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# DESERT FOOTHILLS

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Desert Foothills! We believe in a middle school concept that provides a smaller school-within-a-school feel through academic teams, a daily advisory period for social skill development and strong elective and exploratory classes. All students and academic teachers form teams for both grade levels. Each team consists of groups of students taught by the same teachers for math, English Language Arts, science and social studies. The goal of each team is to support student learning by increasing communication and planning integrated units. Teachers on each team meet weekly for team planning. Our goal is to provide the best education during an age where students face difficult social challenges. We look forward to working with you to continue developing our students into future leaders.

## MISSION AND VISION

**Vision:** We believe that the most promising strategy for achieving the mission of our school is to develop our capacity to function as a professional learning community.

We envision a school in which staff:

- Unite to achieve our common purpose
- Work together - interdependently - in collaborative teams
- Seek and implement promising strategies for improving student learning on a continuous basis
- Monitor each student's progress on a frequent basis
- Demonstrate a personal commitment to the academic success and general well-being of each student

**Mission:** It is the Mission of Desert Foothills Junior High School to ensure high levels of learning for each student. Through mutual respect within the total school community, our children will grow and learn in a positive atmosphere where staff, students, and parents together are enthusiastic about the teaching and learning process.

## SCHOOL/PARENT RESOURCES

Address: 3333 W. Banff Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85052

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

Front Office .....602-896-5500

Attendance.....602-896-5521

Nurse .....602-896-5510

District Office.....602-347-2600

School Hours: 8:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (M, T, TH, F)

8:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (Wednesday)

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Wednesday)

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

### **Absences**

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to contact the school in the event his or her child will not be in attendance that day.

**Failure to contact the attendance clerk on or before the day of the absence will result in the absence being recorded**

**permanently as unexcused.** Absences and tardies can be reported at **602-896-5521**. Please be advised that Arizona law states that no student can miss more than 10% of the school year (18 days). Students who miss more than 18 days, regardless of the reason for absences, may be referred to the WESD Attendance Unit.

### **Tardies**

Students who report to school late must sign in through the front office. Students who are late to school are considered tardy. A tardy is considered excused only if the student is accompanied by a parent/guardian, the student provides a note from the parent/guardian, or the parent/guardian verbally notifies the attendance clerk. Upon a student's tenth **unexcused** tardy, the school may submit a truancy referral notice to the **WESD Attendance Unit.**

### **UNEXCUSED/UNVERIFIED TARDIES**

The First Tardy = Warning

The Second - Third Tardy = Lunch Detention and Call to Parents

The Fourth Tardy – Referral to Student Services

### **Truancy**

By state law, truancy is defined as an unexcused absence of a class period or longer. **Students who have accumulated more than ten unexcused/unverified absences may be referred to the WESD Attendance Unit (AU).**

### **Leaving Campus**

No student may leave campus without being properly signed out through the office. A student leaving campus without being properly signed out will be considered truant, his or her parent will be notified and subject to consequences through the Student Center. Once on campus, students are not allowed to leave.

## **SAFETY**

### **Health Office**

It is imperative that parents update all phone numbers (cell, home and work) throughout the year, in order for the health office to reach parents when there is an emergency. All prescription and over-the-counter medication must be administered through the health office. To do so, a request for giving medication form must be signed by a parent/guardian and the physician ordering the medication. Students who purposefully misuse or distribute medication to other students are subject to disciplinary action.

### **Student IDs/Bus**

Student safety on the way to and from school is of vital importance to all members of the Desert Foothills community. Riding the bus to school is a privilege, not a right. Bus referrals may result in suspension of bus privileges. **Students are only allowed to ride their assigned bus. All students riding a bus must have their bus ID. If a student has lost his or her ID, he or she must get a temporary ID from the front office before 7<sup>th</sup> period. This ID must be returned the next day. If the original ID cannot be found, the replacement cost is \$2.00. If a student misses the bus, he or she may not walk home. District policy does not allow**

students to walk or ride their bike across major roads going to and from school.

## **PE Lockers**

Locks are issued to all PE students. PE lockers are to be used for storing school materials and clothing only during PE. Only clothing used specifically for PE should be left in the lockers overnight. Money, watches, jewelry, etc. are not to be left in lockers. The school is not responsible for items missing from lockers or the locker area. Students and their parents are advised to not bring valuables, technology or large sums of money to school.

## **STUDENT CENTER**

It is normal for students to have social, emotional and educational issues as they navigate the middle school experience. The role of the Student Center is to assist students with the problems and issues they face. Both students and parents should feel free to contact the Student Center if they need help or assistance.

## **Social Worker/Counseling Office**

Desert Foothills offers services to students who are in crisis or who have personal, sensitive or private issues that they wish to discuss. Parents can request services as needed.

## **Bullying Prevention Program**

During the 2023-2024 school year, Desert Foothills will promote practicing behaviors aligned with the Bullying Prevention Program. Teachers will use discussion groups, modeling and question/answer sessions to help support the anti-bullying model. All bullying issues should be reported to the Student Center.

## **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

### **Promotion**

Students must achieve a 1.0 or D average in each academic class to qualify for any and all promotion activities. If a student earns an "F" in the last quarter, this will impact the privilege(s) of attending any field trips associated with promotion but will not impact other promotion activities if all other criteria are met. If a student is suspended at the time of the promotion activities, he or she will not earn the right to participate in the activities. Students who have received multiple disciplinary actions for significant behavior concerns resulting in suspension(s), will be in jeopardy of not participating in the promotion activities as indicated in the Promotion Activity Guidelines.

### **Academic Probation & No Pass/No Play**

Any student who has received an "F" in any class or who has received a "U" in conduct on either their report card or their midterm report will be placed on academic probation. While on academic probation, no student is eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity (e.g., student government, athletics, spirit line, etc.). The student will remain on academic probation for a minimum of two weeks. After two weeks, the student can be reinstated by initiating contact with the principal and showing proof that he or she has satisfied any previous deficiencies.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Dances**

Dances are held in the cafeteria from 4-6 p.m. Students who are suspended either in or out of school or absent the day of the dance will not be allowed to attend. School dress code rules apply to all dances. Students must have a permission slip signed by a parent in order to enter the dance. Students may not leave the dance early unless their parents pick them up. Failure to pick up a student within a reasonable time after a school event may result in the student being removed from future events. Students may not bring guests.

### **Interscholastic Athletics**

The Washington Elementary School District Sports Council arranges activities for Interscholastic Athletics. The council arranges for the officials, sets the standards and arranges the schedule for athletic events. Interscholastic Athletics provided at Desert Foothills include cross country for boys and girls, girls and boys volleyball, basketball for boys and girls, wrestling, girls softball, soccer for boys and girls and track and field for boys and girls. All team members pay a \$25.00 participation fee per sport.

### **DF Library Media Center Policies**

**Textbooks:** Students may check out any textbook throughout the year for two weeks as needed to complete homework assignments.

**Library books:** Students may check out up to three books for two weeks with their student ID card.

**Overdue policy:** Students with overdue books cannot continue to check out books nor participate in dances, non-academic field trips, team-related activities, or end-of-the-year celebration activities. Students can pay the amount owed by cash or check for the exact amount only, they can set up a weekly payment schedule until the fine is satisfied, or students can participate in a work program in the library to pay off their account.

## **HONORS/RECOGNITION**

### **Honor Roll**

Honor Roll includes students with a 3.0 to 3.49 average in all classes with no Ds, Fs or Incompletes.

### **Principal's List**

Principal's List includes students with a 3.5 to 4.0 average in all classes with no Ds, Fs or Incompletes.

## **PBIS - POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS**

Desert Foothills Jr. High is a PBIS school. PBIS Stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. PBIS focuses on creating and sustaining school-wide, classroom, and individual systems of support that improve the educational environment for all children. Our aim is to explicitly teach behavioral expectations and then recognize the positive behaviors shown by students. Here at DF, we R.I.S.E by being RESPECTIFUL, having INTEGRITY, practicing SAFETY, and putting in our best EFFORT.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Core beliefs of discipline policy:

- 1) No one has the right to interfere with the learning, wellbeing and/or safety of others.
- 2) Students are expected to comply with all behavioral and academic guidelines.
- 3) Students will be expected to observe the “Good Neighbor Policy” as they move through the community on their way to and from school.

\*See Disciplinary Action Chart of the WESD section of handbook, for expanded list of infractions and consequences.

### **School-wide Classroom Discipline Plan:**

Classroom consequences for inappropriate behavior will be as follows:

- a. First offense: Warning
  - b. Second offense: Isolation in the classroom.
  - c. Third offense: Short-term isolation in buddy room and after-school detention.
  - d. Any further misbehavior after isolation and/or misbehavior in buddy room and an office referral will be submitted.
- Inappropriate behaviors include disrupting class, talking out, not following teacher directions, out-of-seat without permission, off-task behavior.

#### **The Following Are Examples of Student Behaviors That Will Result in An Office Referral:**

1. **Assault:** Physical aggression directed toward another individual that does not result in mutual combat and/or the other individual does not retaliate physically will result in a nine-day OSS.
2. **Bullying** – See the WESD Policy.
3. **Dangerous/Disruptive Items** – Items that have the potential to cause damage/harm to property/persons, combustibles (lighters, matches, etc.), fireworks, caps of any sort, projectiles, shooters, rubber bands, etc.). Items that if used could disrupt the educational environment (laser pointers, stink bombs, smoke bombs, etc.). Disposition will be determined based on specifics of the individual incident and/or based on administrator discretion.
4. **Defiance** – Failure to comply with a reasonable request made by a staff member.
5. **Displays of Affection Between Students:** Displays of affection between students are limited to “hugs of greeting” only and must be brief in duration. Other forms of physical contact between students (e.g., touching, kissing, etc.) are not considered appropriate for the middle school environment. After proper warning, repeated failure to adhere to this standard will result in disciplinary action.
6. **Disrespect** – Any act of argumentativeness, rudeness or lack of respect shown toward staff, in either a written, verbal or gestural nature.
7. **Disruption of the Educational Process:** Any behaviors or acts, whether intentional or unintentional, that impede, interfere with, or disrupt the normal functioning of the learning process and/or school environment.

8. **Drugs/Alcohol/Illegal Substances** – Any use, possession, purchase/sale, distribution of these items or substances represented as these items will result in a nine-day OSS and a possible recommendation for a long-term suspension. Hookah and/or vape pens/liquid or any item represented as such are considered in this category. See WESD Policy as well as WESD Disciplinary Action Chart.

9. **Graffiti/Tagging/Marking:** Writing on or marking on any school or District property.

10. **Instigating/Provoking:** Any attempt by students to initiate, encourage or escalate conflict between other students. Any attempt by one student to directly or indirectly initiate, provoke or pick a fight with another student. All students present in an incident of instigation or provocation will receive consequences.

11. **Physical Aggression:** If a student is physically aggressive, a three-day out-of-school suspension will be issued for the first offense. Any further incidents of physical aggression will result in progressive discipline: five days OSS, seven days OSS and nine days OSS with a possible recommendation for long-term suspension. This category also includes endangerment and any reckless or careless act, either intentional or unintentional, that has the potential to hurt, harm, injure or endanger another student.

12. **Language, Inappropriate** – The use of offensive or vulgar language.

13. **Language, Racially Offensive** – Use of any language that is demeaning and/or derogatory in reference to another persons’ race, religion, culture and/or skin color, first offense, will result in a five-day OSS. Any further incidences of similar behavior will be dealt with progressively.

14. **Language, Inappropriate toward staff** – use of profanities/vulgarity in response to directives or corrective feedback by school staff, first offense, will result in a five-day OSS. Any further incidences of similar behavior will be dealt with progressively.

15. **Sexual Harassment/Sexual Offenses** – See WESD Discipline Policy for definition of offenses and disciplinary action. First offense will result in a five-day OSS. Any further incidences of similar behavior will be dealt with progressively. Sexual harassment with contact, first offense, will result in a minimum seven-day OSS.

16. **Tobacco** – Any use, possession, purchase/sale, distribution of tobacco products and/or represented as a tobacco will result in a three-day OSS for first offense violations. Any subsequent violations will result in **progressive discipline**.

17. **Verbal/Physical Confrontations** – Any public confrontation between two or more students that has the potential to escalate either verbally or physically but stops short of a fight. Any behaviors considered in this category will result in OSS. Any students involved will receive equal consequences. Any student who videotapes another student with or without their permission and shares or posts the videos, will receive a minimum of a three-day OSS.

18. **Misuse of Technology** – Any student who is in possession/shares and/or distributes inappropriate images on personal or WESD electronic devices, will receive a minimum of a three-day OSS. Due to the severity of the offense, Phoenix Police Department will be notified.

## Behavior Consequences

### Lunch Detention

Students may be assigned lunch detention in the time out/in-school suspension room for one or more days for various disciplinary issues. A student who is removed from the time out/in-school suspension room for inappropriate behavior will be subject to further disciplinary action that may include out-of-school suspension. Students who fail to report for detention as assigned will be subject to additional consequences.

### Time-out/In-school Suspension (ISS)

Students may be placed in the time-out/in-school suspension room, located in the Student Center. This room keeps the student in supervised isolation on the school campus. Students removed from the time-out/in-school suspension room for inappropriate behavior will be issued out-of-school suspension. Students will not be able to attend any after-school events on a day on which they have served an in-school suspension.

### Out-of-school Suspension (OSS)

Students who have been suspended from school may not be on campus or at any school sponsored activity or event for the duration of their suspension. Academic work that the student missed while serving OSS will be available for parent pickup. All work must be completed before the student returns to class. Students will be assigned to ISS until work is completed. A parent conference may be required by the administration before a suspended student will be readmitted to school.

## Dress Code

See WESD Dress Code for prohibited items. Students are expected to have their own IDs at all times. ID pictures are not to be covered. Along with facing disciplinary action, students who do not have their ID will not be permitted to ride the bus to and from school. Replacement IDs can be purchased for \$2.

### Consequences for Apparel Infractions

- First Offense: Warning and parent notified.
- Second – Fourth Offense: Parent will be notified. Lunch detention will be assigned.
- Fifth Offense: A fifth offense will be considered defiance. Parents will be notified and one day of ISS will be issued.

### Prohibited Items and Activities

- Electronic/media devices, earbuds, headphones, smart watches, iPods, cameras, etc. are not allowed and will be confiscated.
- Spinners, fidget cubes, lasers or any related item will be confiscated for the day.
- Cell phones may not be used inside the gates of school. Cell phones should be turned off at all times. If a cell phone is being used or heard during the school day, it will be confiscated, and a parent will be required to pick it up. After the third time a phone is confiscated, the phone is to be left at home or secured in the Student Center.
- Large amounts of cash are not permitted.
- Backpacks, fanny packs, mini-backpacks, backpack purses, sports bags and book bags are not allowed. Purses must be smaller than a textbook. Students and athletes must bring PE clothes, uniforms, shoes, etc. to school in a designated team bag or a clear

plastic grocery bag. Bike riders may wear backpacks but must leave them padlocked to the bike during the school day.

- Gum, food, candy and drinks, other than water in a clear water bottle, are not permitted.
- Skateboards and scooters must be left in the bike rack.
- Balloons and bouquets are not allowed.
- Sharpies and permanent markers are not allowed. Students may not write on themselves or other students.
- Items that are considered gang related are not allowed.
- Students who are in violation of the above will be subject to progressive discipline and a behavior contract.
- Students are not allowed to bike, scooter, skateboard or walk across any major street and/or intersection.
- Going to the park after school to socialize or be picked up is prohibited. All students are to be picked up by the flagpole near the front office at dismissal. Students walking home must go home prior to going to the park.
- Hats, bandanas, wallet chains and do-rags are not to be worn or brought to school.
- Slides, crocks or any shoes without a back may not be worn when playing a sport. This includes lunchtime and P.E. class.

### Consequences for having prohibited items at school

- First offense: Item confiscated. A parent must come to school to pick up the confiscated item.
- Second Offense: Item confiscated. A parent must come to school to pick up the confiscated item. Lunch detention will be assigned.
- Third offense: Item confiscated. A parent must meet with administrator or advisor, and one day of ISS will be assigned.
- Fourth offense: Item confiscated. A parent must come to school to pick up the confiscated item. Three days out-of-school suspension.

**Any prohibited item confiscated by school personnel must be claimed by a parent/guardian or adult family member. Any confiscated item not claimed within nine weeks will be disposed of appropriately.**

**The school will not assist parents and/or students in any way, in the event that a prohibited item, or an item of value, is lost or stolen at school.**

## NUTRITION SERVICES

Due to the Dept. of Agriculture and the Community Eligibility Program, all students are provided a free breakfast and lunch. Only a la carte items will have a charge.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

### BEST/PTO

The Desert Foothills BEST (Boosters of Education Students and Teachers)/PTO organization functions as our primary parent group. This group will provide many essential activities and events for Desert Foothills this year. If you are interested in working with BEST, please contact the school office or e-mail them at [dfbest@gmail.com](mailto:dfbest@gmail.com).