library Media Center is a classroom and a resource room for every Cactus Wren student and staff member. **Students are responsible for lost or damaged books.**

Policy for Student Placement

Classes are heterogeneously created on the basis of academics, social dynamics of the class composition, personalities and in the best interest of all involved parties. Genuine efforts are made to set up the most successful environment for each child. If you, as a parent, have a special concern to take into

consideration, please notify the classroom teacher or the office. Please be aware that it is not a policy or practice at Cactus Wren to grant requests for specific teachers.

Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)

The PTO is a nonprofit organization that helps the school, teachers and students of Cactus Wren. It has developed a close working relationship with the school in order to enhance academic achievement, communication and community participation. Each year the PTO helps sponsor the meet the teacher event, picture days, fund-raisers, luncheons for teachers, and other school events. Your involvement is most needed! Call the school office for more information 602-347-2100.

Student Telephone Usage

The telephone in the administration office is to be used for business purposes and emergency situations. Please make all social plans at home, before coming to school. Students are not allowed to use cell phones while school is in session.

If your child wishes to carry a cell phone, you must complete the Cell Phone Permission Agreement.

School Parties/Birthdays

Please check with your child's classroom teacher regarding parties and birthdays. The primary grades address seasonal events in a different manner than the intermediate due to the developmental levels of the children being taught. We ask that all food products that are brought into classrooms be store-bought, prepackaged and unopened. At the beginning of the year, each teacher will provide the parameters for his or her parties.

Special Events

Students attending special events must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Unaccompanied children will be asked to leave.

DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR

Make Your Day Citizenship Program

Guidelines

Purpose

The Make Your Day program is a consistent campus-wide citizenship system for all classes. It reinforces high expectations for all students and staff and is a cooperative management system that stresses responsibility for one's own actions. **Make Your Day centers on one rule: No one has the right to interfere with the learning and safety of others.**

The system encourages students to take responsibility for their own actions, both appropriate and inappropriate, regarding attendance, social and academic performance. Emphasis is placed on the importance of each student working to his or her own ability level. The program allows all students to make mistakes. It provides time for thought and direction. Effort is

expected and rewarded with frequent positive feedback. The program allows students to make decisions that develop critical thinking skills. School-wide appropriate behaviors are expected, as students are taught and are expected to understand the appropriate behaviors. The foundation of Make Your Day is that ALL students are capable of success and that making appropriate choices at school will generate student success when expectations are clear. An individual packet will be coming home with more detailed information.

Prevention Programs

Cactus Wren has a number of prevention programs in place that address the physical and emotional well-being of all students. For example, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is research-based, and statistics have shown that when fully implemented, it significantly reduces bully-victim situations. Students meet for community time and build relationships with their peers. Bullying information is presented in a variety of ways throughout the year. Students may report bullying directly to a staff member or use the bully box and write their concern on an information form and place it in the secured box located in the library. The principal or community outreach specialist follows up with the expressed concern. The community outreach specialist provides crisis intervention for students in an emotional crisis. Some students meet in small groups throughout the year to address topics including, but not limited to, self-esteem enhancement, anger management, problem solving, conflict resolution, friendship and grief and loss. The coordinator is available at 602-347-2134.

Items Unacceptable at School

Radios, tape recorders, iPods, electronic games, personal computers, toys or other distractions, should not be brought to school. If you have a specific need for such items, please call the principal with your concerns. Exceptions: Cell phones may be brought if needed to stay in communication with your child. Students may not use phones during school day. If there is misuse of the phone, it will remain in the front office for parent pickup.

Bicycles and Skateboards

The parents of Cactus Wren students may give their child permission to ride bikes to school for transportation purposes. The Washington Elementary School District and Cactus Wren School assume no responsibility for bicycles and skateboards. If your child rides a bike or skateboard to school, the following rules must be followed:

1. Park and LOCK bicycles in bike rack.
2. Students are not to bring bicycles to school without a chain and lock.
3. Bicycles, skateboards and rollerblades are not to be ridden in the parking lot, on the school sidewalks, or anywhere on school grounds.
4. Kindergarten students are not to ride bicycles to school.

5. The school cannot be held responsible for the security of bikes.

Parking Lot Safety

Vehicles will enter from the north parking lot and follow the paved route as it goes past the administrative building and flows into the south parking lot. Students being dropped off on time will enter the school in the usual manner, near the bike rack area on the south playground. Students will be picked up in the same manner and use the one entrance and exit to support a one-direction flow to improve street and internal traffic during high volume movement of vehicles. The north and south parking lots support a one-direction flow. As you drop off or pick up your child(ren), you will use the passing lane as a way to move away from the drop-off/pickup lane near the curb to exit the south parking lot. Please follow the arrows placed on the parking lot to ensure safety for all. The internal crosswalks support safe movement for students and families to get to their parked cars.

We will **not** be allowing students to be dropped off in the north parking lot as has been the custom for late arrivals. This will require all of us working together to follow the same rules and expectations. Parents/guardians of **late arrivals will need to park their vehicle in an open parking space in the north or south parking lot and walk their child to the office to sign them in to get a tardy slip.**

Crosswalks

We have two crosswalks. Students who live on the north side of the school may choose to use the crosswalk at 39th Ave. and Camino Acequia. Students who live closer to Carol may use the crosswalk at 39th Ave. and Carol.