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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

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 at 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. Excessive unexcused tardies will result in lunch detention(s).

## UNEXCUSED/UNVERIFIED TARDIES

Tardies 1-3 are handled by the teacher with parent contact.

Tardies 4 or more will be handled by student services using progressive discipline.

\*The tardy policy starts over after each quarter.

## 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/STUDENT SAFETY

All students are required to have their school ID with them at all times on campus. Students who do not have their ID may be subject to disciplinary action. IDs are required for lunches and to check out books from the library. If students deface, destroy and/or render their ID unreadable or lose their ID, they will be required to purchase a replacement ID for \$1.00.

## STUDENT IDS/Z-PASSES FOR 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/Z-Pass. If a student has lost his or her ID/Z-Pass, he or she must get a temporary ID from the library before 7<sup>th</sup> period. This temporary ID must be returned the next day or lunch detention will be assigned by student services. If the original ID/Z-Pass 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 AND SPORTS LOCKERS

Locks are issued to all PE students and student-athletes. The school is not responsible for items missing from lockers or the locker area. Students and their parents are advised not to bring valuables, technology or large sums of money to school. The student is responsible for the issued lock. If the lock is lost or stolen the student is responsible for paying \$5.00 to cover the cost of the lock.

## 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 2025-2026 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. If students do not meet the requirements to attend promotion activities and show up anyway, they will be subject to additional disciplinary action.

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. See below for additional information for Promotion Ceremony Expectations.

#### Academic achievement

Students are expected to average passing grades in all classes. Passing is defined as receiving no less than a 1.0 GPA per class

over four quarters (Using the following point values: A=4 pts., B=3 pts., C=2 pts., D=1 pt., F=0 pts.). For example, three D's and one C would equal a 1.25, while three D's and an F would equal a non-passing GPA of .75.

#### Attendance

Students are expected to maintain good attendance in order to be considered eligible for the promotion ceremony. According to Arizona Revised Statute 15-803, students are required to attend 90% of the school year with no more than 18 absences.. This includes excused absences. If you feel this is in error, please log into ParentVUE and contact the front office.

#### Student Discipline

According to Arizona Revised Statutes 15-841 and 15-843, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that allow teachers to maintain order and effective discipline within the classrooms, and administrators to maintain a safe and orderly educational environment.

## ACADEMIC PROBATION & NO PASS/NO PLAY

Any student-athlete 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. The student-athlete will remain on academic probation for a minimum of two weeks. After two weeks, the student-athlete can be reinstated by initiating contact with the principal and showing proof that he or she has satisfied any previous deficiency. Student-athletes who get suspended may be subject to removal from the team. Student-athletes must attend at least a half day of school to participate in the event.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Dances

Dances are held in the cafeteria after school. 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.**

### Sports Teams

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:

- Co-ed teams – Cross Country and Track and Field
- Boys teams – Volleyball, Basketball and Soccer
- Girls teams – Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer and Softball

All team members pay a \$25.00 participation fee per sport. Inability to pay the fee does not exclude a student from participating. (Please contact the school administration.) Students must be eligible to participate in after school athletics. Please refer to the WESD Sports Council Student/Parent/Coach Contract.

Additional eligibility requirements may be added as deemed appropriate by Desert Foothills administration.

## **DF LIBRARY AND 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 3.5-3.99 average in all classes with no Ds, Fs or Incompletes.

### **Principal's List**

Principal's List includes students with a 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 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 a reflection room. (Parent notification required)

The classroom teacher will assign lunch detention for the first two removals in a quarter. After school detention and/or lunch

detention will be assigned by student services on the third removal in a quarter.

Any further misbehavior after isolation and/or misbehavior in a reflection room and an office referral will be submitted.

Inappropriate behaviors include disrupting class, talking out, not following teacher directions, not following classroom procedures, 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 for one or more days for various disciplinary issues. A student who is removed from the opportunity 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.

### **Period Pull Out/In-school Suspension (ISS)**

Students may be placed in the opportunity room for period pull out or in-school suspension, located in B-101. This room keeps the student in supervised isolation on the school campus. Students removed from the opportunity 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. A parent conference may be required by the administration before a suspended student will be readmitted to school.

## **DRESS CODE**

Please see the District portion of the handbook for Dress Code information.

## **Consequences for Apparel Infractions**

Consequences for apparel infractions will be handled by a case-by-case basis, and may include:

- Parent(s) contacted to drop off a change of clothing.
- Parent(s) pick up their child.
- Students change into school-provided clothing.
- Continued violations may result in further disciplinary actions.

## **Electronic Devices/Cell Phones (Off and Away)**

Desert Foothills has an “Off and Away” policy regarding electronic devices. “Off and Away” means all electronic devices must be powered off, placed in their binder and off their person. Desert Foothills does not recommend bringing electronic devices to school and is not responsible for any lost or stolen electronic devices on campus (including cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, cameras, earbuds, smartwatches, etc.) Students are not allowed to use these items on campus at any time; therefore, they will be confiscated if seen or heard on campus. After the third electronic device infraction students will need to turn their electronic devices into Student Services every morning and pick them up at the end of the day. Failure to turn in electronic devices will result in progressive discipline.

## **BACKPACKS**

Desert Foothills is a NO backpack campus.

Backpacks, mini-backpacks, fanny packs, purses used as backpacks, shoe bags, duffel bags, and book bags are not allowed on campus. Purses must be smaller than a textbook. The rationale for this action includes improvement of student organization and achievement while increasing campus safety and security. Purses carried by students may be no larger than 8”x 11” in size. If a backpack or anything used as a backpack is brought onto campus, it will be confiscated and returned to a parent or guardian. Students who need to bring gym clothes to school are required to bring them in a clear, plastic bag. Student-athletes participating in a sport other than softball must also bring their items in a clear, plastic bag. Bike riders may wear backpacks but must leave them padlocked to the bike during the school day. Violations of the backpack policy may result in disciplinary action.

Gum is not permitted on campus. Teachers and staff will manage gum violations within their classrooms and on campus. Packs of gum will be confiscated.

Selling items on campus is not allowed.

Any exchange of goods or money is prohibited.

Large bags of chips, large boxes of cookies, and crackers are not allowed on campus and will be confiscated.

Candy is not allowed on campus and will be confiscated.

Drinks other than water are not permitted.

Skateboards and scooters must be left in the bike rack.

Balloons, flowers, stuffed animals, toys, and or other items that distract from the learning environment are not allowed and will be confiscated.

Sharpies and permanent markers are not allowed. Students may not write on themselves or other students. Sharpies will be confiscated.

Scented sprays, perfumes, cologne, and lotions prohibited. These items will be confiscated. These items are not to be used in classrooms or within the buildings. If they are being used in classrooms and/or the buildings they will be confiscated and may result in disciplinary action. Items that are considered gang related are not allowed. This includes bandannas or items of color hanging from pockets. Items deemed gang related will result in disciplinary action.

Students are not allowed to bike, scooter, skateboard or walk across any major street and/or intersection.

Headphones, video games, laser pens, earbuds, MP3 players, iPods, smartwatches etc., are not allowed. These items will be confiscated.

Use of cell phones are prohibited on campus during the school day. Including after school while in the buildings. Cell phones will be confiscated if they are seen or heard. Please see the cell phone policy.

Public display of affection (PDA) (i.e. holding hands, embracing, kissing), as determined by the Desert Foothills staff, is not permitted and will result in an office referral.

- **Desert Foothills assumes no responsibility for replacing lost, damaged, stolen, or confiscated items. Any prohibited item confiscated by the Desert Foothills staff will be turned in to Student Services. Some items must be claimed by the parent or guardian in the front office.**

## **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).