

# PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear Parents and Students:

Let me welcome you to Desert View School. It is my intent that you and your child have a rewarding experience while your child is a student here.

In order for school to be a place for children to grow and learn, a place to respect and be respected, a place to experience the excitement of learning, it is important that the students, parents and school staff form a tri-partnership. Working together, there is no limit to what we and our children can actualize.

This parent/student handbook is only the introduction to your child's school program. After reviewing it for general information, I encourage all parents and students to become actively involved in the Desert View experience.

Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding school year.

Sincerely,

Maria Farmer, Principal



## VISION STATEMENT

Every teacher, engaging every child, every day

## MISSION

## STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY

### **Mission Statement**

Desert View Elementary School is dedicated to preparing students to meet with success in their future life experiences by providing a spectrum of exceptional, educational opportunities. High academic expectations, shared decision making and responsibility, and a nurturing atmosphere are vital components in achieving our mission.

### **School Philosophy**

The school staff and the parent organization at Desert View care about all students attending this school. Our goal is that all students become responsible citizens who show respect for the personal rights and property of others.

We are committed to providing a safe, caring environment conducive to learning for all our children. We will provide

alternative programs to enable all children to achieve. Student learning is monitored by staff and through District-approved testing. We strive to promote a positive self-image in all our students and to develop a respect and appreciation for the many cultures that comprise Desert View.

We want all parents, community members, students and staff to provide input in making decisions concerning our school, and we encourage all parents to take an active part in our parent organization.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**School Address:** 8621 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Phoenix

**School Web Site:** <http://desertview.wedschools.org>

### **Important Telephone Numbers:**

Office	602-347-4000
Health Office	602-347-4010
Attendance	602-347-4011

### **Daily Schedule**

<b>7:15 a.m.</b>	Gates open. Students allowed on campus.
<b>7:25 a.m.</b>	FIRST BELL – All students line up in designated areas. All teachers take students to rooms.
<b>7:30 a.m.</b>	HOMEROOM – Pledge of Allegiance – Moment of Silence Announcements and attendance/morning Breakfast in the classroom.
<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	Morning preschool dismissal
<b>11:00 a.m.</b>	Afternoon preschool arrival
<b>1:30 p.m.</b>	Afternoon preschool dismissal
<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	Grades K – 5 dismissal

### **Early Release Wednesday Dismissal Time:**

<b>1:00 p.m.</b>	Grades K – 5 dismissal
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### **Office Hours**

The office will open each day for business by 7:15 a.m. and will close at 3:15 p.m. If parents need to see their child's teacher or the principal before or after these hours, they must arrange this in advance with the teacher or principal, who will then alert the office staff. All visitors must always report to the office, sign in and obtain a visitor's pass before meeting with any student or staff member.

Our gates open at 7:15 a.m. Your child should not come on campus before this time as there is no supervision.

### **School Attendance/Reporting Absences**

Report all absences to the –attendance line by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. The attendance line has voice mail that is operative 24 hours a day. That number is **602-347-4011**. Remember to give a specific reason for the absence when leaving your message, e.g., fever, cold, ear infection, etc. Do not just say, "Does not feel well" or ".....is sick."

- Absences shall be excused only for necessary and important reasons: illness, doctor appointments, bereavement, other family emergencies, and observance of major religious holidays of the family's faith.
- When a student is absent, it will be necessary for the parent to call the school before the day of the absence or on the day of absence before 9:00 a.m. in order to advise the school as to the reason for the absence.
- When a student returns to school following an absence, a note of explanation from the parent is required.
- The school will require an appointment card or a letter from a hospital or clinic when the school **has not** been notified by the parent of an appointment that is medical or dental in nature.
- Unauthorized absence from school is considered truancy and will be treated as such.

In addition to the District policies concerning absences, Desert View Elementary will adhere to the following:

- Any student absent from school because of medical or dental reasons will be required to bring in a doctor's note explaining the reason for the absence.
- Reporting your child's absence does not necessarily excuse an absence for personal or medical reasons. Sick days are excused if we receive a doctor's note explaining the condition causing the absence. *If your child has chronic health problems, we will need a letter by the doctor certifying the student has health problems preventing them from attending regular classes for intermittent periods of one or more days because of the illness, disease or accident.*

### Tardy Policy

Tardies are considered "excused" if they are due to doctor/dentist appointment or family emergencies. All other tardies are "unexcused." In the event of an excused tardy, the parent must notify the attendance clerk in writing, in person or by a phone call to the office at 602-347-4000.

### Truancy

In order to assure students are successful and meet current state legislation, which requires all students to attend 90% of the school year, WESD has 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 may 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.

### Leaving Before Dismissal

Positively no child is ever to leave the grounds at any time once he or she has arrived at school without permission from the principal's office. Students are released only to parents, guardians and to those persons listed on the emergency card as emergency contacts with a valid ID. If your child is a bus rider and you wish to pick him or her up in your car, you must report to the office first. We ask that you never pull up to the bus bay and try to pick up your child there. Staff members on bus duty vary weekly. They may not recognize you and are not authorized to release any student to any person they cannot verify as a parent, guardian, etc. Although it may seem very annoying at the time, the safety of our students must always come first. We will **not release** any child to anyone not authorized to pick him or her up. Please refer to the District portion of this handbook for more specific information.

### Dress Code

Student dress is governed by Washington District Governing Board Policy (See District Student Conduct Section). "Students' dress must be appropriate at all times. Any student's dress or personal appearance that distracts or interferes with the normal learning process is unacceptable. The decision as to whether or not such a condition exists or regarding the course of action to be taken shall be left to the reasonable discretion of the administration."

If a student comes to school dressed inappropriately, he or she will be sent to the school nurse and will be given an acceptable outfit to wear if one is available. If one is not, or this is the second infraction, the child's parents will be called to bring him or her an acceptable outfit to wear. The student will not go back to class until he or she is dressed appropriately. Parents are always welcome to discuss the matter of what is deemed appropriate dress with the principal, the school nurse or the teacher. Our staff encourages all parents to be particularly knowledgeable about gang-like dress. Our students are our main concern. Dressing in gang-like fashion may be done to be "cool" or may be done very unintentionally or intentionally, but it can cause serious problems for the entire campus and must not be taken lightly. We appreciate full parent support and student cooperation.

### Library Facilities and Policies

Our library is open to parents from 7:15 – 7:45 a.m. and 2:30 – 2:45 p.m. Monday – Friday to check out books. Our librarian will ask you for your name, address, phone number and your child's homeroom teacher's name. She will then set up an account for you. You will receive your own library card that will allow you to check out up to four books, take them home, and read them with your child

### Special Area Requirements

Art, vocal music and physical education are offered to all kindergartners through fifth graders. The fine arts are also integrated throughout the kindergarten and preschool curriculum. Band and strings are offered to all upper-grade students who are interested. We ask that parents whose children participate in band and strings encourage their children to handle their musical instruments with great care, to attend all instructional sessions, and to practice at home as required. As

with all participation in any of the performing arts, we strongly urge parents to ensure their children attend school events in which they are performing, as this is an integral part of the learning process. On the days when students participate in physical education, we ask they dress appropriately. For example, sandals would not be appropriate for running events and could cause student injury. Students must take responsibility for their footwear and clothing for PE.

## **PTO**

Our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) is an active participating segment of the community and the school. All parents are welcome to attend the meetings. The meetings are held every other month beginning in August on the last Friday of the month at 7:30 a.m.

## **Site Council**

Desert View has a Site Council that facilitates the decision making at this site. We strongly encourage participation of parents and community members on the council. There are five (which includes one alternate) positions for parents on the Desert View Site Council and one for a community member. As positions open, parents are strongly encouraged to apply. Applications are available at the office. Terms are for one to two years. Up-to-date information about Site Council, including meeting times and agendas, will always be advertised in the newsletter.

**Meeting dates will be posted on the marquee and the agenda will be displayed on the outside board in the case by the office 24 hours prior to the meeting.**

## **School Newsletter**

Our school newsletter, *Desert Views*, comes home each month with your child. Please read our newsletter, as important information is included pertaining to schedule, upcoming events, PTO, Site Council, and other important information you should know.

## **Preschool Programs**

Desert View has two Head Start classrooms and four Special Needs Preschool classrooms at our site. We strive to include all of our preschoolers and their families so they may feel a true part of our school. Everyone is always welcome to all our special events and programs. For more information regarding our preschool programs, contact our office staff who will direct you to the program directors.

## **Prevention/Intervention Programs**

Desert View has a school-wide Title I program that includes a social worker and a parent liaison to better serve our students and their families. We also have an ELL Department, and provide Gifted Services. All of these staff members can be accessed through the office.

## **School Parties and Birthdays**

Due to strict nutritional guidelines imposed by the state, **Desert View does not allow birthday parties at school.** We do allow three designated holiday celebrations each year: Fall Celebration, Winter Celebration, and Valentine's Day. Teachers may also schedule an end-of-the-year party. Snacks served during these parties must be store bought. Please do not

bring homemade food. These events are most often held during the last period of the day. If a parent does not wish to have his or her child participate, arrangements can always be made to accommodate the parent's wish and place the child in another classroom during the event.

## **HONORS/AWARDS**

### **Perfect Attendance**

Recognition is given to those students who achieve perfect attendance. This is defined as no absences, excused or not excused. Perfect attendance awards are given for the entire year. Perfect attendance is not easy to achieve. Students who acquire perfect attendance are always recognized for such an accomplishment.

### **Honor Roll/Principal's List**

Desert View recognizes the academic achievement each semester of its fourth and fifth graders. Students who have a grade index of 1.0-1.5 will be on the Principal's List, and those students with a grade index of 1.6-2.0 will be on the Honor Roll List. No matter how high the grade index, a student with more than one "N" for behavior or effort cannot make the Honor Roll or Principal's List.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

### **The Make Your Day Program**

Desert View is one of many schools in the Washington District that uses the Make Your Day Program for school-wide discipline and positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors. The Make Your Day Program exists to provide a consistent campus management system for all classes. The program focuses on one rule: **No student has the right to interfere with the learning, safety or well-being of others.** The plan provides for students to make decisions that develop critical thinking skills. Effort is expected and rewarded and frequent positive feedback is given.

Besides building student responsibility and self-esteem, the program also incorporates daily communication with all parents. Direct parent involvement with the student's daily progress and academic achievement will generate student success.

Desert View also has a very strict anti-bullying program called the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated at our school, and serious consequences will be imposed for this behavior.

**Parents, please thoroughly familiarize yourselves with the overview of this program, which has been provided to you in our discipline booklet entitled "Desert View Student Discipline/Behavior."** Hopefully, this will answer any questions you may have.

### **Articles Prohibited At School**

Personal items should remain at home. We do not allow s, video games, iPods, radios, headphones, laser pointers, literature with inappropriate pictures, rollerblades, shoes with wheels, scooters, skateboards, chewing gum, candy, or toys. This list is by no means all-inclusive. We ask that parents use good

judgment and monitor items their child brings to school. We understand you may want your child to bring a cell phone to school. We require all students to give the phone to the teacher for safe keeping. The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the day.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Safety/Bicycles/Parking Lot**

We want to always keep our students safe. Students should refrain from rollerblading, skating, skateboarding and bicycling on our campus. Skateboards are not allowed on campus. Students who bring them should be prepared to have them taken and held until a parent can retrieve them.

Students who are walkers should always cross with the crossing guards and closely follow their directions. If this means going out of one's way to be able to cross with the guard, we still need students to do this. Students' safety is our No. 1 concern.

You may give your child permission to ride his or her bicycle to school. However, we do ask that you provide a helmet for safety. (We request that kindergarten students not be allowed to bring bicycles.) It is also important for your child to use a bike lock. Washington District and Desert View School assume no responsibility for bicycles. If your child rides a bicycle to school, the following rules will be enforced:

- Park and lock bicycles in the bike rack;
- Bicycles are not to be ridden in the parking lot, on the school sidewalks or on the school grounds;
- Students are not to loan their bicycles to other students;
- Infraction of these rules and/or dangerous bicycle riding to and from school may result in the loss of bicycle riding privileges.

Our parking lot is not large and can get very congested during morning drop-off and dismissal times. We ask parents to follow directions by dropping children off by the sidewalk so they do not cross the busy parking lot. Please stay in your vehicle when in the drop-off/pickup lane. A staff member will bring your child to your vehicle. Please be cautious and alert and exercise safe driving when using our parking lot. All parents should drop off and pick up students in our new north parking lot area before and after school hours. If you are late picking your child up, he or she will be escorted to the office by a staff member and will be waiting for you there.

### **Health and Welfare**

We have a full-time registered nurse on duty during school hours. It is the purpose of the health office to help care for your child while he or she is at school.

Health appraisals consist of screening tests for vision and hearing.

If your child must use a prescription drug or any over-the-counter medication, please contact the school nurse and ensure an adult leaves the prescription with the nurse who will administer the prescription as required by your child's doctor. A "Request for giving medicine at school" form must be filled out by both doctor and parent each new school year for all medications. All medications need to be brought to the health office by a parent or authorized adult. Contact the nurse if you

have any questions regarding your child's need to use inhalers and refer to the appendix in the District portion of the handbook.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY PRACTICES**

At Desert School it is important that students and staff are prepared for any emergency. Fire drills are practiced each month. We also perform lockdown drills throughout the year. The District sets up two bus evacuation drills for every student so students know how to safely get off the bus and what to do in the case of an emergency when going home from school or on a field trip.

The Washington Elementary School District also employs its own security team. Members of the security team come to each campus throughout the day to make sure the campus is safe. The District security team also attends after-school events such as basketball games and evening events such as our fall festival.

We keep all the gates locked while students are on campus. The north gate, where students are dropped off in the morning, is locked at 7:30 a.m. each day. We also lock the north gate following afternoon dismissal because we have students on campus who attend our after-school programs and the PAC program until 6:00 p.m. each evening. All adults who enter campus are asked to come and out through the office. We also ask all adults to sign in and get a visitor badge.

Finally, **every student and staff member** is issued an ID badge. **Students are expected to wear their badges and are responsible for their badges.** With this new system, our transportation department is able to tell that a student enters a bus and at what stop and time the student got off the bus. This is extremely helpful if we have a lost student after school hours. School badges are also needed in the library in order for students to check out books. The cafeteria will also be installing a scanner for students to use in order to get their lunch each day.

Parents will be required to pay to have badges replaced. The fees are as follows:

Complete badge (badge, lanyard and pouch) \$5.00

Lanyard 50 cents

Pouch 50 cents