



Welcome to Cactus Wren

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

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

Our Vision and Mission

Our Vision

The Washington Elementary School District is committed to achieving excellence for every child, every day, every opportunity.

Our Mission

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

School Improvement Plan

School improvement is an ongoing process involving the collaboration of staff, the Site Council and the community. A copy of the 90-Day Action 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, writing and math instruction.

Daily Schedule

Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Office Hours on Wednesdays: 7:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

7:15 a.m. Teachers on duty on playgrounds. 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 Facebook: [Cactus Wren Elementary](#)

School Phone Numbers

Office 602-347-2100

Health Office 602-347-2110

Cafeteria 602-347-2117

Attendance 602-347-2111

ID requirements: Cactus Wren ID Policy

ID Cards/Bus Passes: All Cactus Wren students are required to wear IDs and bus passes while on the Cactus Wren campus and on buses. These must be on a breakaway lanyard around their neck or worn as clip-on badges. Students will be provided a picture ID and a bus pass at the beginning of the school year at no cost. Students will be checked for compliance during first period and throughout the school day. If a student does not comply with the school dress code in wearing his or her ID card, consequences may result. Students may not be allowed on the afternoon bus if an ID/bus pass is not present. IDs and bus passes are required when getting on the bus, and entering campus from the buses. If students deface, destroy, render their ID unreadable or lose their ID, **they will be required to purchase replacement cards for \$2.** Clips/pouches are 50 cents each, if buying separately.

Medication at School

If your student needs to take any medication, including cough drops, please take the medications to the Health Office and complete the necessary consent forms. Students are not permitted to have any medication in their possession while at school. If you have any questions, please call the Health Office at 602-347-2110.

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, you will receive an automated call out and school personnel will try to verify your child's absence by phoning you at home or at work.

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 an Attendance Unit (AU). The AU 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 trancies or 10 total absences, the school may make a referral to the AU 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.

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

Students need to be dropped off in the south parking lot by 7:25. Late arrivals need to come to the office and check in with the attendance clerk. 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 is free and served in the classroom each morning. Cactus Wren provides lunch to students at no charge.

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. If you wish to have a meeting with your child's teacher or with the principal, please let the office staff know. **Office staff will take your name and number and will get back to you on a timely manner.** Please be aware that the teacher can meet before school or after school.

Please read our **Visitor Code of Conduct**:

During my visit, I will:

- Respect teacher's time.
- Make an appointment for extended conversations.
- If I have any concern with a student or staff member, I will report it to the office manager or principal.

During my visit, I agree to support an atmosphere of mutual respect, where everyone is a... **H E R O**

Helping Everyone Respect Others

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.

ID BADGES:

- ID badges are part of the school uniform and expected to be worn all day.

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 spirit shirts may be worn on Friday (purchase through PTO).

BOTTOMS:

- Colors are navy blue 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 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
- No offensive logos

UNDERGARMENTS:

- Should not be visible.
- 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.

School Take Home Folder

Due to health and safety concerns, students are asked to utilize paper or plastic folders to support home/school communication. A colored folder will be provided for each student as a take-home/back-to-school folder. **Some students may need a backpack, but we ask that you consult with the principal and complete a form to describe the need.**

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. We are looking for parents to get involved. We can use your assistance.

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. There are strict standards for food, and the school can provide a recommended list of foods. Check the school's Web site to see the recommended list.

Special Events

Students attending special school/PTO sponsored events **must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.** Unaccompanied children will be asked to leave.

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT/DISCIPLINE

Our discipline support focuses on a positive but direct behavioral set of expectations for our students. Each area of the school has expected behaviors that are taught, practiced and reinforced. Many of the strategies are based on Whole Brain teaching, as we focus on six rules to support our Behavior purpose: Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Kind.

We utilize the following rules. Ask your child(ren) to show you the gestures that go with each rule.

1. Follow directions quickly.
2. Raise your hand for permission to speak.
3. Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat.
4. Make SMART CHOICES!
5. Make your dear learning community happy.

Diamond Rule: Keep your eyes on the target.

What is the target? The target is anything or any person we want students to focus their attention on for a specific time – e.g. a teacher, a book, the SMART Board, another student who is speaking, etc.

- When a student chooses or forgets the rules, s(he) will be asked to repeat the rule and explain what behavior was chosen to reinforce expected learning behaviors. Most of the rule practice will occur at school. We may ask you to support that rule practice at home, if needed. If this should occur, you will receive a letter asking you to support the rule practice at home, sign it and return it to school.

- The Behavior Support Advocate, a new position added to each school site in WESD, will be engaged in supporting students' success.
- Students may receive an office referral for behaviors that are ongoing, disrespectful or hands on. This may include a call home, office referral, and possibly suspension. Respectful behaviors are expected. Students may still need to take a moment to move away from the group, if needed. Behavior plans and other supportive ideas may be implemented in building students' success.

The Cactus Wren staff utilize a variety of strategies that support student engagement and respectful behaviors. We want students to grow academically and behaviorally so they may be successful in school and in life. We appreciate your support in our endeavor to build a safe, responsible and kind learning environment!

Prevention Programs

Cactus Wren continues to acknowledge that the social and emotional well-being of our students is very important. Morning Meetings, part of the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching, is utilized. It embodies a set of social skills that children need to learn and practice so that they can be successful. This model is designed to set the tone for respectful learning, establish a climate of trust, motivate students to feel significant, create empathy and collaboration and support social, emotional and academic learning. Students will not want to miss their Morning Meeting so arriving to school on time is crucial.

Bullying Prevention continues to be utilized as a means to address any potential bullying situations. Students can report concerns in an anonymous "Bully Box" that is located in the library. Students are also encouraged to report potential bullying to a staff member. The Principal, Social Worker, or Behavior Support Advocate will investigate every concern.

The Social Worker, the Behavior Support Advocate, and the School Psychologist provide crisis intervention for students experiencing an emotional crisis. Some students attend small group meetings throughout the year. Topics addressed include, but are not limited to, self-esteem enhancement, anger management, problem solving, grief and loss, conflict resolution and friendship.

Items Unacceptable at School

All electronic items should be left at home. 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 the school day. Phones need to be turned into their teacher each day. If there is misuse of the phone, it will remain in the front office for parent pickup. The telephone in the administration office is to be used for business purposes and emergency situations.

Bicycles, Skateboards and Scooters

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, skateboards, and scooters. 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, and similar items.

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. Parents are asked to park in the visitor's spaces.

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.

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 602-347-2129.