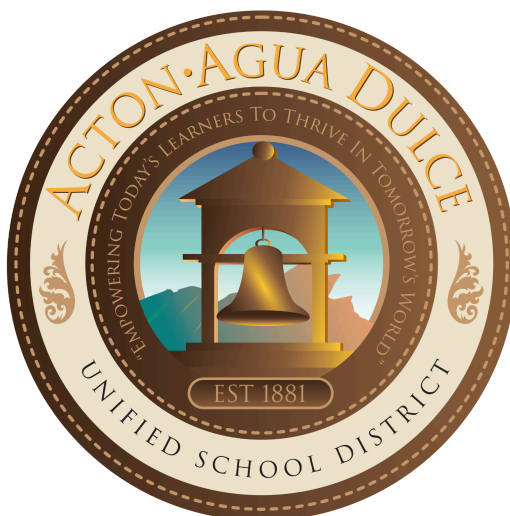




HIGH DESERT SCHOOL

**SCHOLAR/PARENT
HANDBOOK
2023-2024**



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Ken Pfalzgraf, Vice President
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(661) 269-0750

Mr. Kvin Venzko, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services
(661) 269-0750

Coordinator of Human Resources

Pupil Services/Education

High Desert School Administration

Mrs. Michelle Van Ornum, Principal
(661) 269-0310

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August 2023

Dear High Desert Hawks and Parents,

Welcome to High Desert School, Home of the Hawks! At HDS, we truly believe that the middle does matter and aim to create an interactive and collaborative learning environment so that our Hawks scholars will SOAR.

The teachers and staff at High Desert School are very committed to providing a safe, supportive and academically rigorous learning environment for all students. We have high expectations for academic achievement and behavior. In addition to our core subject classes, we have exploratory and elective options in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM). Athletic opportunities are also offered for students interested in volleyball, cross country, flag football, spirit squad, soccer, basketball, and track. Our school is also proud to offer ballroom dancing, keyboarding, and handbells. We are very proud of our students and look forward to continuing to support them in soaring towards excellence!

The Medal of Honor Program is a priority in our school and district. The core values of courage, integrity, citizenship, sacrifice, commitment, and patriotism enhance students' character development, and support our policies and programs by focusing on student responsibility for academic progress and his/her own behavior. In coordination with a system of Positive Behaviors, Interventions, and Supports (PBIS), scholars pursue leadership and mentorship opportunities while striving to always do their best.

Together, students, parents, teachers, school support-staff, and the community form a partnership that provides a solid foundation for success in learning and enriches the school environment. Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged.

The **High Desert Scholar/Parent Handbook** has been created to provide parents and students with information about our school in one easy-to-use location. This handbook, our school plan, and calendar are also available on the High Desert School website at <http://www.aadusd.k12.ca.us/domain/9> and the Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District website at <http://aadusd.k12.ca.us>. If you need additional support or information beyond the handbook, please contact the school office. The office staff will be able to direct you to the person or source for the information you need.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Van Ornum
Principal
High Desert School

DISTRICT VISION, HIGH DESERT MISSION AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT



The Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District endeavors to provide a safe, secure, and supportive community that promotes a deep love of learning. We maintain high expectations of student achievement and engagement in an individualized experience that only a small town can offer.



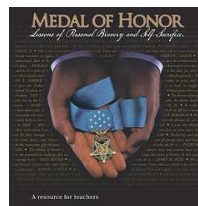
HIGH DESERT SCHOOL

Vision Statement

Choosing to Soar Toward Excellence

Mission Statement

We, as a community, have a vision where every High Desert scholar is valued and challenged to reach their academic, social, and physical potential while supported by a safe, positive circle of learning, and fortified to become a responsible and productive citizen of the global community.



Medal of Honor: COMMITMENT, SACRIFICE, CITIZENSHIP, INTEGRITY, PATRIOTISM, AND COURAGE

The Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District is a proud partner of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, which recognizes the important contributions made by our nation's military heroes. This collaborative effort ensures that our students learn important lessons about courage, commitment, sacrifice, patriotism and integrity that will inspire them to become great citizens of the Acton-Agua Dulce community and beyond.

HIGH DESERT SCHOOL 2023/2024 DIRECTORY

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	Ext
Van Ornum, Michelle - Principal	101
Campbell, Heather - Secretary	102
Ortiz, Monique - Office Clerk	103
Townsend, Heeidy - Psychologist	106
Quezada, Tiffany - Counselor	104
FACULTY	Ext
Acuña, Nicole	301
Alford Walsh, Marilynn	308
Ayers, Taylor	316
Biedermann, Cassandra	317
Botton, Gina	332
Cieslik, Chad	321
Friedman, Shana	319
Fuentes, Rafael - 7/8th RSP	328
Goodstein, Heather	302
Hexom, Lowell - Speech	319
Knee, Jay	307
Landaverde, Claudia - 5/6 RSP	318
Reveles, Arcelia	320
Rowland, Larry	314
Seymour, Denise	305
Walker, Jana	304
Facilities	EXT
Keyboarding Room	327
Handbell Room	326
CTE Lab	315
Science Lab	303
Library	111
Wellness Center	333
Boys Locker Room	210
Girls Locker Room	211

CLASSIFIED STAFF
Conde, Alondra
Giron, Adaliz
Herrera, Paula
Hulbert, Amy
LoBello, Chelsea
Lomeli-Lovo, Odalis
Medina, Precious
Olson, Janet
Sanchez, Lilliana
Trusel, Tommee
Vasquez, Sergio
Wygant, Seth
CUSTODIAL/MAINTENANCE
Gonzalez, Maria
Hernandez, Juan
DISTRICT NURSE
Wright, Cari
CAFETERIA - ext 209
Bruce, Kristina
Loporchio, Donna
Rivas, Gisela
Vazquez, Alejandra
PHONE NUMBERS
District Office 661-269-0750
High Desert School 661-269-0310
Meadowlark School 661-269-8140
Vasquez High School 661-269-0451
Cafeteria-High Desert 661-269-0950
Transportation 661-269-5802

HIGH DESERT SCHOOL | 2023-2024 CALENDAR

■ Minimum Day
 ■ No School
 ■ Pupil Free Work Day
 ■ CAASPP Testing

- 7 5th/6th Registration Day
- 8 7th/8th Registration Day
- 9 New Staff Orientation
- 10-11 Staff PD
- 15 District Breakfast/Staff Orientation
- 16 First Day of School – Early Release Wednesday
- 18 School Year Kickoff Assembly
- 31 HDS Back to School Night – Min. Day

AUGUST '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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FEBRUARY '24						
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- 1 Spelling Bee
- 7 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 9 Winter Dance
- 12-15 Engineer's Week
- 13 PBIS Team Meeting
- 14 ELAC Meeting
- 16-19 Presidents' Day – No School
- 20 School Site Council
- 23 Pastries with the Principal
- 27 MOH Mentor Day

- 4 Labor Day – No School
- 5 PBIS Team Meeting
- 6 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 13 Hawks Spirit Rally
- 21 Hawks Family Game Night
- Fall Picture Make-up
- 29 MOH Day

SEPTEMBER '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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MARCH '24						
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31						

- 6 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 7 Hawks Family STEAM Night
- 11 Non-Student Day – PD Day
- 13 HDS Arts Day
- 15 End of 3rd Qtr – PBIS Event
- Coffee with the Counselor
- 18-21 Outdoor Science School
- 22 Medal of Honor Awards
- 26 PBIS Team Training
- 28 Spring & Promotion Pictures
- 29 Minimum Day

- 4 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 6 Coffee with the Counselor
- 10 PBIS Team Meeting
- 13 End of 1st Quarter/PBIS Event
- 17 School Site Council
- 18 ELAC Meeting
- PSAT Exam
- 19 Great California Shakeout
- 20 Medal of Honor Awards
- 23-27 Red Ribbon Week
- 27 Halloween Dance

OCTOBER '23						
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APRIL '24						
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28	29	30				

- 1-5 Spring Break/Florida Trip
- 9 School Site Council
- MOH Mentor Day
- 10 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 12 Hawks Spirit Rally
- 16 PBIS Team Meeting
- 17 ELAC Meeting
- 19 Talent Show
- 24 4th Grade Parent Info Night
- 25 HDS 4th Grade Roadshow

- 30-31 Halloweek
- 1 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 7 PBIS Team Meeting
- 7 MOH Day
- 9 Pastries with the Principal
- 10 Veterans Day – No School
- 17 Minimum Day
- 20-24 Thanksgiving Break

NOVEMBER '23						
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MAY '24						
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- 29-30 CAASPP Testing
- 1 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 7 PBIS Team Meeting
- 10 Career Day – Min. Day
- 15-29 5th Grade STARBASE
- 17 Spring Dance
- 21-22 ASMO Spring Concert
- 24 PBIS Event
- 27 Memorial Day – No School
- 29 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 30 HDS Open House – Min Day

- 1 Hawks Spirit Rally
- 5 PBIS Team Meeting
- 6 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 12 School Site Council
- 12-13 ASMO Winter Concert
- 13 ELAC Meeting
- 14 PBIS Event
- 15 1st Semester Ends – Min. Day
- 18-29 Winter Break

DECEMBER '23						
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JUNE '24						
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30						

- 3 5th/6th Awards
- 4 7th/8th Awards
- 6 8th Grade BBQ – Min Day
- 6 8th Promotion @ 6pm
- Minimum Day
- 7 8th Magic Mountain
- Last Day of School – Min Day
- 10-14 Washington DC Trip – Tentative
- 20 ESY Teacher Prep Day
- 21 Summer School Start

- 1-5 Winter Break
- 8 No School – Non Contract Day
- 9 2nd Semester Begins
- 10 HDS Booster Club Meeting
- 15 M.L. King Day – No School
- 16 PBIS Team Meeting
- 18 5th/6th 1st Semester Awards
- 19 7th/8th 1st Semester Awards
- 24 8th Grade Roadshow at VHS
- 26 Coffee with the Counselor
- 30 MOH Day

JANUARY '24						
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JULY '24						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- 4 Independence Day
- 19 Summer School End

AADUSD School Board Meetings
are on the 2nd/4th Thursday of each month

Rev 7/5/23

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING OUTCOMES

All HDS curriculum and campus culture strives to guide students into:

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKERS

- generate questions and employ creative approaches to problem solving
- identify connections in content and integrate knowledge
- analyze and comprehend the complexities of the English language and the symbolic language of mathematics and the sciences
- effectively acquire, assess, and organize information

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- practice empathy and cultural awareness
- articulate using academic language and an informed point of view
- employ good listening skills
- evaluate and successfully utilize forms of argument in both oral and written context

EMPOWERED INDIVIDUALS

- take a proactive approach to their current academic pursuits and future goals
- make sound decisions about physical, emotional, and mental health
- act ethically and take personal responsibility for actions
- adapt to an increasingly complex and ever-changing world
- draw inspiration from the diversity of the environment

TECHNOLOGICALLY PROFICIENT CITIZENS

- develop foundational skills for transition to high school and career readiness
- demonstrate competency in exchanging and presenting ideas through a wide variety of technologies
- distinguish accurate information and the validity of sources

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

- apply excellence, respect, courage, and integrity in interactions with others
- take part in meaningful service within their communities
- work cooperatively with diverse populations
- use individual voice to advocate for the needs of all act with a global consciousness

GENERAL INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS

The office is open from **7:30 AM to 3:00 PM** Monday through Friday.

Our office staff strives to provide the best possible services. Phones are answered during office hours. You can always call our school office and leave a message when our school office is closed. We will return your phone call as soon as possible.

THERE WILL BE NO INTERRUPTIONS ALLOWED TO TEACHERS' CLASSES DURING THE PROTECTED INSTRUCTIONAL BLOCK FROM 8:00 AM – 2:20 PM EXCEPT IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY.

If you need to pick up your child for any reason during school hours, please come to the school office. We encourage families to schedule medical/dental appointments during non-school hours. If your student has an appointment during school hours, please bring your student to school promptly after your appointment. You may be requested to have a note from your doctor verifying the visit.

ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

Students may not arrive on campus before supervision begins at **7:30 AM**. Students must be picked up after school no later than **2:40 PM**. **Parents are asked to strictly adhere to these times during which supervision is available.**

VALET SAFETY/PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please respect the following **VALET SAFETY** rules:

- Pull all the way forward in the loading zone when dropping off or picking up students.
- Have student(s) ready to exit the car when you arrive in the valet circle.
- Students must enter the campus using the walk-through gate, the sidewalk, and walkways.
- Cars must exit the valet loading zone immediately after dropping off/picking up student(s).
- Cars may only enter the valet turn-around loop turning right from Antelope Woods Road.
- Keep your car engine running while dropping off/picking up students in the valet lane.
- There is no parking in the valet or drive through lanes.
- The speed limit is no more than 5 mph.
- For safety reasons, please refrain from texting and/or cell phone use in the valet line.

Please respect the following **PARKING LOT SAFETY** rules:

- Students must be accompanied by an adult and escorted to and from any parked car.
- Cars must be parked in a designated parking space.

CAMPUS VISITATIONS

Parents/Guardians are always welcome to visit their child's classroom during the school day. For the protection of all students, it is mandatory that all visitors register in the school office prior to any campus visitation. Visitors will be given a "visitor's badge" which must be visible throughout the visit. School district insurance does not allow for friends to visit students at High Desert.

Visitors who wish to tour the campus must make arrangements with the school principal prior to visiting the campus.

CLOSED CAMPUS

High Desert is a closed campus. Students must proceed directly to school and stay on campus in approved areas from the time they arrive on campus until school dismissal. Off-campus permits are issued only for administrative, medical, or dental purposes, and must be requested in writing by a parent or guardian.

Students are not to visit with persons who are not in attendance at High Desert when they come on or near school grounds. People who loiter around school are subject to trespassing fines of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500) and/or imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months as determined by the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department. All campus visitors must report to the attendance office for permission to visit.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS

All students will be released from school grounds according to the following policies:

- Students will be released only through the school office. Students will only be released to parents/guardians or emergency contacts indicated on the student's Emergency Card.

- Should it be necessary for someone other than persons listed on the Emergency Card to pick up a student, a written note with the parent's signature will be required. The person picking up the child will also need to present proper identification. School personnel may copy this identification.
- A "Student Sign-Out" log (located in the office) must be signed by the adult checking out the student.
- Parents are discouraged from checking students out early except for medical appointments, funerals, illness and other reasons considered excused by education code.

PRESS RELEASES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

From time to time, students are photographed or videotaped for classroom and campus activities including oral language presentations, plays, events, yearbook, newspaper, physical education and student of the month. Press releases are also made concerning these and other activities. **Note:** *If you do not wish for photographs to be taken of your child or a press release made with your child's name, please put your request in writing **annually** to the teacher and the principal.*

CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES

Custody disputes may only be handled through the courts. The school has no legal jurisdiction to refuse a biological parent access to his/her child or to the child's school records. The only exception is when a signed restraining order or proper divorce papers specifically state visitation limitations. These papers must be current and must be on file in the child's cumulative record in the office.

Any request to release a student that seems questionable will be handled by the principal or his/her designee. The Sheriff's department may be contacted to resolve conflicting parental claims if the situation becomes a disruption to the school, or the child's welfare is in question. Students' school days may not be disrupted for visits with non-custodial parents, relatives, or family friends.

STUDENT'S LEGAL NAME

The school is required to use each student's legal name on all records as the name is shown on the student's birth certificate. If a child's name has been legally changed, certified court records, adoption papers, or other legal records must be presented to the principal and copies made for the student's permanent record folder.

PETS GUIDELINES

Due to the unpredictability of animals and potential allergic reactions, pets are not allowed on campus.

FOOD, PARTY, AND TOY GUIDELINES

- Students should have a healthy nutritious breakfast before they come to school each day to prepare them for learning. This will help them to have better energy and concentration.
- Breakfast and snack foods are available in the cafeteria during break; however, students have two hours of school before break, so a breakfast at home is essential.
- We ask that students not bring candy to school in their lunches.
- If you wish to provide a treat for a class party, please check with the teacher in advance. **Only individually wrapped, commercial food may be provided at school.**
- Since some students have food allergies, please check with the office before planning to purchase food for parties or birthday treats.
- No open beverage containers (cups, soda cans, etc.) may be brought on campus. **Students may not bring energy drinks to school.**

Party Invitations

- Please check with the teacher before asking your child to distribute private party invitations at school.
- If invitations are distributed in the classroom, all students must receive an invitation.

Toys and Personal Items At School

- Toys and personal items may not be brought to school unless the child has his/her teacher's permission.
- Permission is rarely granted for bringing items to school except for certain projects or classroom activities. These items may not be taken out to break, lunch or on the bus.

TELEPHONES

The office and classroom telephones are reserved for incoming calls, and staff use. Students will be allowed to use office phones to call home for any unforeseen emergencies. Transportation, homework and after school plans need to be scheduled before the start of the school day.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- Students shall be permitted to carry cell phones in their backpacks. They must be turned off on campus and may only be used after students leave campus.
- Students are expected to immediately comply with the direction of any school personnel to cease the use of the phone or electronic

device on campus or at a school sponsored activity.

- **Taking photos or videos while on campus is prohibited by law.**
- Authorization for student possession of any electronic device may be revoked by the administration for inappropriate student use or failure to comply with cell phone and electronic device school policy.
- The District assumes no liability for the damage, loss, theft, or misuse of the cell phone or electronic device by the student or another person.
- Students may use electronic devices in the classroom for assignments **ONLY** if permitted by the teacher.

Use of an electronic device during instructional time is treated as a classroom disturbance. If a student uses an electronic device during class without teacher permission, the following consequences will be enforced:

- 1st Infraction: Warning and asked to put device away.
- 2nd Infraction: Item confiscated from student, given to Administration, and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Parent/Guardian will be notified.
- 3rd Infraction: Item confiscated from student, given to Administration, and device must be picked up by parent/guardian.
- 4th Infraction: Item confiscated from student, given to Administration, and parent/guardian conference scheduled prior to returning device to parent/guardian. Parent/guardian will be notified and restricted break/lunch privileges will be assigned.

SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Each student will receive a school identification card with the student's picture on it. Students are required to carry their identification card at all times. The card may be used to admit the student into school activities and may be requested to be seen by any school personnel. The card will be required for admission into the library and computer lab. The cost for replacement of a lost or stolen card is \$10.00.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES: EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED

A student may legally be absent in the state of California only for the reasons given below. All other reasons for absences are considered “unexcused” according to California Education Code.

- Student is too ill and / or contagious to attend school.
- Student must see a doctor or dentist.
- Student attending a funeral of an immediate family member (1 day excused in California; 2 days out-of-state).
- Students may be released to attend religious services, but the student must attend school for a minimum number of instructional minutes.
- Upon parent written request and the principal’s approval, a student may be released for justifiable reasons including court appearance, employment conference, and attendance of a religious observance.

By law, all students must attend a full-time school until they are 18 years old. Failure to attend school regularly can result in serious legal problems for students and parents.

REPORTING ABSENCES AND TARDIES

Every absence, even for part of the day, interferes with a student’s progress in school because instruction is taught in sequence geared to the child’s readiness and ability. Each skill must be built on carefully developed previous ones. It is especially important that all students be in school regularly because the foundation for all subsequent years is being put into place.

If a student is absent, call the school at **661-269-0310** or email **the office clerk** by **10:00 A.M.**

When a child must be absent, please send a note, email, or call the office and give the following information for each day the child was absent. Date you are calling or writing

- Child’s first and last name
- Child’s grade
- Date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence
- Your name or signature

If a parent does not clear the absence within 24 hours, the student’s absence will be marked as “unexcused”.

NOTICE: A student with 3 unexcused absences in a school year must be declared truant according to the California Education Code.

FREQUENT ABSENCES – TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

When students are absent for any part of the day important instruction is missed. It is the responsibility of the principal to monitor attendance and to take steps to improve a student’s attendance when he/she is frequently absent or tardy.

- Parents will be contacted by letter when problem attendance patterns are first noted.
- If the problem is not resolved, a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting with the principal and teacher will be scheduled to resolve the problem.
- If attendance problems continue after these measures are taken, the matter must be referred to the district’s School Attendance and Review Board (SARB). The parent will be required to attend a meeting with the district’s SARB committee to resolve the attendance problems.
- If the attendance problem is not resolved at this level, the SARB committee must refer the problem to the District Attorney’s Office for resolution.

Parents must phone the school on the same day of the absence whenever a student is absent. The call should be made to (661) 269-0310 before 10:00 a.m. If parents are unable to call the office before the student returns to school, the students will need to present a note, upon arrival at school with the parent’s signature, indicating the date and reason for the absence, with your parent’s signature. Students who fail to bring a note will have the absence recorded as a truancy. Attendance letters for Truancy are mailed home after 3, 6, and 9 unexcused absences. Attendance letters for Chronic Attendance are mailed home at 12, 15, and 18 absences for any reason.

INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACT

If a student must be absent for a family emergency, trip, or other reason for five or more days, the parent must apply **one week in advance** for an Independent Study Contract. Any Independent Study Contract request that extends beyond 10 school days requires

administrative approval. The student will be given assignments based on the classroom core curriculum for each day of the absence. **ALL work must be completed accurately and submitted immediately upon the student's return to school** to be considered present for the days listed on the Independent Study Contract. Failure to complete any Independent Study Contract fully or submit it immediately upon return may result in denial of future Independent Study Contract requests.

STUDIO WORK

Students who have a valid work permit and are absent from school to work on location will be given an excused absence under the following circumstances:

- Student is taught by a credentialed studio teacher on the set using the district's or other state adopted instructional materials and the student presents verification of this instruction to the school office upon return to school.
- For absences of 5 days or more, the student's parent must complete the school's Independent Study Contract, the student completes all required assignments accurately, with work returned to the teacher / school office upon return.

TARDIES

Students should be on campus **no later than 7:55 AM** at High Desert School daily. **Students who are not in their class when the tardy bell rings at 7:55 AM, must report to the office for a tardy pass.** (Students who ride the bus are not marked tardy when the bus is late.) Please send a note to the office with your child when your child arrives late.

Please reinforce that punctuality is an important expected behavior, and understand that there is a district policy regarding excessive absences and/or tardies. Students who are tardy miss school announcements, assignments, and are disruptive to the class and office procedures.

Students who arrive tardy or leave early in excess of 30 minutes for unexcused reasons three times in a year are declared truant according to the California Education Code.

Students are marked tardy if they are not in their seat when the tardy bell rings. In Physical Education, students are tardy if they enter the locker room spaces after the bell or fail to be in the assigned area at roll call.

Late Arrival to School/Tardy - Should a student arrive late to school they will need to present a note signed by a parent/guardian or be signed in by a parent/guardian. As stated in our absence policy, only illness, medical appointments, court appearances or funeral of an immediate family member are considered "excused" for tardiness and a note is required for that tardiness to be excused.

Unexcused Tardy - Three or more unexcused tardies may result in a parent conference.

Class Tardy Policy - Tardies are recorded every day in every class period. It is a reasonable expectation that in order for a learning environment to thrive students must arrive to class on time. Students who continually do not meet this expectation are considered to be in defiance of authority. Teachers may refer students who have excessive tardies to administration for progressive discipline which includes, but not limited to lunch detention or parent conferences.

TRUANCY

Ed. Code 48260 states *"Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any thirty (30) minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three or more occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district."*

Being truant also means being out of class without permission from their parent/guardian or teacher. Students who cut class or stay home without parent/guardian permission are truant, as well as students who leave the P.E. area before the period ends. Truant students receive consequences from administration and may not be allowed to make-up missed class work. Students found truant out in the community may receive truancy citations from the Sheriff Department.

MAKE-UP WORK AND ABSENCES

Students will be given the opportunity to make up school work missed due to an **excused** absence and will receive full credit if the work is turned in according to a reasonable make-up schedule set by the teacher. Students who have an **unexcused** absence may be required to complete the work but may not be given full credit for the completed work. A student who is suspended from school may be required to complete any assignments and tests missed during the suspension. (Ed. Code 48913)

- **ONE OR TWO DAY ABSENCES:** When a student is absent for up to two days, the student should request missed assignments from the teacher upon return to school.

- **THREE OR MORE DAYS EXCUSED ABSENCES:** When a student is absent for excused reasons for three or more days, the parent may call the office and request that the work be left at the office for pick up. **Twenty-four hours notice is needed for the teacher to provide work.**

EARLY DISMISSAL

When students leave school early, they miss out on important instruction. **Parents should request early dismissal only for unavoidable emergencies. Please send a note with your child stating the reason and time you will be at the office to pick up your child.** This will ensure that the classroom instructional day is disrupted as little as possible.

A student who attends less than the required minimum instructional minutes and is released for a reason not considered “excused” by California Education Code must be marked “unexcused” for the day.

Parents/guardians are not to go to the classroom first. All students must be signed out through the office. After a student is signed out, the office staff will call the classroom and have the student come to the office.

Truancy is defined in Education Code Section 48260. The law declares that pupils be considered truant if they are **absent on three occasions** in one school year for **more than ANY 30-minute period during the school day**, or any combination of these, without a valid excuse.

EMERGENCY AND DISASTER INFORMATION

EMERGENCY CARDS & DISASTER RELEASE FORMS

Each student must have a current Emergency Card on file. During the first week of school, parents must complete a new Emergency Card (front and back) providing all requested information. **AT LEAST ONE LOCAL CONTACT MUST BE INCLUDED.** These cards are kept on file in the school office for the duration of the school year. You are also asked to provide this information on a Disaster Release form each year. Students may only be released to individuals listed on the card, and individuals may be required to show ID.

Please be certain to inform any person you list that they are on your child's emergency card. It is also important to let your child know who may pick him / her up in an emergency. We advise that you make a copy of your child's completed emergency card before sending it back to school.

Updating information: If any phone number changes, it is critical to provide the school with this updated information immediately. It is imperative that we be able to contact you in case your child becomes ill or is injured.

DISASTER RESPONSE AND RELEASE INFORMATION

In the event of a disaster such as an earthquake, your child will stay at school under the supervision of school personnel until you or someone listed on the emergency card comes to check your child out. If necessary, the staff is prepared to keep students overnight or for as long as necessary. **Please discuss this arrangement with your child. This will help your child to be well prepared and to stay calm in the event of a disaster.**

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills are conducted as prescribed by the regulations of the Fire Department and the Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District. We will be conducting emergency, fire, and lock down drills during the school year. It is important to have students prepared for any emergency that may arise such as an earthquake, fire, animals on campus, etc.

STUDENT CHECK-OUT IN A DISASTER

After an earthquake or other disaster, students may be evacuated to the field, courts, or other safe location. **Parents are asked not to park in the parking lots for the school so that this area may be reserved for emergency response vehicles.**

In the event of an earthquake or other disaster, a calm organized release of students to their parents is very important. Please cooperate with the following procedures:

1. Parents must report to the **Report-In-Gate**. You will give your children's name and the teachers' names.
2. You will then go to the **Check-Out-Station in the same location**. Your child will be brought here while you sign the child out. **You or the person checking out the child may be asked to show picture identification at this time.** You will be asked to indicate your destination in case other family members come for the child and need to know where the child has been taken.

Only those listed on the child's emergency release form may check a child out at anytime, including during a disaster.

SCHOOL EVACUATION

If it should ever be necessary to evacuate students from the school, the number you have designated on the district's emergency phone call system will be called. A notice of the relocation site will also be posted on the school gate and/or broadcast by the radio stations listed below. If possible, another district school will be used as the relocation site.

SCHOOL CLOSING FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER

When weather or other conditions prevent the school buses from running, schools will likely be closed. Normally, the decision to close school is made by 6:30 a.m. and the district's emergency call system will call your home with an automated message. If you question whether school will be open on a particular day, and have not received a call, please tune in to **KAVL 610 AM** to listen for school closings.

HEALTH SERVICES

ILLNESS OR INJURY

While we encourage perfect attendance, it is not in the student's best interest to be at school if he or she is ill. If you are unsure whether your child should stay home, please consult your pediatrician. Children should stay home from school for treatment and recovery when they display any of the following conditions:

- chest pains
- contagious infection or virus
- head lice
- earache
- fever
- vomiting or diarrhea

Important: Please keep your child home until they are free of any **fever, vomit, and diarrhea for 24 hours** before sending back to school.

If your child becomes ill during regular school hours, the nurse or office clerk will provide basic care until parents or someone listed on the Emergency Card can arrive. (Please keep the information on your child's Emergency Card up to date.) If an accident occurs at school, the nurse, office staff or other trained staff will provide basic first aid. If it is possible that the injury needs more than basic first aid, the parent will be contacted immediately. If the injury is severe or potentially life threatening, the paramedics will be called immediately.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

School personnel cannot administer medication of any kind (including pain reliever or cough drops) to a student without written authorization and directions from a physician. A "Request for Medication" form is available, which is to be completed and signed by the physician and parent before prescription/non-prescription medication can be administered by school personnel. Medication must be labeled clearly with the following information:

- Pupil's full legal name
- Physician's name and telephone number
- Name of medication
- Dosage, schedule, and dose form
- Date of expiration of prescription

The office/health clerk or other personnel under the direction of the district nurse are available to assist students in taking authorized medication at school. Though an effort will be made to remind students if they forget, it is the child's responsibility to come to the school office at the designated time for the administration of medication. **Students are prohibited from carrying any type of medication including pain reliever, cough drops and Orajel on the school campus.** A parent may come to the school office and administer medication to their own child if they wish. Medications must be brought to school by the parent or an authorized adult.

MEDICAL RESTRICTIONS

Please notify the teacher and health office immediately if your child has any special medical restrictions including serious allergies, asthma, medical needs or is taking any medications on a regular basis. A treatment plan will be developed by the district nurse for any student with health needs that must be addressed at school.

SPECIAL HEALTH TREATMENT OR CARE

If a newly enrolling child has a health problem that requires special treatment or care during the school day, enrollment may be delayed until the district nurse has completed a health consultation with the parent and doctor to establish a Health Care Plan. This will ensure that the child's health needs are properly addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND/OR BREAK/LUNCH EXCUSES

Physical education classes are required by education code. Students must participate unless there is a valid medical reason to excuse participation.

- A **parent/guardian note** may excuse a child from physical activities for **up to three days within a school year**.
- A **doctor's note** will be needed to excuse a student from physical education beyond three days. It is expected that a student who is excused from physical education should also not participate in active games or activities at break, lunch, or extracurricular activities.

For the safety of the student and others, a **student on crutches or wearing a cast** may not participate in competitive or active break, lunch, or extracurricular activities.

HEALTH SCREENINGS PROVIDED FOR STUDENTS

The Acton-Agua Dulce School District employs a district-wide nurse to coordinate the district health program. The major focus of school health services is on the prevention and early detection and correction of health problems.

At the middle school level, three types of health screenings are provided. These screenings do not take the place of annual comprehensive health exams by the child's pediatrician. A parent or teacher may refer a student for screening at any time. The parent will be notified when students do not pass a specific screening.

Parental Rights: A parent may exempt their child from one or more of these screenings by submitting an **annual** written statement to the district nurse stating they do NOT consent to a specific screening. (CA Ed. Code 49451)

The screenings and the grade levels at which they are routinely given are given below:

- **VISION SCREENING** - Kindergarten, third, fifth, eighth, and tenth grade students; students who have an IEP triennially (AC Ed. Code 49455 and CA Admin. Code 596)
- **COLOR PERCEPTION** - First grade male students (CA Ed. Code 9455 and CA Admin. Code 595)
- **HEARING SCREENING** - Kindergarten, second, fifth, eighth and tenth grade students, plus students who have an IEP triennially. (CA Admin. Code 2951)
- **SCOLIOSIS SCREENING** - Seventh grade girls and eighth grade boys (CA Ed. Code 49452.5). A separate notice is sent home prior to scoliosis screening.

STUDENT INSURANCE

The Acton-Agua Dulce School District does not provide medical, dental, or hospital coverage for pupils injured at school or during school sponsored events. Information about a low cost student insurance plan is sent home at the beginning of each school year and always available at the school office. You may request a copy from the office staff.

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION COURSES

Family Life Education courses are offered as optional classes. The district school nurse will provide a preview of the films to parents annually. Parents will be informed before the films are shown. Signed parental permission is required for students to participate.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW

What is child abuse? The following definition is taken from Penal Code Sections 273 and 11165.5: *Child abuse is a physical injury, which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person. Child abuse also includes sexual abuse and willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child. Failure to safeguard a child from injuries or abuse when the child is under a person's care or custody may also be child abuse.*

Mandated reporting: State law requires that if physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of a child is suspected, school personnel must report the information to the Department of Children's Services. School personnel are not allowed to investigate or confirm the situation themselves by contacting parents or others.

How to file a complaint of child abuse by school district employees or others at school sites: A parent or guardian of a pupil has the right to file a complaint against a school district employee or other person that they suspect has engaged in abuse of a child at a school site. The complaint may be filed with the Child Protective Agency, the School District, or the County Office of Education.

WELLNESS PLAN ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

Please ask the District Nurse to view a copy of this document.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Part of the key to your success will be how well students plan time and prioritize assignments. Since middle school can be a big adjustment for students, we provide each student with a student planner to write down all assignments. **Each academic teacher reserves class time for students to fill out the planner.** Students should carry this planner to every class and use it to record assignments, school business, important dates, and other things that must be remembered. Parents/guardians should check it nightly and use it to communicate with teachers, if necessary. If students have a problem with missing assignments, we recommend that students ask parents/guardians and teachers to initial the student planner daily. **Students who write down, complete, and turn in all assignments on a daily basis, can expect to be very successful at High Desert.**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating includes:

- Copying, faxing, or duplicating assignments to be turned in as “original.”
- Exchanging assignments by printout, file transfer, or email, and then submit them as “original.”
- Writing formulas, codes, or key words on your person or objects for use in a test.
- Using hidden reference sheets during a test.
- Using a cell phone in any way during class.
- Using programmed material in watches or calculators, unless such devices are expressly included
- Exchanging answers with others (either give or receive answers).
- Take someone else’s assignment and submit it as your own.
- Talking to another student or looking at their work during a test.
- Submitting material written or designed by someone else without giving the author/artist credit. Students may not CUT AND PASTE work from any source and claim it as their own. These are all plagiarism.
- Taking credit for group work when little contribution was made.
- Not following specific guidelines on cheating established by your teacher.

All assignments are to be completed independently unless the teacher directs otherwise. Students caught cheating will receive no credit or reduced credit on that assignment or test and will be referred to the school’s administration. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the incident and the penalty imposed.

AERIES AND ONLINE GRADING

All High Desert School teachers use Aeries as their online grading system. Aeries can be accessed at <https://www.accessmystudent.com/actonaguadulce>. The Aeries portal empowers parents and students to access and monitor course grades and to contact teachers directly regarding any questions. Regular use of Aeries can help keep students focused and on-track to pass their classes and prevent failure. Teachers are expected to maintain accurate and current grades in Aeries throughout the year, ensuring the viability of this communication system.

For parents and students new to our district, step-by-step instructions for creating an Aeries account and viewing course grades are available in the Main Office.

GRADING

Report cards are issued on a semester basis. Teachers determine the grades given to each student. The determination of the student’s grade by the teacher, in the absence of **clerical or mechanical/technological mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency**, by law is final. Teacher error or data entry error will be corrected by the teacher. Students or parents seeking clarification of a grade or assistance in the class should make an appointment with the appropriate teacher.

The grading criteria upon which any grading system is based may include such items as test and quiz scores, homework completion, oral and written reports, research papers, participation in class activities, or similar evidence of the quality of the student’s mastery of the subject content. A grade may be affected by missed class work, incomplete homework, or lack of class participation. Most teachers use Aeries (<https://actonaguadulce.asp.aeries.net/Student/LoginParent.aspx>) that lets students and parents check current grades and homework online anytime. Everyone has their own password so grades are confidential.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are issued approximately 25%, 50%, and 75% through each semester and reflect a student's course achievement primarily on tests, quizzes, essays and other assessments, but also include daily participation in class, homework, reports, projects and other assignments. Progress reports are distributed to students to take home, and parents will receive an all-call phone message informing them that progress reports have been distributed.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are mailed home at the end points of each semester. Final letter grades represent the degree to which a student has achieved an established set of course objectives, content mastery and performance standards. Semester grades become a part of the student's permanent record and the official calculation of the grade point average (GPA).

TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts are the official record of a student's middle school course of study and reflect final semester grades. Students are encouraged to periodically review unofficial transcripts for completeness and accuracy. Official transcripts are free to currently enrolled students. Transcripts may be obtained by completing the Transcript Request Form available in the main office. Students and parents should allow 48 hours to process the request. You may request to pick up a transcript in the main office or to have them sent to a specific institution that you indicate on the form. Students are responsible for providing accurate mailing information when requesting transcripts to be mailed. Students are responsible for picking up requested transcripts from the mail office when indicating pick up on transcript request form.

GPA POINTS SYSTEM

Grade	Percentile	GPA Points
A	90-100%	4.0
B	80-89%	3.0
C	70-79%	2.0
D	60-69%	1.0
F	0-59%	0.0

HOMEWORK POLICY

The purpose of homework is to provide time for each student to review essential skills and information taught during class time. Homework also teaches students important study habits including organization, time management, and practice. The district has stated guidelines for the amount of time students at each grade level should spend on homework. The times given below are for the average student. Some students may need more than the allotted time to complete assignments and others a bit less.

Homework presents an opportunity for students to: A) prepare for new topics, B) practice skills, C) elaborate on introduced material, and D) show progress towards mastering District and Common Core State Standards. Homework affords the teacher an opportunity to determine if students have a grasp of the subject being taught and affords the students an opportunity to test their understanding of the material taught.

AADUSD encourages the assignment of homework. The District expects the work to be done by the students and to be used by the teachers as a part of the evaluation of students' academic progress. The District wishes parents to be aware of this philosophy along with the following guidelines.

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7 - Grade 8
40 - 50 minutes total	60 - 75 minutes total	75 - 90 minutes total

Teachers work together to ensure homework assignments do not surpass the suggested grade level time frame.

(SEE APPENDIX B FOR STUDENT, TEACHER AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES)

CORE CURRICULUM

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a coherent progression of learning expectations in English language arts and mathematics designed to prepare K–12 students for college and career success. The CCSS communicate what is expected of students at each grade level, putting students, parents, teachers, and school administrators on the same page, working toward shared goals. The standards are aligned with college and work expectations, based on evidence and research, and internationally benchmarked so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society. The Common Core is not a curriculum. As a comprehensive set of standards, the Common Core describes the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop, but does not prescribe how to teach them.

The district provides state adopted textbooks for each student in reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Literature and informational texts are available at each grade level. Supplementary materials are used to provide reinforcement, remedial, and enrichment instruction.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The assessment of students' skill levels and progress in mastering the core curriculum include the following:

- Tests provided by the publishers of the adopted textbooks weekly
- Interim assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics each quarter.
- Formative Assessments
- Teacher prepared tests
- Teacher observation and anecdotal records
- Common Core State Standards tests in grades 3 - 11 (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium-SBAC)
- California English Language Development Test (CELDT) for English Learners and second language students

CAASPP

The State of California mandates statewide testing for grades 2-11 for all students attending California public schools. These content standards tests measure and assess the student's progress in mastering state curricular content standards. The goal for students is to score at the "standard met" and "standard exceeded" levels. State assessment scores are one measure High Desert School administration and staff use to determine if students have the knowledge and skills required to be successful in Honors courses.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

All state and district course requirements must be completed successfully to promote from High Desert School. **A student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 to be eligible for participation in 8th grade promotion.** Students without a cumulative GPA of 2.0 may be considered for participation in promotion upon appeal and review by the principal and 8th grade team. This is cumulative over a four year period, grades 5 through 8. Also, a student must maintain good attendance and behavior. Students who are academically ineligible, who owe debts to the school, or who have discipline problems will not be able to attend 8th grade activities without administrative approval.

SCHOOLWIDE SCHEDULE AND STUDENT SCHEDULES

High Desert School's schoolwide schedule of classes is built each year upon student course requests. Students should consult with the school counselors, their parents, and teachers before classes are selected each spring. In order to properly assign students to courses and plan for the upcoming school year, it is imperative that we finalize all fall student schedule requests in the spring.

It is important for students to challenge themselves by taking academically rigorous courses. Choosing the right level course depends on several factors including previous course enrollment and performance, prerequisites, results from State Standards Tests (CAASPP), STAR Reading/Math results, teacher recommendations, student motivation and future goals. Principal/School Counselors will place students in courses after considering all data in an effort to meet student needs and requests.

To request a class or schedule change, the student must complete a Request for Schedule Change form, available in the main office. No request will be considered unless the form is filled out completely with any necessary signatures. Changes to course programs within the first three weeks will be processed only in the following cases: 1) computer/school error; 2) misplacement/lack of prerequisites; or 3) teacher recommendation. Course programs will not be changed for period or teacher preference. Requests for a schedule change must be turned in during the first 15 school days of each semester. After the third week of the semester, all class or schedule changes require administrative approval.

HONORS PLACEMENT

All Honors courses at High Desert are structured to challenge each student and prepare them for Honors and Advanced Placement coursework in high school. Students enrolling in Honors courses should expect a significant increase in workload and cognitive demands, bringing discipline and integrity in preparation.

CURRICULUM AND CONTENT STANDARDS - THE COMMON CORE

The California State Department of Education (CDE) in conjunction with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium has adopted the Common Core Framework as a base for curriculum design, and the CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress) as the formal state assessment. The details of Common Core State Standards can be found online at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/>. High Desert School students are expected to meet these standards and to demonstrate proficiency on state assessments and on site benchmark assessments.

SPECIAL DISTRICT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Services are available for physically, emotionally, or mentally disabled persons up to age 22. If you know of someone who needs special services, please call the principal or the school psychologist through the school office.

AADUSD is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals to an education. Our district programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin, lack of English skills, ethnic group, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability or any other unlawful consideration. (Ed. Code Section 56501)

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. California has a long history of providing numerous systems of support. These include the interventions within the RtI2 processes, support for Special Education, Title I, Title III, support services for English Learners, American-Indian students, and those in gifted and talented programs. MTSS offers the potential to create needed systemic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports that quickly identify and match the needs of all students.

STUDENT STUDY TEAM MEETING

A Student Study Team (SST) Meeting may be requested by a parent, teacher, or other school staff. The parent is always invited to attend and participate in the Student Study Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to identify specific concerns about a child's academic, physical or social/emotional progress. The Student Study Team identifies specific steps to be taken to help the child learn. For more information, contact the school principal or school psychologist.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Speech and language services are available for students who have a speech or language disability and qualify for these services based on an assessment conducted by qualified personnel. Children may be referred by their parent or school staff for an assessment beginning at age three. Contact the school office for further information.

TITLE I PROGRAM

Title I is a federally funded program for students performing below grade level in reading and language arts. Students are screened for Title I services based on the state test results, teacher assessment, observation, and referral. Students with the greatest need are given first priority for assistance. A credentialed teacher provides extra support in an inclusion program. Parents/Guardians of students in Title I are invited to an annual meeting to learn more about the program and about helping their child at home in reading and math.

ENGLISH LEARNER PROGRAM

Students who have a home language other than English are initially assessed using a state-designated, norm-referenced assessment of English proficiency. Students who do not show English mastery qualify for supplementary services through the English Learner (EL) Program. These students receive daily instruction in English Language Development using state and district adopted materials. They learn to understand, speak, read, and write English. Their progress is monitored and tracked to assure good progress in learning English. When the English proficiency assessment along with grades and teacher and parent observations confirms that they have mastered English at a level that will allow them to be successful in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing, they are reclassified as Fluent English Proficient. Their progress continues to be monitored for two years.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Several special education programs provide services for students who qualify based on a full assessment conducted by the school psychologist and a special education teacher with input from their regular classroom teacher(s) and parent(s). These programs include the following:

- **Resource Specialist Program (RSP)** – Students generally receive most of their instruction in a regular education class using an inclusion model with support from an RSP teacher and Instructional Assistant. An RSP teacher and an Instructional Assistant may provide services and additional support to students in the RSP classroom based on each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Contact the principal, RSP teacher, or school psychologist for more information.
- **Special Day Class (SDC)** – Students who need more extensive special education support may qualify for assistance through the SDC program. The SDC teacher and instructional aide provide small group and individual instruction to students based on each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Contact the principal or school psychologist for more information.
- **Speech and Language** – Beginning at age three, referred students are assessed by a Speech and Language Pathologist. Students who are eligible for services are given speech and/or language instruction in a small group setting based on their Individualized Education Plan.

- Adaptive Physical Education – Qualifying students are given adaptive physical education

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION (GATE)

High Desert School provides differentiated instruction for identified gifted and talented students whose needs cannot be met by the regular curriculum, including offering Honors courses for Math and English-Language Arts. Students may qualify for the GATE program in several ways, including: state test results, teacher and/or parent surveys, qualifying scores on the district's GATE assessments.

HOME TUTORING

A student who, due to illness or injury, has been certified by their physician as unable to attend school for three weeks or more may qualify for home tutoring. During the period of absence, the student may receive one hour of instruction per regular school day from a home teacher. Contact the principal for more information.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

An Independent Study Contract may be requested for a student who must be absent for a period of no more than two weeks and no less than five days. The contract must be signed by the parent, student, teacher, and principal prior to the absence. All assignments must be reviewed by the parent and turned in to the office for grading by the teacher immediately upon the student's return to school. Failure to complete Independent Study Contracts fully or submit them immediately upon return may result in denial of future Independent Study contract requests. Contact the school office for further information.

HOME-BASED INDEPENDENT STUDY PROGRAM

The district provides a home-based independent study program. These students study at home using the district provided curriculum. Assignments, assessments, and instruction are provided by a credentialed teacher who meets with students and parents on a regular basis. Contact the school secretary or the district office for further information.

INDEPENDENT STUDY OFFERING FOR THE 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 130 into law on July 9, 2021. This bill makes changes to Independent Study (IS).

- AB 130 makes significant changes to independent study and, for 2021–2022, the school year only requires school districts and county offices of education to offer independent study as an educational option (EC Section 51745).
- The 2021-2022 version of IS serves as an alternate option for students whose health may be put at risk by in-person instruction, as determined by the parent or guardian. Our Independent Study program is available to students in grades K-12 and serves as an alternative method to in-person instruction. If your child is in Special Education you may still have the option to enroll in Independent Study, participation in independent study continues to be subject to IEP team determination as already provided in the law.

For the 2021–22 school year only, written agreements for IS must be signed no later than 30 days after the first day of instruction. However, it is important to note that all other IS requirements must be met upon commencement of instruction. For any other school year, written agreements must be signed prior to the commencement of IS.

KEEPING INFORMED AND GETTING INVOLVED

Our schools have a tradition of active parent involvement and support as it is an essential element in keeping a strong school culture. Informed and involved parents also are able to support their children's education beyond the classroom. There are a variety of ways to learn more about the school and its programs and many ways to be involved listed below:

- **Back to School Night** is held each fall for parents. Each teacher offers a 10-minute presentation on the grade level curriculum, homework, and expectations for the school year.
- **Open House Night** is held each spring. Students and their parents are invited to visit the classroom to see the many projects, artwork, and writing examples accomplished during the school year.
- **Parent Workshops** are offered during the year. Trainings are held to provide parents with specific information about curriculum and working with the child at home. Fliers are sent home announcing the workshops.
- **Booster Club** holds monthly meetings with the principal to discuss events, opportunities for involvement, and to obtain input from the community.
- **SSC (School Site Council)** parent meetings are held quarterly to review the School Safety Plan, the Single School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), and an opportunity to provide input on updates to policies/procedures on campus.
- **ELAC (English Language Advisory Committee)** meetings are held throughout the year. Parents of English Learners are given information about the English Learner program and asked for their suggestions for program improvements.
- **DELAC (District English Language Advisory Council)** meetings are held with representatives from each school's Parent Teacher Organization, Booster Clubs, ELAC, and PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization). The district superintendent and principals attend the meetings to share information and receive suggestions for program improvement from parents.

INFORMATION SENT HOME:

- **School Calendar:** The calendar for the year with holidays, minimum days and first and last day of school is sent to each parent at the beginning of the new school year. Additional copies are available on our school website.
- **Cafeteria Menu:** A menu is sent home each month and also available to view on our district website.
- **Parent Rights:** A summary of parent rights based on state and federal laws are sent home to parents each fall.
- **Website:** Important dates, public documents, and additional information are available at the school's website <http://aadusd.k12.ca.us/domain/9>.
- **High Desert Parent Handbook:** This handbook is updated annually and contains information on school schedules, attendance, emergency procedures, discipline, volunteering, district programs, and other important information for families.

ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

The following documents are available online, for a small copying fee, or free checkout from the school office:

- **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)** – A document that includes achievement data and identifies the district's goals, planned actions, and expenditures to improve student outcomes.
- **School Curriculum Plan** – Provides detailed information about the curriculum, assessments, and annual improvement goals.
- **Single School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA)** – A description of planned actions, and expenditures to achieve district and schools goals. The SPSA is based on an analysis of achievement data, parent and student survey data, and is approved by the School Site Council.
- **School Accountability Report Card (SARC)** – Provides specific information about the school and district including standardized testing information, teacher training, and school safety policies and practices. Available on the school website or through the school office.
- **District/School Safety Plan** – Provides information about safety procedures and safe school climate. Available on the District/school website.
- **Retention/Promotion Policy** – Provides information about the guidelines for promotion and retention.
- **District Homework Policy** - Included in the High Desert Student Handbook.
- **Uniform Complaint Procedures** – The school district has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs. Information about the complaint policies is available including complaints concerning schools, school personnel, and complaints about state and federal programs such as special education and Title I. You may contact the District Office at 269-0750 to obtain a copy of the district's complaint procedures.

ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES

The organizations listed below meet each month with dates and locations of the meetings posted on the school website.

Booster Club: The Booster Club has a “Welcome Table” in the school MPR (cafeteria) during registration days. The Booster Club provides many services and funds that **go directly back to the school** to provide supplemental classroom supplies and materials, computers, computer software, fine arts programs, disaster preparedness supplies, P.E. equipment, assemblies, and library books. **All parents are encouraged to attend the monthly meetings.**

School Site Council (SSC): This is an elected committee made up of 5 parents and 5 school staff (plus alternates). The committee oversees the development of the School Plan for Student Achievement, annual school improvement goals, and the use of school funds for special programs. All parents are welcome to attend the monthly meetings to learn more about school programs and funding. The agendas are posted at the school office.

English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC): Each California Public School from Kindergarten through grade 12, with 21 or more English learners must form a functional English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). The ELAC is a committee for parents or other community members who want to advocate for English Learners.

District English Language Advisory Council (DELAC): meetings are held with representatives from each school's Parent Teacher Organization, Booster Clubs, ELAC, and PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization). The district superintendent and principals attend the meetings to share information and receive suggestions for program improvement from parents.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parents and community members who volunteer under or outside the direct visual supervision of a credentialed employee **must** be fingerprinted through the district office to provide protection for all students. **All volunteers** are reminded that confidentiality of information concerning children, teachers, parents, or other school staff is expected.

Volunteer Orientation: Parents who volunteer on a regular basis must have TB test results on file at the district office. This policy provides protection to all students. Please call the district office at 661-269-0750 to make an appointment.

- **Classroom Volunteers:** Many teachers encourage parents to volunteer in the classroom. Parents may help with materials preparation, clerical tasks, producing class newsletters, and tutoring students. Many parents volunteer on a weekly basis. Volunteers must work under the direct visual supervision of the teacher at all times.
- **Career Presentations:** Many parents volunteer to give classroom presentations to teach students about their chosen career. They bring in equipment and materials used in their job and tell children how they use math, reading, writing, science, and technology daily in their careers. Contact your child's teacher for more information.
- **Special Talents and Resources:** Parents are encouraged to share their special talents. Some parents offer classroom presentations on art, music, science, or information about their culture or language. Contact your child's teacher or the principal.
- **Work at Home Volunteers:** Parents who are unable to be at school during the day often volunteer to do projects for the classroom such as materials preparation at home. Contact your child's teacher or principal.
- **Library Volunteers:** Volunteers can provide valuable assistance in the library mending books, shelving returned books, and helping to set up displays. Contact the principal.

All volunteers are reminded that confidentiality of information concerning children, teachers, parents, or other school staff is expected.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The principal is responsible for management of all instructional programs, counseling services, school safety and discipline, student activities, personnel, school budget, and facilities. The principal is also able to assist students and parents with any school-related issues. The principal also assists students and parents to ensure that all appropriate athletic clearance and school district paperwork is properly prepared and on file before students participate in athletics or student activities.

SECRETARY AND OFFICE CLERK - Our office staff works with students to clear absences and tardies, and coordinates with teachers, administration and parents to secure classwork and homework for students on short term independent study. They also manage all aspects of formal student records, including enrollment, transcripts, and cum files.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR – Our counselors’ primary goal is to help students develop and enhance their academic, social, career, and personal strengths in order to become responsible and productive citizens. Students will meet with the counseling department at least once a year with the purpose of assessing their academic progress to date and plan for the progression of courses for the following school year. Throughout the year, the counseling department offers a variety of programs and workshops. Counselors are available to meet with both students and parents if an individual problem or concern arises.

PSYCHOLOGIST - The services of the district psychologist are available to students in need of psychological and educational support services. Students with learning challenges or other psychological concerns can contact the School Counselor or Principal to schedule an appointment to meet with a school psychologist for assistance. The school psychologist also assists the Special Education Department through participation in IEP meetings, assessments and acts as a liaison for district and county assistance programs.

BILINGUAL AIDE – The Bilingual aide works with parents and students whose home language is a language other than English.. The Aide secures instructional resources and community agency information that can assist nonnative English speaking students and their families through the educational process.

LIBRARY

Our school library is stocked with recreational reading books as well as books to help students with school assignments. The teacher is available to assist students with finding and checking out books when visiting as a class.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL - When a parent has a concern or question about a student’s progress after viewing course marks on the Aeries Parent Portal and/or receiving a progress report or report card, they should contact the teacher first. Approximately 95% of student/teacher problems can be remedied with parents/guardians and the teacher working together to help students meet course requirements. If there is a problem that is not resolved satisfactorily through this line of communication, the School Counselor may be contacted to help facilitate communication. If a problem still remains unresolved, a meeting with the site administration is available to all parents. Finally, parents that wish to seek resolution beyond site administration may seek the Director of Students’ Services at the District Office.

Please be aware that teachers are not available for phone calls during class time, but you may leave a message for a return phone call within 24 hours. Email typically serves as the most expedient and effective means of communication with teachers. Teacher emails are found on the Administration and Staff page of this handbook as well as the school website.

If you have a concern or need information, please contact the person with responsibility in the area of your concern. Please use the guidelines below to identify the person to contact:

Contact the teacher if you have questions about:

- Your child’s progress
- Your child’s social/emotional adjustment to school
- Problems with homework
- Classroom instruction
- Classroom discipline
- Volunteering in the classroom

Contact the Principal if you have questions about:

- General instructional program
- General operation of the school

- School-wide activities
- School safety issues
- School discipline policies
- Special program placement
- Requests for assessment or special services
- Your child's school records
- Classroom placement information
- Discipline problems at the bus stop or on the way to/from school
- On-campus problems

Contact the Transportation department (269-5802) if you have questions about:

- Bus stop concerns
- Bus schedule questions
- Bus discipline problems
- Bus passes and fees

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The school district has established procedures to address allegations of unlawful discrimination and complaints alleging violation of state or federal laws governing educational programs. You may contact the District Office at 269-0750 to obtain a copy of the district's complaint procedures.

CIVILITY POLICY

AADUSD's Board Policy 1313 states "promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among district employees, parents, and the public." The policy further states that if any individual disrupts or threatens to disrupt school or office operations, the person will be directed to leave the school or school district property. A member of the public who uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting or demeaning manner will be calmly admonished to communicate civilly. If corrective action is not taken by the abusing party, the district employee will verbally notify the abusing party that the meeting or telephone conference is terminated and if the meeting is on district premises, the offending person will be directed to leave promptly.

California Education Code 44811 and Penal Codes 415.5 and 626.7 make it a misdemeanor if the person re-enters any district facility within 30 days after being directed to leave or within seven days if the person is a parent/guardian of a student attending that school. Law enforcement may be notified if the individual refuses to leave upon request or returns before the applicable period of time.

A copy of the complete Civility Policy is available from the school or district office.

"WE TIP"/Incident Statement

The "WE TIP because we care about our school" program was developed by the HDS students to accomplish two important things:

1. To assure the rights of all students to have a safe environment in which to learn and socialize.
2. To keep our campus clean, attractive, and in good condition.

The "WE TIP"/Incident Statement forms are available in all classrooms and in the school office. Any student who actually witnesses a student mistreating another student on the school campus may fill out a form and turn it in to a teacher or to the school office. All Incident Statement information will be investigated confidentially by the Principal. Any student found submitting false information will receive appropriate consequences.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

DRESS CODE

Dressing appropriately for school enhances the success of both the individual student and the school. Although the primary responsibility for the appearance of students rests with the parents and the students themselves, the school has an obligation to require dress that does not disrupt educational and campus programs and complies with sound health and safety practices. Dress code compliance is monitored throughout the day by all staff members. If a student wears inappropriate clothing to school, they will contact their parents to bring a change of clothing and/or PE clothes will be worn. Students may have their original clothing back when the borrowed clothing is returned clean to the office.

Clothing must not be distracting to the educational environment. High Desert Administration reserves the right to determine whether an item of clothing is INAPPROPRIATE or overly DISTRACTING for school.

- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be mid-thigh or thumbs when arms are extended at the side
- Leggings and yoga pants may be worn as long as undergarments cannot be seen through them. Tights are not to be worn as pants, but may be worn under skirts or shorts. Absolutely no fishnets.
- Pants must be worn at the waist and may not be excessively baggy or sagging.
- Midriffs, and backs must be completely covered. At least 3 inches of the shoulders must be covered at all times.
- Clothing must conceal all undergarments. No halter tops, spaghetti straps, off the shoulder, low-cut or see-through tops are permitted.
- Clothing must not have holes or tears above the thumbs when arms are extended at the side.
- No backless shoes, open toed shoes or flip flops are permitted on campus.
- Hats, jacket/sweater hoods and sunglasses may be worn **outside only**.
- No belt buckles with inappropriate or gang-related symbols are permitted.
- Heavy chains, wallet chains, jewelry with spikes, or other dangerous items are not permitted on campus.
- Pajamas, sleepwear/blankets, and slippers are not to be worn to school.
- Students are not to write on their own or others' bodies, clothing or backpacks.
- Clothing and jewelry shall not have writing, pictures or any other insignia that are crude, vulgar, violent, profane, sexually suggestive, representative of death, or that advocate racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice, that promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons, anti-social or gang activity.
- The principal has the prerogative not to allow items of clothing or accessories based on safety or considerations of appropriateness for school.

Students who fail to comply with the dress code policy will be required to call home and have appropriate attire brought to school or may be required to change into their P.E. uniform. Repeat dress code violations will result in disciplinary consequences.

Campus Dress Code Policy is subject to change at any time, especially in an effort to keep up with contemporary changing fashions.

SCHOOL MEALS - BREAK AND LUNCH

Students may bring their own lunches or purchase a lunch for approximately \$3.00 through food services. Free or reduced price meals are available for eligible students whose parents submit a School Meal Program application. Eligibility is determined annually and is confidential information. Monthly meal menus are available on our school website. High Desert is a closed campus, so students may not go home for lunch.

MEDAL OF HONOR

High Desert and the Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District promote the Medal of Honor Program. All High Desert students are encouraged to make ethical choices based on the Medal of Honor Program and the Core Values of the District. The core values of the program are: Commitment, Sacrifice, Citizenship, Patriotism, Courage and Integrity.

CLEAN CAMPUS

Each individual on campus is expected to throw away his/her own trash in a trash can. Please be responsible and do your part to keep High Desert beautiful by not littering!

SCHOLARLY BEHAVIORS

High Desert is a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) school. We work with staff, families, and students to create a positive environment for students in which behavioral expectations are explicitly taught. We believe in fostering positivity, personal

growth, and self-reflection in working with students to help them understand how to be respectful citizens in society. Students are rewarded for being outstanding citizens (Medal of Honor Character Awards), for working diligently in their academics (Scholar Awards), and for attending classes daily and on time (Perfect Attendance Award). We are extremely proud of the dedication and character exhibited by our students daily.

Every staff member teaches “Scholarly Behaviors” in conjunction with their management system and the Medal of Honor Character Traits. Students need to be explicitly taught how to be learners and scholars. Students are expected to exhibit good character at all times. See Appendix for complete list of Scholarly Behaviors.

SCHOOL RULES

Students are taught the school rules in their classrooms. Staff and students follow Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies to model appropriate behavior and discuss ways in which to solve problems.

Following are five basic expectations that we adhere to at High Desert:

1. **Students must be under the direct supervision of a school employee at all times.** Students must be on time and in their seats with required materials when the bell rings. Students must all stay only in approved areas when on campus.
2. **Take pride in the school’s appearance and equipment, be responsible.** Damage or destruction of school or private property is not permitted. Monetary restitution will be required.
3. **Follow the directions of all adults at school the first time, be respectful.** Rudeness, profanity, vulgarity, and obscene gestures will not be tolerated.
4. **Keep themselves and others safe.** Any action, item, or clothing that is unsafe or that disrupts school activities is unacceptable.
5. **Students must have their teacher’s permission to bring any item to school other than school supplies. No gum or candy may be brought to school.** Eating and drinking are not permitted in the classroom.
 - o Bringing **any** weapon, including a pocketknife or any type of drug, to school is grounds for **suspension and expulsion** under California Education Code.
6. **Show respect and appreciation for all.** We respect individuality, provide everyone with equal opportunities, and create opportunities for growth, challenge, and improvement.
 - o Harassment of other students, including teasing and bullying are not allowed. Sexual harassment and harassment of a student who is a witness may be grounds for suspension under California Education Code.

Discipline consequences range from warnings, break/lunch detention, after-school detention, class suspensions, loss of privileges, litter pick-up, in and out of school suspensions, and expulsion.

HALL PASSES

Students are required to carry a pass whenever they are out of the classroom during class time.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a lost and found area in the main office. If a student has lost an item, students are encouraged to talk to the secretaries in the main office. The lost and found gets emptied at the end of each semester. Any items not claimed by the specified date are donated to charity. **High Desert is not responsible for lost items.**

RESTROOMS

Restrooms are to be used only for their intended purpose. Loitering or engaging in horseplay or other inappropriate behavior in and around the restrooms is not allowed, and can result in disciplinary action.

TEXTBOOKS, LIBRARY BOOKS, AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

Textbooks cost an average of \$350 per pupil in grades six through eight. Textbooks, library books, and school materials are on loan to students by the taxpayers. Report cards must be held until all books and materials have been returned or paid for. **Students have the following responsibilities:**

- Inspect each textbook within 24 hour of receiving it and report any prior damage to the school office.
- Cover each textbook within 24 hours of receiving it.
- Keep books clean and in a safe place.
- Turn in textbooks and library books on time.
- Pay for damaged or lost books and materials.

PERSONAL PROPERTY THEFTS

Students are encouraged to keep personal belongings and textbooks at home. During physical education class time, students must lock valuables in the P.E. lockers. Backpacks should never be left unattended, especially at brunch and lunch. **The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

SAFE SCHOOL

Upon arrival at school, students are to enter campus and may not loiter outside the gates. Students may not leave campus during school hours without written permission obtained in the Office. Scooters and skateboards are prohibited on campus at all times. There is no on-campus supervision provided before 7:20 a.m. or after 2:15 p.m. On minimum days, students are dismissed at 11:55 AM, and supervision ends at 12:05 p.m.

The behavior of students shall promote a safe environment at all times. Actions, gestures, and language (both spoken and written) shall not be disruptive to a safe and orderly school. Anti-social activities or displays (buttons, backpacks, etc.) of students at school, or to and from school, such as hazing, fighting, or violent horseplay are not permitted. Students who are angry with, or fearful of, another student are directed to report to the office to seek mediation for their problems. Conflicts shall be resolved in a non-physical manner under the supervision of an adult and away from other students. Do not attempt to settle emotionally charged differences on campus.

If you are aware of a weapon, drugs, or other items of concern on campus, please report them to the office immediately.

Approaching another student on campus for the purpose of obtaining goods or money is prohibited and illegal. "Tagging" or graffiti of any sort on personal or school property is prohibited and illegal.

Items such as toys, games, playing cards, skates, skateboards, liquid correction fluid, permanent markers, balloons, flowers, squirt guns, aerosol sprays, laser pens or pointers, pointed scissors, cigarette lighters, matches, sunflower seeds, or stuffed animals, etc. are not permitted on campus. Gambling of any sort, including coins or cards, is prohibited. Any flowers or balloons delivered to school will remain in the office until the end of the day. Students should avoid bringing iPods, Game Boys, or other electronic devices to school as they are not allowed to be used on campus at any time. If they do, the items must not be visible or turned on while the student is on campus, or they will be subject to confiscation. Visible headphones also will be confiscated. School personnel are not responsible for loss or theft of such items and parents may be asked to retrieve these items from the office.

BULLYING

(SEE APPENDIX E and F)

SALES ON CAMPUS

Students are not allowed to sell or trade anything on campus without proper authorization. Unauthorized items being sold or traded will be confiscated. Appropriate discipline will be administered.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Acton-Agua Dulce Unified School District will maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and is prohibited by both federal and state law. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by a member of the school staff to a student, or to another staff member, or when made by a student to another student or staff member, or when submission to the conduct is a condition of receiving benefits in employment or academic status, or is sufficiently severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment. Any student who feels that he/she is being harassed should immediately contact a teacher, or administrator to discuss the complaint. Parents/Guardians, students, teachers, and staff can do a great deal to eliminate sexual harassment by behaving in ways that model and encourage respect for all individuals.

SMOKING, NARCOTICS, ALCOHOL

Smoking and/or possession of tobacco are not permitted on or near the school grounds or at school activities (on or off campus). Penalties may include suspension, and/or a citation from law enforcement.

Use or possession of narcotics, narcotics paraphernalia, or alcohol on school premises or on the way to or from school; or appearing at school or school functions under the influence of narcotics or alcohol will result in an immediate suspension from school and as well as the possible arrest and/or citation from the Sheriff.

SUPPLIES

Students should bring appropriate school supplies including paper, pen, and pencil to school each day, so that they do not disrupt class by borrowing from others. Parents/Guardians who have a financial problem purchasing these supplies should call the teacher and/or Principal. Students may speak with their teachers or Principal at any time if they need help with supplies.

TRANSPORTATION

- If your child is walking, PLEASE discuss safe routes to school and pedestrian traffic laws. We encourage you to walk the route with your child.
- Please discourage your child from visiting the AM/PM gas station unsupervised before or after school.

- Students must wear bike helmets when riding their bikes and skateboards. Because of the busy traffic in front of the school, bicycles, scooters, and skateboards must be walked onto the school campus. Bicycles must be parked in the bicycle rack located in front of the school office, and locked. Scooters and skateboards are to be left in the school office. Students must walk their bikes, scooters, and skateboards off campus. Failure to follow these rules will result in the loss of the privilege to ride a bike, scooter, or skateboard to school.
- BUS RULES - All school rules apply to the time students are waiting for or are on the school bus.

STUDENTS' DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

1. Students are made aware of the school and classroom rules.
2. When a student uses inappropriate behavior in the classroom or on campus and has been reprimanded, the parent is contacted by e-mail or by phone.
3. Continued misbehavior after two parent contacts may result in a referral to the office where the student will receive consequences.
4. An immediate office referral will be made anytime a student's behavior involves severe behavior including severe disruption of the classroom, defiance or disrespect, profanity, theft, injury or endangerment to himself/herself or others.
5. Office referrals are recorded on the student's discipline record.
6. Severe behavior or behavior which has not changed after other consequences have been used may result in suspension or expulsion from school. Students who have discipline problems, such as repeated office referrals, detentions, or suspensions will be placed on the Loss of Privilege (LOP) list by the Principal. Students on this list will be excluded from dances and other activities.

DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES

School staff must hold students to a strict account for their conduct on the way to and from school, in the classroom, and on campus during brunch and lunch. (Ed. Code 55807) Teachers, principal, and the transportation department all use a progressive discipline system. The teacher, principal or principal's designee may issue consequences including the following:

1. Time out in the classroom, or in another classroom
2. Loss of a privilege
3. Copy school rules or behavior expectations.
4. Community service during break or lunch (pick up trash, etc.)
5. Detention during break and lunch for a period of time
6. Detention outside of school hours with prior notification of parent
7. Confiscation of an unauthorized item
8. Suspension from class (Teacher) or school (Principal)
9. Expulsion from school (District Expulsion Panel and Board of Trustees)

CONFISCATED ITEMS

When school staff must take an item away from a student for safety or other reasons, the parent of the child may pick up the item from the classroom teacher or the school office within ten school days. Items will not be held more than a week after the end of the school year. All items not picked up within the designated time period will be discarded.

DETENTION OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

Students may be given detention for violating classroom or school rules or for incomplete assignments. Teachers and the principal have the authority, granted by the California Education Code, to detain a student for up to one hour after school. Parents will be given 24 hour notice of an after school detention. Detention has a priority over any other school activity (basketball practice, etc.).

COMMUNICATION

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Each year students will receive an annual calendar of the dates and events planned for that school year. The calendar is also posted online on our school website. The district and school occasionally send out automated phone messages. Please check our website frequently for up-to-date information.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

HDSTV keeps students and teachers informed of happenings at High Desert. All students should listen carefully to public address or TV announcements to stay informed. Students should ask their teacher for clarification of any announcements they do not understand or have missed.

MESSAGES AND PACKAGES

The office cannot handle requests to deliver items to students. We do not have staff available to deliver messages, money, lunches, P.E. clothes, homework, etc. The student will be responsible to pick up the items from the office during break or lunch. Balloons, flowers, and gifts are not allowed to be delivered to school.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents/Guardians should contact the school when the need arises. Parents/Guardians may email teachers through the website. If a parent calls to speak with a teacher during the school day, the office will leave the teacher a message to return the call. If a parent wants a conference with a teacher or principal, he/she should call for an appointment. Teachers' schedules do not allow for drop-in conferences.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

The more a student is involved in school, the more successful the student is likely to be academically and socially/emotionally. High Desert offers many opportunities for students; some of the student activities available are listed below:

- **Athletics** – Parents may register students to participate in a variety of sports during the school year.
- **Handbells and Ballroom Dancing** - Students are able to sign up to participate in Handbells, starting in Grade 6, and Ballroom Dancing, for grades 5 - 8.
- **Spirit Days** - All students are encouraged to dress for "Spirit Days" each month. This activity is planned by the Student Council.
- **Spelling Bee** - Students in grade 5 and 6 will compete within their classrooms to participate in the school-wide Spelling Bee. The spelling bee is held during the evening, usually in January. The winner may participate in the County Spelling Bee.
- **Student Council** - This is a student leadership body. The Student Council meets during the school day under the direction of the school's ASB Advisor. Each classroom in grades 5 - 6 has a representative on the council. School-wide Student Council elections are held in the first month of school. Students in grades 7 and 8 have the opportunity to participate through eligibility for the elective class, ASB/Yearbook.
- **Talent Show** - Each Spring, try-outs are held for the school talent show. The participants perform in the evening. Tickets are available for sale the week of the performance and at the door if space allows.
- **Before/After School Academic Assistance** – students that meet the criteria may participate in before and after school academic classes to boost their learning in reading and math when offered.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

HARMONIC BRONZE HANDBELLS

A handbell choir or ensemble that rings recognizable music with melodies and harmony. Bells are arranged chromatically on foam-covered tables; these tables protect the bronze surface of the bell, as well as keep the bells from rolling when placed on their sides. A handbell ensemble acts as one instrument, with each musician responsible for particular notes, sounding his or her assigned bells whenever those notes appear in the music. The Harmonic Bronze Handbell Ensemble is a program after school focusing on learning music, working together as group, and teaching a love of music.

BALLROOM DANCING

Students in grades 6 - 8 are eligible to participate in the Ballroom Dancing Program. Participants must maintain academic eligibility and citizenship standards. The culmination of the program includes a Ballroom Dancing Competition where HDS students compete against other schools in the Antelope Valley in various dances.

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

Science Olympiad is an American team competition in which students compete in 23 events pertaining to various scientific disciplines, including earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, and engineering. Over 7,800 middle school and high school teams from 50 U.S. states compete each year. High Desert School has two teams – a 5th grade team competing at the elementary school level and a 6/7/8th grade team competing at the middle school level.

ATHLETICS

HDS participates in the Silver League, a league of small middle schools which include Challenger Middle School, California City Middle School, Mojave Middle School, SOAR Prep. Academy, and Knight Prep. Academy. Students in 5th through 8th grades will have the opportunity to play Volleyball, Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track against other small middle schools within the Silver League. Each season is approximately 5 weeks long culminating in a championship tournament. **Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 for the most recent and current reporting period to be eligible to participate in HDS Athletics.**

DANCES AND ASSEMBLIES

The ASB plans dances for High Desert students. There are three school dances during the year. All school rules apply to these dances and only High Desert students meeting academic and behavioral standards are allowed to attend. **Student ID cards and a ticket are required to enter the dance.** Dances are held in the MPR beginning at 5:30 p.m. and ending at 8:00 p.m.

Parents/Guardians will be called to come and pick up students unable to follow school rules and appropriate dance behavior. Parents are required to personally pick up their child in the MPR at the conclusion of the dance. Students are only permitted to leave the MPR with an adult. Students not picked up by their parents by 8:30 p.m. will be turned over to the local sheriff. Our Booster Club provides chaperones and ASB provides decorations, refreshments, and music for all the dances.

Students attending assemblies are to behave in a courteous manner and follow directions of teachers and others in charge. Poor manners and inappropriate behavior will result in removal from the assembly and possible elimination from subsequent activities.

SEMESTER AWARDS CRITERIA

- Principal's Scholar – GPA of 4.0 or above
- Scholar Criteria – GPA of 3.75 – 3.99
- Commended Scholar Criteria – GPA of 3.5 – 3.74
- Perfect Attendance - Given monthly in homeroom and at Semester assemblies
- STAR Reading and STAR Math Growth Awards – Growth of greater than 1 Percentile Rank or Grade Equivalent for months in school

ELIGIBILITY FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Special instructional and extra-curricular activities are an important part of High Desert School's campus life. However, in order to participate in these activities students must first fulfill their academic and citizenship responsibilities. Consequently there are eligibility requirements for participating in certain campus activities. For some campus activities, like Career Day, **all students may be invited to participate** because the activity directly supports academic or college preparatory instruction.

Instructional activities may be defined as any activity that enhances the learning of instructional objectives and that may take place inside or outside the instructional class hours. Extra-curricular activities are those activities that do not take precedence in importance over learning instructional objectives, but do enhance campus life for students and staff. These activities may occur inside or outside

the instructional class hours. Extracurricular activities are subject to eligibility criteria.

Extracurricular Activities Criteria:

Academic Fieldtrips - All Students Eligible

Citizenship Fieldtrips - No N's or U's in Citizenship for most recent grading period

8th Grade Magic Mountain - All students who are eligible for promotion

Assemblies - All Students Eligible

Ballroom Dancing - Passing grades (C or higher) in all classes and no N's or U's in citizenship for most recent grading period

It is the intent of the High Desert School staff, through these eligibility requirements to help provide students with a fair and consistent policy. By this means, we hope to teach a set of standards for academic performance and citizenship, not the least of which is that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand.

HDS ATHLETICS

ATHLETICS

HDS participates in the Silver League, a league of small middle schools which include Challenger Middle School, California City Middle School, Mojave Middle School, SOAR Prep. Academy, and Knight Prep. Academy. Students in 5th through 8th grades will have the opportunity to play Volleyball, Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track against other small middle schools within the Silver League. Each season is approximately 5 weeks long culminating in a championship tournament. **Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 for the most recent and current reporting period to be eligible to participate in HDS Athletics.**

Team Selection Process

All students must complete the online athletics clearance prior to tryouts. <http://athleticclearance.com> Tryouts for each sport will be held approximately 6-8 weeks prior to the first game. Teams will be selected by the coach(es) and the final roster will be checked for academic eligibility by the Principal and/or Athletic Director prior to posting. Practices will begin 4-6 weeks prior to the first game.

Timeline for Silver League Games

Volleyball: Beginning of September – Mid October

CC: Late September – 1st week of November

Soccer: February – Mid March

Basketball: Mid March – April

Track & Field: April - May

Athletic Eligibility Requirements

In order to emphasize the importance of academic achievement, the following constitutes the minimum requirements for student participation in athletics:

- A grade point average of 2.0 for the most recent and current reporting period
- Full attendance on the school day of a competition
- A mandatory physical and proper athletic clearance online prior to the first tryout (Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball) or practice (Cross Country, Track & Field)

Eligibility will be determined each reporting period. Should an individual fall below the requirements, the student will not be eligible for participation in athletics during the next nine-week grading period. Academic eligibility will be updated at each reporting period while the sport is in season. A mandatory physical is required each year along with proper athletic forms. The school through administration or head coaches will notify students of their eligibility.

Sport	Reporting Period Used for Eligibility
Volleyball	Final Sem. 2 grades from previous year
Cross Country	Final Sem. 2 grades from previous year
Soccer	Qtr. 2 progress report from current year
Basketball	Final Sem. 1 grades from current year
Track & Field	Qtr. 3 progress report from current year

Note for incoming 5th graders: Initial eligibility for Volleyball and/or Cross Country will be waived until the 1st quarter grading period.

Uniforms and Equipment

When student athletes are issued uniforms and equipment belonging to High Desert School, all equipment and uniforms must be returned to the head coach or school office within seven (7) days of the last game. A student will be charged for the replacement cost of uniforms if they are not returned.

Illegal and Performance Enhancing Substances

Any athlete found to be in possession of or involved in the use of alcohol, tobacco, smokeless tobacco, vape, or narcotics during the season or while attending school or at any HDS sponsored activity, will be suspended from athletics for a period of time determined by the HDS Administration. Performance enhancing substances are strictly prohibited. The Board recognizes that the use of

androgenic/anabolic steroids (“steroids”) and other performance-enhancing supplements presents a serious health and safety hazard. As part of the District's drug prevention and intervention efforts, the Superintendent or designee and staff shall make every effort to ensure that students do not begin or continue the use of steroids or other performance-enhancing supplements. Students in grades 7-12 shall receive a lesson on the effects of steroids as part of their health, physical education or drug education program.

Students participating in interscholastic athletics are prohibited from using steroids or any other performance-enhancing supplements. Coaches shall educate students about the District's prohibition and the dangers of using these substances. Before participating in interscholastic athletics, a student athlete and his/her parent/guardian shall sign an agreement that the student athlete shall not use steroids, unless the student has a written prescription from a fully licensed physician, as recognized by the American Medical Association, to treat a medical condition. A student athlete who is found to have violated the agreement or this policy shall be restricted from participating in athletics and shall be subject to disciplinary procedures including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion in accordance with law, board policies and administrative regulations.

Team Transportation

All team members and student managers are required to ride their parents to events. All appropriate District required paperwork, must be provided to the Athletic Director/Principal no less than three (3) days before the scheduled athletic events for someone other than the parent to provide transportation.

Additional Team Member Costs

Other costs may be incurred for personal items required for each sport. The level of this expense primarily depends on the market price and quality of items. Every effort is made to keep the expense to a minimum. Student athletes are expected to help raise funds to defer the cost of additional items and to help build their individual team program.

CIF Code of Ethics

Students must sign the CIF Code of Ethics. Athletics is an integral part of the school's total educational program. All school activities, curricular and extracurricular, in the classroom and on the playing field, must be congruent with the school's stated goals and objectives established for the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of its students. It is within this context that the following Code of Ethics is presented.

As an athlete, I understand that it is my responsibility to:

1. Place academic achievement as the highest priority.
2. Show respect for teammates, opponents, officials and coaches.
3. Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials.
4. Exhibit fair play, sportsmanship and proper conduct on and off the playing field.
5. Maintain a high level of safety awareness.
6. Refrain from the use of profanity, vulgarity and other offensive language and gestures.
7. Adhere to the established rules and standards of the game to be played.
8. Respect all equipment and use it safely and appropriately.
9. Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal and non-prescriptive drugs, anabolic steroids or any substance to increase physical development or performance that is not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, Surgeon General of the United States or American Medical Association.
10. Know and follow all state, section and school athletic rules and regulations as they pertain to eligibility and sports participation.
11. Win with character, lose with dignity.

Insurance

A prospective athlete must have parental consent, a physical examination, and specific insurance coverage in order to participate in tryouts. All student athletes must be cleared before being allowed to try out.

California law prescribes that students participating in interscholastic sports must carry a minimum of \$1,500 accident/health insurance. Supplying and verifying coverage is a parental responsibility, not a school responsibility. Before you may participate in a HDS sport activity, your parents will need to examine (or have your insurance agent examine with you) your insurance policies and certify on the Parental Consent and Athletic Eligibility Card the type of policy, the company's registered number of the policy, if any, and the limits of coverage. This certification process should be started well in advance of the first day of tryouts.

If you do not already have the necessary coverage under your parent's insurance, voluntary minimum insurance may be purchased through a variety of vendors. The school provides information in the Main Office regarding student insurance policies at no profit to the school. This policy covers approximately 80% of medical expenses. The state no longer requires a student to have life insurance before participating in school athletics. Student insurance will offer an optional life insurance policy for those who wish to purchase life insurance. The Parental Consent and Athletic Eligibility Card is available in the Main Office. With parent signature, the card

indicates certification of the required insurance coverage and approval of a student's participation. It must be filed in the School Office before students begin tryouts or practice.

Conflicts With Other School Events

Athletes may request to miss a practice or game in order to participate in another academic or extra-curricular school activity such as college nights, various school activities or performances. Athletes must recognize that missed practices or games may result in reduced playing time in future contests.

Questions?

Please call the school office (661-269-0310) and we will be happy to help you locate the information you need.



HIGH DESERT SCHOOL

SIGNATURE PAGE

Directions: Student and parent/guardian please read the following statements and the attached *High Desert School Student/Parent Handbook for 2021-2022*. Please sign and date this Signature Page and return it to your homeroom class.

STUDENT

I received the *High Desert School Student/Parent Handbook for 2021-2022*.

I have read and I understand the contents of this handbook.

I understand my responsibilities as a student enrolled and attending High Desert School.

I accept the responsibility to conduct myself in an appropriate, educationally productive and studious manner.

I understand that if I have any questions concerning the contents of my handbook, or anything else associated with my education, I will ask a school official for clarification.

I have presented this handbook to my parent/guardian for review.

PRINT STUDENT NAME: _____ DATE: _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN

I have read the High Desert School Student Handbook for 2021-2022 and I understand the contents of this handbook.

I understand that my son/daughter attending High Desert School is responsible for complying with the policies, procedures, rules and responsibilities stated in *High Desert School Student/Parent Handbook for 2021-2022*.

PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME: _____ DATE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

Appendix A. CCSS Anchor Standards

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

The K-12 Common Core standards define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING	LANGUAGE
Key Ideas and Details	Text Types and Purposes**	Comprehension and Collaboration	Conventions of Standard English
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.	1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.	Knowledge of Language
Craft and Structure	Production and Distribution of Writing	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.	4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.	6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Research to Build and Present Knowledge		6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words ^a .	7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.		
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.	8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.		
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.		
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Range of Writing		
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.		

^aPlease see "Research to Build and Present Knowledge" in Writing and "Comprehension and Collaboration" in Speaking and Listening for additional standards relevant to gathering, assessing, and applying information from print and digital sources.

^{**}These broad types of writing include many subgenres. See Appendix A for definitions of key writing types (found at corestandards.org).

Appendix B. Homework Policy

Homework is the time students spend outside the classroom on assigned activities to practice, reinforce, or apply acquired skills and knowledge.

Homework Philosophy

The purpose of homework is to provide time for each student to review essential skills and information taught during class time. Homework also teaches students important study habits including organization, time management, and practice. The district has stated guidelines for the amount of time students at each grade level should spend on homework. The times given below are for the average student. Some students may need more than the allotted time to complete assignments and others a bit less.

Homework presents an opportunity for students to: A) prepare for new topics, B) practice skills, C) elaborate on introduced material, and D) show progress towards mastering Common Core State Standards. Homework affords the teacher an opportunity to determine if students have a grasp for the subject being taught; it affords the students an opportunity to test their understanding of the material taught.

AADUSD encourages the assignment of homework and expects the work to be done by the students and used by the teachers as a part of the evaluation of students' academic progress and wishes parents to be aware of this philosophy along with the following guidelines and procedures.

Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7-Grade 8
40 - 50 minutes total	60 – 75 minutes total	75 – 90 minutes total

Teachers work together to ensure homework assignments do not surpass the suggested grade level time frame.

Responsibilities

Students will:

- accurately record homework assignments including instructions
- ask questions when necessary to clarify assignments
- plan time for completing assignments at intended depth
- complete required homework each night (additional time with honors classes)
- turn in neat, accurate, and meaningful products on time
- request and complete homework assigned while absent

Parents/Guardians will:

- provide a suitable place for study: well lit, free from distractions, adequately supplied
- actively help cultivate effective academic routines and study habits
- teach time management skills, especially for long term assignments
- demonstrate a genuine interest in homework content
- empower students to seek own solutions to challenging assignments, and avoid providing direct answers when possible
- support students in obtaining make-up work due to absences
- ensure that students have adequate school supplies (pen, pencil, paper, notebook) on a daily basis
- contact teachers by letter, phone, or email when they have a concern regarding student assignments

Teachers will:

- openly and publicly state homework assignments with clear, concise directions
- allow time for student to ask clarifying questions on the nature of assignments
- remain sensitive to the availability of materials and provide alternate options when needed
- ensure that students know the make-up homework policy when absent
- maintain a clear and careful record of all graded homework done by students
- give timely and specific feedback on homework
- monitor and scaffold long-term assignments

Appendix C. Student/Parent/School Compact of Rights and Responsibilities

STUDENTS

Rights

- To remain enrolled in school until removed under due process conditions as specified in the Education Code.
- To have access to school records upon reaching the age of sixteen.
- To be informed of school rules and procedures.

Responsibilities

- To attend class regularly and to be on time.
- To obey school rules and procedures.
- To respect the rights of school personnel and other students.
- To be prepared for class with appropriate materials and work.
- To help maintain a clean and orderly campus.

PARENTS

Rights

- To be informed of district policy and school rules and procedures related to their children.
- To be informed of all facts and school actions related to their children.
- To inspect their child's records with the assistance of a certificated staff member.

Responsibilities

- To visit school periodically and to participate in conferences with teachers, counselors or administrators on the academic and behavioral status of their children.
- To provide supportive action by making sure that children have enough sleep, adequate nutrition and appropriate clothing before coming to school.
- To maintain consistent and adequate control over their children.
- To be familiar with and supportive of district policies and school rules and procedures.
- To make certain their students attend school regularly.
- To model for students appropriate behavior, including working positively with school staff.
- To provide the school with accurate emergency information at all times.

TEACHERS

Rights

- To expect students to behave in a manner that will enhance the learning of other students.
- To have parental support related to academic and social progress of students.
- To expect students to put forth effort and participate in class in order to receive a passing grade.

Responsibilities

- To inform parents through report cards, phone calls, emails and conferences about the academic progress, attendance and behavior of their children.
- To conduct a well-planned and effective instructional program consistent with district, school and departmental curriculum standards.
- To initiate and enforce a set of classroom regulations consistent with school and district policies, rules and procedures.

ADMINISTRATORS

Rights

- To hold pupils to strict accountability for any disorderly conduct during the school day, at school-sponsored events or on their way to and from school.
- To take appropriate action in dealing with students guilty of misconduct.
- To recommend suspension, exemption, exclusion or expulsion as the situation demands.

Responsibilities

- To provide leadership that will establish and promote good teaching and effective learning.
- To establish, publicize and enforce school rules that facilitate effective learning and promote attitudes and habits of good citizenship among students.
- To request assistance in matters concerning serious instructional, behavioral, emotional, health or attendance problems.
- To grant access to pupil records by parent/guardian or others with proper authorization.

Appendix D. Bell Schedule

5th & 6th BELL SCHEDULE

5/6 Regular Schedule		
Time	Period	Min
7:50-7:55	Announcements	5
7:55-9:55	Block 1	120
9:55-10:10	Break	15
10:13-12:22	Block 2	129
12:22-1:02	Lunch	40
1:05-2:05	Block 3	60

5/6 Minimum Day Schedule		
Time	Period	Min
7:50-7:55	Announcements	5
7:55-9:15	Block 1	80
9:15-9:30	Break	15
9:33-10:52	Block 2	79
10:52-11:22	Lunch	30
11:25-11:55	Block 3	30

7th & 8th BELL SCHEDULE

7/8 Regular Schedule		
Time	Period	Min
7:50-7:55	Announcements	5
7:55-8:45	Period 1	50
8:48-9:38	Period 2	50
9:38-9:53	Break	15
9:56-10:47	Period 3	51
10:50-11:42	Period 4	52
11:42-12:22	Lunch	40
12:25-1:15	Period 5	50
1:18-2:05	Period 6	47

7/8 Minimum Day Schedule		
Time	Period	Min
7:50-7:55	Announcements	5
7:55-8:25	Period 1	30
8:28-8:58	Period 2	30
9:01-9:31	Period 3	30
9:31-9:46	Break	15
9:49-10:19	Period 4	30
10:22-10:52	Period 5	30
10:55-11:25	Period 6	30
11:25-11:55	Lunch	30

Note about Update to Bell Schedule: After receiving additional information, HDS will continue to begin school at regular start time of 7:50 for the first semester. We will formally assess the HDS community during the fall semester regarding the proposed changes in start time and block schedule using surveys and community meetings to address questions prior to beginning them in spring semester.

Appendix E. Bullying

If you have a concern, need information, or need to report an incident please contact the school immediately in regards to all aspects of inappropriate behavior, harassment, or bullying.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when a person is picked on over and over again by an individual or group **with more power**, either in terms of physical strength or social standing.

Two of the main reasons people are bullied are because of **appearance and social status**. Bullies pick on the people they think don't fit in, maybe because of how they look, how they act (for example, kids who are shy and withdrawn), their race or religion, or because the bullies think their target may be gay or lesbian.

Parents- Doing Your Part at Home- 5 Smart Strategies to Keep Kids from Becoming Targets

1. **Talk about it.** Talk about bullying with your kids and have other family members share their experiences. If one of your kids opens up about being bullied, praise him or her for being brave enough to discuss it and offer unconditional support. Consult with the school to learn its policies and find out how staff and teachers can address the situation.
2. **Remove the bait.** If it's lunch money or gadgets that the school bully is after, you can help neutralize the situation by encouraging your child to pack a lunch or go to school gadget-free.
3. **Buddy up for safety.** Two or more friends standing at their lockers are less likely to be picked on than a child who is all alone. Remind your child to use the buddy system when on the school bus, in the bathroom, or wherever bullies may lurk.
4. **Keep calm and carry on.** If a bully strikes, a kid's best defense may be to remain calm, ignore hurtful remarks, tell the bully to stop, and simply walk away. Bullies thrive on hurting others. A child who isn't easily ruffled has a better chance of staying off a bully's radar.
5. **Don't try to fight the battle yourself.** Sometimes talking to a bully's parents can be constructive, but it's generally best to do so in a setting where a school official, such as a counselor, can mediate.

Parents- Teach Tolerance

Today, more than ever, kids interact with people of differing ethnicities, religions, and cultures. Classrooms are increasingly diverse, reflecting the communities where families live and work. Success in today's world — and tomorrow's — depends on being able to understand, appreciate, and work with others.

Things parents can do to help kids learn tolerance include:

- Notice your own attitudes. Parents who want to help their kids value diversity can be sensitive to cultural stereotypes they may have learned and make an effort to correct them. Demonstrate an attitude of respect for others.
- Remember that kids are always listening. Be aware of the way you talk about people who are different from yourself. Do not make jokes that perpetuate stereotypes. Although some of these might seem like harmless fun, they can undo attitudes of tolerance and respect.
- Select books, toys, music, art, and videos carefully. Keep in mind the powerful effect the media and pop culture have on shaping attitudes.
- Point out and talk about unfair stereotypes that may be portrayed in media.
- Answer kids' questions about differences honestly and respectfully. This teaches that it is acceptable to notice and discuss differences as long as it is done with respect.
- Acknowledge and respect differences within your own family. Demonstrate acceptance of your children's differing abilities, interests, and styles. Value the uniqueness of each member of your family.
- Remember that tolerance does not mean tolerating unacceptable behavior. It means that everyone deserves to be treated with respect — and should treat others with respect as well.
- Help your children feel good about themselves. Kids who feel badly about themselves often treat others badly. Kids with strong self-esteem value and respect themselves and are more likely to treat others with respect, too. Help your child to feel accepted, respected, and valued.
- Give kids opportunities to work and play with others who are different from them. When choosing a school, day camp, or child-care facility for your child, find one with a diverse population.
- Learn together about holiday and religious celebrations that are not part of your own tradition.
- Honor your family's traditions and teach them to your kids — and to someone outside the family who wants to learn about the diversity *you* have to offer.

When parents encourage a tolerant attitude in their children, talk about their values, and model the behavior they would like to see by treating others well, kids will follow in their footsteps.

Students What Can You Do if Your Feel You are Being Bullied

- **Ignore the bully and walk away.** It's definitely not a coward's response — sometimes it can be harder than losing your temper. Bullies thrive on the reaction they get, and if you walk away or ignore hurtful emails or instant messages, you're telling the bully that you just don't care. Sooner or later the bully will probably get bored with trying to bother you. Walk tall and hold your head high. Using this type of body language sends a message that you're not vulnerable.
- **Hold the anger.** Who doesn't want to get really upset with a bully? But that's exactly the response he or she is trying to get. Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions. If you're in a situation where you have to deal with a bully and you can't walk away with poise, use humor — it can throw the bully off guard. Work out your anger in another way, such as through exercise or writing it down (make sure you tear up any letters or notes you write in anger).
- **Don't get physical.** However you choose to deal with a bully, don't use physical force (like kicking, hitting, or pushing). Not only are you showing your anger, you can never be sure what the bully will do in response. You are more likely to be hurt and get into trouble if you use violence against a bully. You can stand up for yourself in other ways, such as gaining control of the situation by walking away or by being assertive in your actions.

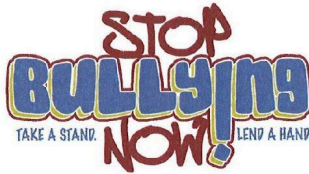
Some adults believe that bullying is part of growing up, that it builds character, and that hitting back is the only way to tackle the problem. That is not the case. Aggressive responses tend to lead to more violence and more bullying for the victims.

- **Practice confidence.** Practice ways to respond to the bully verbally or through your behavior. Practice feeling good about yourself (even if you have to fake it at first).
- **Take charge of your life.** You can't control other people's actions, but you can stay true to yourself. Think about ways to feel your best — and your strongest. Exercise is one way to feel strong and powerful. (It's a great mood lifter, too!) Learn a martial art or take a class like yoga. Another way to gain confidence is to hone your skills in something like chess, art, music, computers, or writing. Joining a class, club, or gym is a great way to make new friends and feel good about yourself. The confidence you gain will help you ignore the mean kids.
- **Talk about it.** It may help to talk to a guidance counselor, teacher, or friend — anyone who can give you the support you need. Talking can be a good outlet for the fears and frustrations that can build when you're being bullied.
- **Find your (true) friends.** If you've been bullied with rumors or gossip, all of these tips (especially ignoring and not reacting) can apply. But take it one step further to help ease feelings of hurt and isolation. Find one or two true friends and confide how the gossip has hurt your feelings. Set the record straight by telling your friends quietly and confidently what's true and not true about you. Hearing a friend say, "I know the rumor's not true. I didn't pay attention to it," can help you realize that most of the time people see gossip for what it is — petty, rude, and immature.

References

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- "5 Ways to Bully-Proof Your Kid." *KidsHealth - the Web's Most Visited Site about Children's Health*. Ed. Arcy Lyness. The Nemours Foundation, 01 Oct. 2011. Web. 01 Sept. 2014.
- "Teaching Your Child Tolerance." *KidsHealth - the Web's Most Visited Site about Children's Health*. Ed. Arcy Lyness. The Nemours Foundation, 01 Mar. 2014. Web. 01 Sept. 2014.

Appendix F. Parents Guide to What Do I Do If My Child Is Being Bullied



What to Do if Your Child is Being Bullied

What is bullying?

Bullying among children is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. A child who is being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying is repeated over time. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting or punching (physical bullying); teasing or name-calling (verbal bullying); intimidation using gestures or social exclusion (nonverbal bullying or emotional bullying); and sending insulting messages by phone or computer e-mail (cyberbullying).

Effects of bullying

Bullying can have serious consequences. Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to

- Be depressed, lonely, anxious;
- Have low self-esteem;
- Be absent from school;
- Feel sick; and
- Think about suicide.

Reporting bullying to parents

Children frequently do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed, ashamed, frightened of the children who are bullying them, or afraid of being seen as a "tattler." If your child tells you about being bullied, it has taken a lot of courage to do so. Your child needs your help to stop the bullying.

What to do if your child is being bullied

1. First, focus on your child. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying.

- Never tell your child to ignore the bullying. What the child may "hear" is that you are going to

ignore it. If the child were able to simply ignore it, he or she likely would not have told you about it. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.

- Don't blame the child who is being bullied. Don't assume that your child did something to provoke the bullying. Don't say, "What did you do to aggravate the other child?"
- Listen carefully to what your child tells you about the bullying. Ask him or her to describe who was involved and how and where each bullying episode happened.
- Learn as much as you can about the bullying tactics used, and when and where the bullying happened. Can your child name other children or adults who may have witnessed the bullying?
- Empathize with your child. Tell him/her that bullying is wrong, not their fault, and that you are glad he or she had the courage to tell you about it. Ask your child what he or she thinks can be done to help. Assure him or her that you will think about what needs to be done and you will let him or her know what you are going to do.
- If you disagree with how your child handled the bullying situation, don't criticize him or her.
- Do not encourage physical retaliation ("Just hit them back") as a solution. Hitting another student is not likely to end the problem, and it could get your child suspended or expelled or escalate the situation.

- Check your emotions. A parent's protective instincts stir strong emotions. Although it is difficult, a parent is wise to step back and consider the next steps carefully.
- 2. Contact your child's teacher or principal.**
- Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying may not stop without the help of adults.
 - Keep your emotions in check. Give factual information about your child's experience of being bullied including who, what, when, where, and how.
 - Emphasize that you want to work with the staff at school to find a solution to stop the bullying, for the sake of your child as well as other students.
 - Do not contact the parents of the student(s) who bullied your child. This is usually a parent's first response, but sometimes it makes matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the child or children who did the bullying.
 - Expect the bullying to stop. Talk regularly with your child and with school staff to see whether the bullying has stopped. If the bullying persists, contact school authorities again.
- 3. Help your child become more resilient to bullying.**
- Help to develop talents or positive attributes of your child. Suggest and facilitate music, athletics, and art activities. Doing so may help your child be more confident among his or her peers.
 - Encourage your child to make contact with friendly students in his or her class. Your child's teacher may be able to suggest students with whom your child can make friends, spend time, or collaborate on work.
 - Help your child meet new friends outside of the school environment. A new environment can provide a "fresh start" for a child who has been bullied repeatedly.
 - Teach your child safety strategies. Teach him or her how to seek help from an adult when feeling threatened by a bully. Talk about whom he or she should go to for help and role-play what he or she should say. Assure your child that reporting bullying is not the same as tattling.
 - Ask yourself if your child is being bullied because of a learning difficulty or a lack of social skills? If your child is hyperactive, impulsive, or overly talkative, the child who bullies may be reacting out of annoyance. This doesn't make the bullying right, but it may help to explain why your child is being bullied. If your child easily irritates people, seek help from a counselor so that your child can better learn the informal social rules of his or her peer group.
 - Home is where the heart is. Make sure your child has a safe and loving home environment where he or she can take shelter, physically and emotionally. Always maintain open lines of communication with your child.

References

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying At school: What we know and what we can do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Snyder, J. M. (February, 2003) *What Parents Can Do About Childhood Bullying*. Schwab Learning Center, (www.schwablearning.org) Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. Retrieved August 12, 2005, from <http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=697>

What Parents Should Know about Bullying (2002). Prevention Child Abuse America Publication. South Deerfield, MA. (1-800-835-2671).

Resource KIT

These and other materials are available online at: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

References

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying At school: What we know and what we can do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

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Appendix G. SOAR Behavior Matrix



High Desert S.O.A.R. Schoolwide Behavior Matrix

	Strive to be YOUR Best!	Own Your Actions	Act Responsibly	Respect All
Restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the bathroom during your break and lunchtime Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honor an individual's privacy Use your time wisely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the space of others Report any issues or problems to an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow "voice limits" Quietly wait for your turn Only one person in a stall at a time Observe personal space
Quad Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk to class quickly Keep your campus clean Follow directions the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate language Properly dispose of your items; trash in the trash can and recycling in the recycle bin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your hands, feet, & objects to yourself Show respect for all plants, trees, and wildlife
MPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say "please" and "thank you" Follow directions the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your place in the lunch line Pick up trash and properly dispose of it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate table manners Observe personal space Show respect for peers and adults
Indoor Areas - Classroom - Administrative Office - MPR Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always give your best effort Bring all required materials Use appropriate language and tone Walk to and from areas quickly Follow directions the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take responsibility for your actions Be honest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept feedback positively Be on time Follow procedures & expectation Sit criss-cross and conserve space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter and exit quietly Be a good role model for others Keep your hands, feet, objects to yourself. Active Listening when someone is speaking
Science Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow all safety rules Know your purpose in the lab Use voice limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report accidents/spills/hazards to the teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up your lab station Be prepared with all lab materials, including having read through the lab Ask for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with assigned partners Allow all lab partners to participate
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sure to check out materials before you leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return all books to their proper location Treat books with care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up your area before you leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow "voice limits"
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay seated at all times Keep materials in your backpack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time Follow all bus safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the bus driver Follow "voice limits"
All Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be kind to others Treat others the way you want to be treated Say "Please" and "Thank you!" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to class promptly when the bell rings Be a problem solver Only bring approved materials to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to intercom announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use appropriate language Think before you speak and act

Appendix H. Alternative Means of Correction

Alternative Means of Correction Chart HIGH DESERT SCHOOL



*Final determination of disciplinary consequences for each individual student at the discretion of the Principal.
In compliance with AB 1729, AB 420, AB 667 & California Education Code 56520 (b)*