



## **WELCOME LETTER**

August 2015

Dear Parents, Students and Community Members,

Welcome to Ocotillo School, Home of the Bulldogs. We are extremely proud of our school and the programs we have designed to meet a wide variety of educational needs for children. We are committed to academic achievement and building fundamental skills in reading, math and language. We feel that a child's self-esteem, coupled with a safe supportive environment, enhances the learning experience. Our goals of academic excellence and positive self-esteem can become a reality when staff and parents work together in an atmosphere of communication and cooperation. We invite you to become actively involved in your child's education and look forward to an exciting and productive 2015-2016 school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Murosky, Principal

### **General School Information**

**School Address:** 3225 W. Ocotillo, Phoenix, AZ 85017

**School Web Site:** [ocotillo.wesdschools.org](http://ocotillo.wesdschools.org)

#### **Important Telephone Numbers:**

Office: 602-347-2400

Health Office: 602-347-2410

Attendance: 602-347-2411

KidSpace: 602-347-2415

Head Start Preschool: 602-347-2443

### **School Goals**

At Ocotillo Elementary, staff and teachers design instruction so that 80% of students will meet benchmark expectations in math and reading and develop acceleration plans for the remaining 20% to ensure successful student learning.

### **Action Steps**

- Maintain high student expectations
- Provide clear communication of academic and behavioral goals to ensure student success
- Hold students responsible for their actions
- Participate in continued professional development to enhance teacher effectiveness.
- Utilize research-based instructional practice
- Create and sustain a positive school environment that welcomes community and parental involvement
- Frequently monitor students using multiple assessments.
- Implement a variety of teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of students.

## **Instructional Practices**

The Ocotillo staff, parents and Site Council continue to work diligently on school improvement. Our emphasis is in the areas of reading and math. Professional development will be provided throughout the year to give staff additional knowledge and training to implement our school improvement plan. Classroom instruction, special program support, professional development and academic interventions all focus on our goal of students achieving the Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards.

Ocotillo understands that effective, comprehensive assessment to screen, diagnose, monitor and measure outcomes is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We will do this by implementing procedures to collaboratively and individually identify instructional improvements related to our identified needs in the areas of reading and math. Teachers will utilize assessment results to make data-based instructional decisions.

### **School Hours**

Office: 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

### **Start/Dismissal Times**

Grades K-6: 7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Early Release Wednesdays K-6: 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Attendance/Tuancy**

In order to assure students are successful and meet current state legislation, ARS § 15-803, which requires all students to attend 90% of the school year, WESD has 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 truanancies or 10 total absences, 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.

### **Reporting Absences**

Parents are to report the reason for their child's absence by calling our attendance clerk at 602-347-2411. To change the status of an unexcused absence to excused, the parent is responsible for calling or writing a note to the attendance clerk. Absences occurring after the 10th absence will only be counted as excused if a parent/guardian presents the school with written certification on official letterhead from the student's healthcare provider indicating the absence was health related, or documentation regarding a bereavement, religious observance, or family circumstance.

### **Signing Out Students**

Anyone signing students out during the school day must be listed on the student's emergency card and show valid identification every time – NO EXCEPTIONS! Students will not be permitted to be signed out on regular school days after 2:10 p.m. and 12:40 p.m. on early release days.

## Breakfast Information

Our cafeteria serves nutritionally balanced meals each regular school day. Breakfast for all children is provided at no cost at the beginning of the day in the homeroom classroom.

## Dress Code

Student IDs are an essential part of the Ocotillo dress code. IDs must be worn by all students at all times for the sake of safety on the campus. The ID may not be defaced in any manner and must be worn facing forward with a breakaway lanyard. Students who forget their ID will call home to arrange for parents to bring their ID or wear a temporary ID issued by the campus administration. Excessive ID violations may result in campus-level discipline. If a student is unable to locate his or her ID, a replacement may be purchased in the office for a nominal fee. Student dress must be appropriate at all times. Any student dress or personal appearance that distracts from or interferes with the normal learning process is unacceptable.

### Attire that is not acceptable includes:

- Half-shirts, shirts that reveal the chest, stomach or undergarments, tank tops, spaghetti-strap tops, or sheer (see-through) clothing
- Shirts with statements/images regarding alcoholic beverages, weapons, tobacco products, drugs, and/or unacceptable language/images
- Extremely short shorts, skirts or dresses, or any clothing that is determined by an administrator to be revealing or inappropriate
- Footwear, such as thongs (flip-flops), slippers, heels above 1", cleated athletic shoes, or shoes with wheels. (Tennis shoes are recommended for safety and are required on days the student has PE.)
- Hats, caps or bandannas
- Excessively baggy and/or sagging pants are not permitted. Undergarments must not show above pants.
- Excessive and/or dangerous jewelry
- Writing on self or others
- Distracting hair styles such as Mohawks are not permitted at Ocotillo
- Exposed tattoos or "fake" tattoos are considered distracting and not permitted at school
- Please refer to the District guidelines on student dress outlined in the handbook under Student Conduct.

Students who violate the dress code standards may be asked to do any of the following after an attempt to contact the parent:

- Turn inappropriate clothing inside out
- Be transported home by school personnel to change
- Change into clothing that may be provided by the school
- Ask parent to bring other clothing brought to school

Repeated violations of the dress code standards may result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken, including suspension from school.

The decision as to whether or not a distracting condition exists and how it is handled shall be left to the reasonable discretion of the building administrators. In accordance with ARS § 15-843 and under severe disciplinary conditions, the principal has the authority to suspend a student from school following student due process procedures.

## Special Services Requirements

Program services are provided for English Language Learners within each classroom. Special education programs are offered to students in all grade levels who are determined eligible under the federal and state guidelines.

## Library Media Services

- Every school in the WESD has a well equipped library media center that provides resources to support the curriculum at every grade level. The purpose of a school library is to support all students' education as lifelong learners and readers, encourage students to read for pleasure, teach students the skills necessary to locate and evaluate information, and encourage student responsibility.
- The Ocotillo Library is staffed by a librarian and a library technician. Kindergarten and first grade students may check out one item at a time. Students in second through sixth grade may check out two items at a time. Students may use the library before and after school as needed. During the school day, students may use the library as needed with teacher permission.
- If a library book is lost or damaged beyond use, we appreciate receiving the replacement cost.
- Parents and families are encouraged to use the library media center as a community resource.

## COMMUNICATION

### Parent Communication

Conferencing is a positive way to develop two-way communications between home and school on how students are performing in academic and social development skills.

- Two formal parent-teacher conference times are scheduled during the year.

We encourage parents to hold conferences with the teacher whenever necessary. Please call the teacher for an appointment to set up additional conferences. "Drop-in" conferences are discouraged.

- Each month our school newsletter and calendar are sent home to provide information about school, community and special event activities.
- Midterms or report cards will be sent home in all grades approximately every nine weeks.
- Parents may request homework after a child has been out one complete day. Teachers need 24 hours to honor the request. A student has one day for each day absent to make up missed assignments.
- It is extremely important that parents communicate with the school office in reference to enrollment, withdrawals, emergency phone numbers and any change of address information.

### Student Records

- Student records for current students are maintained in the Ocotillo school office. Access to records is available to parents with educational rights. From time to time our records are audited, and you may be asked by our office staff to update information. It is essential that contact information, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contacts remain current at all times for the safety of your student.
- Records for former students are maintained at the District Office.

### PTO

The PTO is a support service organization that functions to assist the school. Any parent or community member is eligible and encouraged to join. The PTO plans and conducts fundraising projects for programs that enhance the curriculum. The PTO monthly meeting dates will be published in the school newsletters.

### Site Council/District Councils

Our school Site Council is involved in school improvement planning, short-term problem solving, and staff selection. It is composed of administrators, certified personnel, classified personnel,

parents/guardians and community members. If a parent is interested in becoming a member of Site Council, applications are available in the office. Elections are held in October of each year. We also have opportunities for teachers, classified staff, and parents to participate on the Planning and Steering or Facilities Council at the District level.

## School Newsletter

Our school newsletter contains a monthly calendar of events, dates to remember, student recognition, school improvement and other pertinent news regarding Ocotillo.

## Student Telephone Usage

Students may not use the office phone except with a teacher's or office staff permission. We discourage the use of the phone except for emergencies. Parents are urged to limit calls and messages to students. With the exception of emergencies, all calls during instructional time will be sent to voicemail. Student cell phones must be turned off and kept in the student's backpack. Cell phones and other electronic devices (including tablets, iPads, iPods, handheld games, etc) that are visible to the teacher during the school day are considered a distraction and can be confiscated and turned in to an administrator. Parents may retrieve confiscated electronic devices in the office by signing for the item.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### After-school Activities

Ocotillo School sponsors several after-school activities such as Student Council, cross country, chorus, and boys and girls basketball programs. There is no charge for these programs, and complete information will be available as they are scheduled during the year.

### After-school Academy

Ocotillo School offers a vibrant after-school program that offers additional academic support in math and reading, enrichment classes and demonstrations during the fall and spring semesters. This program is free of charge to participating Ocotillo students.

### Child Care (KidSpace)

A District-sponsored childcare program is available that provides before- and after-school supervision and activities for students. There is a nominal fee for this service. Further information is available through the extended day office at 602-347-2415.

### Head Start

Head Start is available at Ocotillo for four and five year olds. Information is available from the program director at 602-347-2415 or 602-347-2443.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

### Parking Lot

No student is to be on campus before 7:10 a.m. Our drop-off and pickup zone is along the curb in front of the school. Please do not leave your vehicle unattended along the curbs in the driveway lane in front of the school. Vehicles parked along the curb will be subject to citation by the fire marshal or police. If you need to enter the building, or walk your child to the door, please park in the appropriate designated spaces in the parking lot. **Please respect and adhere to a five mph speed limit in the parking lot.** Everyone shall use the designated crosswalks where a crossing guard is provided. **Students are not to cross the street without the assistance of the crossing guard.** Please do not park on the east side of 31<sup>st</sup> Drive to pick up your child requiring him or her to cross the street unattended at dismissal. Please always pull forward as much as possible when dropping off your students in the morning or when picking up your student in the afternoon. If all drivers

comply with this request, drop-offs and pickups will be smooth and wait times in the lane will be reduced.

## Bicycles

Students may ride bicycles to school with permission from their parents; however, the Washington Elementary School District and Ocotillo School assume no responsibility for these bicycles. They must be parked in the bike racks correctly and locked. Bikes need to be walked on the sidewalk from the bus bay to the bike rack area. Bicycles are not allowed on the campus after school hours. Should this happen, the bicycle may be taken away until a parent comes to claim it. In other areas, students are expected to follow the basic traffic safety rules.

## Bulldog Barkers

Any time a student performs an act of kindness, shows responsibility, or displays pride in our school, he or she can earn a Bulldog Barker coupon. On Fridays students are recognized through the use of these Bulldog Barker coupons.

## Safe Dismissal of Students

The safe dismissal of all students is important to the entire community. In order to ensure all students are returned safely to their parents, please follow these guidelines:

- Complete the Dismissal Instructions form by the first day of instruction. All students are required to have a current form on file with the teacher.
- Always communicate changes to your child's dismissal IN WRITING to the teacher and the office manager. We will not change your child's dismissal without YOUR WRITTEN permission.
- Please do not call the office at the end of the school day to change your child's dismissal plans at the last minute. Promote safe routines with your child and ensure your child knows his or her dismissal plan prior to the start of each school day.

## Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are an exciting time for an elementary school student. We welcome store-bought items to share with the class at snack time. We cannot allow home-baked items at school, and snacks must not violate the food nutrition guidelines that govern our lunch program.

- Birthday snacks must be store-bought.
- Birthday snacks must not interfere with instruction.
- Classrooms are not the appropriate place for birthday parties.
- If invitations to an outside party are passed out at school, the entire class should be invited to avoid hurt feelings.
- Contact your child's teacher to coordinate any birthday snacks for the class.
- Balloons, balloon bouquets or large stuffed animals are NOT permitted in classrooms.

## DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR

Ocotillo operates under these school-wide rules:

- I will be respectful.
  - I will be responsible.
  - I will be safe.
- In addition to the above school-wide rules, the following expectations have been established with safety and orderliness in mind.
- Come to school on time and prepared to learn.
  - Do your personal best.
  - Follow both written and oral directions of all teachers and staff.
  - Keep hands, feet and objects to self. Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.

This includes hitting, pushing, pinching, shoving, kicking, slapping, fighting, play fighting, kickboxing, threatening, encouraging others to fight, spitting, rock throwing, etc.

- Speak with appropriate language at all times.
- No gum, candies or objects in mouth.
- Treat others with kindness and respect.

The discipline program at Ocotillo School is based on mutual respect and high expectations. The philosophy of our program is that we expect all students to behave appropriately in the classroom, cafeteria, playground and on the bus. We will not allow any student to prevent the teacher from teaching or to prevent other students from learning.

In order to create a positive learning climate, all students must know what the school and classroom rules are, what the consequences of inappropriate behavior will be, and that there will be positive recognition of those students who follow the school rules.

The emphasis of our discipline program is to help children develop effective decision-making skills and understand the consequences of their actions. Consistency and fairness will lead to a better understanding of the importance of self-control and appropriate behavior. Home-school communication and cooperation are vital to providing a positive learning environment.

## Discipline Procedures

The intent of having school discipline consequences is to improve student behavior. We believe that each child should be responsible for his or her own behaviors. The staff at Ocotillo also believe that positive incentives will promote positive behaviors. Each classroom teacher will offer positive incentives/choices as a first step to preventing discipline problems. If a child becomes a disruption in the classroom, the teacher will implement the following steps:

Step 1 - Verbal warning to the student

Step 2 - Think time within the classroom

Step 3 - Think time in another classroom and contact home

Step 4 - Phone call to parent

At each step, the student will have the opportunity to correct his or her behavior and return to participate with the class. If the above steps have been followed and the behavior continues to disrupt the learning of others, the teacher will:

Step 5 – Refer to the Front Office/Student Services

**Severe behavior will automatically result in moving to Step 5.** (see *Definition of Offenses* and *Disciplinary Action Chart in the Appendix*)

The first step is to meet with the administration and to discuss the inappropriate behavior. Developing an improvement plan may be necessary. Parents/guardians will be notified. Continued disregard of school rules or referrals of a serious nature will require a conference with the parents. During the parent conference, the child's behavior will be discussed, and the administrator(s), teacher, student, and the parent will work together to establish a plan of action. The student is the main person responsible for the plan. Continued disregard of school rules will lead to more severe consequences that may include suspension or expulsion.

## Playground/Cafeteria Behavior

Students are expected to follow all school rules (Be Respectful, Responsible and Safe) while in the cafeteria and on the playground. Students breaking a rule will receive a "lunch ticket" from the adult on duty. These are warnings. After three "lunch tickets" are issued, a letter is sent to the student's parent, and the student may be required to serve detention during lunch/recess.

## Playground Expectations

- Play in the approved, safe areas of the playground.

- Games involving tagging, hitting or tackling are not permitted.
- Remain on playground with an adult at all times.
- Report injuries immediately.
- Food, candy or gum is NOT permitted on the playground (this includes food from home or from the cafeteria).
- Respect the landscaping (trees, plants, etc).
- Sports balls must be appropriately used and if safety is compromised, they may be confiscated by monitors. (This includes basketballs, soccer balls, wall-balls, etc)
- Sand, rocks, wood chips, pinecones, etc. are not to be thrown.
- Use equipment in a safe manner. (Ex: feet-first on the slide, do not hang upside down, etc)

## Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a school-wide philosophy that focuses on changing social norms regarding bullying and aggression. This bullying prevention model uses the entire school, staff and students, to prevent bullying and intimidation. Students and teachers participate in regular classroom meetings to educate students on the different forms bullying can take, to understand what they can do when they see bullying occur, and to share their own thoughts and feelings about the school environment in relation to bullying issues. If you feel your child is the victim of bullying please discuss it with his or her teacher or the administration.

### Ocotillo Bully Rules

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are being bullied.
3. We will include students who are easily left out.
4. When we know someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at home and at school.

## Articles Prohibited at School

The following items **may not** be brought to school:

- Alcohol, drugs or tobacco products including "e-cigarettes"
- Items such as toy guns, chains, matches, lighters, fireworks, explosives, caps, "shocker" pens, laser pointers, items that resemble or promote alcohol, drug or tobacco products, etc.
- Animals
- Electronic devices such as musical CDs, tapes, iPods, iPads, tablets, Gameboys, Nintendos, etc.
- Skateboards, rollerblades, cleated shoes and/or roller sneakers
- Gum, candy, energy drinks, sodas, or bags of chips larger than 2 oz.
- Weapons of any kind, including but not limited to: firearms, knives, brass knuckles, mace, pepper spray. (This is a serious violation of school rules and can result in a long-term suspension.)
- Toys, hats, bandannas or footballs. (Basketballs, soccer balls, and kickballs are permitted, but Ocotillo will not be held responsible if they are lost or stolen). Cell phones are permitted only if the student has written permission from parents on file with the office. During school hours, cell phones must be turned off and kept in the student's backpack. If cell phones are visible or in use during school, they are subject to confiscation. (First offense: confiscated by teacher and returned at end of the day. Second offense: confiscated by teacher and turned in to assistant principal's office; returned at the end of the day. Third offense: confiscated by teacher and returned to parents only during a conference.