

Parent Handbook

OF

Desert Marigold School

...Where Children Love—to Learn

“Love is higher than opinion.

If people love one another, the most varied opinions can be reconciled.

*This is one of the most important tasks for mankind today, and in the future:
that we should learn to live together and understand one another.*

If this human fellowship is not achieved, all talk of development is empty.”

Rudolf Steiner

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Desert Marigold School is a member of the Alliance for Public WaldorfSM Education
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DMS is a project of VSWEA, Inc a 501(3) non-profit corporation

Introduction

In May, 2016, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools renewed our charter to run through the 2036-37 school year. We are in the process of implementing various enhancements to our review procedures that were agreed in the renewal process. These new procedures will also help ensure that the education we provide is:

“ever-evolving, continuously renewed through practice, research, observation, and active reflection.”

That is our goal as a member of the Alliance for Public WaldorfSM Education. Our curriculum is guided by the [Core Principles](#) of Public Waldorf education and to deepen your understanding of the curriculum you have chosen for your child, please visit the [Curriculum Section](#) of our website.

The three basic areas of engagement outlined in enrollment process were:

- [Supporting the Education Process](#)
- [Providing Financial Support](#)
- [Contributing to the Creation of Community](#)

The educational experience you want for your child is possible only if we are all working together. Collaboration between home and school is essential. Making Desert Marigold your school of *choice* means that you have decided to become a contributing member of a community committed to education as a source of social renewal:

A community working together for a better future for all.

Just as you have expectations of Desert Marigold, as a school and a community, the school community and organization has expectations of you as a parent, and as a member of our community. Follow the “Financial” and “Community” links above to learn about those two elements and the role you can play.

This Handbook is to acquaint you with the policies and detailed procedures of daily school life that relate to *Supporting the Education process*. It is essential that you take the time to review this Handbook and to understand its contents, which covers K-8. For parents with high school students, there is a separate *High School Handbook*. Watch for changes announced in the **DMS Bee** or on the website.

If you have questions about any of the information presented, speak with the class parent for your child’s class, who will either have the information or be able to direct you as needed.

Of course, you can always contact the office at 602-243-6909.

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Section 1: School Operations

1.1 School Hours

Before 7:50 and after school hours, supervision of all non-high school students is the responsibility of parents. It is the school's expectation that parents ensure that children remain in their general proximity while on campus.

Gates open at 7:50 a.m. for 8:15 start of classes.

(See Supervision details below)

At 8:10 1st Bell Rings for students to go to classrooms from the play yards.

In Grades 3 - 5 the class teacher picks up the students from the drop-off play area and walks them to their classroom. Students in classes all other grades line up at their classroom door.

End of day release is as follows:

PlayGarden: **12:00 p.m.** *with Kinder Care available until 3:15 p.m.*

Early Childhood: **12:15 p.m.** *with Kinder Care available until 3:15 p.m.*

Grade 1: **2:00 p.m.** *with 1st grade care until 3:15 p.m.*

Grades 2 to 8: **3:10 p.m.** *with Extended Care available until 5:30 p.m.*

High School: **3:10 p.m.**

*Note: **NEW Early Release Day: Every Wednesday Grades 2-12 will end at 2:05 pm (No Friday Half Days).***

Please see [Calendar](#) for details.

1.2 Attendance

Attendance is a critical element of your child's education and has a significant impact on social well-being and achievement. It is vital that parents ensure that students attend school regularly and arrives on time daily.

Significant absences can also contribute to retention.

It is equally important that every student arrives ready to learn--having had enough sleep, is not overly distracted or stimulated, comes with a healthful lunch and has completed any required homework or other preparation (such as practicing a musical instrument.)

a. Late Arrival

If you arrive at school late (after 8:15 a.m.), students may not go directly to class. Park your car and walk with your child to the office for a late pass. A parent must sign the pass and state the reason for the tardy.

Students arriving late disrupt the important rhythm at the start of the day.

Parents may accompany students in Pre-K - Grade 2 to the classroom, ***but only students may enter the classroom.*** Students in grades 3 - 8 will walk to class on their own. High school students receive late passes at the high school office.

Recurring late arrival is a serious issue that affects academic achievement and the harmony of the classroom environment.

Frequent tardies not only are detrimental to the student who is late, but disrupt the entire class. If your child consistently arrives late, there will be a conference with your class teacher or high school sponsor and a representative of the administration to address the issue.

b. Illness

If a student is ill or will be absent for any reason, please leave a message for the office prior to 8:00 a.m. that day and every day of absence.

We recognize that under certain circumstances absence is unavoidable. If children are sick, by all means, they need to stay home. Be sure to include your name, your child's name and the reason for the absence. If you expect your child will absent for 3 consecutive days, contact the teacher to determine make-up work. A doctor's note will be required for illnesses extending beyond 3 days.

Keeping Your Child at Home When Ill

While trying to minimize time lost from illness, premature return can spread illness. Children should be kept at home under the following circumstances:

- The child has something communicable, such as chicken pox, strep throat, etc. In this case, please notify the school immediately so that we may inform others as necessary.
- The child has any of the following symptoms: fever; sore throat; green discharge from the nose; congested cough; discharge from the eyes; rash; or vomiting.
- The child is not well enough to play actively outdoors or participate in daily movement or Eurythmy classes.

If a student becomes ill during the school day he or she will be sent to the office and you will be called. In the event that we are unable to reach you we will call the emergency contacts

you have provided. Please be sure you keep the office up-to-date with any changes in contact information. Students who are ill must be picked up within 45 minutes, as we do not have a dedicated nurse's office.

If the school becomes aware of serious illness within the school, a notice is sent out to the class(es) effected. The notice will include a link to basic information on the illness on our [Health Notices](#) webpage.

c. Unexcused Absence

If you do not call the office and advise the school of your child's absence, he or she will be marked with an unexcused absence. Five consecutive unexcused absences may result in a meeting with a teacher or member of administration. If a pattern of unexcused absence develops, a meeting will be set up with parents, the class teacher and a representative of the administration to address this concern. (Students in grades 5 - 8 and High School may be asked to attend as well.)

d. Vacations

In the case of family vacations, we ask that you make every effort to schedule these during breaks. If this is simply not possible, it is imperative that you meet with your child's teacher well before the absence to develop a plan to accommodate for missed work **and** that you notify the records manager **in writing** regarding the absence. All vacations are always considered **unexcused** absences.

e. Disenrollment

If unexcused absences, including a vacation, reach 10 consecutive school days, ***your child will be withdrawn from Desert Marigold School.*** You will have to re-enroll before your child can return to school. ***When there are wait lists, there may be no available space upon your return.*** Your child(ren) would then be placed at the end of the wait list.

f. Early Release Procedures

If you have an emergency (or an unavoidable schedule conflict so that you must pick your child up early), please call ahead to notify the office. Try to schedule medical appointments outside school hours when possible. Students will not be released without an early release slip, so come to the office to get a form when you arrive. A staff member or office volunteer will pick the student up from class and bring him or her back to the office.

1.3 Carpooling

Desert Marigold supports carpooling and will make every effort to support families in developing car pools. Our goal is to reduce the number of cars coming onto our campus as much as possible. The benefits of doing this are tremendous: less stress for families; stronger community connections; less pollution; and improved relations with our neighbors. We ask that everyone make a concerted effort to carpool with at least one other family.

List all your carpool drivers on your child's registration form. One-time deviation from a listed/standard carpool driver should be communicated in writing to the class teacher as the teacher dismisses his/her students daily.

If your child is going home with someone other than an established carpool, please go to the office prior to that time and add that driver to your carpool list.

For assistance in arranging a carpool, go to the [Desert Marigold Carpool](#) page on Facebook.

1.4 Morning Drop-off

Enter the main parking lot from 28th Street and either proceed to the drop-off curb or go directly to park. If you park, ensure that all students stay on the pathways in the parking grove.

**Do not park in the drop-off area and leave your car unattended.
Do not park or drop students off on 28th Street
or in the faculty parking lot.**

When leaving the parking grove and exiting onto 28th Street, note that there are two lanes, one for traffic turning left only and one for traffic turning right only.

Please drive slowly— 10 mph or slower on campus at all times!

7:50 – 8:10 Supervised play areas:

- Pre-K & KG: Early Childhood Play Yard
- Grade 1 & 2: Lower Grades Play Yard
- Grades 3-5: Front Covered Bench Area & Front Grassy Play Yard
- Grades 6-8: Middle School Play Yard (enter through garden path)
- Grades 9-12: High School Courtyard

Early Childhood, 1st & 2nd Grade

If you have only 2nd grade and younger students in your carpool, please park and then escort the children to their classrooms. If you have a car with mixed ages, you may go through the drop-off to let out the older students, then park. Be sure that your early childhood student has made contact with his or her teacher before heading on your way.

As a part of the transition from kindergarten to the grades, 1st grade students have their own supervised area near their classroom. At the beginning of the school year, there is a brief initial period where parents may walk all the way to the play yard while students acclimate. After that initial period ends, parents may accompany their child as far as the sidewalk between the animal barn and kindergarten (near the large, grey electrical

transformer) and release them to walk on to their yard. When students have gained in confidence, parents may choose to allow them to walk from the drop-off area without accompanying them. It is important to let the class teacher know when you are thinking of making that change.

For Grades 3 - 5

The students stay at the drop-off area and the teachers lead them to the classroom for a strong start to the day — ready and on time for morning verse. This morning rhythm mirrors the afternoon pick-up.

Grades 6 - 8

Students in Grades 6 - 8 walk unaccompanied to the middle school play yard.

High School

High School students walk unaccompanied to the high school courtyard from either the main drop-off area or from the high school pull-through drop-off area. There is no parking beside the high school. Students who drive must park in designated area of the main parking lot.

1.5 Start of Classes

The ringing of the first bell at 8:10 a.m. signifies that the school day has begun. If you are in the classroom areas, please head back toward the parking lot and garden areas at this time. This courtesy is much appreciated and contributes greatly to the harmony and sanctity of your child's educational environment. If you are volunteering, please check in with the office and get your visitor pass.

Parents are welcome to stay and visit with friends in the drop-off area or the grassy areas between the parking lot and the administration building. Please do not allow any children who are with you to wander beyond your view.

1.6 Afternoon Pick-up

All children participating in any private program (Pre-K, Nap Care, Extended Care) must be signed in upon arrival and signed out upon departure. Your child's teacher will show you the location of the class sign-in sheet.

Early Childhood Pick-up: 12:15 p.m.

Shortly after the 12:15 release, kindergarten and preschool children will be ready at the pickup area under the shade sail. Children not picked up by 12:30 p.m. will be taken to the office, and a parent or guardian will be contacted.

If you are picking up a child from the Nap Care program at 3:30 p.m., you must park your car first. Please pick up the younger child first, then walk over and pick up the older child(ren) from the

waiting area.

Grades Pick-up: 1st Grade at 2:00 p.m. Grades 2 - 8 at 3:30 p.m.

Parents are welcome to park their cars and walk to wait beside the pickup area under the shade sail. Students will be brought to parents by the attending staff. This will promote the stewardship of our natural environment by reducing the number of cars idling in the pick-up line.

If a grades student is not picked up by 3:45 p.m., he or she will be taken to the office, and a parent or guardian will be contacted; he or she will be placed in Extended Care.

High School Pickup: 3:15 p.m.

Students will be ready to be picked up in the drop-off/pickup area by 3:15 p.m. *(unless other activities have been previously arranged).*

Extended Day Program Pick-up

All students enrolled in any extended program, whether preschool, kindergarten, or elementary school age, must be signed out every day. Please park and walk to the extended care room to get your child. The extended day program information sheet (available in the office) has information about fees and payment procedures for this program.

Afterschool Program Pick-up

Review information provided by each program for specific information on pick-up times.

Supervision Outside of School Hours

For everyone's safety, it is the school's expectation that parents ensure that their children remain in their general proximity while on campus, especially right after pickup when traffic is busy.

For events after school hours or on weekends, such as garden evenings or second Saturday's, supervision of students is the responsibility of parents unless childcare has been specifically provided for the event.

1.7 Nutrition and Sleep Guidelines

In early childhood a daily [mid-morning snack](#) is provided. All other students need to bring a snack and lunch every day. Kindergarteners need to pack a lunch only if they are staying for Kindercare.

a. Please follow these guidelines when packing your child's lunch (or better yet, supervising your child in preparing his or her own lunch!). Your child's class teacher will inform you if there are any additional guidelines for that class. The guidelines are designated to help make mealtimes a special and nourishing time for both body and spirit.

1. Send food in an insulated lunch box with a blue ice pack.
2. Include a water bottle. Although drinking water is readily available at school, it is necessary to have a water bottle easily accessible during Movement and Gardening classes.
3. Make sure the lunch is fully prepared. Classrooms do not have the facilities to heat water, for example. Warm soups can be sent in a thermos.
4. Pack a well-balanced lunch, including proteins, fruits and vegetables so that your child has good energy for the afternoon.
5. Many children are sensitive to the preservatives, sweeteners and dyes used in packaged food. Products with heavy dyes also stain floors and desks. Limit these items as much as possible. Again, your child's teacher will contact you if more specific guidelines are required.
6. Candy, gum and soda (including natural soda) are not allowed. Gum will be taken away from the child and returned at the end of the day.
7. We are asking that all families make an effort to reduce packaging waste. It is recommended that lunch items be sent in reusable containers.

b. Food Allergies and Special Diets

If your child has special nutritional needs, or if you have questions about any of these guidelines, please let your child's teacher know immediately. Any food allergies must be listed on the emergency medical form and made known to the teacher and the Student Records Manager.

1.8 Visitor Guidelines

All campus visitors during school hours must sign in at the office and receive a visitor's badge.

a. Parents as Visitors

After the ringing of the first bell at 8:10 a.m., which signifies that the school day has begun, parents within the classroom areas are considered "visitors" for the purposes of these guidelines. Parents are welcome to stay and visit with friends beyond the administration building.

If you will be volunteering in some capacity on campus, other than in the garden, please get a visitor's badge at this time. Regularly scheduled volunteers can have an identification badge so that they do not have to stop in the office on each visit. Teachers will provide the office with the names of regular volunteers and their schedule, so that we know who is on campus in case of emergency. Nevertheless, checking in at the office each day as a courtesy is still helpful.

b. Unidentified Visitors/Suspicious Activity

If you see someone on school grounds you do not recognize, and he or she does not have a visitor's badge, let the office know. If their behavior seems suspect, ***make that report a matter of urgency***. Similarly, if you see someone acting suspiciously near the school, such as on 28th Street, ***please report that to the office immediately***.

c. No Dogs on Campus

For safety reasons, we do not allow dogs on campus. The only regular exceptions to this rule are service animals or for complementary pedagogical reasons. On occasion, a teacher may seek approval from the Collegium to plan an event, such as "Bring your pet to school day" or to have a classroom pet for a period of time. Such exceptions will be looked at on a case by case basis.

1.9 School Trips

Starting in around third grade, classes begin to travel off campus for some of their activities. These experiences may take the following forms:

a. Walking Field Trips

These are walks within a mile radius of the school, including our "walk around the block" (28th St., Vineyard, 26th St. and Lynne Lane), the Farm at South Mountain, and the Performing Arts Building at South Mountain Community College. Your enrollment paperwork includes a blanket walking permission slip; if you have any questions, please address these at the time of enrollment. Teachers taking classes on walks check in at the office before leaving and upon returning and always have a cell phone with them in case of emergency.

b. Day Trips by Car or Public Transportation

Parents must sign a field trip permission form ***every time*** a class goes on a field trip. One copy of this form stays in the office and one copy goes with the teacher. These permission slips detail where the class is going, the cost of the trip and what the children need to take with them. The form also contains the parents' signatures and emergency contact information for parents (REQUIRED). DMS has a standard field trip form used for all field trips.

c. Parents as [Volunteer Drivers](#)

Unless public transportation is being used, we most commonly rely (with much gratitude) on parent drivers. All DMS Volunteer Drivers must complete and sign a Volunteer Driver Form with proof of the following requirements:

- 21 years of age or older
- Valid Arizona State driver's license
- Valid car registration
- Valid auto insurance card

- Signed Criminal History Affidavit

Overnight field trips: Drivers must have a valid Fingerprint Clearance Card issued by the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

Teachers are responsible to ensure that all parent drivers have completed requirement number one before departing campus. The office will keep this information with the copies of field trip permission forms. This requirement pertains both to day field trips and extended class trips.

All parent drivers should have with them directions to the field trip location and the contact information of the teacher leading the field trip.

d. Class Trips

Class trips are extended field trips that encompass at least one overnight stay. Transportation may be by car, rental van, train, airplane, boat or all of the above. All the requirements for day field trips above pertain to class trips. It is our strong preference that only staff members accompany classes on overnight trips. Exceptions are made on occasion if necessary on a case by case basis. Parent drivers who stay with the group as chaperones must have a fingerprint clearance card.

Any person chaperoning a field trip or school activity must follow the school's Discipline Policy. Make sure you have a clear understanding of this policy and the teacher's expectation of you in this role.

e. Arrangements for Students Not Participating (field trip or class trip)

The standard procedure involves joining another class, usually the class just above or below the student's grade level.

f. Dress Code While on Field Trips

Unless noted by the teacher, the usual dress code applies for field trips. Packing lists will be included for camping and longer class trips or any field trip that has specific dress requirements.

g. Food on Trips

We ask that you follow the guidelines set forth in the Nutrition Guidelines section of this handbook when contributing food or drinks to a school activity, including class trips. The class teacher should approve any food or drink that you plan to contribute.

Section 1.10 Lost-and-Found

A lost-and-found collection will be maintained in the office. Please check it regularly, as

items will be donated to charity monthly.

Section 1.11 Health and Safety Policies

1 Sun Safety

Legislation requires schools to provide preventative education regarding excessive sun exposure. Desert Marigold has long supported the practice of wearing hats outdoors and will continue to educate students about sun safety. We ask that parents be conscious of potential sun exposure and send students to school in accordance with your own family sun safety practices (sunscreen, thin layers of clothing, hats, etc.).

2 Illness/Injury at School

Depending on the nature of the illness/injury, the following procedures will be observed:

- a. Minor injury ("green light" procedures): Examples include a small cut, scrape, or bruise. The student will receive basic first aid treatment at school, and you will be informed at dismissal or with a call or note home about the injury.
- b. Other injury or illness ("yellow light" procedures): Examples include fever, vomiting, nosebleed, more serious cut or scrape, or possible sprain. First aid will be administered and the parent or guardian will be notified by telephone to pick up the student for further care. If the parent or guardian cannot be located, a person listed on the emergency card will be called to take the student for further care.
- c. Potentially life threatening injury ("red light" procedures): Examples include loss of consciousness, scorpion sting, and serious broken limb. One adult with first aid training will stay with the student while another adult present phones 911. As soon as the emergency call is completed, the parent or guardian will be called.

Under all circumstances, the appropriate accident report will be filled out and parents will be provided with a copy.

3 Medication Policy

If it is necessary for your child to take medication during the school day you must complete a medication permission form, available in the office, or send written authorization including the following information:

1. First and last name of the student
2. Name of medication
3. Prescription number if any
4. Dosage and route of administration

5. Starting and ending dates of the dosage period if indicated
6. Times and frequency of administration
7. Reason for medication
8. Date of authorization
9. Signature of parent or guardian

In addition, these guidelines must be followed:

- a. We cannot administer any medication that has been transferred from the original container to another. Medication (prescription or non-prescription) must be in the original, labeled package or bottle, with the child's name clearly marked on the container.
- b. Medication cannot be brought in by a child; it must be brought to the office by the parent or guardian.
- c. It is your responsibility as parent or guardian to pick-up any unused medication. Items must be claimed no later than two weeks after the last day of school or the last day of the dosage period. Unclaimed items will be disposed of.

In situations with serious medical conditions, a formal 504 plan will be required before medication can be administered.

4 Emergency Safety Procedures

4.1 Crisis Management - The safety of the students and the security of the campus are of the utmost importance to the teachers and staff. In an emergency, the crisis management protocols in the Emergency Response Plan will be followed with director level staff managing the situation.

4.2 Evacuations - Regular fire drills take place to assure students know how to respond and are familiar with evacuation procedures.

4.3 Lockdown/Sheltering in Place - Should it become necessary shelter in place due to a natural disaster, severe weather or environmental hazard, or lock down due to a civil disturbance, or other dangerous circumstance beyond our control, these procedures will be followed:

- a. All students will shelter in place, or brought into a safe space if outside.
- b. If a lockdown, doors and windows will be secured and locked and 911 will be called.
- c. Students and staff will remain in their locations until the campus is deemed secure and safe again or predetermined safe escape route(s) are utilized.

4.4 Role of Parents -

- a. Preparation
 - i. Ensure that that the emergency contact information for your child is always accurate and current.

- ii. Opt in to the broadcast messaging service.
- b. Notifications
 - i. Parents will be notified in emergency situations as soon as it is clear what action is required of parents--first by text blast and then by email with any further detailed instructions—including any alternative pick-up arrangements.
 - ii. If the emergency is of a longer duration, all efforts will be made to provide periodic updates.
 - iii. If no action is needed on the part of parents, the crisis management team will determine what form of reporting is necessary to inform parents.
- c. Response
 - i. Please do not call or come to the school, this only complicates matters from a safety and security standpoint as it may hinder the efforts of emergency responders or police.
 - ii. Do not call your child directly because emergency protocols prohibit cell communications, other than by teachers, for safety reasons.
 - iii. Stay close to your phone and email for updates and instructions.
 - iv. Rely only on official communications from the school or public safety officials.
 - v. If alternative pickup arrangements are indicated after an evacuation, students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians who are documented as emergency contacts.

Desert Marigold's complete Emergency Response Plan is available in the main office.

5 Fire Safety

Fire drills are conducted monthly, in compliance with state statutes. Fire extinguishers are located in all buildings, and exits are clearly marked.

6 Pond Use Guidelines

- a. The pond area was developed in partnership with Arizona State University, thanks to a Heritage Grant from the Arizona Department of Fish & Game. It is intended both as a wildlife refuge for native flora and fauna and as a learning environment for students at DMS and within the greater community. In addition, it is home to a year-round population of ducks, geese and bees.
- b. It is not a "rescue" center for domestic fowl. Contact the animal care coordinator to see what options there may be for unwanted ducks. The Salt River Sanctuary may be able to take them.
- c. For safety reasons, the pond area is kept locked at all times.

Section 2 The Curriculum at DMS

As member of the Alliance for Public Waldorf education, the [Core Principles](#) of the Alliance are the foundation for curriculum and academic instruction:

2.1 Image of the Human Being

Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being.

- a. Each human being is a unique individual who brings specific gifts, creative potential, and intentions to this life. Public Waldorf education addresses multiple aspects of the developing child including the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual. Through this, each child is helped to integrate into a maturing whole, able to determine a unique path through life.
- b. Rudolf Steiner's educational insights are seen as a primary, but not exclusive, source of guidance for an understanding of the image of the human being.

2.2 Child Development

An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program, to the greatest extent possible within established legal mandates.

- a. Human development proceeds in approximate 7-year phases. Each phase has characteristic physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions and a primary learning orientation.
- b. The Public Waldorf educational program, including the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods, work with this understanding of human development to address the needs of the individual and the class in order to support comprehensive learning and healthy, balanced development.

2.3 State Standards

- a. Our curriculum addresses all state standards. Our developmental perspective informs how state and federal mandates, including curriculum sequence, standardized testing, and college and career readiness, are met.
- b. Students in grades 3 through 11 currently take the Arizona annual standardized state tests. While our curriculum is not focused solely on "teaching to the test," our curriculum and instruction prepare the students for the state tests.

2.4 Expectations

- (a) DMS holds high standards of academic achievement. We strive to bring age appropriate subject matter to students using styles of teaching suitable to their

developmental stages. In order to enable the students to achieve their very best, we challenge the children while at the same time not rushing them into some aspects of learning too soon.

- (b) The social, emotional, and physical health of the children are also of prime importance to the teachers, and every effort is made to give the children the opportunity to grow and develop in these areas. Tolerance of social differences is expected; and everyday conflicts can become learning points. Nevertheless, clear boundaries for conduct are maintained. *See Section 3.3*
- (c) We utilize movement, crafts, direct contact with nature, vibrant artistic and musical experiences within the curriculum to support creativity, intellectual growth, emotional health and balanced development. As all of these elements are a part of an integrated whole, students are not free to “opt out” of a particular element. However, accommodations may be made to allow participation when physical or medical limitations exist.

2.5 Academic Assessment

Desert Marigold School uses many assessment tools to monitor the academic growth of individual students with language skills, mathematical skills and the other rich content of our curriculum:

- a. Teacher observation (daily interaction that allows teachers to see where students excel, where they are challenged, and where differentiation is needed);
- b. Quizzes, activities, unit reviews or block tests;
- c. Portfolio assessment (analysis of a collection of a student’s work, including main lesson books);
- d. Monthly Galileo tests linked to state standards and other district assessment tools;
- e. Standardized state test results.

2.6 Reports on Student Progress

2.6.1 Throughout the year, parents are informed of student growth in the following ways:

- a. **Informal Conversation** (your child’s teacher will let you know how and when to contact him or her to touch base as to how your child is doing); a parent-teacher conversation may be arranged by appointment.
- b. **Parent/Teacher Conferences** - Formal parent-teacher conferences take place twice a year—usually in September and in February. When there are attendance or discipline problems, additional parent/teacher conferences may be required.
- c. **Report Cards** - Report cards will be made available online after the end of

each semester.

- d. **End of Year Narratives – Grades K - 8** - prepared in June for each student and sent by US mail.

2.6.2 Grading

- a. In grades K through 6, an individual student's academic progress is rated in the following categories:
 - i. E - excellent
 - ii. S - satisfactory
 - iii. I - improving
 - iv. C - area of concern

The kindergarten also has a schema for feedback on areas of non-academic development.
- b. Traditional A-F letter grades begin in 7th grade. If a student does not complete all assigned work in a given grading period, the teacher will set a date by which the work must be completed, or made up.
 - i. The teacher will notify the family in writing of the situation and what is expected by what date. This will need to be signed by both student and parent and returned to acknowledge both recognition of the situation and receipt of the notification. A conference may also be necessary.
 - ii. If the student meets the due date, they will receive the appropriate letter grade. If they do not complete the work satisfactorily, they will receive a failing grade (F).
- c. In the high school, a student must obtain a passing grade to receive credit for a course; and must earn sufficient credits to graduate.

See the High School Handbook for an explanation of grading and credit requirements in the high school.

2.6.3 Annual Standardized Testing Results

During the summer the state provides the individual results of the AzMerit testing to DMS for distribution to parents. Overall testing results are made public in the Autumn and a few weeks later individual school academic rankings are released.

2.7 Student Support Services

- (a) DMS takes its responsibility, as a Public school, to creatively address the developmental needs of the students with the most inclusive possible approaches for all learners very seriously. Assessments help teachers continually adjust to meet the individual needs of students and also allow DMS to monitor how well we are meeting our goal of providing an exceptional learning environment.

(b) When additional help may be needed, individual 45-day assessments are conducted by Student Support Services staff to see what supports may be needed. This may lead to individual tutoring by the teacher or to the development of a formal IEP (Individual Education Plan) or 504 plan when students qualify. If a formal plan is put in place, a team will decide the scope of additional supports that are to be provided.

2.8 Promotion and Retention

(a) First Grade Readiness

The process of determining when a child is ready for Grade One is a critical one that requires much care. In the Kindergarten, cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills are accorded equal value, and many different competencies are developed. The nature of this early learning is self-motivated, allowing the child to come to know the world in the way most appropriate to his or her age: through active feeling, touching, exploring and imitation—in other words, through doing.

Around the seventh year, forces that have been concentrated on growth and physical up-building can become active in developing the facility for independent, representational and pictorial thinking. Only when these new capabilities appear — again, at around the seventh year—is the child physically, emotionally and intellectually ready for the formal instruction that begins in Grade One.

In a typical first grade class at Desert Marigold, children range in age from having turned seven the spring before starting first grade to turning seven the spring of their first grade year. In addition to supporting the formation of a healthy first grade, this also helps to ensure that the class as a whole is well positioned to fully take in the riches of the Waldorf curriculum as it moves through each grade level.

(b) 3rd grade Promotion - AZ Move On When Reading

AZ State law requires that schools are accountable for student achievement in reading to ensure students meet basic proficiency levels for promotion to 4th grade. Our curriculum prepares students to attain the required level on the standardized state reading tests to be promoted. We utilize the PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) assessment tool provide the evidenced-based instruction required by MOWR up through 3rd grade. This screening helps teachers monitor individual student progress, so that each student can succeed.

(c) Academic Probation:

When students are not meeting the expected level of competency, we seek to put in place support systems that will allow them to succeed. However, when students are consistently failing to meet expected standards, students will be given a “probationary warning” status and offered an academic improvement plan. This plan will outline supportive steps to help the student meet the academic goals set by the teacher, such as

- Improved student attendance and timeliness
- Completion of classroom assignments

- Participation in class
- Supervision of homework by the parents and a homework log
- Participation in afterschool tutorials

This plan will be developed by the class teacher in coordination with the administration. The student and parents will meet with the class teacher to review and agree to the improvement plan. When the student has met the goals of an improvement plan, a “letter of achievement” will be written by the class teacher. This letter will be attached to the improvement plan and placed in the student’s file.

(d) Retention

Because of the developmental foundation of the curriculum, every effort is made to assure students progress with their class. Since the Waldorf curriculum addresses not only the intellectual needs of the growing children but also seeks to meet their physical and emotional needs, every attempt is made to place students entering the school in classes with children of similar ages.

If a student is not ready to succeed academically at the next grade level, retention may be necessary. Retaining a child is given the greatest consideration by the class teacher, faculty, and parents. Once a question of potential retention arises, parents will be notified in writing. At the center of this discussion is what is in the best interests of the child.

A formal parent conference will be held with the class teacher. A letter will be provided, no later than in the meeting, summarizing issues to be addressed in that meeting. The class teacher and parent will agree on an “assessment period.” A student’s ability to meet clearly defined benchmarks will be considered by the class teacher and the administration. Promotion will be determined by the class teacher and the administration.

Section 3 Student Conduct

3.1 Code of Conduct

The essential tenets that guide our day-to-day life together are as follows:

- **Be kind.**
- **Be safe.**
- **Be respectful.**
- **Be responsible.**

The appropriateness or inappropriateness of any action will be determined based on how it holds up in light of these basic expectations. However, serious violations of the code may fall into the prohibited areas of harassment, hazing, bullying, sexual harassment/assault/abuse and/or discrimination. ***See the full Non-discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.***

We partner with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) with peer training for high school students, working towards designation as a “No Place for Hate” School. More details will be provided over the course of the year.

3.2 Philosophy

At Desert Marigold School, we believe that children have a right to a quality education in a safe and caring environment. Our discipline policy starts with the adults of the school and our commitment to work on ourselves—and to treat each other and the children in our care with respect. We want to provide children—and adults—with the opportunity to learn from our mistakes and to develop over time an inner sense of what is right in the moment. Our goal is to create a healthy learning environment by fostering respect for self and others, by providing clear expectations and boundaries and by promoting problem-solving skills among our students. ***Ultimately, a healthy school culture is based upon healthy relationships.***

3.3 Clear Boundaries

Alongside the commitment to support the learning process, we provide clear boundaries and guidance regarding those behaviors that are simply unacceptable at school—behaviors that jeopardize the following:

- ***Physical safety of others*** (e.g., putting hands around another person’s neck, hitting someone in the stomach, throwing a sharp object)
- ***Physical safety of self*** (e.g., hiding instead of coming in at recess or running out of the classroom)
- ***Emotional safety of others*** (e.g., profanity, abusive language)
- ***A healthy atmosphere for learning*** (e.g., repeated significant disruption during class)
- ***Care of the physical environment*** (e.g., damage to property such as tearing a book apart)

Intentional violations of these boundaries will not be considered “minor” within the determination of discipline under Section 4. Generally, first time violations relating to emotional safety and the healthy learning atmosphere will be considered “minor.”

3.4 Strategies to promote problem-solving when mistakes happen

When conflict arises at school, our first action as adults is to provide calming, positive support to the students involved. This means attending to the needs of any student who was hurt and helping that student express his or her feelings, as well as guiding any student who did something hurtful to problem-solve and come up with solutions to the problem. In all cases our intent is to teach, i.e., to help students feel, reflect and be responsible for their choices.

Any time it is possible to go through the process described above in the immediate moment,

in the classroom or play yard setting, teachers will do so. However, there are circumstances when that is not possible or appropriate. In those cases, another adult—either a teaching or administrative staff member—will go through a problem-solving process with the student or students who need that support. In some instances it may not be appropriate to begin that process until the situation has de-escalated and the student or students are ready to respond to such a process.

Most situations will require some written documentation, either a notice of concern or an incident report. Sometimes it may not be possible to complete all documentation until all who are involved are present and have gone through a fact-finding and/or problem-solving process.

*In 2018-19 staff are refreshing the school's efforts in this regard through study and work with **Conscious Discipline**. More details will follow, including opportunities for parent education about this approach.*

3.5 Consequences and Social Remediation

As much as possible, consequences are selected that are connected to the inappropriate actions involved. For example, a younger student who does not come in when the bell rings might be required by the teacher to stay in during the next recess. We also favor consequences that have a restorative aspect. For example, a student who breaks something could be involved in the undertaking of its repair. Inappropriate behaviors may also be addressed at the classroom level by a change of pace or location, e.g., having a student spend time in an adjacent classroom or engaging in some form of purposeful work before returning to his or her own class.

It is our practice as a Public Waldorf School to take into deep consideration the stages of human development given to us according to Rudolf Steiner. Actions that occur in certain stages of development (example: a kindergarten student who hits a classmate as opposed to a middle school or high school student that hits a classmate will be looked at appropriately and dealt with according to the specific situation). As much as possible, it is our intention have behavioral matters serve as learning opportunities and to address them within the context of the school day.

3.6 Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

- a. In grades through grade 8, students with cell phones must keep them turned off and put away the entire school day. This includes during lunch and morning breaks. Students must keep the cell phone in a backpack or otherwise out of reach.
- b. Students are not authorized to take pictures of other students during the school day, even at another student's request. Privacy rules prevent this.
- c. After one warning, **a cell phone not kept properly stored, or improperly used, will be confiscated.** All confiscated cell phones will remain in the front administration building until the end of the day. A student may not retrieve a confiscated cell phone without

an adult present.

- d. After school, cell phones are not to be used at the pickup area. Essential communication about transportation issues is allowed, but only on the administration porch. *Note that the office phone is not available to students who want to arrange ad hoc play dates, but can be used for essential travel arrangements!*

See the High School Handbook for the rules that apply in the high school. It has more detailed procedures that also cover computers and other electronic devices.

3.7 Displays of Affection in Public

The following are acceptable physical forms of expressing affection at school, provided the activity is mutual:

- handholding
- brief hug

The following are **not** acceptable forms of expressing affection at school:

- kissing
- sitting on each other's laps
- extended hugs
- any form of fondling or other intimate contact

Unwanted sexual contact or advances may be dealt with under the Anti-Harassment and Nondiscrimination Policy.

3.8 Dress Code

Please take the time periodically to clarify with your child what portion of his/her wardrobe is school appropriate. Questions can be directed to your child's teacher or the administrative office.

Desert Marigold School recognizes that all students have intrinsic worth based on who they are and not on what they wear. We want to create an environment in which each student can develop those innate qualities, focus on learning, and contribute in a positive way to the school community. We also believe that pressures related to clothing choice can distract students and undermine the school environment. The following dress code adopted by the school encourages self-discipline and is simple to manage. Styles must neither interfere with the educational process nor present a safety hazard as determined by the faculty. Disregard for any of these standards will result in the student not being allowed into class and parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts being contacted to pick student up and/or bring an appropriate change of clothes.

The standards of dress are as follows (this includes all clothing and personal items such as hats, purses, bags, back packs, and lunch boxes):

1 Pre-school, Kindergarten & Grades 1 - 8

- A. Students will not wear clothes containing words, letters, numbers, pictures, logos, emblems, or camouflage. The exceptions to this are DMS t-shirts and DMS event-related clothing, e.g., Pentathlon, Medieval Games, Track & Field, etc.
- B. Students will wear clothing solid in color or an all-over pattern which may include florals, plaid, stripes, paisley, tie-dye, polka-dots or nature motif.
- C. Students will wear clothing that covers shoulders and midriffs. All shirts must have sleeves and no tank tops may be worn.
- D. Students will wear shorts, dresses, skirts that come to the top of the knee or lower.
- E. Students will wear closed-toe shoes. For safety, no flip flops, platforms, crocs, rubber clogs or high heeled shoes may be worn.
- F. Students will not wear shoes with lights or rollers/wheels, even if wheels are removed.
- G. Students will wear clothes that fit correctly and that are modest. See-through shirts, anything baggy or sagging or too tight fitting (including yoga pants, jeggings or leggings unless covered by a dress or long top) may result in a request to change clothing.
- H. Students will keep their hair clean, neat and tied or clipped back out of the face. Hair must be its natural color.
- I. Students in grades 1-6 are not permitted to wear nail polish or makeup to school.
- J. Students in grades 7-8 may wear subtle nail polish and makeup.

2 Change of Clothes

Kindergarteners and 1st graders should bring the following items to have on hand if needed: extra shirt; pants (or shorts); socks and underwear. If your children are older, yet you feel they would benefit from having a change of clothes at school, contact your child's teacher to arrange this.

3 Dressing Out for Movement Classes

Students in grades 5 - 8 will be required to dress out for movement education classes. They will need to wear shorts, t-shirt, tennis shoes (with socks) and a hat, and have a full water bottle. It will be the student's responsibility to change during snack or lunch recess as required to be ready for movement class. (Religious exceptions allowed: speak directly with the Movement Education Teacher.)

4 High School Dress Code: *See the High School Handbook*

3.9 Toys, Games & Personal Property

Personal toys, games, etc., are for at-home play. If such items are brought to school, the teacher will put them in a safe place and return them at the end of the school day.

3.10 Playground Rules

The following guidelines apply generally to all play areas at DMS. More specific guidelines may be provided by on-duty teachers or yard supervision staff.

1 Supervision

- A minimum of one (1) staff person is to be on duty at all times on the play yards during school-hour recesses. Typically, 2-3 attendants are on the play yard at a given time, depending on the number of classes at play.
- No students are to be sent out before an adult is on duty.
- Class teachers may decide whether students in their class are allowed to read at recess and will monitor those who leave their class with a book.
- People other than DMS staff and approved volunteers are not allowed on the playground during school hours, unless they are on tour or have been granted written permission from the Administration.

The teachers and staff on duty are to be vigilant in making sure only appropriate equipment is being used and that it is being used in the proper way.

All those on duty need to encourage the most efficient use of playground space for all users and their respective activities, and may ask groups to adjust as needed for the safety and fairness of all.

Teachers and yard supervisors will guide appropriate play among age groups with an eye to suitability, roughness, etc. If teachers/supervisors see something that makes them uncomfortable—whether or not it falls within general guidelines – they will confer with that student’s class teacher, if the teacher is present. If the teacher is not present, the teacher/supervisor on duty will intervene and discuss the incident with the class teacher later on.

Should there be an accident or injury, that must be documented on the appropriate form, after appropriate care and/or first aid is administered.

2 Suitable Clothing, Hydration and Food

Hats: Sun hats are to be worn during the fall and spring. Winter hats are to be worn during the winter.

Jackets: Students must wear long-sleeve shirts or jackets that come down to the wrist before school and during the first recess during the cold months.

Boots: In addition to appropriate closed-toe shoes, rubber boots are required near water and muddy areas. Students without boots must play away from muddy areas.

Water bottles: Students must have water bottles on the play yard.

Eating: Food is to be eaten in the classroom during snack and lunch. No food is to be eaten outside. If a teacher would like for his or her class to have a picnic, and allows the children to

take food out, they may do that if it is in a separate area and the teacher remains with them.

3 Equipment and Play Structures

- A variety of sports and play equipment may be used, such as jump ropes, hula hoops, etc. Playground balls, basketballs and footballs may be used in the field/basketball court area only. Regular baseball bats and hard baseballs present safety concerns and are not allowed. Balls are not allowed on the Lower Grades Play Yard during recess time, with the exception of the four square area (grades 4 & above, only).
- Equipment may be brought from home if pre-approved by the class teacher. *This does not include toys and games per Rule 3.9.* Students who bring equipment are advised that breakage is not the responsibility of the school.
- Equipment needs to be brought in at the end of recess, by the students who used it, and put into its designated storage space.
- Ropes may be used as jump ropes and harnesses **only** and may not be tied from branches in trees. *The only ropes allowed in trees are those installed by the maintenance staff in accordance with current safety standards.*

3.1 Swings

- Weaving between moving swings is prohibited.
- Standing on swings or jumping from the swings is prohibited.
- No climbing on the swing structures is allowed.
- Straight swinging only, no twisting.
- If a child is waiting for a turn, the child swinging must give up his or her turn after approximately 40 swings.
- No pushing children on swings except by an adult.
- No tag games allowed through the swing area.
- Rope Swings: Children who are not on the swing must walk around the child swinging on any rope swing. When other children are waiting for a turn, the child on the swing may stay on for only two minutes.

4 General Rules

- No hitting balls against walls.
- No skateboarding is allowed on school property.
- No climbing on fences or tops of playhouses is allowed.
- No Parkour.
- Students may climb only to the height specified by the supervising teacher (child's feet within reach of the supervising teacher's outstretched hand) and may climb only in designated trees (no climbing in citrus or fruit trees).

- Sticks are to be used only in closely supervised creative play such as building, etc. Sticks will be removed from the playground area if there are problems.
- Shoving, pushing, tackling, or use of excessive force is not allowed.
- Students are not allowed to throw objects such as stones, sticks, dirt clods, sand or oranges on the school grounds.
- Physical contact with a student who is hanging from any climbing bar is not allowed.
- No riding on the backs or shoulders of other students is allowed.
- Digging is allowed within the boundaries of the sandbox only.
-

5 Team Games

- Participation in team games such as football, soccer, frisbee and basketball requires all students to demonstrate good sportsmanship, which means playing cooperatively, fairly and safely, and communicating respectfully. Students who cannot meet this standard may be required to sit out.
- The general rule is to encourage inclusive play amongst the various grades with age appropriate games. However, individual grade classes will often initiate exclusive games, and there is no hard restriction against this. The on-duty teacher should intervene, if necessary, if play space and equipment are not being shared over the whole of the recess week, by any group or class.
- There may be a limited number of players for certain games. Additional students who want to play should be allowed to rotate in. The teacher on duty needs to support the students in maintaining a fair method for accomplishing this.
- Clear boundaries need to be established for team games. The on-duty teacher may need to help establish and maintain these. Traffic cones can be obtained from the PE teacher for this purpose.

6 Damage to School Property

Any student identified as having damaged school property will participate in the restoration or replacement process. *Intentional damage may also lead to discipline.*

3.11 Alcohol-free & Smoke-free Campus

There is no drinking and no smoking allowed on school grounds. This includes vaping and all forms of electronic smoking.

Section 4 Disciplinary Actions

When a rule is broken, the consequence will depend on the situation, and will be in the form of social remediation to the greatest extent possible per Sections 3.4 and 3.5.

4.1 Direct Resolution

Any faculty or staff member may handle a minor disciplinary issue in a manner appropriate to the offense. Consequences may include a verbal warning, written apology, work assignment or detention. A Notice of Concern will be sent home. With any more serious infraction there will be an Incident Report issued, even if there is no formal discipline imposed. A meeting between the student, teacher (or teachers) and the parents may be required.

4.2 Recurring problems

Recurring problems require involvement of parents in the problem-solving process.

In these instances, a meeting will be set up with the class teacher or responsible high school teacher or class sponsor, the parents and other faculty and staff members as needed, with the purpose of developing a plan of action together.

Generally, students should not be in the middle of conversations about discipline between a teacher and a parent. However, students in grades 5 and above may be requested to participate in a portion of this meeting as well.

The plan developed may include strategies to better meet a student's developmental needs, imposed consequences at home, pre-arranged agreements between teachers and parents, requests for supports outside of school, etc.

It is the expectation of Desert Marigold that parents will be fully involved and supportive in these efforts, which may require frequent communication and meetings, as well as work at home.

4.3 Confidentiality of Disciplinary matters

Parents are not entitled to disciplinary information about any child other than their own.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) prohibits the school from sharing information about a student, including disciplinary actions, with anyone other than a parent or guardian. The actual details of events related to a disciplinary incident may be shared during the process of building the clearest picture possible of what happened and who bears responsibility. Nevertheless, even where one student may be the clear "victim," we cannot share the actual discipline imposed, or even whether or not discipline has been imposed.

Given that DMS approaches all disciplinary matters as potential learning points, placement of "blame" is not the primary objective. Nevertheless, we do strive to build an objective picture of every incident, determine "comparative responsibility" within the circumstances, and minimize inconsistency--mindful that no two situations or circumstances are ever identical.

4.4 Suspensions

a. No suspension can be imposed without the agreement of Administrative Disciplinary Team, that includes the Directors of Curriculum, Instruction and Business Operations and Student Support Services (as needed). The Executive Director oversees this activity and serves as the final arbiter.

- b.** When the student's actions cause a significant danger to self, others or property, whether a student has been sent home previously or not, a suspension may be immediate.
 - a. When the student's actions cause a significant danger to self, others or to property, or are intended to cause emotional harm, a suspension will be immediate.
 - b. If a student's behavior is so extreme that it creates a continuing imminent threat to the safety of self or the safety of others, DMS retains the right to call 911 if the parent is: unreachable, unable to, or unwilling to pick up the student.
- c.** When behaviors which are unacceptable at school persist, despite problem-solving support, in-school consequences, and parental involvement in addressing recurring behaviors, a suspension will be warranted.
- d.** The Disciplinary Team may suspend a student for up to 10 days. This suspension may be either an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension. In all disciplinary matters, whenever possible, the student's Class Teacher or responsible High School Sponsor shall be consulted prior to any recommendation or action taken, if not already within the process.
- e.** The length of the suspension is determined by the Team, based upon the seriousness of the incident and prior history. Suspensions of increasing lengths of time will be administered for re-occurrences, leading up to expulsion as the final step.
- f.** If a student is suspended, other than in-school, parents will be called to pick up the student. In any event parents will be notified of the suspension and given a copy of the Incident and Disciplinary Report to sign.
- g.** What steps must be taken before the student may return to school will be specified on the Notice, including if a conversation between parent(s), teacher(s) and/or an administrator will be required as a precondition.

The AZ SAFE Policy determines that suspensions will be documented and reported according to the procedures outlined by the AZ SAFE Policy (ARS 15-840).

4.5 Expulsion

- a.** Expulsion means the permanent withdrawal of the privilege of attending Desert Marigold School, unless the Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the Executive Director, reinstates that privilege. Only the Board of Directors can expel a student upon consideration of a recommendation from the Executive Director.

b. Special Education Students

When a special education student engages in misconduct that could result in suspension or expulsion, Desert Marigold School shall follow the State Board of Education rules governing suspension and expulsion of special education students. Pursuant to the rules, if the misconduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability, standard school discipline procedures shall apply.

c. Notification and due process

1 The student's parents will be notified in writing that expulsion is recommended and the reasons the Executive Director has recommended removal from the school. The student and parent shall be given notice of applicable due process procedures, including the right to a hearing. Notification will include instructions regarding those due process procedures. Expulsion does not become effective until all procedures have been completed.

2 If an appeal hearing is requested, a hearing officer appointed by the Board of Directors shall hear the evidence, prepare a record and bring a recommendation to the Board for action. The hearing shall be closed to protect the privacy of the student unless the parent requests that it be open to the public.

3 The parent and any student subject to expulsion shall be given written notice of the date, time and place for the hearing at least five (5) working days prior to the hearing.

Section 5 - School Policies

5.1 Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy

DMS prohibits any and all forms of discrimination and harassment which includes behaviors commonly recognized as bullying, hazing, sexual harassment and sexual abuse/assault.

Discrimination includes acts of discrimination or harassment based upon actual or perceived religion, race, color, national origin, gender, physical or mental abilities/disabilities, physical traits, academic achievement, grade level, socioeconomic status, neighborhood/area of residence, sexual orientation, personal characteristics or beliefs, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. Discrimination and harassment can take place in person or in writing and can be physical, verbal, demonstrative, or electronic..... ***Regardless of its form, DMS prohibits it.***

5.2 Media Mindfulness

The violence, consumerism and passive entertainment that are taken for granted in today's mass-media culture do not support the wellbeing of children. It is now becoming documented that the cumulative effect of repeated exposure to television, video games, movies, radio and computers can negatively impact a child's development.

At Desert Marigold, we strongly recommend that parents take full responsibility for determining the type and extent of screen viewing (video games, game-boy, x-box, computers, etc.), and media exposure (television and DVD) their children receive.

Our recommended levels of media use are:

1. **For children in early childhood and grades 1 - 2** . None.
2. **For children in grades 3 - 6:** No television, video games, computers or movies during the school week; a maximum of 2 hours per day parent-directed media use on weekends and during vacations.
3. **For students in grades 7 - 8:** Same as for grades 3-6 with the addition of safe and respectful use for assigned homework or research projects during the school week.
4. **For high school students:** Parental involvement in determining media and computer-use choices. *See the high school handbook for additional information.*

Your child's teachers will be providing information regarding media use and your child's education and engaging you in a dialogue about alternative activities that we hope will be stimulating and rewarding. For those ready to commit to these levels of media exposure at home, please sign the appropriate Media Agreement [[K-2](#), [3-6](#), [7-8](#)] and bring it to your child's teacher.

Our goal is to collaborate with parents to maximize the students' benefit from the DMS learning environment--leading to active, imaginative learning, healthy self-discipline and later to creative thinking and an awakened sense of responsibility.

5.3 Social Media Policy

DMS understands that students, staff and other school community members use social networking/media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Wikispace, YouTube, Flickr, etc.) as a way to connect with others and share education-related experiences. While social networking is fun and valuable, there are some risks you should keep in mind when using these tools.

In the social media world, the lines are blurred between what is public or private, professional or personal. Social media are powerful communication tools that have a significant impact on organizations and professional reputations. Once something is posted it is available on the Web forever—think twice before posting.

***Employees are liable for anything they post to social media sites.
Only employees are approved to represent the school.***

We ask community members to respect and follow these guidelines and policies when discussing DMS in the virtual world.

1 General Guidelines for DMS Community Members

- **Use good judgment**
 - Use good judgment in all situations.
 - Know and follow the parent Code of Conduct.
 - Regardless of your privacy settings, assume that all of the information you have shared on your social network is public information.
 - Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of DMS.
 - Remember your audience.

- **Be respectful**
 - Always treat others in a respectful, positive and considerate manner.
 - Be a good listener.
 - Do not post unauthorized pictures of school events that contain identifiable children.

- **Be responsible and ethical**
 - Be open about your affiliation with the school and any role you hold.
 - Bring concerns to the attention of the teachers or administration before

posting to a social media site.

- Always be doing at least as much listening and responding as you do “talking”.
- Delete any wrong or hurtful postings.

2 Private and personal information

- Do not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential or not public. If it seems confidential, it probably is. Online “conversations” are never private. Do not use your birth date, address, and cell phone number on any public website or ask online for anyone to provide you with such information.
- To ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.
- **Never** give out or transmit personal information of students or other parents.
- Do not assume to be correct and up-to-date the information you may receive through social networking (such as email addresses, customer names or telephone numbers). Always respect the privacy of school community members.
- Make sure your privacy settings are set to an appropriate level.

3 Images

- Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school (if applicable).
- You may use photos and videos (products, etc.) that are available on the school’s website.
- It is not acceptable to post pictures of students taken on school grounds without the express written consent of their parents.
- Do not post pictures of others without their permission.

4 Other sites

- A significant part of the interaction on blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks involves passing on interesting content or linking to helpful resources. Do not blindly repost a link; look first at the content.
- Pay attention to the security warnings that pop up on your computer before clicking on unfamiliar links. They actually serve a purpose and protect you.
- When using Twitter, Facebook, etc., and other tools be sure to follow their printed terms and conditions.

5 Mistakes

- Be sure to correct immediately any mistake you make, and clarify what you’ve done to fix it.
- Apologize for the mistake if the situation warrants it.