

DESERT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

2025/2026 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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



Desert Christian Schools Administrative Team

Josh DeVore
School Administrator

Jamie Baker
Ministry Operations Executive

Caleb Smith
High School Principal

Lisa Costello
Middle School Principal

Shannan Case
Elementary School Principal

Noelle Heflebower
Learning Tree Preschool Director

Hannah Gibson
Home Education Programs Director

Heather Welch
Office Manager/Admissions

Maria Williams
Peach Factory Director

Kathryn Dimmitt
Gym Center Director

Heather Shreves
Business Manager



A Letter to Parents from the Elementary School Principal

Dear Desert Christian Elementary School Families,

Welcome to a new and exciting school year at Desert Christian Elementary School! We are honored to partner with you in the academic, emotional, and spiritual growth of your child. Each year brings new opportunities to learn, grow, and discover more about who God created us to be—and this year is no exception.

Our theme for the 2025–2026 school year is **“Created by God and Made for More,”** based on **Ephesians 2:10**, which reminds us:

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

This handbook will serve as a helpful guide for families—outlining our school policies, procedures, and expectations. It is our prayer that it supports strong communication and a shared understanding between home and school as we partner together in Christ-centered education.

We are so thankful to walk alongside you and your children this year. May we all be reminded that we are not only created by God—we are made for more in Him.

With Joy in Christ,

Shannan Case

Shannan Case
Elementary School Principal

Table of Contents

ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

GENERAL INFORMATION

Our Purpose	1
Elementary Principal	1

CAMPUS INFORMATION

School Hours	1
Arrival and Departure	1
Student Pick-Up	1
Communication	2

CHRISTIAN LIFE

Christian Training	2
Chapel	2

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Main Campus Library	2
Textbooks and Materials	2
Homework	3
Late Daily Homework Policy	3
Student Absent Work Make-Up Procedure	3
Grading and Reporting to Parents	3
Student Recognition	4
Star Reading/ Accelerated Reader	4
Music	4
Physical Education	4
Computer Usage	4
Elementary Curriculum Overview	4

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Parent's Responsibilities	5
Types of Absences	5

STANDARDS FOR DRESS

Dress Standards for Elementary Students	6
Dress-Down Guidelines	8

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

School Rules	9
Steps to Discipline	9
Disciplinary Action	10

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School-Sponsored Activities	11
Yearbook	11
Student Activities	11
Clubs	12

Revised 08/27/2025

GENERAL INFORMATION

OUR PURPOSE

The goal of Desert Christian Elementary School (DCES) is to evangelize, educate, and equip children for godly living by:

- Providing a nurturing environment.
- Teaching from a God-centered worldview.
- Communicating who Jesus is and presenting His plan of salvation.
- Modeling Christian character.
- Teaching children to make the right choices according to God's Word.

DCES is open to students eligible for kindergarten through fifth grade. It is a quality grade school with a Christian emphasis. Qualified staff, carefully chosen curriculum and eager students are blended together for a happy and productive educational opportunity.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Shannan Case is a graduate of Village Christian High School in Sun Valley and is personally acquainted with the value that Christian education provides. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Family Environmental Science from California State University, Northridge, and a Master of Arts Degree in Educational Leadership from Cal Lutheran University. She and her husband, Jerald, have been married for 27 years and have three children. Andrew is a graduate of California State University, Northridge, and a DCHS Class of 2021 alumnus; Lindsey is a sophomore at Cal Lutheran and a 2024 Alumnus, and Benjamin is a 8th-grader at DCMS. They are active at Grace Chapel. The Case family has been proud to be part of the DCS Knights family for many years and looks forward to this new year.

CAMPUS INFORMATION

The elementary campus is located at 44662 15th Street West, Lancaster. The elementary office telephone number is 661-948-5071.

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours for kindergarten through first grade students are 8:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and for second through fifth grade students are 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Elementary office hours are 7:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Because Desert Christian Schools values your child's safety, students are not allowed to use Uber, Lyft, or any other ride service to and from school.

DCS will be utilizing a drive-thru system for morning drop-off. Procedures and traffic patterns are provided by email prior to the start of the school year.

Kindergarten through first-grade students may arrive between 8 and 8:15 a.m. and report directly to their classrooms. Second through fifth-grade students may arrive between 8:15 - 8:30 a.m. Students with siblings in middle school may utilize Peach Factory free of charge beginning at 7:45 a.m., while students in third through fifth grade who have siblings in kindergarten through second may utilize Peach Factory starting at 8:00 a.m. free of charge. Students using early drop-off must be enrolled in Peach Factory.

Students who report to school before drop-off time must report to Peach Factory.

Students may not be on campus other than during school hours unless they are involved with an organized school activity or enrolled in Peach Factory.

STUDENT PICK-UP

Concern for the safety of students results in continual review and refinement of procedures that promote greater safety. Please follow these procedures:

- If a student needs to be picked up prior to school dismissal for appointments, etc., parents must call the school office to request their student be picked up early, and the student will be escorted to the Elementary office for pick-up. Students will be signed out by an adult on their approved pick-up list, who will need to show their valid ID.
- At school dismissal, students are escorted to the designated dismissal areas. Kindergarten through first grade will be dismissed for a walk-up pick-up at 2:30 p.m. in front of the main office. Second-

fifth grade will be dismissed on the south side of the campus at 2:45 p.m.

- Students in kindergarten through fifth grade need to remain with their teacher in their assigned and supervised areas for after-school pick-up.
- Students must not run in or through the parking lot. All students and parents must use crosswalks and be attentive to all cars in the parking area.
- A teacher will escort all elementary students not picked up to the central Peach Factory sign-in area. Those students will be placed in the Peach Factory after-school care program until a parent picks them up. Charges will be incurred for childcare. (See General Section regarding detailed information for before and after school care.)

COMMUNICATION

DCES publishes a weekly update. The weekly update is campus-specific. The monthly Knightly News includes information about upcoming programs and special events on all campuses. Parents are requested to thoroughly read each newsletter.

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

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

Parents may not enter classrooms for discussions before school or during the school day without office permission as this prevents teachers from supervising students.

CHRISTIAN LIFE

CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Spiritual growth is nurtured within each child. Regular times of sharing God's Word and integrating spiritual principles occur throughout the school day. Seeing a child develop a saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a treasured privilege.

During each school year students memorize a passage of scripture that provides a school-wide focus.

Christian outreach projects are an integral part of Christian training in the elementary school. Students are given the opportunity to apply the Christian principles of generosity and evangelism through various projects each year.

CHAPEL

Chapel brings students together once a week for special times of worshiping, sharing, and instruction. Parents are invited to attend. Due to limited space, parents are asked to RSVP by emailing dcesinformation@desertchristian.com

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

MAIN CAMPUS LIBRARY

The main campus library will be open posted hours after school for students and families to check out books. It is the student's responsibility to return library books on time. Students are charged the cost of replacing books that are lost or damaged. Report cards are withheld until books are returned or paid for.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

DCES students will automatically have their books ordered for them. Textbook charges will be added to student accounts and parents will be invoiced for charges in July. Student books will be put in their classroom for the first day of school.

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

The yearly materials fee will be charged to student accounts and is due in August.

HOMEWORK

Homework varies as students move up through the grades.

Summaries for homework and lesson plans are posted for the entire week on FACTS Family Portal and become available the Monday of each week by 3:00 p.m.

A weekly preview is emailed by teachers, listing the next week's spelling words, Bible memory verse, and upcoming tests or reports, and is also available on FACTS.

Parents are encouraged to check with students daily about class activities, assignments, and progress. A quiet reading time for students is encouraged to foster good reading and language skills.

LATE DAILY HOMEWORK POLICY

Daily homework is work intended to be completed at home. Generally, it is given in class one day and due the next. Long-term projects and studying for quizzes and tests are not considered daily homework. The purpose of homework is to practice skills and reinforce knowledge learned in class.

The following policies apply to late homework: In grades kindergarten through fifth, late daily homework is assessed a penalty of 15% for the first or second day, and 50% for the third day.

STUDENT ABSENT WORK MAKE-UP PROCEDURE

Families are responsible for finding out what students have missed due to excused or unexcused absences or tardies via FACTS. Students will be given one day for every day they are absent to make up their work (e.g., all make-up work from Monday must be turned in before class starts on Thursday). If absent on a test or quiz day, students will be responsible for making up tests and quizzes on the day of their return. For a one-day absence, assignments can be found on the Family Portal.

For extended absences (more than one day) due to pre-planned family activities, parents may request assignments by emailing the teacher. Teachers must have one week's notice to prepare the class assignments the student will miss. Assignments will be available for pick up in the main office after 4:00

p.m. on the arranged date. All provided assignments are due the day the student returns to school. In addition, students must be prepared to take all missed tests and quizzes upon their return. Additional assignments by the teacher may be required after the students return.

When students are out of the classroom they are missing valuable instructional time. Therefore, it is the family's responsibility to teach the concepts missed. Assignments that are not turned in upon the student's return to school will result in a zero in the gradebook.

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

GRADING AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

Report cards are prepared quarterly for each grade level and are designed to report information on each child's progress in subject matter as well as personal development. A grade in a course of study is based upon several factors including class participation. Projects, reports, homework assignments, and tests and quizzes.

In the primary grades, students are evaluated based on the completion and mastery of class work, participation, and cooperation in group activities, in-class assessments, and take-home projects. Social and personal development is also monitored.

The following scale is used to determine grades for kindergarten through second-grade students: students receive O (outstanding), S (satisfactory), N (needs improvement), or U (unsatisfactory).

96-100 O

88-95 S+

80-87 S

70-79 S-

60-69 N

0-59 U

In grades third through fifth, letter grades are given for daily assignments, tests, projects, and participation in class discussions.

The following scale is used in determining letter grades for third through fifth grades:

90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

60-69 D

0-59 F

Students in third, fourth, and fifth grade may be placed on academic probation for receiving a grade point average below 2.0 or having two or more F's on a report card or progress report. A student on probation is assigned a specific period of time in which to demonstrate his or her ability to perform satisfactorily at DCES. He/she will also be required to participate in after-school tutoring. Teachers work closely with students and parents to provide direction and support. If the student does not perform satisfactorily during that period, he or she may be asked to withdraw from the school or retention may be necessary.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

In the course of the school year, kindergarten through fifth-grade students are recognized for displaying Christian characteristics such as honesty, respect, obedience, kindness, and love. These recognition opportunities are designed to identify and encourage Christ-like characteristics. Recognition settings vary based on grade level and often take place in chapels, the classroom, banquets, and/or graduations.

Student recognition assemblies are held throughout the year and parents will be notified when their child is being honored.

STAR READING/ACCELERATED READER

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a research-based, research-proven reading program that supports literacy growth and achievement by individualizing student's reading growth. AR is 5% of each student's reading grade for students in first-fifth grade.

MUSIC

Seasonal music programs such as Christmas and Spring Concerts will be held during the school year and will include specific grade levels.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kindergarten through fifth grade participates in physical education weekly activities including recreational games, endurance, and team-building.

COMPUTER USAGE

Students have access to Chromebook carts where Chromebooks can be brought to each classroom to be used in classroom instruction.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

LANGUAGE ARTS:

Bob Jones University's Language arts curriculum completely addresses the five key areas of reading for students in transitional kindergarten through fifth grade. Students will be instructed in phonemic awareness; systematic, explicit phonics; fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students will also be instructed in writing, grammar, handwriting, spelling, inquiry, and higher-order thinking. BJU offers academic rigor (clear explanation of concepts, comprehension questions, skill-building problems, hands-on activities), biblical worldview shaping (textbooks written with the ultimate goal of training each child to think about the world the way God does), technology solutions (comprehensive suite of technology support for teachers and students), compliance with standards (national and state), dependable content (authors are experts in their field), and excellence for each student (textbooks are adaptable for different learning styles and challenges).

MATH:

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade utilize McGraw-Hill My Math. The goal of this curriculum is to "maximize every learning moment." The McGraw-Hill My Math Learning Solution provides an easy and flexible way to diagnose and fill gaps in understanding so that all students can meet grade-level expectations and accelerate beyond: strong, equitable core instruction with actionable data, best-in-class resources and targeted instructional strategies, and personalized, student-driven learning.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

Students in grades kindergarten through fifth receive instruction from the Bob Jones University Press Heritage Studies which makes history and other social studies topics meaningful and relevant by making them active by allowing students to interact with the material they are learning. Students have the opportunity to study the lives of historical figures and learn how they either failed or succeeded in following God's standards. In addition, students are also given opportunities to evaluate concepts, such as cultural values, economic issues, and governmental systems in the light of Scripture. The BJU Press Heritage Studies program is written from a conservative evangelical perspective that avoids extremes and seeks to present history in a balanced manner, challenging students to think for themselves and giving them the skills and knowledge they need to make good decisions in their homes and communities.

BIBLE:

Students kindergarten through fifth grade utilize Summit Ministries *Building on the Rock* Bible Curriculum which helps young students understand relationships with the Creator, each other, and creation.

SCIENCE:

Elementary students in grades first to fifth utilize Bob Jones University Science. This science curriculum equips students to apply science to life by observing and analyzing scientific information and by evaluating scientific models from a biblical worldview.

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Regular, punctual attendance is essential for success as a student. Absences interrupt the smooth and complete process of learning. Students should only be absent when absolutely necessary.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Encourage prompt and regular attendance.
- Schedule doctor appointments and family vacations so that school attendance is affected as little as possible.

- Email the DCES attendance clerk at ESattendance@desertchristian.com, attaching any necessary documentation to report an absence.

TYPES OF ABSENCES

EXCUSED:

- The California Education Code section 48205 cites absences due to illness, quarantine, medical services, and funeral services for immediate family as excused.
- Any projects or long-term assignments due during the absence could be required to be turned in before the absence.
- The student will be given the same number of days that they were absent to complete assignments missed.
- Long-term projects or large written assignments may be due before the student's absence.

UNEXCUSED:

- Many other good reasons for being absent may seem legitimate to parents, but are, nevertheless, classified as unexcused.
- Absences beyond 10 days per semester are unexcused without principal permission and must be approved before the absences occur.

TRUANCIES:

- Truancies are defined as absences from school or class all or part of the day without authorization from parents or school.
- Absences that are not cleared in the attendance office are also considered truant. Parents must contact the school every time their child misses a day.

SUSPENSION:

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

CONSEQUENCE FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES:

- Excessive absences affect academic performance and may result in probation or forfeiting enrollment at DCES.

Students who leave school before the end of the school day for personal reasons (anything other than doctor appointments or a DCS-related activity) will receive an unexcused tardy for that absence. Students must remain in school from 8:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m. for leaving early to be considered a tardy and not an absence.

Students who arrive after the school start time will need to report to the Elementary office.

Students who exceed three days of absence due to an illness must return with a doctor's note in order to excuse the absence. Parents of students exceeding seven days of absence (other than reported illness) or seven tardies (other than doctor's appointments) in each quarter will be contacted by letter requesting improvement in this area. If students exceed this number in subsequent quarters, families will be asked to contact the principal for further discussion of the problem. Three unexcused tardies equal an unexcused absence.

A copy of the Excessive Absent/Tardy Notification Letter is placed in the student's permanent cumulative record. When a student misses more than 20 school days during the year, the student's ability to return for the following quarter or the student's promotion will be reviewed by the administration. Students who are absent during the school day may not attend after-school activities, including clubs and cheer.

Students who are late to school due to doctor, dentist, or orthodontist appointments must verify the doctor's office for that tardy to be excused. All other tardies are unexcused.

STANDARDS FOR DRESS

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

This dress code remains in effect for all school activities and while students are on any DCS campus, including after school and summer.

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

DRESS STANDARDS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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

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

DCES students who are out of the dress code are referred to the office.

- 1st occurrence – Parent is called or emailed. The student returns to class.
- 2nd occurrence – Parent is emailed and given a phone call. The student returns to class.
- 3rd occurrence – Parent is emailed and given a phone call. A student may not return to class until the parent brings clothes to resolve the out-of-dress code issue.

Parents should have a plan in place to bring clothes to their children to resolve any unexpected needs.

It is at the discretion of the administration to evaluate any clothing that may or may not reflect the values of DCS.

SHIRTS:

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

- Polo shirts must be purchased from B's Embroidery and Printing.
- Must not fit tightly.
- May be tucked in or worn out, according to the

desire of the student.

- May wear a plain long-sleeved shirt underneath the DCS logo polo shirts.
- DCES Spirit shirts may be worn on Fridays only.

PANTS:

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

- Must be clean and neat.
- Must be worn at the waist.
- Must fit at the waist without the help of a belt.
- May not have holes.
- May not include leggings, jeggings, or yoga pants worn as pants.
- May not be flannel pants.
- May not be athletic style (including those made of mesh or nylon-type).
- May not be sweatpants or joggers.
- Kindergarten and first-grade students may wear sweatpants or leggings as pants.

SHORTS:

- In kindergarten and first grade, are acceptable in modest length and fit.
- In grades second—fifth: should not be shorter than fingertip length.
- Board shorts, boxer shorts, and spandex/biker shorts are not acceptable.
- Must not be tight fitting.

SKIRTS, SKORTS, AND JUMPERS:

- Must not fit tightly.
- Must not be shorter than fingertip length.
- Must not have slits that extend more than three inches above the knee while standing.
- May display designs of appropriate subject matter.
- May be worn with tights, leggings, and shorts underneath, but must be no shorter than three inches above the top of the knee when standing.
- May be made of denim. Factory frayed denim is acceptable.

- Skorts are permitted.
- Students may wear jumpers with a DCS polo shirt underneath.
- May wear a dress in place of a skirt, but must be covered with a school shirt.

OUTERWEAR, SWEATERS, AND SWEATSHIRTS:

- May include logos or brands whose image reflects a positive moral tone.
- Logos may include designer brand names, names of colleges, and names of professional sports teams.
- The only outerwear to be worn over a DCS shirt is a coat, jacket, sweatshirt, sweater, or vest.

HAIR:

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

- Must be practical. Extreme hairstyles are inappropriate. (Most extreme styles may be avoided by ensuring that length transitions are blended).
- Hair length that varies more than 4 inches from the side to the top will be reviewed for being extreme.
- Must be neat, clean, and simple in style.
- Must be kept trimmed, clean, and combed.
- Boy's hair must be a conservative length.
- Boy's hair must be trimmed above the eyebrows.
- Must not be extreme so as to cause a classroom or playground distraction and should not cause restroom confusion.
- Students who wish to have coloring in their hair other than natural hair colors should limit the coloring to streaking, shading, or smaller areas to avoid extreme hairstyles and distraction. Natural colors include shades of blond, brown, black, or red, as they would normally grow. A good rule of thumb is that at least 75% of the student's hair should be a natural color.
- Must be able to see both eyes at once.

- Examples of unacceptable hairstyles include the following: any style that can be associated with practices contrary to the school's biblical lifestyle standards, or any style that draws attention to it and may cause a distraction in the classroom.

SHOES:

- Must be worn at all times.
- Must be practical and safe.
- Heels may be no higher than 1" (or 1 ½" for a wedge).
- Only sandals with heel straps are acceptable; beach sandals are not.
- Shoes with wheels are not allowed on campus.
- Crocs are acceptable in sport mode.

MAKEUP AND SKIN ART (tattoos, decals, or drawings on skin):

- Makeup on elementary students is not allowed.
- Nail polish on boys is not allowed.
- Artificial nails or press-on nails are not allowed.
- Acquiring any form of skin art (e.g. tattoos, temporary tattoos, decals, drawings) is not allowed.
- Students are not to draw on themselves or each other.

GENERAL:

- Hoods may be worn only when out of doors.
- Jewelry must be kept simple.
- Girl's earrings must not be longer than one inch in length or hoop size.
- Clothes worn under jackets must be in dress code to allow students to respond to temperature changes.
- Bare midriffs are not allowed.
- No part of an undergarment should ever be visible.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OR STYLES ARE NOT ALLOWED:

- Jewelry for body piercing may not be visible except earrings for females. This includes

participation in all school activities.

- Earrings are not permitted for boys.
- Accessories or styles that reflect a negative subculture, such as the "heavy metal," "grunge," "gang," or "gothic" look, are not permitted. This is solely at the discretion of an administrator.
- Inappropriate pictures or words are not permitted on clothing worn to school. Teachers, administrators, and staff must easily understand the meaning of words or emblems that appear on clothing including those in different languages.
- Clothing that bears the name or logo of groups and movements that clearly oppose Christian principles.
- Oversized clothing.
- Military fatigues, trench coats, and surgical wear.
- Items with a skull or bones.
- Items bearing a Confederate flag.
- Clothing worn tight to the body.
- Student lunch boxes, backpacks, notebooks, or clothing must not display unwholesome characters or logos.
- Kuromi, Labubu Dolls, and other dark characters are not permitted on any items including backpacks, sweatshirts, and keychains.

DESS-DOWN GUIDELINES

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

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

- Athletic wear, such as athletic shorts, jerseys, sweatpants, warm-ups, and jogging suits is allowed.
- Logos may include designer brand names, names of colleges, and names of professional athletic teams, and local or family-owned businesses.

DRESS DOWN SHIRTS:

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

DRESS DOWN SHORTS:

- Regular-style walking shorts that are at least as long as mid-thigh are allowed. The spirit of the rule is to be "closer to the knee than not."
- May be athletic shorts

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

SCHOOL RULES

- Follow directions the first time.
- Respect everyone and their property.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself at all times.
- Use wholesome language.
- Think SAFETY: Can it hurt yourself, others, or things? "You are responsible for the choices you make."

STEPS TO DISCIPLINE

DCES is dedicated to the effort of training students to apply Christianity to all aspects of life, believes in the importance of decent and orderly behavior, and feels that students should be taught to live responsibly before God and men.

An important aspect of character development in students is responding respectfully to authority. However, a child's first encounter with authority is at home and DCES firmly believes that the main responsibility for discipline resides with the home.

Therefore, parents will be informed when unusual circumstances needing disciplinary action arise. Parents are expected to respond with consistent follow-through should this occur. Long-lasting

behavioral change most often takes place when parents and the school cooperate. (Proverbs 19:18 and I Timothy 3: 4, 5 & 12).

DCES encourages students to understand the many principles of Christian living found in the Bible. Students are expected to conduct themselves according to biblical standards of honesty, integrity, responsibility, and respect for fellow students.

Listed below are some policies and specific guidelines regarding standards of student conduct **on and off campus** during enrollment at DCES:

- Students need to comply with the school rules quickly, quietly, and completely.
- Students are expected to abstain from all morally degrading literature, music, activities, movies, and internet use.
- Students are to refrain from the use of foul language, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs.
- Honesty, fair play, and sportsmanlike conduct are expected under all conditions. Students are personally responsible for behaving in a way that helps create a positive learning environment that is not degrading to themselves or others.
- Cheating, lying, or stealing will not be tolerated. Students are not only expected to adhere to this policy but also to promote and encourage their peers to follow it.
- Students are expected to cooperate with administration and faculty in providing truthful information regarding the violation of school rules or proper behavior.
- Respect must be shown for the rights of others and their property.
- Students' speech must be clean, wholesome, and respectful.
- Students are to follow a "hands off" policy: no fighting, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, wrestling, pinching, play fighting, spitting, biting, etc., is allowed.
- Students may not harass or abuse others verbally or physically, or threaten to harm another.

- Defacing or abusing any school property (walls, restrooms, books, desks, etc.) is grounds for dismissal and parents will be held financially responsible.
- Students may not bring toys, pets, radios, tape recorders, electronic devices, skateboards, roller blades, retractable skate shoes, card games, trading cards, hardballs, or alloy or wooden bats to school. Permission to bring such items may be granted by teachers for share days or special activity days.
- Students are not allowed to bring or possess fireworks, firecrackers, matches, or other flammable materials on campus.
- Only recreational equipment (balls, Frisbees, etc.) may be thrown. Rocks, sand, dirt clods, etc., may not be thrown.
- Students are not to loiter, play in, or socialize in the restrooms, on the balconies, or around the stairs. Students are to stay in the designated playground areas at recess. Out of bounds includes unsupervised rooms, all stairwells, the parking lot, the preschool area, and any areas outside of the playground fence.
- Students must have a pass when they are out of the classroom for any reason.
- Students are not allowed to leave class until formally dismissed by the teacher.
- Students may not sit on tables or desks or tip back in chairs.
- Students may not chew gum at school.
- Students are not allowed to eat or drink during class unless the teacher has given special permission.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

DCES has incorporated a disciplinary system that is focused on children being responsible, doing right, and being productive. Classroom and playground rules are clarified and reviewed with students and systematically reinforced.

Any matters not specifically covered by the handbook are subject to discipline at the discretion of the

administration and may cover penalties up to and including expulsion from school. The handbook does not limit the scope of our discipline; instead, it attempts to create clarity and consistency.

LEVEL I - TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

The classroom teacher will instruct students regarding appropriate behavior, provide positive reinforcement for that behavior, and help them recognize inappropriate actions and understand the consequences.

Concepts of forgiveness and restoration are a part of the process as well. When disobedience occurs, disciplinary action is firmly and fairly carried out. Discipline may be administered in various forms including:

- Verbal instruction.
- A verbal warning.
- Privileges taken away.
- Time out.

LEVEL II - PARENT CONTACT

If unacceptable behavior continues, the teacher will speak to the parents personally, so that they are informed of the problem, the course of action needed, and follow-up procedures.

LEVEL III- REFERRAL TO ADMINISTRATOR

If disruptive behavior continues, the student is referred to the principal or other administrator who may:

- Instruct.
- Counsel.
- Contact parent.
- Establish appropriate consequences.

If behavior does not change for the better, parents will be contacted to discuss stricter disciplinary action, which includes restrictions, detentions, behavior contracts, or suspensions.

If a student does not demonstrate willingness or ability to respond to correction, seems to be unteachable, or exhibits extreme rebellion and the steps listed above have not restored the student to a

proper attitude, the administrator contacts the parents.

Before this conference, a decision is made in counsel with the teacher, principal, and/or School Administrator to explore alternatives and determine what the Level III recommendations will be.

At this level, a determination is made regarding the student's continuation in the program. Alternatives could include:

- Referral for Special Services.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.

When circumstances dictate, a student may be considered for higher levels of discipline without proceeding through each level. These instances may include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate physical contact or harassment.
- When another child is injured as a result of purposely thrown objects or hostile actions.
- Extreme defiance of adult authority.
- Extreme or continual use of profanity or verbally abusive language.
- Defacing school property.

CAUSES FOR SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL

The following actions shall constitute legitimate cause for suspension or dismissal:

- Continued willful disobedience, habitual profanity or vulgarity, open, or persistent defiance of the authority of school personnel.
- Willfully cutting, defacing, or otherwise damaging property (school or personal) while under the supervision of DCES. The parent or guardian shall be liable for all damages caused by the student.
- Use of a cell phone **or** smartwatch during the school day to listen, view, or share personal music, videos, or social media on campus.
- An attitude, action, or language that is demoralizing to other students, including harassment.

- Inappropriate internet usage to include social media on and off campus.
- Possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, or tobacco.
- Gambling, stealing, fighting, or immoral conduct.
- Bringing pocketknives or any weapons (real or simulated) to school.
- Deliberately hurting another student.

The administration reserves the right to dismiss a student who, in its judgment, does not conform either to the stated regulations governing student conduct or to the expressed principles, policies, and programs of the school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SCHOOL SPONSORED

DCES offers a variety of school-sponsored optional activities for students, such as the Art Festival, Speech Meet, and Math Olympics. Involvement in these activities varies according to the annual. DCES students are selected to participate in these academic and fine arts opportunities.

YEARBOOK

Students must be actively enrolled by December 31 to be included in the Elementary School yearbook.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES (CHEERLEADING AND GYM)

The philosophy of student activities in the elementary school supports the school-wide philosophy which emphasizes the development of the whole child and provides opportunities for students to explore and/or develop in areas that may not have previously been experienced.

Student activities nurture students spiritually, socially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Physical activities are open to all students, whether or not they have experience in the sport. Students develop spiritually by sharing their God-given talents with a group. Students learn to offer help and encouragement to others, to share in the joy of another's success, and to trust God through competitive situations. Social skills are developed through cooperatively contributing to the team, good

sportsmanship, self-control, fairness, loyalty, and self-discipline. Students develop through learning to lose and win gracefully and by maintaining composure in competitive situations. Activities are open to all students. Emphasis is placed on participation rather than individual competition. The program is structured to identify and develop God-given talents and abilities, as well as Christian character qualities.

CLUBS

Clubs provide opportunities for students in second-fifth grade to explore, develop, and gain knowledge in areas of which they have an interest. A variety of after-school clubs are offered. Clubs are offered on a first-come, first-served basis for second through fifth-grade students.