



**2020/2021  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
HANDBOOK**

*Families who enroll agree with the terms and provisions set forth  
in the Desert Christian Schools handbook.*

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Revised 8.20—*Note: Revisions are printed in bold italics*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### OUR PURPOSE

The goal of Desert Christian Middle School (DCMS) is to provide a caring, student oriented, Christ-centered setting for enthusiastic and cooperative young people in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

### PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Lisa Costello is the middle school principal. She has been at Desert Christian Schools since 2004. Her other ministry experience includes roles as a Children's Director for a local church and a supplemental instructor for Antelope Valley College.

Mrs. Costello holds a Bachelor's degree in history from California State University, Northridge and holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Grand Canyon University. She holds a Professional Administrative Teaching Certificate from the Association of Christian Schools International.

Mrs. Costello and her husband Jeff have one daughter, Elizabeth.

### COMMUNICATION

DCS publishes a monthly newsletter, Knightly News, which is e-mailed. The Knightly News includes information about upcoming programs and special events and is one avenue of communication with parents. Parents are requested to thoroughly read each newsletter.

Parents may access student grades via FACTS. Please see the information regarding ParentsWeb in the general section of the handbook. Classroom teachers email accounts that are checked daily. Email addresses can be accessed through FACTS. The primary source for communication to parents regarding academics and discipline is FACTS, our internet-based information system. DCS uses FACTS to e-mail timely notifications to parents. Because of this it is essential that parents update any changes to e-mail addresses and regularly check their child's grades on FACTS.

Meetings with teachers should be scheduled as an appointment as this gives teachers an opportunity to devote attention and resources to answering parent questions.

Parents may not *come onto campus without an appointment.*

## CAMPUS PROCEDURES

### SCHOOL HOURS

School hours for middle school students are **7:55 a.m. to 2:10 p.m.** Office hours are **7:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.** The telephone number is 661-723-0665.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Desert Christian Schools values the safety of your child and because of that; students are not allowed to take UBER, LYFT, or any other ride service to and from school. These drivers are not supposed to transport passengers under the age of 18 without an accompanying adult.

Students may not be on campus before **7:25 a.m.** or after **2:30 p.m.** unless they are participating in an organized school activity. All other students on campus before or after regular school hours must attend Peach Factory, the before and after school care program.

### STUDENT PICK-UP

The following procedures are intended to promote safety and accountability for students. Please review the guidelines with your students to help reinforce safe procedures for student drop-off and pick-up.

Middle School Campus Procedure:

- If there are changes in pick up or transportation plans for a student, the office should be notified before **1:00 p.m.** so there is adequate time to inform the student.
- If a student needs to be picked up prior to school dismissal, parents must sign the student out **at the main campus** office. If the student returns to school the same day, he/she must receive a pass from the office before returning to class.
- Middle school students are released from campus on their own at the end of school. Students must exit the campus at the middle school entrance gate unless they are reporting directly to Peach Factory.

- If a student remains on campus without parent supervision past **2:30 p.m.**, the student will be admitted to the Peach Factory program and the parents will be charged accordingly. (See General Section for detailed information.)
- Parents are expected to be on time to pick up their students at all times and from all events, practices, and detentions.
- Parents who are more than ten minutes late to pick up their students may be charged a \$10 fee for any portion of the first ten minutes they are late and \$1 for each additional minute plus any additional Peach Factory charges. The student of the late parent will not be allowed to practice or participate in any events until the late fee has been paid.

### TELEPHONE USAGE

The student telephone in the middle school office is available for use by students before school, at break, at lunch, and after school with a staff member's permission.

When calling into the middle school office to get a message to your student, be sure to do so before **1:00 p.m.** in order for the message to be delivered to your student before the end of the day.

### STUDENT VISITATION

***Due to COVID-19, this service will not be available during the 2020/2021 school year.***

Students from another school visiting classes with a DCMS student must first be approved by the administration.

The visiting student's parent or supervising adult must submit a Visiting Student form at least 24 hours in advance and agree to be available in case of emergency or misbehavior by the visiting student.

### FUNDRAISING REQUIREMENT

To help keep the cost of tuition down, each middle school student is required to raise \$150 during the school year. Parents who do not wish their children to participate in fundraising may pay the \$150. For families with multiple students subject to the fundraising requirement, the requirement will cap at \$300 per family.

**All** proceeds from school-wide fundraising activities **are** counted towards each student's fundraising requirement. These activities may **include Box Tops submissions, Discount Card Sales, and Color FUNd Run participation.** Only school-wide fundraisers are credited toward the fundraising requirement.

***Desert Christian Schools is going to waive the student fundraising requirement during the 2020/2021 school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your voluntary participation in student fundraisers will be greatly appreciated.***

Participation in the Annual Auction, contributions given at the Development Dinner, to the Annual Fund, and student or parent participation in sports, club, or other group fundraisers are appreciated, but do not apply to the fundraising requirement.

### LOCKERS AND LOCKS

Each student is provided a locker. Following are some guidelines for using school lockers:

- Students must purchase their own lock from the office and are 100% responsible for its proper use.
- The school is not responsible for missing or damaged locks.
- Students may not share lock combinations with other students.
- Students may not switch lockers.
- Students must not attempt to open any locker that has not been assigned to them.
- Students must not tamper with locks or lockers.
- Students must not abuse lockers by writing on them, applying stickers, or damaging locker mechanisms.
- The school is not responsible for items missing from lockers.
- Students must not store items that are not allowed on campus in their lockers.

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

A goal of the school is to introduce students to Jesus Christ and help them grow in a relationship with Him. Not all students will embrace a personal Christian faith. However, all students are expected to behave according to Christian standards.

Students must show openness to considering Christ as their life leader. This is primarily demonstrated through proper behavior and positive attitudes that are in harmony with Christ's teachings. A verse of scripture that emphasizes this thought is I Timothy 4:12, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe."

### **CONDUCT AT ALL TIMES**

Students must at all times, while enrolled at DCMS refrain from involvement in the following:

- Possession, use, or sale of any substances used to create a psychoactive reaction (get high), illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or any nicotine substances (this includes smokeless tobacco, electronic and vapor cigarettes).
- Involvement in immoral or illegal activities.
- Participating in the occult or witchcraft.
- Swearing, using inappropriate language, sharing pornography, or other communication unbecoming to a Christian.
- Defying authority.
- Acts of dishonesty, such as cheating, lying, and stealing. Cheating may be:
  - Copying someone's work to submit as one's own (including class work, homework or other assignments).
  - Giving or receiving answers or stealing tests.
  - Plagiarizing, i.e. copying other people's material and not attributing it to them.
- Claiming conduct contrary to our rules.

- Written or spoken words that threaten physical harm or damage the reputation of another.

It is understood that while enrolled at DCMS, parents accept responsibility for their student, seeing that students abide by the Christian lifestyle standards at all times, including non-school hours.

Students who violate these standards may be dismissed from school. Students should make every effort to avoid compromising situations, which might give the appearance of being involved in the above activities.

### **CONDUCT ON CAMPUS**

To provide a wholesome, safe environment, the following behavior is not permitted on campus:

- Speech or words that are negative or contrary to Christian standards.
- Displaying pictures, symbols, or emblems on one's clothing, lockers, or personal property that call attention to groups or movements that are contrary to Christian standards.
- Demonstrating romantic affection such as kissing, hugging, or holding hands.
- Bringing or possessing fireworks, firecrackers, matches, or other flammable materials.
- Bringing pocketknives or any weapons (real or simulated) to school.
- Chewing gum or eating sunflower seeds during school hours.
- Bringing or consuming energy drinks before school, during school, or at school sponsored events.
- Using personal music players on campus.
- Bringing skateboards to school.
- Tampering with lockers.
- Tampering with or taking items that belong to another student.
- Littering, defacing, or abusing school property.
- Entering faculty areas or restrooms except with specific permission.

- Bringing any type of games to school. This includes card games or hobby pieces to play, sell, or trade.
- Bringing or using aerosol cans.
- Harassing or abusing anyone verbally or physically.
- Threatening harm to others.
- Talking disrespectfully to or about another person.
- Treating another person disrespectfully.
- Being in the parking lot except to be picked up or dropped off.
- Social dancing at any school sponsored activity.

The school accepts no responsibility for lost or missing items and strongly recommends that valuable items not be brought to school.

### CONDUCT IN CLASSROOMS

Teachers establish rules for the classes they teach. However, the following are standards for all classes:

- Students must always respect and cooperate with teachers.
- Students must be on time to classes.
- Student must be prepared with the necessary materials needed for each class. (See Class Materials.)
- Students must have a mental attitude that indicates a readiness to learn.
- Any communication that disrupts the class or distracts students from learning is unacceptable.
- Personal grooming is not permitted during class.
- Students leaving class must have a pass in their possession.
- Food and *beverages in the classroom are allowed only at the discretion of the teacher.*

- Water may be brought into the classroom. Students may not be in classrooms or offices unless a teacher or staff member is present.
- The teacher's desk and personal property must be left untouched and undisturbed by students.

### CELL PHONES

Administrators reserve the right to review student phones for behavior management including but not limited to:

- Email
- Texts
- Photos

If a student has a cell phone on campus, it must remain completely powered off and in the student's locker or backpack during school hours.

Students who have phones out or visible (fully or partially) will be charged with a violation of the cell phone policy. Students may not have their phones in their pockets or elsewhere on their person at any time during school hours.

#### Chapel Cell Phone Policy

Cell phones are not to be brought to chapel. Students who have a cell phone in their possession in chapel will be charged with a violation of the middle school cell phone policy.

Cell phones may not be used to serve as a Bible using a Bible app.

#### Cell Phones on Trips

Cell phones are not to be used on school sponsored trips unless specific permission is given by the teacher or administrator heading the trip.

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

DCMS desires to foster appropriate use of technology for the purpose of student academic achievement.

- Students will be provided Chromebooks to be used in the classroom when necessary to meet this goal.
- Electronic devices such as iPads, Nooks, and Kindles, may be viewed or utilized during school hours with staff permission. Middle school students may not access the Internet except with direct teacher supervision and

permission. The device must be on or above the student's desk and in clear view of the teacher.

## HOW MISCONDUCT IS HANDLED

Any matters not specifically covered by the handbook are subject to discipline at the discretion of administration and may cover penalties up to and including expulsion from school. The handbook does not limit the scope of our discipline; instead it attempts to create clarity and consistency.

The discipline policy is available on FACTS. The intent of disciplinary procedures is to encourage students to comply with the conduct standards of the school.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### CLASS MATERIALS

Students are expected to be prepared for class. This includes bringing with them the following materials needed in class, but are not limited to:

- Textbook.
- Pens, pencils, and colored pencils.
- Paper.
- Red pen for grading.
- Any required notebooks or journals for specific classes.
- Assigned research materials or other materials necessary to complete class work.

***Due to COVID-19 regulations, students will be required to have their own materials and will not be allowed to borrow from a friend. School supplies will be available to purchase from the middle school office.***

### TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

All textbooks, workbooks, and materials are purchased by the family. Textbooks are available for purchase from the school. In many cases, parents are able to purchase textbooks on their own through the school supplied ISBN list. All textbook payments placed on student accounts are due July 15.

Class fees and miscellaneous school charges will be added to student accounts in July and will be due to be paid by August **31**.

Students or families may not own copies of current teacher's manuals.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY

***Due to COVID-19, students will be able to check books out from their English teachers.***

The middle school library is open for book check out during published hours. It houses books that are appropriate for students in the sixth through eighth grades. It is the student's responsibility to return library materials on time. Students are charged the cost of replacing books that are lost or damaged. Report cards are withheld until materials are returned or paid for.

### MATH CLASSES

Students at the middle school are required to participate in our online diagnostic and practice tool, ALEKS. ALEKS stands for Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces. Students are given specific questions that quickly and accurately determine what a student knows and doesn't know in a course. ALEKS will then offer instruction on those areas the student doesn't know while reassessing the student on previous knowledge. Students will be assigned a number of topics by their math teacher that they will be required to complete on a weekly basis. ALEKS is an excellent tool for students to fill in "math gaps" they may have as well as strengthening math skills the student may already have.

### ACCELERATED READER

***Due to COVID-19, students will participate in reading challenges instead of Accelerated Reader.***

The STAR reading test is used to establish a student's reading ability. While most of our students are proficient to excellent in their reading abilities, we do understand and work with those students that struggle on an individual basis. Students may read and test on books not included in the DCMS library; however, they must be in the student's ZPD (zone of person development) range. All students take the STAR computerized test at the beginning of the school year. Results of this test determine the reading level for Accelerated Reader (AR) books checked out in the

library. The AR program provides student quizzes on designated books so that points can be earned. Students are assigned a quarterly goal for the number of points (including a combination of accuracy and book level) to earn by successfully passing AR quizzes. Participation in the AR program constitutes 12% of the student's English grade. A letter is sent home that provides parents with access information to Renaissance Place, where they can track student progress online.

## **HOMEWORK**

All homework relates directly to curricular goals and a variety of activities are used to increase motivation and interest. Reports, readings, hands-on activities, newspaper clippings, artistic expressions and projects are all examples of good teaching techniques that help students personalize learning.

The average student should set aside two hours to study and complete homework each day. This standard presupposes that some students will finish in less than two hours and some will take more time.

Many student factors determine the length of time spent on homework. Most teachers give time in class to begin homework assignments, therefore student attention and diligence in class greatly impact homework time. Student ability and understanding, beginning early in the evening, working industriously in a quiet home study environment, and student time management also make a difference. Even very good students can spend unnecessary time on homework by doing more than is requested or polishing daily assignments needlessly.

Summaries for homework and lesson plans are posted for the entire week on FACTS ParentsWeb and become available the Monday of the week after 3 p.m. If there are any changes in homework it will be updated.

FACTS ParentsWeb is a valuable tool in providing parents with general insight into assignments. It is not, however, intended to be a substitute for instruction, details, or modifications to assignments made in the classrooms.

Students are expected to have the ability to type papers and conduct Internet research. Students who do not have that capability at home are

expected to make arrangements through libraries or other means.

Homework and classwork to be shared via the cloud for group work or submission to the teacher must be performed on Google Docs or the appropriate app under the Google Office Products. Students must use their Desert Christian email for such work.

Some assignments at the middle school are assigned for the entire quarter, like AR and Aleks. If there is a technological difficulty, the assignment is still expected to be completed on time.

Allow 4-6 weeks for students to adapt to a new grade level and homework expectations. During this time it may take students longer to complete homework.

## **LONG TERM PROJECTS**

Long-term projects are intended to take several homework days to complete. Therefore, students should avoid procrastinating, but rather plan to spend several days working on the project before it is due.

All long term projects, book reports, term papers, etc., must be turned in on the assigned due date even if the student is absent on that day.

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

Teachers may accept late work with **for 85% credit** if turned in within **one day** of the zero being posted on FACTS. **It will be worth 50% credit the second day it is posted on FACTS.**

Work that is intended to be done in class may not be done ahead of time as this prevents proper instruction and leaves the child with little to do in class.

## **EXTRA CREDIT GUIDELINES**

Extra credit may be given to help struggling students experience success and to help other students improve their grades. Extra credit is not meant to be a substitute for consistent effort on daily assignments and tests.

## **GRADING AND REPORTS TO PARENTS**

### Grading Scale

In 6th, 7th, and 8th grades the following scale is generally used in determining letter grades:



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 90-100 . . . . .   | A |
| 80-89 . . . . .    | B |
| 70-79 . . . . .    | C |
| 60-69 . . . . .    | D |
| below 60 . . . . . | F |

Report Cards

- DCMS uses traditional letter grades for achievement on report cards. To further help parents accurately understand the progress of his/her child, teachers give grades in every subject area.
- Report cards are issued at the end of the quarter. Check the school calendar for dates when the reports will be distributed.
- Teachers are available to address questions and concerns about a student’s progress. Please email them with questions or concerns.

A grade in a course of study represents the teacher's best judgment of a student's academic achievement. Various components of course work, such as class participation, projects, reports, homework assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. may be assigned different weights by individual teachers.

Progress Reports

Parents may monitor their student’s academic progress on ParentsWeb, a feature of FACTS. By using this feature, parents have the opportunity to help their children bring up their grades before the official report card is issued.

Academic Probation

Students are placed on academic probation for receiving a grade point average below 2.0 or having two or more F’s on a grade card.

A student on probation is assigned a specific period of time in which to demonstrate his/her ability to perform satisfactorily at DCMS. If the student does not perform satisfactorily during that period, he/she may be asked to withdraw from the school and not be allowed to enroll the following year. Students placed on academic probation will be assigned to a guidance counselor to help them succeed academically.

Re-enrollment and Graduation Policy

Students in sixth or seventh grade who receive an “F” as a quarter grade in more than six classes during the school year forfeit the right for re-enrollment at DCMS the following school year and for promotion from their current grade. Students in the eighth grade who receive an “F” as a quarter grade in more than six classes during the school year forfeit the right to participate in the graduation ceremony and for promotion from their current grade. These limits are prorated for students attending less than a full year.

Parents will meet with the principal to establish a plan to provide practice in the key areas of the class the student failed. By participating in this service, the student will have a better chance for success in the coming semester.

**ACADEMIC HONORS**

The following scale is used in determining qualifications for academic honors: A=4 points; B=3 points; C=2 points.

ACCESS

- The highest distinction is awarded to those students who earn a 3.5 grade point average with no grade below a “B”.

At 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation, students are recognized for academic honors.

**SPECIALIZED TRAINING**

Christian Training

- Spiritual growth is nurtured within each child. In addition to regular times of sharing God's Word, spiritual principles are integrated throughout the day.
- Bible classes provide opportunities for students to study the Bible and discover its application to their lives.
- ***Due to COVID-19, weekly chapels will be broadcast in Bible classes for the 2020-2021 school year.***
- Weekly chapel provides opportunities for relevant biblical training and personal expression of faith through worship. Parents are always welcome to chapel and are especially encouraged to attend Character Recognition Chapel for their children.

- Because the Bible is the authoritative basis of the Christian faith, we feel that every person should become thoroughly familiar with it.
- Students are taught to apply biblical principles to all life situations, including school, sports, and social interaction.
- Beginning in second grade, each student is required to have the New International Version (NIV) 2010 Bible for study and memorization.

#### Physical Education

- A physical education program is offered that emphasizes the basic components of physical fitness: strength, flexibility, and cardio respiratory endurance.
- In addition to these special physical skills, the development of Christian character traits through cooperative participation in sports and games is emphasized.
- Please refer to the P.E. dress code under the Standards of Dress section of this handbook.

#### Computer Education and Chromebooks

- The middle school **uses chromebooks for** all core subjects to conduct Internet research, use Google products, and to utilize different computer programs such as ALEKS.
- Middle school students will be issued a school email address to be used for all school assignments. Only the Desert Christian Google account should be used for school work requiring online access, sharing, and online submission.

#### Academic Support Program

- The Advantage Program offers support to middle school students with diagnosed learning needs.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

***Due to COVID-19, student attendance policies will be flexible for the 2020-2021 school year. Students are encouraged to stay home when sick.***

Regular, punctual attendance is essential for success as a student. Absences interrupt the smooth and complete process of learning.

Students are urged to be absent only when absolutely necessary.

#### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Encourage prompt and regular attendance.
- Schedule doctor appointments and family vacations so that attendance at school is affected as little as possible.
- Phone the middle school office to report your child's absence. A parent phone call is normally sufficient to excuse a student from school. However, a written note may be requested.

#### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Regular, punctual attendance in all classes.
- When an absence occurs, the student is responsible for class work missed and must arrange with the teacher to make up assignments, tests, and quizzes.
- The student is ultimately responsible to provide notification of an absence.
- If a student misses more than half a class they may be considered absent from that class and may be subject to appropriate grade reductions.

#### **TYPES OF ABSENCES**

##### Excused

- The California Education Code section 48205 cites absences due to illness, quarantine, medical services, and funeral services for immediate family as excused.

##### Prearranged absences

- Parents may prearrange for some absences that might otherwise be unexcused.
- Prearranged absences will not incur a grade penalty unless the student exceeds the total number of absences allowed under the middle school excessive absence policy.

##### Prearranged absences of one or two days

- Parents may make arrangements the day before the absence by sending a note to the school office clearly stating the specific reason for the absence. If approved, the absence will not incur a grade penalty.

- Any projects or long-term assignments due during the absence are required to be turned in before the absence.
- The student will be given the same number of days that he was absent to complete assignments missed.
- Any tests taken during the absence are required to be taken at the teacher's discretion when the student returns.

#### Prearranged absences of more than two days

- If circumstances require a student to be absent more than two days, parents may make arrangements at least three days before the absence by requesting the Extended Absence Request Form from the office.
- The office will submit a copy of the Extended Absence Request form to each teacher for the purpose of assigning homework to be done during the absence that is not listed on FACTS.
- The student will request the Extended Absence Request form along with homework assignments from each teacher on the last day before the student's departure. The assignments listed on this form or on FACTS during the time of their absence may be due the day the student returns to school.
- Any assignments not listed on the Extended Absence Request or on FACTS during their absence must be completed following the student's return in the same number of days for which the student was absent. Students should refer to FACTS to complete all missed classwork and homework.
- Long term projects or large written assignments are due before the student's absence.
- Any tests taken during the absence are required to be taken at the teacher's discretion when the student returns.
- All absences are considered to be detrimental to the student's academic progress.

#### Unexcused

- Many other good reasons for being absent may seem legitimate to parents, but are,

nevertheless, classified as unexcused. Examples of absences that cannot be excused by the school are:

- Vacations that are not properly pre-arranged with the school
- Babysitting
- Student needed at home
- Music, art, or other lessons
- Car failure or lack of transportation

#### Truancies

- Truancies are defined as absences from school or class all or part of the day without authorization from parents or school.
- Absences that are not cleared in the attendance office are also considered truant.

#### Suspension

- Suspension is defined as occasions when a school administrator does not permit a student to attend classes for a specific period of time.
- Suspension may be in school or at home and is determined solely by the administrator.

#### Consequence for Excessive Absences

- Excessive absences affect academic performance and may result in probation or other consequences assigned by the principal.
- Students who exceed ten absences of any kind in a class for the semester will have their grade reduced by 1% for each successive absence. This excludes absences for extracurricular school activities. In case of an extended illness, parents may submit an appeal in writing to the principal requesting a waiver of this policy.

#### **STUDENT WORK MAKE-UP PROCEDURE**

When a student misses classes because of an absence, the student is also missing valuable classroom instruction and discussion that cannot be made up by normal homework assignments.

Therefore, teachers will hold students accountable for adequate make-up work to cover the missed

instruction. Failure to complete assignments will reflect on the quarter academic grade.

For all absences, parents and students may retrieve assignments by accessing them on FACTS. Parents should review the lesson plan as well as homework section. Teachers will set due dates for illnesses on a case-by-case basis.

#### One or Two Day Absences

- The student will be allowed to complete the work in the same number of days for which the student was absent. (Example: if a student is absent two days, he/she has two days to make up class work, provided the work was assigned during the absence.)
- If a test was given on the day of the absence or assigned prior to the absence, it may be required to be made up on the day the student returns.
- Failure to follow these procedures will result in a zero for the assignment or test and may affect the final grade.

#### Absence of Three or More Days

- When students have absences of three or more days they will have up to the equal number of days to make up the missed assignments.

#### Lengthy Absences

- In cases of a lengthy absence caused by illness, prearranged absences, or emergencies, students and teachers will make special arrangements for make-up work. Make-up tests will be arranged with the teacher.

#### Partial Absences

- A student who is present for any portion of a class is responsible for the homework given in class.

#### Extracurricular Absences

- Students excused for any extracurricular activities are responsible for homework in all their classes regardless of whether they attended those classes on the day of the absences.

#### Truancies, Suspensions, and Unexcused Absences

- Students who have been truant, suspended, or receive an unexcused absence will be assigned a penalty by the principal.
- Suspension make-up procedures are identical to one or two day absences (see the previous section.)

#### Special Consideration

- On a day an absence due to illness or some special emergency may legitimately prevent the student from having the opportunity to complete an assignment or prepare for a test. In this case, the parents should submit to the principal a written request for special consideration.
- The burden of proof is on the parent to demonstrate that an exception to the standard procedures is justified.

#### **TARDY AND DEFICIENCY POLICY**

***Due to COVID-19, student tardy penalties will be flexible.***

It is important that students at DCMS be punctual. Students not only do better in school by learning to be on time, but punctuality is a characteristic of good citizenship in every walk of life.

- Students must be in the classroom before the bell rings.
- If a student is tardy to school in the morning, he/she should report to the office to register his/her attendance and obtain a tardy slip.
- If a student is tardy to class, he/she should report directly to class. He/she will be charged with an unexcused tardy unless he/she brings an excused tardy slip to the teacher.
- ***Students tardy to class and late to school will be tracked separately.***

#### Excused Tardies

- Some reasons for lateness to school may be excused, such as illness, medical or dental appointments, verified major traffic problems, or a late car pool (unless the tardy student is the cause for the lateness.)

- When excused tardies become frequent, parents may be notified that excused tardies will no longer be permitted.

#### Unexcused Tardies

- Excuses for lateness not listed in the previous section will not be accepted.
- Excuses such as personal circumstances, illness of a sibling or parent, or car failure are not excused.
- Three “late-to-schools” are given without penalty to accommodate unforeseen events. Parents and students should take care to reserve the first three occurrences for these instances since they have no penalty attached to them.

#### Deficiencies

- Late to school and classroom tardies will be calculated together.
- Late to school for medical or dental appointments may only be excused with a doctor’s note.
- Students may have four unexcused deficiencies per quarter in each category without suffering a consequence. Deficiencies will be handled in the following manner:

- 1st occurrence: student notified.
- 2nd occurrence: student notified.
- 3rd occurrence: student notified.
- 4th occurrence: student notified.
- 5th occurrence: lunch detention.
- 6th occurrence: lunch detention.
- 7th occurrence: after school detention.
- 8th occurrence: after school detention.
- 9th occurrence: meeting with parent and principal.

- Students will be notified in person and parents by email when a detention has been assigned. Forgetfulness is not a valid excuse for missing an assigned detention.
- Students will not be assigned detention on the same day the tardy occurs. This is

so students may make arrangements with carpools, employers, coaches, etc.

- Once scheduled, the detention may not be rescheduled except for extreme circumstances.
- A request to reschedule a detention requires a parent note or email by 10:45 a.m. on the day the detention is scheduled. Please email [kdarwood@desertchristian.com](mailto:kdarwood@desertchristian.com) if your student’s detention needs to be reassigned.
- If a student misses detention, the detention will be rescheduled along with an additional detention of the same type.
- Three missed detentions will count as a referral.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

***Due to COVID-19, some activities may not be available during the 2020-2021 school year.***

DCMS extracurricular activities include all teams, clubs, and organizations associated with the school. Some examples include chapel, tech crew, worship team, leadership and discipleship groups, sports teams, music groups, and academic teams.

Athletic and club fees will not be refunded for students who become ineligible for sports or class participation due to discipline or grades.

### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

The purpose of student activities is to:

- Enhance the intellectual, spiritual, social, and physical growth of our students.
- Enhance the spirit and morale of our school family.
- Teach students how to have fun in a godly manner.

Student activities include off-campus trips such as overnight outings and field trips, and a variety of on-campus activities such as field days and spirit week. Participation in off-campus trips is important since there may be no classes for students on those days.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Single day and multiple day field trips are part of the educational experience at DCMS. Participation in field trips is contingent upon properly registering and paying fees on time. When the field trip involves the entire grade level, classes are cancelled for that grade level and no supervision or alternative childcare is available on campus for those students. Students who do not attend grade level trips may be required to submit alternative homework as substitute for activities and learning missed.

Middle school parents may participate in field trips only when they have completed and been approved in the formal volunteer process.

## **MUSIC**

Middle school music aims to equip students with the skills and experience necessary for a lifetime of participation in music making while also developing individual character and fostering spiritual growth. Students may participate in either Choir or Orchestra.

## **REGULATIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The following are general rules governing extracurricular activities that are applicable to all students, whether they are participant or spectator.

- All activities are under the supervision of the school, and students are expected to be as responsible and cooperative at an activity as they are in the classroom.
- The school dress code applies to extracurricular activities unless specific exceptions are announced.
- All trip and event fees are non-refundable. The first payment commits a student to the entire amount.
- Field trip and extracurricular fees are added to student accounts.
- Students may not participate in any extracurricular activity on the day in which they have been suspended.
- Students who begin an extracurricular activity or sport are expected to complete their responsibilities. Those who do not may be considered ineligible for future activities.

- Parents are expected to be on time to pick up their students at all times and from all events, practices, and detentions.
- Any participants that are late meeting a deadline, (such as returning to a bus), will be responsible for paying fees incurred by the school.

## **STANDARDS OF ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING ATHLETICS**

Student eligibility to participate in all extra-curricular activities including clubs, organizations and athletics is determined as stated in the handbook.

- In order to be eligible students must have a "C" average (2.0 GPA), with no "F"s and must follow school behavior standards.
- Eligibility for fall activities is determined by the grades received for the fourth quarter of the previous year in middle or elementary school.
- To be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity (including practices), a student must be in attendance at least a majority of the periods of that day.
- Students who try out and make a team are required to pay the full team amount regardless of whether or not they leave the team or choose not to participate.
- The administrator may remove students from participating whose grades or behavior drop significantly during the course of a season or activity. Criteria such as progress reports and reports from teachers will be used to determine if a student should continue to participate.

### Restrictions for Eligibility

Students ruled ineligible because of grades or behavior are restricted by the following policies:

- If a student is ineligible during a season of his/her sport or activity, he/she is excluded from participation until a subsequent quarter grade report makes him/her eligible.
- A student's eligibility is determined at the end of each quarter.

### Attendance and Participation Policy

- A student must attend at least half of his/her classes to participate in that day's activity or athletic experience.
- If a student attends school, he/she should also attend practice, even if he/she does not suit up.
- If a student misses school for illness, he/she cannot attend practice.
- If a student does not participate in P.E. because of injury or illness, he/she may attend practice but not physically participate.

### **ACCESS**

ACCESS is a program for high achieving academic students. "Achievement Centered Challenge Events for Successful Students" provides unique learning opportunities for students who are excelling in the classroom.

In order to participate students must:

- Be at DCMS one full quarter
- Obtain a 3.5 GPA for the preceding quarter with no C's
- Observe appropriate student behavior standards
- Register on time for scheduled events

### **LEADERSHIP**

Diakonia is a servant leadership training club available to qualifying 8th grade students. Members are selected following submission of an application packet and maintain eligibility by meeting academic, behavioral and meeting requirements.

### **WORSHIP TEAM**

Selected students participate in a worship team that assists in leading music for weekly chapels.

### **READERS'/MATH AUCTION**

A semiannual summer and fall reading/*math* program earns students reward dollars that can be spent at an invitation only award auction in the winter.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

Various clubs that focus on individual interests are formed annually. ***Clubs will be held after school from 2:15-3:15 p.m.***

### **INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS**

DCMS competes with several area schools in cross country, volleyball, soccer, basketball, and track.

The primary goals of the sports program are character development and participation. Families that desire a strong instructional component should enroll in one of the fine community programs intended for that purpose.

Parents and students are expected to remain supportive, positive, and encouraging toward officials, coaches, and players of both teams. Those who cannot will be prohibited from participating or attending.

### Goals for our Sports Program

- Developing Christian character within the athletes.
- Involving students in an activity that will nurture them spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically.
- Demonstrating and teaching Christian sportsmanship: how to win, lose, accept someone else's error, and forgive their own mistakes.
- Involving students in practices and games so they feel they are an important part of the team. (Care will be taken to give each student playing time during the season. However, playing time is determined by such factors as game situations, variation of a player's skills, and discipline. Therefore, playing time is not guaranteed for each game and is solely at the discretion of the coaches. Playing time may particularly be limited during tournaments to the extent that some players may not play during each tournament.)
- Developing a positive self-image in students through encouragement.
- Teaching students to understand and accept their individuality; that God loves them as they are, with their abilities and weaknesses.

- Teaching skills and rules of the sport in which the student is involved.

#### General Policies of Interscholastic Sports

- A fee-per-sport of \$150 is assessed to help cover the costs of various expenses incurred in the program.
- Athletic fees are added to the student account and are due by the start of the first game. Students will not be allowed to participate in athletic activities if the fees are not paid in full by the fee due date.
- Practices are held at the discretion of the coaches, usually three to four days per week.
- Most games are after school. Students may need to leave school early to attend contests.

#### **YEARBOOK**

An annual yearbook highlighting student activities is available for purchase each year. The cost of the yearbook will be \$60 and will be added to student accounts. Parents not wishing to purchase a year book may opt out.

#### **STANDARDS FOR DRESS**

Christian schools have a responsibility to establish dress standards appropriate for a Christian educational setting. The DCS dress code has been designed to provide for a comfortable, non-distracting, and appropriate environment for students where they can maximize their Christian education.

This dress code remains in effect while students are on any DCS campus, including after school.

The administration reserves the right to make final decisions in all dress code or hairstyle matters. If there is any question whether an item of clothing or hairstyle is appropriate, ask the principal or vice-principal before the item is worn to school.

#### **DRESS STANDARDS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

All students must appear neat, well groomed, and modest, meaning that clothes must fit well and not be provocative or revealing. DCS takes the view that sloppy or overly casual dress is not conducive to good work habits.

School pride and honor are something we take

seriously. School color and spirit days may be announced and observed on special days. Clothing with logos or names of other schools is not proper dress on our campus.

DCS students who are out of dress code are referred to the office. Parents should have a plan in place to bring clothes to their children for resolving any unexpected needs.

The school dress code is in affect for all school activities including activities that happen during the summer.

#### Shirts

All students shall wear an authorized DCS logo polo shirt in an appropriate size that meets the following requirements

- Must not fit tightly.
- May not be altered, gathered, or clipped to adjust the length or width.
- May be tucked in or worn out, according to the desire of the student.
- May wear a plain long-sleeved shirt underneath the DCS logo polo shirts.
- ***Girls must wear a bra under their shirt.***

#### Pants

Any type of pants are acceptable that meet the following requirements:

- Must be clean, neat, and properly hemmed.
- Must be worn at the waist.
- Must fit at the waist without the help of a belt.
- May not fit tightly and may not be oversized.
- May not appear excessively faded or worn, and judgment will be based on administration.
- May not be low-rise style.
- May not be torn, worn longer than the bottom of the shoe, or frayed.

#### ***Unacceptable styles include:***

- May not have holes ***or patches.***
- May not include leggings, jeggings, or yoga pants worn as pants.
- May not be flannel pants.
- May not be athletic style (including those



made of mesh or nylon-type or fleece lined fabrics).

- May not have snaps or Velcro fastening the side of the leg.
- May not be sweatpants, camouflage, or joggers.
- Girl's pants that are not full length must be hemmed to remain below the bottom of the knee when the student is seated.

#### Shorts

- Must be a solid color, including cargo style. **Uniform shorts like** Land's End, Target, Sears, JC Penney, Dickie's, or **Old Navy**.
- Must be no shorter than mid-thigh nor longer than the bottom of the knee when standing.
- Must fit at the waist and not be oversized or baggy.
- Must not be tight fitting.

#### Skirts, skorts, and jumpers for girls

- Must not fit tightly.
- Must not be shorter than three inches above the knee, including slits.
- May display designs of appropriate subject matter.
- May be worn with tights, leggings, and shorts underneath, no more than three inches above the top of the knee when standing.
- May be made of denim.
- Skorts are permitted.
- May wear a dress in place of a skirt, but must be covered with a school polo.

#### Outerwear, Sweaters, and Sweatshirts

- Logos may include designer brand names, names of colleges, and names of professional sports teams.
- The only outerwear to be worn over a DCS shirt is a coat, jacket, sweatshirt, sweater, or vest.
- Flannel shirts and blouses do not fit the accepted categories and so are not to be worn over polos.

#### Hair

Hairstyles or colors that are out of dress code, as determined by administration, must be corrected before the student may return to school.

- Must be natural and practical. Extreme hairstyles are inappropriate. (Most extreme styles may be avoided by ensuring that length transitions are blended).
- Hair may have no discernible lines other than the parting of the hair.
- Hair may not be cut shorter than a #1 guide.
- Hair length that varies more than 3 inches from the side to the top will be reviewed for being extreme.
- Must be neat, clean, and simple in style.
- Must be kept trimmed, clean, and combed.
- Boy's hair must be a conservative length. A maximum length must not extend to cover more than half the ear and must be off the collar. Hair length in front of the ear must not extend below the same half-way point.
- Boy's hair must be trimmed above the eyebrows.
- Must not be partially or completely shaved.
- Must not be extreme so as to cause a classroom or playground distraction.
- Must not be dyed or streaked in unnatural colors. Natural colors include shades of blond, brown, black, or red, as they would normally grow.
- Must be able to see both eyes at once.
- Examples of unacceptable hairstyles include the following: shaved lines, partial or full shaving of the head, any style that can be associated with practices contrary to the schools biblical lifestyle standards, bleached or dyed in unnatural colors, or any style that draws attention to it and may cause a distraction in the classroom.
- Beards and mustaches are not allowed.

#### Shoes

- Must be worn at all times.
- Must be practical and safe.

- Only sandals with heel straps are acceptable; beach sandals are not.
- Shoes with wheels are not allowed on campus.
- Military or work boots are not allowed.

Makeup and skin art (tattoos, decals, or drawings on skin)

- Makeup on boys is not allowed.
- On girls, makeup must be neat, simple, and modest.
- Acquiring any form of skin art (e.g. tattoos, decals, drawings) is not allowed.
- Students are not to draw on themselves or each other.

#### General

- Hoods may be worn only when outdoors.
- Jewelry must be kept simple.
- Girl's earrings must not be longer than one inch in length or hoop size.
- Clothes worn under jackets must be in dress code to allow students to respond to temperature changes.
- No skin should be visible between the neckline and bottom of skirt or pants, with the exception of the arms.
- No part of an undergarment should be visible.
- ***Face coverings must follow the same acceptable standards as other articles of clothing.***

The following items or styles are not allowed:

- Jewelry for body piercing may not be visible with the exception of earrings for females.
- Earrings are not permitted for boys.
- Accessories or styles that reflect a negative subculture are not permitted. This is solely at the discretion of an administrator.
- Clothing with the names or depictions of bands, entertainers, or celebrities may not be worn.
- Inappropriate pictures or words are not permitted on clothing worn to school. Teachers, administrators, and staff must easily understand the meaning of words or emblems

that appear on clothing.

- Clothing that bears the name or logo of groups and movements that clearly oppose Christian principles are not to be worn to school.
- Clothing that is meant to intimidate, exclude, or separate (as determined by administration) must not be worn.
- Athletic wear, such as shorts, jerseys, sweat pants, warm-ups, and jogging suits may not be worn.
- Oversized clothing.
- Military fatigues, trench coats, and surgical wear.
- Company uniforms.
- Items with a skull or bones.
- Items bearing a Confederate flag.
- Clothing worn tightly to the body.

#### **DRESS-DOWN GUIDELINES**

Please follow the guidelines in this section for dress-down days. All other dress code rules still apply.

If you have specific questions about what may be worn on dress-down days, call the school office before the clothing in question is worn. Students may receive Dress Code Violation Notices on dress-down days.

- Athletic wear, such as athletic shorts, jerseys, sweatpants, warm-ups, and jogging suits are not allowed unless specifically stated for a particular dress down day.

#### Dress Down Shirts

- Shirts other than DCS polo shirts are allowed.
- Non-revealing, modest shirts will be deemed appropriate.
- On certain days, a school shirt in school colors or spirit theme will be required to dress down.
- Any logos, emblems, words, or phrases on shirts or clothing must be clearly appropriate for a Christian environment.
- No tank tops or spaghetti straps of any kind are acceptable.

### Dress Down Shorts

- Regular style walking shorts that are at least as long as mid-thigh are allowed. The spirit of the rule is to be “closer to the top of the knee than not.”
- Tight fitting or baggy shorts are not allowed.
- **Shorts** may not be longer than the bottom of the knee while standing.
- Cut-offs are not allowed.
- Gym shorts are not allowed.

### **MS P.E. DRESS CODE**

Only official P.E. clothes may be worn for P.E.

- Shirts and shorts must be purchased from the DCS student store.
- Shirts – Students must wear the P.E. shirt authorized by the school and purchased from the DCS student store. Other shirts are not acceptable for P.E. All P.E. shirts and sweatshirts must have professional lettering of their last names printed on them.
- Shorts – Students must wear the P.E. athletic shorts purchased from the DCS student store. The shorts are a black mesh. Other shorts are not acceptable for P.E.
- Sweat clothes – During cold weather, students may wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt. The sweat clothes must be purchased from the DCS student store. The sweat clothes must be worn over their PE shorts and shirt.
- DCMS has two options for PE cold weather outerwear.
  - Option 1: black pullover sweatshirt with the PE logo on the front and student last name on the back, black sweatpants with the word Knights printed on the leg.
  - Option 2: black warm up jacket and pants with the DC logo and student name on the back, which is available by special order.
- Shoes – Shoes must be athletic style with a non-marking sole, and maximum of one-inch in height. For safety, shoes must be tied securely.
- Hats with appropriate logos may be worn during P.E.
- Students may only use the school provided loaner PE clothes. They may not borrow any article of clothing from one another, including shoes.

## Desert Christian Middle School Curriculum Overview

*Some additional books are distributed in class*

|                | Grade 6   | Grade 7  | Grade 8   |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| <b>English</b> | <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. A spelling component in 6 <sup>th</sup> grade and well-rounded curriculum helps provide a robust foundation for future learning. | <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. Understanding literary themes and reading are a focus of 7 <sup>th</sup> grade English as students explore three separate novels. | <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, <i>Holt McDougal Literature</i> offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. Writing cohesive, well-formed essays are a focus of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade English that helps to prepare students for high school and beyond. |
| <b>Math</b>    | <i>Glencoe: Math Course 1 and 2</i>   | <i>Glencoe Math Accelerated: Pre-Algebra Program (2017)</i>  | <i>Glencoe Math Accelerated: Pre-Algebra Program (2017)</i><br><br><i>Glencoe: Algebra 1</i>  |
| <b>Science</b> | <i>Elevate Earth Science</i> (Pearson) This science curriculum presents an interactive study of the earth's surface, water, and atmosphere, and the earth's structure.  | <i>Elevate Life Science</i> (Pearson) This curriculum presents an interactive study of cells and heredity, human body system, and diversity.   | <i>Elevate Physical Science</i> (Pearson) This curriculum presents an interactive study of sound and light, force and energy, and is an intro to chemistry.   |
| <b>History</b> | <i>Discovering Our Past: A History of the World, Early Ages</i> (McGraw-Hill) This curriculum connects today's students to the stories of our past. 6th grade students will explore the first half of this book. 6 <sup>th</sup> grade student study includes ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, and India.   | <i>Discovering Our Past: A History of the World, Early Ages</i> (McGraw-Hill) This curriculum connects today's students to the stories of our past. 6th grade students will explore the first half of this book. 7 <sup>th</sup> grade focuses on the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, and Asia in the years A. D. 500 - 1789.   | <i>Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States, Early Years</i> (McGraw-Hill) ☒ This curriculum brings the people, issues, and events of yesterday to life for the students of today. From the first Americans through the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era the components of the curriculum put students in the middle of the action, maximize comprehension, and build critical thinking skills.   |
| <b>Bible</b>   | <i>Walking in the Truth: The Christian Worldview</i> (Summit Ministries)<br><i>This curriculum trains students to defend their faith and respond to counterfeit worldviews using real world application and critical thinking exercises.</i>  | <i>Route 66</i> (Positive Action for Christ) integrates a fast-moving Bible survey with personal application and an emphasis on God's power and activity. During their journey, students study the New Testament.  | <i>Lightbearers Student Workbook 2nd Edition</i> (Summit Press) is designed to help students clearly understand the tenets of the Christian worldview. Students will learn how to apply their Christian faith to every area of life: theology, philosophy, ethics, biology, sociology, psychology, law, politics, economics, and history.<br><i>How To Be Your Own Selfish Pig</i> (Summit Press) gives students an opportunity to meet people from many walks of life, and holding to various worldviews as they search for the answers to their pressing questions.   |