



2025/2026

# MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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



## Desert Christian Schools Administrative Team

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### A Letter to Parents from the Middle School Principal

Dear DCMS Families,

I am truly excited to welcome you to Desert Christian Middle School! It is an honor to have your family join our community. My staff and I have prayerfully and thoughtfully prepared for a school year that is centered on meeting the spiritual, academic, and emotional needs of every student.

This year, our Middle School theme is inspired by the book of Ephesians. We want every student to know and believe that they are Chosen by God, deeply loved, and created with a unique purpose. Their identity is found in Christ, and our desire is for each student to walk confidently in that truth. More than anything, it is my greatest hope that our students will passionately pursue a personal relationship with Jesus – the only source of true fulfillment and lasting joy.

To help you navigate the school year ahead, the DCMS Handbook serves as a valuable guide. Inside, you'll find everything you need to know about student life, expectations, and the many opportunities available to help your child grow and thrive. I encourage you to spend some time reviewing it – it's a helpful resource for both students and parents.

At DCS, we deeply value partnership with parents. Your involvement is a key part of a successful school year. If you ever have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. You are not walking this path alone – we are here to support you every step of the way.

Partnering with you,

*Lisa Costello*

Lisa Costello  
Middle School Principal  
Desert Christian Schools

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **OUR PURPOSE**

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

### **PRINCIPAL**

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

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

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

## **CAMPUS INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

School hours for middle school students are 8:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The telephone number is 661-723-0665.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Desert Christian Schools values the safety of your child and because of that; students are not allowed to take UBER, LYFT, or any other ride service to and from school.

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

### **STUDENT PICK-UP**

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

### MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS PROCEDURE:

- If there are changes in pick up or transportation plans for a student, the office should be notified before 1:30 p.m. so there is adequate time to inform the student.
- If a student needs to be picked up prior to school dismissal, parents must sign the student out at the main campus front office. If the student returns to school the same day, he/she must receive a pass from the office before returning to class.
- Middle school students are released from campus on their own at the end of school. Students must exit the campus at the middle school entrance gate unless they are reporting directly to Peach Factory.
- If a student remains on campus without parent supervision past 2:30 p.m., the student will be admitted to the Peach Factory program and the parents will be charged accordingly. (See General Section for detailed information.)
- Parents are expected to always be punctual in picking up their students from school events, practices, and detentions.
- Parents who are more than ten minutes late to pick up their students may be charged a \$10 fee for any portion of the first ten minutes they are late and \$1 for each additional minute plus any additional Peach Factory charges. The student of the late parent will not be allowed to practice or participate in any events until the late fee has been paid.

### **COMMUNICATION**

DCS publishes a Middle School update weekly and monthly newsletter, Knightly News, which is e-mailed. The weekly email update is campus-specific while The 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 FACTS. Please see the information regarding ParentsWeb in the general section of the handbook. 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. DCS uses FACTS to e-mail timely notifications to parents including class assignments, zero notifications, emails about class-specific happenings, and discipline incidents. Because of this it is essential that parents update any changes to e-mail addresses and regularly check their child's grades on FACTS.

At DCMS, we utilize Google Classroom as our Learning Management System. FACTS serves as our Student Information System.

In Google Classroom, students find instructions and resources for assignments, submit assignments and receive feedback, view grades, and communicate with teachers. Google Classroom is meant as an extension of the actual classroom and is reserved for teacher and student use. Parents should use email instead of Google Classroom to communicate with teachers.

In FACTS, teachers maintain their class grade books. Parents may view lesson plans, track student assignment grades, and view student progress using the FACTS Family Portal.

Although the FACTS Family Portal is the preferred method for parents to monitor their children's academic performance, parents have the option to receive notifications of missing classroom assignments sent from Google Classroom.

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

Parents may not come onto campus without an appointment.

### **TELEPHONE USAGE**

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

Students will be expected to provide a reason for calling before permission is granted, and permission may be granted at the discretion of school staff members. Students may not use the phone to make

preemptive calls to home when facing discipline at school.

When calling into the middle school office to get a message to your student, be sure to do so before 1:30 p.m. in order for the message to be delivered to your student before the end of the day.

### **STUDENT VISITATION**

Students from another school visiting classes with a DCMS student must first be approved by the administration. Visitation is pending approval and will be limited to prospective and former DCMS students.

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

### **LOCKERS AND LOCKS**

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

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

### **CHRISTIAN LIFE**

A goal of the school is to introduce students to Jesus Christ and help them grow in a relationship with Him. Not all students will embrace a personal Christian

faith. However, all students are expected to behave according to Christian standards.

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

### **CHRISTIAN TRAINING**

- Spiritual growth is nurtured within each child. In addition to regular times of sharing God's Word, spiritual principles are integrated throughout the day.
- Bible classes provide opportunities for students to study the Bible and discover its application to their lives.
- Weekly chapel provides opportunities for relevant biblical training and personal expression of faith through worship. Parents are always welcome to chapel and are especially encouraged to attend Character Recognition Chapel for their children.
- Spiritual Emphasis Weeks are held three times a year to help guide students to grow students to grow their faith
- Because the Bible is the authoritative basis of the Christian faith, we feel that every person should adhere to its teachings.
- Students are taught to apply Biblical principles to all life situations, including school, sports, and social interaction.
- Beginning in first grade, each student is required to have the New International Version (NIV) 2010 Bible for study and memorization.

## **ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

### **CLASS MATERIALS**

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

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

### **TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS**

All textbooks, workbooks, and materials are purchased by the family. Textbooks are to be purchased from the school. All textbook payments placed on student accounts are due July 31.

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

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Students may check books out from their English teacher or the main campus library. It is the student's responsibility to return library materials on time. Students are charged the cost of replacing books that are lost or damaged. Report cards are withheld until materials are returned or paid for.

### **MATH CLASSES**

Students are placed in several different levels of math. Math placement is done primarily by Math class grades, IOWA Assessments, and Let's Go Learn Diagnostic results.

Middle school students will be participating in IXL Math. Students will gain fluency and confidence in math at their own pace through fun and interactive questions, built-in support, and motivating awards. IXL is 15% of each student's total math grade.

### **ACCELERATED READER**

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a research-based, research-proven reading program that supports literacy growth and achievement by individualizing students reading growth. AR is 12% of each student's total English grade. AR is mandatory in all regular English classes.

## **HOMEWORK**

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

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

Many student factors determine the length of time spent on homework. Teachers often give time in class to begin homework assignments, therefore student attention and diligence in class greatly impact homework time.

Summaries for homework and lesson plans are posted for the entire week on FACTS ParentsWeb and become available each Monday after 3 p.m. Teachers may update class assignments and homework in FACTS as the week progresses.

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

Parents are required to setup student access to FACTS to enable students to monitor their own grades.

DCMS utilizes Google Classroom. Communication through Google Classroom is a tool for students and teachers. Parents are encouraged to look at all communication through Google Classroom but should email teachers directly when parent/teacher communication is necessary.

Students are expected to have access to a computer and a good internet connection at home.

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

Allow four to six weeks for students to adapt to a new grade level and homework expectations. During this time, it may take students longer to complete homework.

## **LONG TERM PROJECTS**

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

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

## **LATE WORK POLICY**

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

## **EXTRA CREDIT GUIDELINES**

Extra credit may be given in some classes. Extra credit is not meant to be a substitute for consistent effort on daily assignments and tests, however, extra credit is not an expectation of teachers.

## **GRADING AND REPORTS TO PARENTS**

### GRADING SCALE:

In sixth, seventh, and eighth grades the following scale is used in determining letter grades:

90-100 . . . . . A

80-89 . . . . . B

70-79 . . . . . C

60-69 . . . . . D

below 60 . . . . . F

### REPORT CARDS:

- DCMS uses traditional letter grades for achievement on report cards.
- Report cards are issued at the end of the quarter.
- Parents are welcome to email teachers with questions and concerns regarding student's progress in class.

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



#### PROGRESS REPORTS:

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

#### ACADEMIC INTERVENTION:

Students who have two or more Ds or one F in a given week will be assigned to academic intervention. During an academic intervention, students will receive assistance in completing missing work from the MS academic intervention director.

Students who fail to attend academic intervention will be issued a referral to the office.

#### ACADEMIC PROBATION:

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

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

Students who fail a class will be required to attend intervention for one quarter. Academic intervention is held during lunch. During academic intervention, students will receive tutoring and academic support to help students be successful. Failure to attend academic intervention could result in forfeiting enrollment at Desert Christian Middle School.

#### RE-ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATION POLICY:

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

subject may forfeit their re-enrollment in or graduation from DCMS.

#### GPA REQUIREMENT:

Students who earn a GPA below 2.0 during the school year must appeal to the admissions committee in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade or to participate in graduation and receive a diploma.

#### **ACADEMIC HONORS**

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

#### ACCESS:

The highest academic honor at DCMS is awarded to students who earn a 3.5 grade point average with no grade below a B.

#### **SPECIALIZED TRAINING**

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

Physical education emphasizes the basic components of physical fitness: strength, flexibility, and cardio-respiratory endurance. In addition to these special physical skills, the development of Christian character traits through cooperative participation in sports and games is emphasized.

Please refer to the P.E. dress code under the Standards of Dress section of this handbook.

#### COMPUTER EDUCATION AND CHROMEBOOKS:

Middle school students are required to bring a Chromebook to school. Chromebooks are available to rent from the Middle School Office for a yearly fee.

Middle school students will be issued a school email address to be used for all school assignments. Only the Desert Christian Google account is used for school work requiring online access, sharing, and online submission. Students may not use their personal email address at school.

#### GoGUARDIAN INFORMATION:

GoGuardian is a digital classroom management tool that helps teachers create a safe and focused online learning environment. It allows educators to monitor student activity on school-issued devices in real time, guide students to appropriate content, and block distracting or harmful websites. One of the biggest

benefits of GoGuardian is that it empowers teachers to keep students engaged and on-task, whether learning in person or remotely. It also promotes digital citizenship by encouraging responsible technology use. By using GoGuardian, DCS can better support student learning, improve classroom productivity, and ensure online safety across our school community. Students will be required to sign in to their computers under their Desert Christian email address at all times while on the Desert Christian Middle School campus.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM:

The Academic Support Program offers support to middle school students with diagnosed learning needs.

- Students who are part of this program receive accommodations included, but not limited to, note taking, verbal testing, organization, and homework help.
- Students need to either have a diagnosed learning challenge or ISP to participate in this program.

## Desert Christian Middle School Curriculum Overview

Some additional books are distributed in class

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>English</b>	Holt McDougal Literature This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, Holt McDougal Literature offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. Novel studies are used to teach critical thinking skills and for writing prompts to improve student writing.	Holt McDougal Literature This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, Holt McDougal Literature offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. Understanding literary themes and reading are a focus of seventh grade English as students explore three separate novels. Novel studies are used to teach critical thinking skills and for writing prompts to improve student writing.	Holt McDougal Literature This research-based English Language Arts program provides an engaging learning environment designed to help students achieve success with rigorous standards and next-generation assessments. A complete resource for teaching critical reading, writing, research, language, and media skills, Holt McDougal Literature offers carefully crafted features for preparing students well for college and 21st century careers. Writing cohesive, well-formed essays are a focus of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade English that helps to prepare students for high school and beyond. Novel studies are used to teach critical thinking skills and for writing prompts to improve student writing.
<b>Math</b>	Glencoe: Math Course 1 and 2 This curriculum embodies three components of rigor—conceptual understanding, application, and procedural fluency. It meets students where they are at with assessments which help determine proficiency and differentiated instruction resources ensuring students master concepts before moving on.	Glencoe Math Accelerated: Pre-Algebra Program (2017) This curriculum embodies three components of rigor—conceptual understanding, application, and procedural fluency. It meets students where they are at with assessments which help determine proficiency and differentiated instruction resources ensuring students master concepts before moving on.	Glencoe Math Accelerated: Pre-Algebra Program (2017) This curriculum embodies three components of rigor—conceptual understanding, application, and procedural fluency. It meets students where they are at with assessments which help determine proficiency and differentiated instruction resources ensuring students master concepts before moving on. Glencoe: Algebra 1 Part of the Glencoe High School Math series, this curriculum guides students with materials that lead them to success in the classroom and creates confidence in their future. This rigorous program utilized the lessons, resources, and assessments to emphasize conceptual understanding for encouraging critical thinking.
<b>Science</b>	Elevate Earth Science (Pearson) This science curriculum presents an interactive study of the earth's surface, water, and atmosphere, and the earth's structure.	Elevate Life Science (Pearson) This curriculum presents an interactive study of cells and heredity, human body system, and diversity.	Elevate Physical Science (Pearson) This curriculum presents an interactive study of sound and light, force and energy, and is an intro to chemistry.
<b>History</b>	Discovering Our Past: A History of the World, Early Ages (McGraw-Hill) This curriculum connects today's students to the stories of our past. sixth grade students will explore the first half of this book. sixth grade student study includes ancient Mesopotamia, Israel, Greece, and India.	Discovering Our Past: A History of the World, Early Ages (McGraw-Hill) This curriculum connects today's students to the stories of our past. sixth grade students will explore the first half of this book. Seventh grade focuses on the social, cultural, and technological changes that occurred in Europe, Africa, and Asia in the years A. D. 500 - 1789.	Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States, Early Years (McGraw-Hill) <sup>117</sup> <sub>SEP</sub> This curriculum brings the people, issues, and events of yesterday to life for the students of today. From the first Americans through the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era the components of the curriculum put students in the middle of the action, maximize comprehension, and build critical thinking skills.
<b>Bible</b>	Walking in the Truth: The Christian Worldview (Summit Ministries) This curriculum trains students to defend their faith and respond to counterfeit worldviews using real-world applications and critical thinking exercises.	Competing Worldviews (Summit Ministries) This curriculum compares and contrasts the key tenets of Christianity to Islam, naturalism, and new spirituality.	Christianity in Action: (Summit Ministries) helps students understand how they can live out their Christian worldview in a post-Christian culture.

## **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 DCMS attendance clerk at [MSattendance@desertchristian.com](mailto:MSattendance@desertchristian.com), attaching any necessary documentation to report an absence.
- Parents are required to report each absence daily by 9:00 am.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

### **TYPES OF ABSENCES**

#### EXCUSED:

- The California Education Code section 48205 cites absences due to illness, quarantine, medical services, and funeral services for immediate family as excused.
- Any projects or long-term assignments due during the absence could be required to be turned in before the absence.
- Students 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 DCMS.

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

For all absences, parents and students may retrieve assignments by accessing them in FACTS and/or Google Classroom. Parents should check both the lesson plan as well as the homework section on FACTS. Teachers will set due dates for work missed because of illnesses on a case-by-case basis.

#### ONE OR TWO-DAY ABSENCES:

- The student will be allowed to complete the work in the same number of days for which the student was absent. (Example: if a student is absent two days, he/she has two days to make up class work, provided the work was assigned during the absence.)
- If a test was given on the day of the absence or assigned prior to the absence, it will need to be made up.

- Failure to follow these procedures will result in a zero for the assignment or test and may affect the final grade.

#### LENGTHY ABSENCES:

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

#### PARTIAL ABSENCES:

A student who is present for any portion of a class is responsible for the homework given in class. This includes leaving for school activities.

#### TRUANCIES, SUSPENSIONS, AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

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

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

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

- Students must be in the classroom before the bell rings or they will be tardy.
- If a student is late to school in the morning, a tardy slip must be obtained from the office before reporting to class.

#### EXCUSED TARDIES:

- Some reasons for late to-school tardies may be excused, medical or dental appointments, verified major traffic problems, or a late carpool (unless the tardy student is the cause for the lateness.)
- When excused tardies become frequent, parents may be notified that excused tardies will no longer be permitted.

#### UNEXCUSED TARDIES:

- Excuses for lateness not listed in the previous section will not be accepted.

- Excuses such as personal circumstances, illness of a sibling or parent, or car failure are not excused.

#### PENALTIES:

- Late to school for medical or dental appointments may only be excused with a doctor's note.
- Students may have four unexcused penalties per quarter without suffering a consequence. Penalties will be handled in the following manner:

1st occurrence:	No Penalty
2nd occurrence:	No Penalty
3rd occurrence:	No Penalty
4th occurrence:	No Penalty
5th occurrence:	After School Detention
6th occurrence:	After School Detention
7th occurrence:	After school detention
8th occurrence:	After school detention
9th occurrence:	After school detention
10 <sup>th</sup> occurrence:	In-School Suspension

- For late to schools, students may be required to attend academic intervention when late to school seven or more times per quarter.
- Students will be notified in person and parents by email when a detention has been assigned. Forgetfulness is not a valid excuse for missing an assigned detention. Students will receive a referral to the office for skipping detention.
- Students will not be assigned detention on the same day the tardy occurs unless a student requests for it to be.
- To request rescheduling a detention please email [lcostello@desertchristian.com](mailto:lcostello@desertchristian.com). All requests must be approved by the principal.

#### **STANDARDS FOR DRESS**

Christian schools have a responsibility to establish dress standards appropriate for a Christian educational setting. The DCS dress code has been designed to provide 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 DCMS office before the item is worn to school.

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

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

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

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

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

#### PANTS:

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

- Must be clean, neat, and properly hemmed.

- Must be worn at the waist.
- Must fit at the waist without the help of a belt.
- May not fit tightly and may not be oversized.
- May not appear excessively faded or worn, and such judgment will be made by the administration.
- May not be low-rise style.
- May not be torn, worn longer than the bottom of the shoe, or frayed.
- May not include words, pictures, or anything other than a logo.

Unacceptable styles include:

- Holes or patches.
- Leggings, jeggings, or yoga pants worn as pants.
- Flannel pants.
- Athletic styles (including those made of mesh or nylon-type or fleece-lined fabrics).
- Snaps or Velcro fastening the side of the leg.
- Sweatpants or joggers.
- Pants that are not full length and that are not hemmed to remain below the bottom of the knee when the student is seated.

#### SHORTS:

- Must be a solid color.
- Must fit at the waist and not be oversized or baggy.
- Must be no shorter than a 7-inch inseam.
- Are not acceptable in these styles: Board shorts, athletic shorts (including those made of fleece-lined or mesh fabric), boxer shorts, and spandex/ biker shorts.

#### SKIRTS, SKORTS, AND JUMPERS:

- Must not fit tightly.
- Must not be shorter than three inches above the knee, including slits.
- May display designs of appropriate subject matter.
- May be worn with tights, leggings, and shorts underneath, no more than three inches above the top of the knee when standing.

- May be made of denim.
- Skorts are permitted.
- May wear a dress in place of a skirt, but must be covered with a school polo.

#### OUTERWEAR, SWEATERS, AND SWEATSHIRTS:

- Logos may include designer brand names, names of colleges, destinations, and names of professional sports teams. TV shows, music groups, and other entertainment-themed items are not acceptable. Any exceptions must be approved by the administration.
- The only outerwear to be worn over a DCS shirt is a coat, jacket, sweatshirt, sweater, or vest.
- Flannel shirts, t-shirts, snuggies, blankets, and blouses do not fit the accepted categories and so are not to be worn over polos.
- Administration has the discretion to review clothing that may or may not reflect the values of Desert Christian Schools.

#### HAIR:

Hairstyles that are out of dress code, as determined by 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 partially or completely shaved.
- Must not be extreme to cause a classroom distraction.
- 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: shaved lines, partial or full shaving of the head, 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.
- Beards and mustaches are not allowed.

#### SHOES:

- Must be worn at all times.
- Must be practical and safe.
- Only sandals with heel straps are acceptable; beach sandals are not.
- Shoes with wheels are not allowed on campus.
- Military or work boots are not allowed.
- Crocs are not allowed

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

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

#### GENERAL:

- Hoods may be worn only when outdoors.
- Jewelry must be kept simple.
- Girls' earrings must not be longer than one inch in length or hoop size.
- Clothes worn under jackets must be in the dress code.
- No skin should be visible between the neckline and the bottom of the skirt or pants, except for the arms.
- No part of an undergarment should be visible.
- Face coverings must follow the same acceptable

standards as other articles of clothing.

#### ITEMS OR STYLES ARE NOT ALLOWED:

- Jewelry for body piercing may not be visible with the exception of earrings for females.
- Earrings are not permitted for boys.
- Accessories or styles that reflect a negative subculture are not permitted. This is solely at the discretion of an administrator.
- Clothing with the names or depictions of bands, entertainers, or celebrities may not be worn.
- Inappropriate pictures or words are not permitted on clothing worn to school. Teachers, administrators, and staff must easily understand the meaning of words or emblems that appear on clothing.
- Clothing that bears the name or logo of groups and movements that clearly oppose Christian principles are not to be worn to school.
- Oversized clothing.
- Military fatigues, trench coats, and surgical wear.
- Clothing and apparel with political messaging is not allowed.
- Company uniforms.
- Items bearing a Confederate flag.
- Clothing worn tightly to the body.

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

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

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

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

#### DRESS DOWN SHIRTS:

- Crewneck t-shirts other than DCS polo shirts are the only t-shirts allowed.
- Shirts may not be altered or frayed.

- Any logos, emblems, words, or phrases on shirts or clothing must be clearly appropriate for a Christian environment.

#### DRESS DOWN SHORTS:

- Tight-fitting or baggy shorts are not allowed.
- Shorts may not be longer than the bottom of the knee while standing.
- Cut-offs are not allowed.
- Gym shorts are not allowed.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL P.E. DRESS CODE**

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

- PE clothes must be purchased from B's Embroidery.
- Shirts – Students must wear the P.E. shirt authorized by the school and purchased from B's Embroidery. Other shirts are not acceptable for P.E. All P.E. shirts and sweatshirts must have professional lettering of students' last names printed on them.
- Shorts – Students must wear the P.E. athletic shorts purchased from B's Embroidery. The shorts are a black mesh. Other shorts are not acceptable for P.E.
- Sweat clothes – During cold weather, students may wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt. The sweat clothes must be purchased from B's Embroidery. The sweat clothes must be worn over their PE shorts and shirt.
- DCMS has three options for PE cold weather outerwear.
  - Option 1: black pullover sweatshirt with the PE logo on the front and student last name on the back, black sweatpants with the word Knights printed on the leg.
  - Option 2: black warm up jacket and pants with the DC logo and student name on the back, which is available by special order.
  - Option 3: students are allowed to wear leggings/tights and undershirts that are solid black. They must be worn underneath their approved DC PE attire.
- Shoes – Shoes must be athletic style and suitable for running and physical activities.



- Hats with appropriate logos may be worn during P.E.
- Students who forget their PE uniforms may only use the school-provided loaner PE clothes. Loaner clothes are limited and are not guaranteed. They may not borrow any article of clothing from one another, including shoes.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

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

Students must show openness to considering Christ as their life leader. This is primarily demonstrated through proper behavior and positive attitudes that are in harmony with Christ's teachings. A verse of scripture that emphasizes this thought is 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity, show yourself and example of those who believe."

### CONDUCT AT ALL TIMES

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

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

- All submitted assignments are expected to be students' original work. The use of AI is prohibited.
- Claiming conduct contrary to our rules.
- Written or spoken words that threaten physical harm or damage the reputation of another.

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

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

### CONDUCT ON CAMPUS

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

- Speech or words that are negative or contrary to Christian standards.
- Displaying pictures, symbols, or emblems on one's clothing, lockers, or personal property that call attention to groups or movements that are contrary to Christian standards.
- Demonstrating romantic affection such as kissing, hugging, or holding hands.
- Bringing or possessing fireworks, firecrackers, matches, or other flammable materials.
- Bringing pocketknives or any weapons (real or simulated) to school.
- Bringing or consuming energy drinks before school, during school, or at school-sponsored events.
- Listening, viewing, or sharing personal music, videos, or social media on campus, including before and after school.
- Bringing skateboards to school.
- Tampering with lockers.

- Tampering with or taking items that belong to another student.
- Littering, defacing, or abusing school property.
- Entering faculty areas or restrooms except with specific permission.
- Bringing or using aerosol cans.
- Harassing or abusing anyone verbally, physically, or digitally.
- Threatening harm to others.
- Talking disrespectfully to or about another person.
- Treating another person disrespectfully.
- Being in the parking lot except to be picked up or dropped off.

### **CONDUCT IN CLASSROOMS**

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

- Students must always respect and cooperate with teachers.
- Students must be on time to classes.
- Students must be prepared with the necessary materials needed for each class. (See Class Materials.)
- Students must have a mental attitude that indicates a readiness to learn.
- Any communication that disrupts the class or distracts students from learning is unacceptable.
- Personal grooming is not permitted during class.
- Students leaving class must have permission from the teacher.
- Food and beverages in the classroom are not allowed.
- Water may be brought into the classroom.
- Students may not be in classrooms or offices unless a teacher or staff member is present.
- The teacher's desk and personal property must be left untouched and undisturbed by students.

### **CELL PHONES, CHROMEBOOKS, AND SMARTWATCHES**

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

- Email
- Texts
- Photos
- Internet Search History
- Social Media

If a student has a cell phone on campus, it must remain completely powered off and in the student's locker or backpack during school hours. Phones may not be on your person during school hours.

Students who use Peach Factory will be required to have their phones in their backpacks and powered off.

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

Cell phones may only be used to call, text, or email while on campus. Phones may not be used for entertainment purposes.

#### **CHAPEL CELL PHONE POLICY:**

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

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

#### **CELL PHONES ON TRIPS:**

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

#### **AFTER SCHOOL CELL PHONE POLICY:**

Cell phones may only be used to call, text, or email while on campus. Phones may not be used for entertainment purposes.

### SMARTWATCHES:

Students may not utilize smart watches while on campus. Smart Watches fall under the DCMS cell phone policy.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

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

- Students who do not have their own personal devices will be able to rent a Chromebook from Desert Christian Middle School to meet this goal.
- Chromebooks may be used with staff permission in class for school purposes. The device must be on or above the student's desk and in clear view of the teacher.
- Chromebooks may not be used outside of the classroom.

### **HOW MISCONDUCT IS HANDLED**

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

The discipline policy is available on FACTS and will be emailed prior to school to students and families. The intent of disciplinary procedures is to encourage students to comply with the conduct standards of the school.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Both athletic clubs and after-school clubs are part of DCMS extracurricular activities.

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

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

### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

The purpose of student activities is to:

- Enhance the intellectual, spiritual, social, and physical growth of our students.

- Enhance the spirit and morale of our school family.

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

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Single-day and multiple-day field trips are part of the educational experience at DCMS. Participation in field trips is contingent upon properly registering and paying fees on time. When the field trip involves the entire grade level, classes are canceled for that grade level and no supervision or alternative childcare is available on campus for those students.

Middle school parents may participate in field trips only when they have completed and been approved in the formal volunteer process. Parent volunteer spots are limited and not guaranteed.

### **REGULATIONS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

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

- All activities are under the supervision of the school, and students are held to the same standards in extracurricular activities as they are in the classroom.
- The school dress code applies to extracurricular activities unless specific exceptions are announced.
- All trip and event fees are non-refundable. The first payment commits a student to the entire amount.
- Field trips and extracurricular fees are added to student accounts.
- Students may not participate in any extracurricular activity on the day in which they have been issued a suspension or are serving a suspension.
- Students excused for any extracurricular activities are responsible for homework in all their classes regardless of whether they attended those

classes on the day of the absences with the exception of ACCESS trips.

- Students who begin an extracurricular activity or sport are expected to complete their responsibilities. Those who do not may be considered ineligible for future activities.
- Parents are expected to be on time to pick up their students at all times and from all events, practices, and detentions.
- Any participants who are late meeting a deadline, (such as returning to a bus), will be responsible for paying fees incurred by the school.

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

Student eligibility to participate in all extra-curricular activities including clubs, organizations, and athletics is determined as follows:

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

#### **RESTRICTIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY:**

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

- If a student is ineligible during a season of his/her sport or activity, he/she is excluded from participation for that season.

- A student's eligibility is determined at the end of each quarter.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY:**

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

#### **ACCESS**

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

In order to participate students must:

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

#### **LEADERSHIP**

DCMS Christian Service is a servant leadership training club available to qualifying seventh and eighth-grade students. Students need to meet academic and behavioral requirements.

#### **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

Various clubs that focus on individual interests are formed annually. Clubs will be held both at lunch and after school from 2:30-3:15 or 3:30 pm.

#### **YEARBOOK**

An annual yearbook highlighting student activities is available to all students. The cost of the yearbook is part of the annual tuition. Students must be actively enrolled by December 31 to be included in the Middle School's yearbook.

## **ATHLETICS**

### **INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS**

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

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

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

#### **GOALS FOR OUR SPORTS PROGRAM**

- Developing Christian character within the athletes.
- Involving students in an activity that will nurture them spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically.
- Demonstrating and teaching Christian sportsmanship: how to win and lose gracefully and work together with a team.
- Involving students in practices and games so they feel they are an important part of the team. (Care will be taken to give each student playing time during the season. However, playing time is

determined by such factors as game situations, the degree of a player's skills, and discipline. Therefore, playing time is not guaranteed for each game and is solely at the discretion of the coaches. Playing time may particularly be limited during tournaments to the extent that some players may not play during each tournament.)

- Developing a positive self-image in students through encouragement.
- Teaching students to understand and accept their individuality; that God loves them as they are, with their abilities and weaknesses.
- Teaching skills and rules of the sport in which the student is involved.
- A fee-per-sport of \$200 is assessed to help cover the costs of various expenses incurred in the program.
- Athletic fees are added to the student account and are due by the start of the first game. Students will not be allowed to participate in athletic activities if the fees are not paid in full by the fee due date.
- Practices are held at the discretion of the coaches, usually three to four days per week.
- Most games are after school. Students may need to leave school early to attend contests.