



DESERT HEIGHTS ACADEMY
Transitioning Students Toward Success

**PARENT – STUDENT HANDBOOK/POLICY &
PROCEDURES**

2018-2019

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DESERT HEIGHTS ACADEMY

Welcome to Desert Heights Academy (DHA). We are a private school serving students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. We are committed to providing an engaging and positive learning environment that motivates all students to grow and thrive.

Mission: Our mission is to provide a positive educational experience that teaches students the necessary skills to transition their lives towards success within their community.

As our mission statement indicates, our main focus is helping students *transition*.

- *Transition* from academic struggles to academic success
- *Transition* from behavioral difficulties towards positive and appropriate behavior
- *Transition* from school to gainful employment
- *Transition* a failure identity towards an identity of success
- *Transition* from high school to college

Many students need assistance throughout the transition process. Our academic, clinical, and vocational programs provide the necessary structure and guidance to help students learn the skills to make these transitions a reality.

At DHA, we believe ALL STUDENTS HAVE A DESIRE TO SUCCEED. For some students, success is right on the horizon, and for others, success may take a bit more time. Our staff is dedicated to promoting achievement in each student, even the hard to reach student.

This handbook provides an overview of our school. Please read carefully and let us know of any questions you may have.

We look forward to working with you and your child.

DESERT HEIGHTS ACADEMY STUDENT PLEDGE:

**Today,
I pledge to do my best
and work hard to be successful.
Each day brings challenges and opportunities.
I will stand up and face these challenges and
use my education to achieve success.
I pledge to complete my work, listen respectfully,
and practice positive behavior.**

DAILY OPERATIONS:

- The school day starts at 8:30 am and students are dismissed at 2:30 pm. *We have early release every Wednesday at 12:30 pm.* DHA staff participates in regular professional development training on Wednesdays, discussing student and classroom programming.
- In efforts to support a positive and safe school environment, each student is **wanded and searched** upon entry to the school.

Wanding and Search Procedures: A handheld metal detector (wand) is used by staff to ensure that students do not bring in any type of objects that could cause danger. The search consists of each student pulling out their pockets (Pants / shorts / jackets) to make sure they have NOT brought any personal items to school. Additionally, shoes may be searched on occasion.

In the event that a student refuses to be searched, *this student will NOT be allowed entry into school.* The parent / guardian will be requested to pick up their child.

- After being wanded and searched, students have the option to eat breakfast in their classrooms. They will start their day with the *WhyTry* curriculum and goal sheets, creating a positive start to their day.
- Breakfast and lunch are provided to all students. Breakfast occurs between 8:30 and 8:45am. Lunch is offered between 11:00am and 12:00pm.

School meals have a nutritional value that is in accordance with the National School Lunch Program, although Desert Heights Academy does not participate in the program.

In the event that a student throws their breakfast or lunch away, they will NOT be provided a second meal.

- Daily recess periods are given to elementary students and students in the Oasis program.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY:

At DHA, we respect the privacy of our students and their families. Ethical and legal guidelines indicate that minor students and their legal guardians have the right to have their records remain confidential. With the exception of the referring school district representative, we do not discuss student matters with others who are not the student's legal parent or guardians. A release form must be signed to permit information exchange with others who are not legal guardians of the student during the initial intake.

PARENT / GUARDIAN VISITS:

As a parent or legal guardian of a DHA student, you are always welcome to come to the school for visits. Often times, the students are engaged in various activities in and out of class. In efforts to not disrupt such activities, we ask that you call ahead to arrange your visit. We also ask that you support our efforts in maintaining a positive school culture.

STUDENT & STAFF EXPECTATIONS:

Since *accountability* is a key component to promoting and achieving success, we have outlined several expectations for students and staff. These expectations coupled with the rules and procedures provide the necessary structure and guidance to assist students along their journey in transitioning towards success.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

- Students come to school on time and attend every day
- Students make active efforts to complete all their assignments and prepare for exams
- Students follow staff directions and the rules of the school
- Students treat themselves and others with respect and dignity
- Students practice positive behaviors on a daily basis

STAFF EXPECTATIONS:

- Staff treat students and fellow staff with respect and dignity
- Staff are accountable for creating a safe and positive learning environment
- Staff consistently follow the positive behavior management model
- Staff reinforce and encourage students to do their best
- Staff are prepared to teach every day

RULES AND PROCEDURES:

The following rules and procedures are designed to promote success in our students as well as a safe and positive learning environment.

School-Wide Rules:

- 1. Raise Your Hand**
- 2. Stay in Seat**
- 3. Participate in Class**
- 4. Respect Others**

- We ask that students be on time to school. If a student is late / tardy or absent, we ask that the parents or guardians contact the school by 9 am.
- We ask that students bring only themselves and a positive attitude to school.
 - Students are not allowed to bring ANY personal belongings to school. CD players, IPOD's, cell phones, cosmetics, jewelry, backpacks...etc. are not allowed. *The reason for this rule is to support students focusing on their school work and minimize distractions. This also safeguards against possible theft and / or items being broken.*
 - If a student brings any personal belongings to school that were not pre-approved by an administrator, staff will confiscate these items and return them to the parent / guardian.

- We ask that students behave in respectful and appropriate ways.
 - We ask that students practice self-control on a daily basis.
 - We ask that students express troubling emotions in a manner that shows respect and dignity.
 - We ask that students use respectful language when communicating with their peers and staff.
 - If students behave in an inappropriate manner, staff will apply consequences consistent with the specific behavior.
- Since our program promotes positive transitions, we ask that students take good care of their hygiene. Maintaining a neat and clean appearance is important to one's esteem and relationship building.
- We ask that students follow the school's dress code. The dress code is designed to support a positive image among our students. The dress code is as follows:
 - Shorts and skirts need to be close to knee level.
 - Pants and shorts are to be worn around the waist. *Sagging will not be permitted.*
 - Jewelry is not permitted for safety reasons. This includes but is not limited to visual body piercing, necklaces, watches, bracelets, and earrings. Small stud earrings are an exception.
 - Images of drugs, sexual references, religious images, and / or inappropriate language will not be allowed.
 - Any clothing that is deemed to represent gang affiliation will not be allowed.
 - Hats or caps are not allowed.
 - Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times. Slippers are not allowed.
 - Halter tops, backless blouses, strapless blouses and dresses, sleeveless T-shirts, bike shorts and short-shorts are prohibited.

If students do not follow the dress code, they will be asked to modify their clothing. If this is not possible and / or if the student is unwilling, the student will be sent home depending on the circumstances.

MEDICATIONS:

If your child receives medication during the school day, please check this medication in with the school nurse or school administrator. The parent / guardian will need to sign the self-medication permission form in order to allow students to take medication at school.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS:

Knowledge is power and the educational model at Desert Heights Academy empowers students to apply school-learned information in the real world. We are committed to helping students *transition* to their communities with the skills necessary to succeed. We do not give up on students and genuinely believe that all students have a desire to succeed.

The Academic, Clinical, and Transitions programs were designed with the idea of helping students experience success in their schoolwork. As this success builds, students are well on their way to transitioning towards greater achievement.

As a Catapult Learning school, Desert Heights Academy implements the Assessment, Curriculum, Instruction (ACI) model in all classrooms. ACI provides all students with a structured, individualized, and data-driven instructional model that ensures students make meaningful progress in adopted curricula, grade level standards, and IEP goals. In addition to their IEP, instructional programming for each student is guided by a 4 Step Plan that incorporates assessment data, areas of need, tiered interventions, and a plan of implementation. The model is anchored by station teaching, in which students engage in small group and one on one instruction through a variety of modalities that incorporate evidence-based strategies and tiered interventions. As part of the model, students receive direct instruction from the teacher, intervention and support from the teacher's assistant, and supplemental instruction through computer-based learning programs. The model also allows for independent work time, when students will practice newly learned skills and concepts.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM:

Desert Heights Academy is divided into general classes: Elementary, Junior High, and High School. Upon enrollment, students receive an orientation consisting of a review of our program, rules and procedures, and expectations. This orientation is designed to set each student up for success. Following the orientation, students are given a 'Welcome Tour' of our program, meeting the staff and familiarizing themselves with the building.

After the orientation, new students are placed in a classroom that matches their academic level and age range. The teacher will review the IEP and / or other relevant educational information from the referring school. This ensures that each student is provided with quality instruction.

Desert Heights Academy serves students in elementary, junior, and high school grades. All academic instruction is based on the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. With a backward design approach, teachers analyze academic standards and create instructional activities and assessments aligned to the Arizona State Standards. Daily lesson plans include objectives aligned to standards, independent student learning activities and various forms of formative and summative assessments.

ENGAGED TEACHING

The staff at DHA use engaged teaching techniques. These particular techniques offer a powerful way of motivating students to learn and expand their knowledge. Some of the techniques used by teachers to engage students include:

- Students are invited to construct and produce knowledge in personally meaningful ways.
- Students are encouraged to teach their peers about new knowledge they have acquired. This promotes social skills and confidence as well as knowledge acquisition.
- Fun and engaging projects are used to motivate students' interest in learning.
- Fun, engaging, and interactive lesson plans are used to motivate students and assist with the learning process.
- Students work in groups on various 'hands on' projects.
- Teachers serve as coaches and guides to student learning.

CURRICULUM PACKAGES

Desert Heights Academy utilizes iReady, an adaptive diagnostic and instructional tool, in its classrooms. Upon enrollment, all students are assessed using iReady, with the results being used to develop individualized programming in the areas of ELA and math that is aligned to academic standards and student needs. Additionally, iReady's instructional component provides students with engaging computer-based lessons and supplemental materials to ensure progress is made on grade level standards and IEP goals.

Desert Heights Academy employs a variety of curriculum packages to meet the academic, social/emotional, and adaptive needs of all students. Ready Teacher Toolbox is the primary curriculum for ELA and math instruction in grades K-8. Ready Teacher Toolbox is a collection of K-8 instructional resources that provide students access with interactive tutorials and standards-based lessons.

Kids Discover Online is implemented for students in grades K-8 in social studies. Kids Discover Online is a web-based curriculum that provides students with access to engaging non-fiction articles, standards-based lessons, and customizable assessments.

HMH Science Dimensions is implemented for students in grades K-8 in science. HMH Science Dimensions is an online learning platform aligned to the Next Generation Science standards.

Unique Learning System is implemented in our Oasis program that serves students with autism and intellectual disabilities. Unique Learning System is aligned to the state alternate standards and is highly-differentiated and data-driven. Unique Learning System helps make content accessible to students with specific learning needs by utilizing visual supports, schedules, and engaging thematic units. Additionally, the curriculum includes benchmark assessments as well as monthly pre-tests and post-tests that provide teachers with meaningful data to drive instruction and IEP goal setting.

In our high school classrooms, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt – Collections is implemented for English/Language Arts, Pearson AGS is implemented for math, Prentice Hall is implemented for social studies, and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Environmental Science is implemented for science.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES



Desert Heights Academy uses SMART Board Technology to help empower our teachers and inspire life-long learners. SMART Technology helps create transformative learning environments with revolutionary new software platforms and innovative interactive displays.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

TIERS OF ASSESSMENT

As part of the ACI model, Desert Heights Academy utilizes tiers of assessment to gather meaningful data on all students that can be used to effectively drive academic programming. Data is used to develop 4 step plans, student IEPs, and to target interventions.

<p><u>Tier 1: All Students*</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •iReady K-12 Diagnostic Assessments for Reading and Math •McGuffey Spelling Inventory •Peg Writing Baseline (6 + 1 Traits) •Core Literacy Library (Assessing Reading Multiple Measures)-Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Phoneme Deletion -Phonological Segmentation -Phoneme Segmentation -Phonics Survey -Graded High Frequency Word Survey -San Diego Quick Assessment -MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency -Vocabulary Screening -Reading Maze Comprehension <p><u>*Classroom-based administration</u></p>	<p><u>Tier 2: Students 1 or More Years Below Level*</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 •Curriculum Associates Skill Assessments (Accompanying STARS and STAMS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Comprehensive Assessment of Math Skills (CAMS) -Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Skills (CARS) •Other: Program-specific placement and screening tests <p><u>*Optional additional assessments administered by teacher, test coordinator, reading support</u></p>	<p><u>Tier 3: Students 2 or More Years Below Level*</u></p> <p><u>Diagnostic Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Feifer Assessment of Reading (FAR) •Feifer Assessment of Math (FAM) •Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP-2) <p><u>Academic Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-III -Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test-3 -Comprehensive Mathematical Abilities Test (CMAT) -Brigance -Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, 3rd Edition (WIAT) -Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA-3) -Test of Early Math Ability (TEMA-3) -Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC-4, 5) -Test of Written Spelling (TWS-5) -Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST) -Other: As required and approved by district <p><u>*Optional additional assessments administered by teacher, test coordinator, reading support</u></p>
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FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a common occurrence at DHA. Many of the field trips are educational in scope and offer a unique opportunity for students to learn outside the classroom. Some field trips are reward based, reinforcing student success.

Parents / guardians MUST sign the all-purpose field trip permission form in order for their child to attend.

Although all students are encouraged to attend field trips, there are occasions a student may be held back from going. These occasions include:

- *The student is sick / ill*
- *The student is not demonstrating safe behavior and therefore cannot be transported*
- *The student did not earn 80% of their points for the week, and the field trip is reward based*

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEP'S)

Individualized Education Plans are common for students who receive special education services. These plans are designed to meet the unique learning and behavioral needs of students.

DHA staff will monitor each student's progress toward accomplishing the goals stated in the IEP. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and whether that progress is enough for them to achieve the goals by the end of the year. The progress reports will be provided to parents at least quarterly. Desert Heights Academy uses e-IEP Pro to produce IEP's.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

DHA uses the problem-solving model which includes the DHA team to consider student performance data to identify and define learning problems, to develop interventions to solve those problems, and to evaluate the effects of the interventions on the defined problem or problems.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Students receive 4 progress reports each year. Specifically, students receive two progress reports in the Fall semester and two in the Spring semester. Grading periods last 9 weeks per quarter.

Grades are assigned based on the following factors:

- Classroom participation
- Active effort towards assignment completion
- Grade percentages from class assignments / lesson and tests.

Desert Heights Academy utilizes PowerSchool to keep track of academic grades, which is accessible to parents/guardians. PowerSchool parents and students have been logging in to check real-time grades and attendance since 1997. Since that time, the PowerSchool parent and student portal has grown in popularity to become the most visited SIS portal on the web.

As a PowerSchool parent, you can check to see whether or not your child is in class right now, find out what tonight's homework is, confirm that last night's homework was handed in, and view your child's final grades as they exist in the teacher's grade book at this very moment. You can

also track the formative progress of your child's performance on state standards, register to receive alert notifications, review the daily comments from teachers, and much more.

PowerSchool Student and Parent Access

<https://desert-heights.powerschool.com>

ACADEMIC REWARDS

Students **EARN WHEN THEY LEARN**. The Academic Rewards program supports students transitioning towards academic success by rewarding active efforts at completing assignments and lessons on a daily / weekly basis.



Desert Oasis, a Desert Heights Academy program, was created to fill the need for all-inclusive instruction for students with mild to severe intellectual and developmental disabilities including Autism, Down Syndrome, Traumatic Brain Injury and Other Health Impairments. Desert Oasis is designed to meet the individual needs of each student through the use of high quality academics, community based learning experiences, positive behavior interventions, integrated transition planning, social skills development, job preparation, and independent living skills.

Our Mission: The mission of the Desert Oasis Program is to provide a highly structured, consistent, positive learning environment that will prepare our students to successfully transition into healthy, independent, productive post school environments in all aspects of their lives. Our program is committed to the success of each student, independent of the severity of their disability.

Desert Oasis Programming

Within the Desert Oasis setting there are two programs that provide specialized instruction and curriculum supports for students who may require more intensive and individualized supports.

The S.T.A.R.s and Skills Program provides individualized instruction and supports for students with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities and Autism. A key component of this program is the application of the research-based curriculums: Unique Learning System (ULS) and Social Express. ULS and Social Express are comprehensive programs that are designed to teach students critical academic, functional, and communication skills. This specialized program utilizes these curriculum packages alongside of the Structured Teaching Model in order to best serve and help promote academic, functional, and behavioral growth in our students. Additionally, S.T.A.R.s and Skills students participate in frequent community outings including grocery stores, community parks and numerous job sites in order to learn critical life skills that go beyond the classroom.

The Bridge the Gap Program provides specialized instruction and supports for students who may need more intensive interventions in the classroom and students with mild intellectual disabilities.

This program utilizes academic intervention curricula, Unique Learning System (ULS), and iReady/Teacher Toolbox to assist in teaching routines and functional skills. These classrooms have a smaller student to staff ratio allowing for more individualized instruction throughout the day. Students in the Bridge the Gap Program also participate in numerous vocational and life skills activities in order to provide all-inclusive instruction that will best prepare them for their future ventures.

Sensory Integration

Desert Oasis students have physical activity daily. Exercise opportunities not only promote physical fitness, but also contribute to each student's ability to process information from their sensory systems and improve self-regulation. These sensory systems include the tactile system (touch), vestibular system (movement), proprioceptive system (body position), visual system (sight), olfactory system (smell) and auditory system (hearing). Physical activity time also allows for students to practice social skills and appropriate interactions.

Desert Oasis staff are trained in identifying sensory needs and how these needs can be met both in the classroom and the sensory room. Our goal is to meet as many sensory needs as possible in the learning environment (classroom) so that students can remain engaged and progressing in their curriculum. However, we also acknowledge that some students may require more intensive sensory assistance and our sensory room is a great resource for these students.

Desert Oasis Classrooms

A key component of the Desert Oasis Program is the utilization of the Structured Teaching Model. Based on this model, four elements are considered when developing Oasis classrooms. These elements include:

- ❖ ***Physical Environment*** is a critical element of the Structured Classroom. It is important to have defined areas in the classroom that are known to the students and visually recognizable as different. There are areas for students to complete Independent/Individual Work, Group Work, Leisure Activities, Break Areas, and Time out areas (time outs will be explained in the "Consequence Driven Approach" section of the handbook). Clear visual and physical boundaries are provided in the classroom to ensure students are aware of change in activity or work session based upon visual differences in setting.
- ❖ ***Daily Routines and Schedules*** are used for each individual student as well as for the overall routine of the entire classroom. Schedules are posted and visually accessible to all students, which assist students in their transition from one activity to the next. Students' individual work schedules are developed according to developmental and academic functioning levels. Daily routines and schedules are followed consistently by all staff in order to help students understand what is expected of them and what activities need to be completed.
- ❖ ***Work Systems*** are developed taking into account the type and amount of work needing to be completed, the time in which the student has to complete the work and what it means or looks like to be finished. There are several types of work systems including left to right processing, matching materials, grouping, assembly, written

material, and more. Work systems will be utilized in the classroom based upon individual developmental levels and abilities.

- ❖ **Visual Structure** is an important element in the areas of organization, clarity, and instruction when creating a classroom. Activities and schedules are created and prepared in a way that visually represents what is to be completed and what steps are to be followed to complete the task or activity. Containers may be used with some activities to ensure organization and help to focus the student's attention on the task. Visual structure helps to clarify what is to be expected of the students in terms of work completion and following proper steps.

Desert Oasis Curriculum

The Desert Oasis curriculum is tailored to address the unique needs of each student as outlined in their IEP (Individual Education Plan). The Desert Oasis curriculum is a real world application of skills that assists students in *transitioning* between school, home, community and vocational settings.

Academic Skills and Activities:

Oasis students will have exposure to grade level material as well as action planning to increase academic skills they have missed along their educational journey. This will be achieved through the use of Unique Learning System (ULS), Social Express, and iReady/Teacher Toolbox. These programs are designed to teach children with developmental disabilities critical academic, functional, and communication skills. Desert Oasis uses these curriculum packages alongside of the Structured Teaching Model in order to best serve and help promote growth in our students functionally, behaviorally and academically.

Group Work and Social Interaction:

Students have the opportunity to work in small group settings to help develop social skills while continuing to work on functional, academic and independent living skills. These small group settings will focus on communication, awareness of self and others, self-regulation of behaviors and actions, self-advocacy and transitions. Group activities may involve cooking, reading, storytelling, sensory activities, and much more. Some examples of the skills that will be focused on in these group settings include:

- Relating to others
- Taking turns
- Adjusting to new environments
- Initiating communication with others
- Anticipating change in activity
- Following directions
- Self-calming techniques
- Indicating preferences
- Seeking or requesting help
- Expressing needs and wants
- Tolerance of others
- Ability to get involved in new activities and challenges
- Responding appropriately to others

Community Based Integration Opportunities:

Desert Oasis students participate in weekly field trips to develop appropriate social emotional skills, social skills, vocational skills and provide structured opportunities for

community participation. Field trips in the community are key components that give students the opportunity to practice functional life skills in real world environments. These field trips will include but are not limited to:

- Grocery Stores
- Shopping Centers
- Recreational Centers
- Volunteer Locations

Vocational Opportunities:

In addition to the above community-based learning locations, Desert Heights Academy's Transition Coordinator works with Oasis students to set up off-campus job preparation sites. Many of our students are capable of full employment in a community setting and we strive to help our students make these connections before they leave our program. High school students who are looking to gain meaningful employment will typically be placed in these transitional opportunities once or twice a week for 1 hour at a time. Some of these vocational locations include:

- Thrift Stores
- Restaurants
- Grocery Stores
- Tire Shops
- Adult Learning Centers

CLINICAL PROGRAM:

Maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment is the number one priority at Desert Heights Academy. In order for this to be accomplished, conflict needs to be managed in a productive and positive fashion. Since many of our students have endured unhealthy and hurtful experiences of conflict, our goal is to teach them that conflict is part of any healthy relationship and that it can be managed in a productive fashion that strengthens and not fractures relationships. The clinical model provides the necessary framework to teach students about productive conflict as well as other important social and coping skills that strengthen relationships.

The Values Grounded Classroom Environment Model provides a method to build strong relationships with students.

- This working model is based on research that has identified characteristics of programs that are effective with high risk youth.
- This behavior management model is real world based, meaning that the principles it teaches has direct application to success in the world outside school.
- All Desert Heights Academy staff receive regular training in this clinical model. This ensures uniformity and consistency in our work with the students, strengthening trust and safety within our school.
- Additionally, our teachers receive ongoing support and monitoring on effective instructional techniques and practical ways of operating their classrooms.

The process of transitioning toward success often takes time and practice. "Practice, Practice, Practice" is the motto reinforced by the clinical program. Students are afforded daily opportunities to practice *coping and social skills* in relation to their academic and vocational work. Weekly social and coping skills groups in every class provide the right environment to teach students these skills

while providing an understanding of how these skills will benefit them in their relationships as well as on the job.

Positive reinforcement is one of the benchmarks of our clinical model. Students are offered ongoing praise and rewards for their successful efforts at practicing productive social problem solving and coping skills. Our focus is to encourage and promote functional behaviors that promote students to transition towards academic and vocational success. This is best accomplished by positive reinforcement.

Positive behavior management strategies are employed in a developmentally sensitive fashion, thereby increasing the effectiveness among each age group. For instance, high school students receive greater freedom and independence for accomplishing their academic and behavioral goals.

The clinical program consists of a licensed psychologist and doctoral level students. This team of clinicians performs several important functions:

- Weekly social skills groups
- Staff consultation and training
- Psycho-educational assessment
- Individual counseling
- Social problem solving / peer mediation with students in conflict
- Crisis intervention
- Parent meetings / consultation with outside agencies
- Outcome research

TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Transition aspect of DHA is centered on Vocation Education. All students are given a career assessment to identify strengths and emerging skills so they can begin to work towards possible career areas. Students will be afforded the opportunity to gain work experience and employable skills needed for a successful transition to life after DHA.

While in the program, students will be able to identify personal learning styles and the necessary accommodations to be a successful learner and worker. Students will be able to identify career interests and skills, complete interest and career inventories, and identify additional education or training requirements.

The premise of this program is based on the idea that students can be successful in the world of work once they leave DHA. DHA is dedicated to empower students with the necessary social, academic, and job readiness skills that will make them suitable candidates for employment. This basic education will establish an ethical and pragmatic standard in hearts and minds, helping them determine the kind of people they choose to become. These ideas are typically based on the attitudes, behaviors and competence they will be exposed to while in the vocation program.

VOCATION EDUCATION (SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT):

This course assists students in discovering and applying personal, social, employable, and academic skills through active involvement in real life situations. Students will develop interpersonal skills so they may be able to manage various relational situations that are

commonly experienced on the job. This course helps students focus on future endeavors regarding school and career choices. This program focuses on four areas that promote a successful transition from student to contributing citizen.

PERSONAL AWARENESS:

This part of the program prepares students to navigate and map out their transition from youth to adulthood by way of self-discovery, career/occupational possibilities, and learning functional living skills to cope with the trials of everyday life.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

This portion of the program allows students research career opportunities and the aspects of those endeavors to help develop their various careers of interest. Specifics include:

- Occupational tasks, duties, and responsibilities
- Complete understanding of occupation of interest
- Pay possibilities
- Forecasted scale in hiring market
- Career advancement
- Working conditions
- Related occupations

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND/OR EMPLOYMENT:

This final step encourages each student to:

- Become gainfully employed
- Obtain specialized training, and/or;
- Continue on into a post-secondary educational institution, especially to pursue a bachelors or advanced academic degrees

THE POWER OF CHOICE:

The Power of Choice (POC) is a three series program designed to be a collaborative self-efficacy program / curriculum that integrates federal and state standards to develop strong academic, social, and postsecondary success in students. It empowers young people to make better choices. This program is designed to teach participants in middle and high school, how choice produces both positive and negative consequences. Participants will begin to understand the connection between good choices and bad choices and the tools necessary to make the best ones for their lives.

This program aligns to IDEA (2004) section 300.1. Schools/organizations that implement the POC program experience enrollment increases of 18% annually. Additionally, the graduation rates, for students using this program, increase 60% the first year growing to approximately 29% yearly over a two-year period.

Part 1 - Creating the Mind of Achievement

1. Character Development
2. Developing positive mental guidance
3. Creating strong Self Efficacy
4. Understanding Identity

Part 2 - Shaping the Body of Leadership

1. Goal Setting
2. Developing good social skills
3. How to be a patience person

Part 3 - Walk into your future

1. Real world exercises
2. Create a resume
3. Basic Life Skills

4. Individual Transition Program

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The Positive Behavior Management Model is a consequence driven approach that emphasizes *accountability, responsible decision making, and prosocial behavior*. It parallels real world practices by teaching students that there is a consequence for every action.

Our staff target positive student behaviors, identifying how such behavior helps them *transition toward success*. Positive reinforcement is frequently used to support students practicing prosocial behaviors. All DHA staff receives ongoing training in Positive Behavior Management techniques and approaches. Our interventions are developmentally sensitive, recognizing effective approaches for each age group.

When students exhibit negative or inappropriate behavior, negative consequences are applied. Our model does not punish nor shame students. We encourage students *to not make it personal* when we set limits and apply consequences. We explain to students that it is our job is to teach them responsible ways of handling various academic and relational situations and stressors. We teach students that mistakes can offer valuable learning experiences.

DESERT DOLLARS

Desert Dollars are an important part to our positive reinforcement model. When students demonstrate positive and appropriate behaviors, they are awarded Desert Dollars. Some of the more common behaviors include:

- Self-control (physical and verbal)
- Using positive words
- Behaviors that reflect our school values
- Respect towards peers and staff
- On task behavior and work completion
- Cooperative behavior in the class
- Encouragement towards fellow classmates
- Behaviors that reflect student is following school rules

Students can redeem their Desert Dollars in our school store. The store has a diverse assortment of treats, toys, books and other ‘cool stuff’ that makes earning Desert Dollars a rewarding experience.

Consistent with our focus on transitioning students toward success, DHA students operate the school store, learning how to inventory, manage the store budget, handle ‘money,’ and customer relations.

CONSEQUENCE DRIVEN APPROACH

Consequences are routinely used to provide feedback to students regarding their behavior. Focus is placed upon positive consequences. In addition to awarding Desert Dollars, staff also offers other positive consequences such as:

- Class rewards for task completion

- Recreational and education fieldtrips, e.g., movie theatre, zoo, museum
- Trips to the park
- Honor Roll breakfast
- School Barbeques
- Free computer time
- Teaching assistantship
- Mentorship
- On site jobs (students are paid cash for their work)
- Off site employment / vocational school
- Parent / student luncheon

In addition to receiving positive consequences for positive behavior, students receive negative consequences for inappropriate behavior. Some of the common negative consequences include:

- Referral to the Behavior Intervention Program (BIP)
- Loss of privileges (e.g., class rewards, field trips)
- Paying restitution to others
- Physical management in the case the student becomes unsafe

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM (BIP):

The Behavior Intervention Program, also known as BIP, offers a highly structured classroom setting for students who demonstrate inappropriate behavior in their regular class. Referring the student to BIP serves two purposes: 1) It is a clear intervention that helps the student comprehend that their behavior was maladaptive / inappropriate; and 2) It provides an opportunity for the student to think about their mistake and identify ways they can practice healthier and more prosocial behaviors.

The BIP is our most restrictive learning environment on our campus. When referred, students receive fines that they need to work off while in the BIP room. The more inappropriate and maladaptive the behavior, the greater the fine. While in BIP, students are expected to sit quietly and complete their coping skills worksheets as well any school work. Coping skills worksheets are provided to help students accept accountability for their behavior and identify positive alternatives for coping with the situation the led to their BIP referral. Students remain in the BIP room until they work off their fines. Clinicians are also available to meet with students in the BIP to facilitate coping skill development.

The BIP serves as an intervention to help students learn about their decision making and behavior. Referrals serve the purpose of helping students learn other behaviors to help them in the transition towards success.

ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION:

The BIP program offers school districts a constructive alternative to suspension. Students spend the entire day in our BIP room. Daily progress is reported to the referring school district to ensure that the student is using the BIP placement in a helpful manner. The daily progress sheets are sent to the referring school district at the end of each school day. Prior to the student returning to their home school, clinical staff work with the student to devise a reunification plan, outlining the necessary strategies and coping skills to better manage stressful events in their home school environment. A copy of this reunification plan is sent over the referring school district.

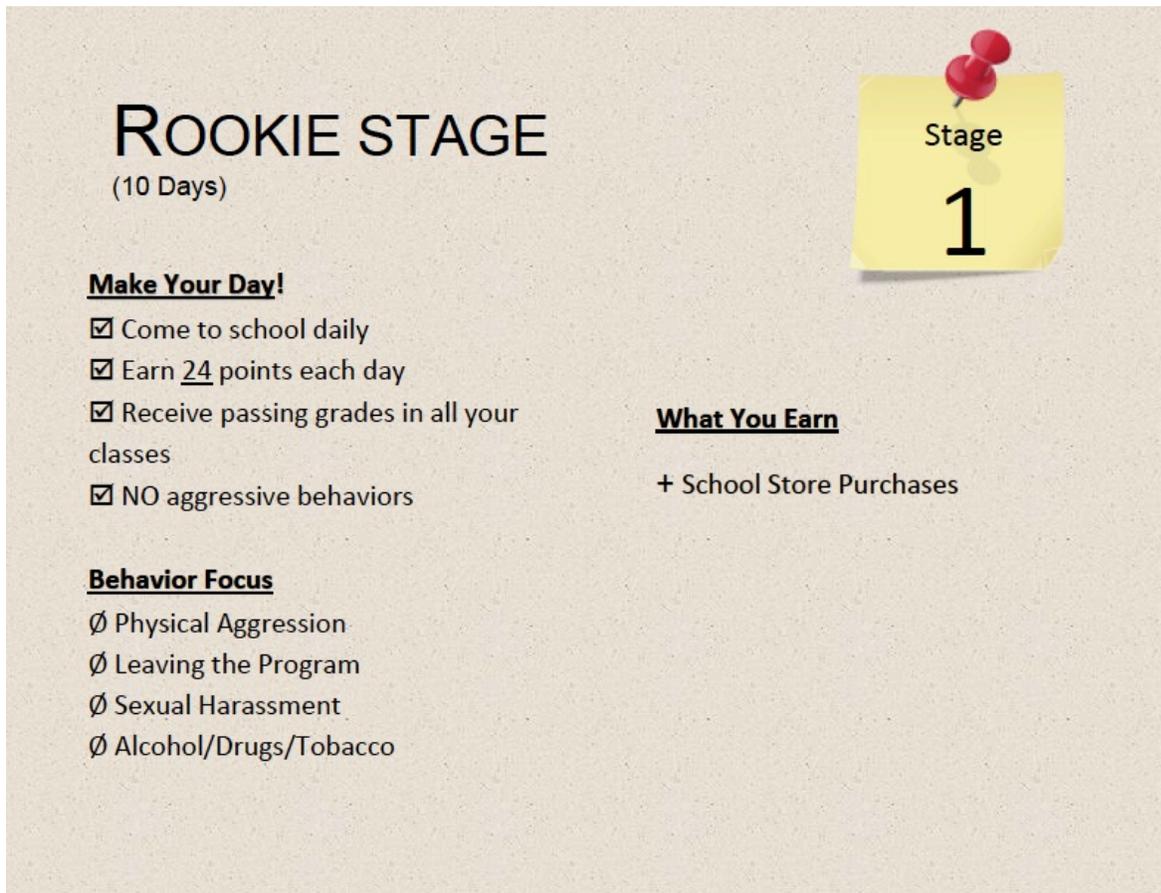
'STAGES' OF TRANSITION

As stated earlier, our mission is to help students transition towards success. Since this process can be challenging and, at times overwhelming, we provide the necessary structure and guidance to help students recognize their positive movement.

The process of pursuing success is broken down into five different stages; Rookie, Apprentice, Starter, Veteran and Mentor. These stages offer students clear feedback on their progress. Students will track their progress with weekly point sheets.

STAGE 1: 'ROOKIE STAGE'

The Rookie stage is characterized by a student who is getting to know our program. As with most Rookies, they need time 'to learn the system.' Rookies tend to make more mistakes than the Veterans and therefore are given less privileges. In order for Rookies to progress to Stage 2, the Apprentice stage, they need to complete the following tasks for 10 consecutive days:



ROOKIE STAGE
(10 Days)

Make Your Day!

- Come to school daily
- Earn 24 points each day
- Receive passing grades in all your classes
- NO aggressive behaviors

Behavior Focus

- Ø Physical Aggression
- Ø Leaving the Program
- Ø Sexual Harassment
- Ø Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

What You Earn

+ School Store Purchases

Stage
1

STAGE 2: 'APPRENTICE STAGE'

The Apprentice stage is characterized by a student who has demonstrated the knowledge of how to navigate the system successfully. At this stage, they are confronted with the challenge of practicing the skills more consistently to enjoy the benefit of greater independence. In order for Apprentices to successfully complete this stage and advance to stage 3, the Starter stage, students need to complete the following tasks for 15 consecutive days:

APPRENTICE STAGE
(15 Days)

Make Your Day!

- Come to school daily
- Earn 25 points each day
- Receive passing grades in all your classes
- NO aggressive behaviors

Behavior Focus

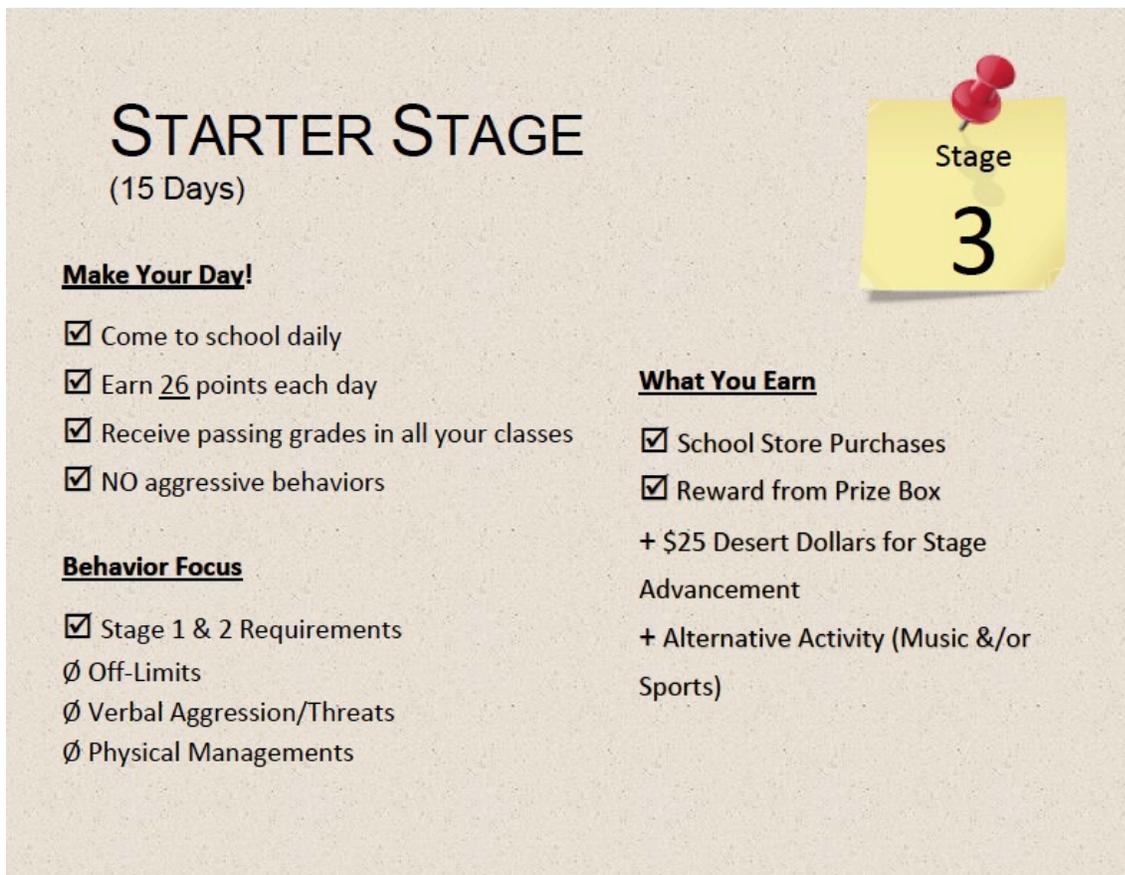
- Stage 1 Requirements
- Ø Bullying
- Ø Destruction of Property
- Ø Stealing

What You Earn

- School Store Purchases
- + Reward from Prize Box
- + \$25 Desert Dollars for Stage Advancement

STAGE 3: 'STARTER STAGE'

The Starter stage is characterized by a student who has demonstrated the knowledge and consistent practice of the basic skills for continued academic success. As the name implies, the student has shown the ability and earned the right to 'start the game.' At this stage, the student has earned the trust of the staff that they can behave responsibly and appropriately. In order for Starters to successfully complete this stage and advance to stage 4, the Veteran stage, students need to complete the following tasks for 15 consecutive days:



STARTER STAGE
(15 Days)

Make Your Day!

- Come to school daily
- Earn 26 points each day
- Receive passing grades in all your classes
- NO aggressive behaviors

Behavior Focus

- Stage 1 & 2 Requirements
- Ø Off-Limits
- Ø Verbal Aggression/Threats
- Ø Physical Managements

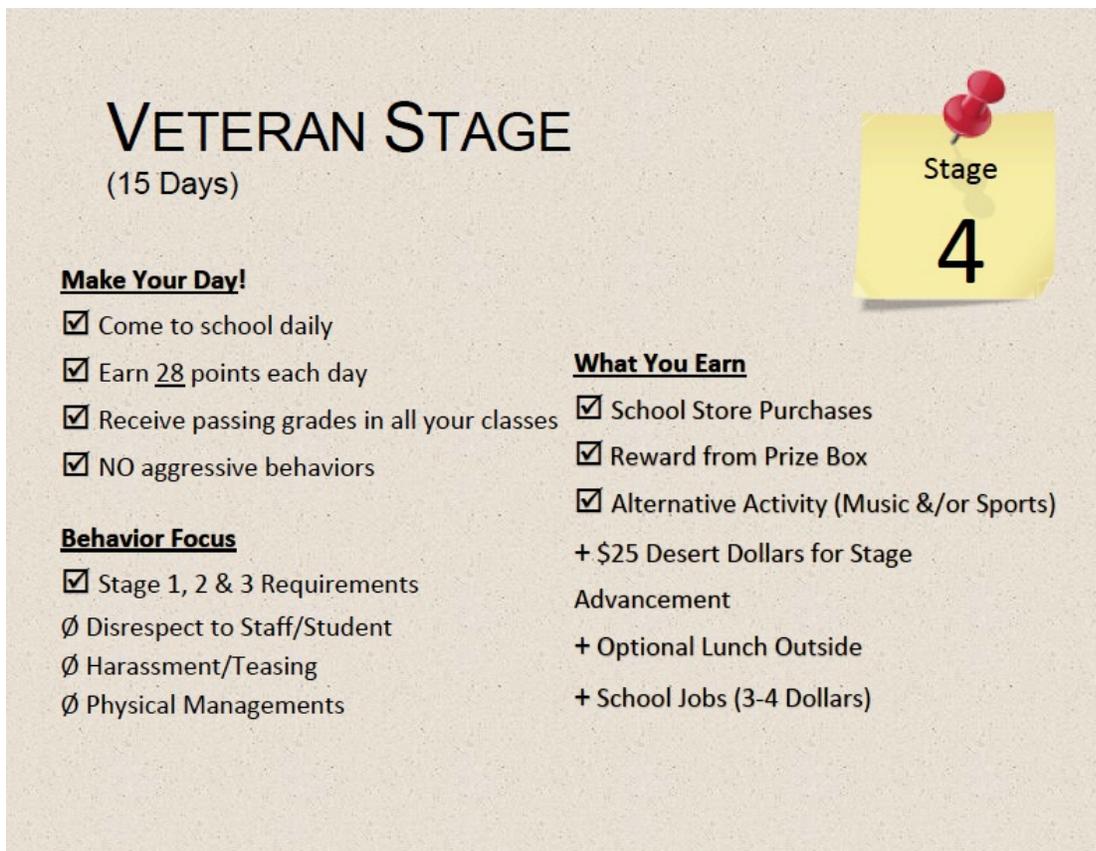
What You Earn

- School Store Purchases
- Reward from Prize Box
- + \$25 Desert Dollars for Stage Advancement
- + Alternative Activity (Music &/or Sports)

Stage
3

STAGE 4: 'VETERAN STAGE'

The Veteran stage is characterized by a student who has demonstrated knowledge and success in their ability to perform their academic responsibilities. The Veteran student has shown through their daily behavior that they understand what it takes 'to get the job done.' The Veteran's transition skills have been tested and proven. They understand through experience the challenges of staying focused on their goals and ambitions. The Veteran has earned the trust of the staff to accept and handle more independent activities. In order for Veterans to successfully complete this stage and advance to stage 5, the Mentor stage, students need to complete the following tasks for 15 consecutive days:



VETERAN STAGE

(15 Days)

Make Your Day!

- Come to school daily
- Earn 28 points each day
- Receive passing grades in all your classes
- NO aggressive behaviors

Behavior Focus

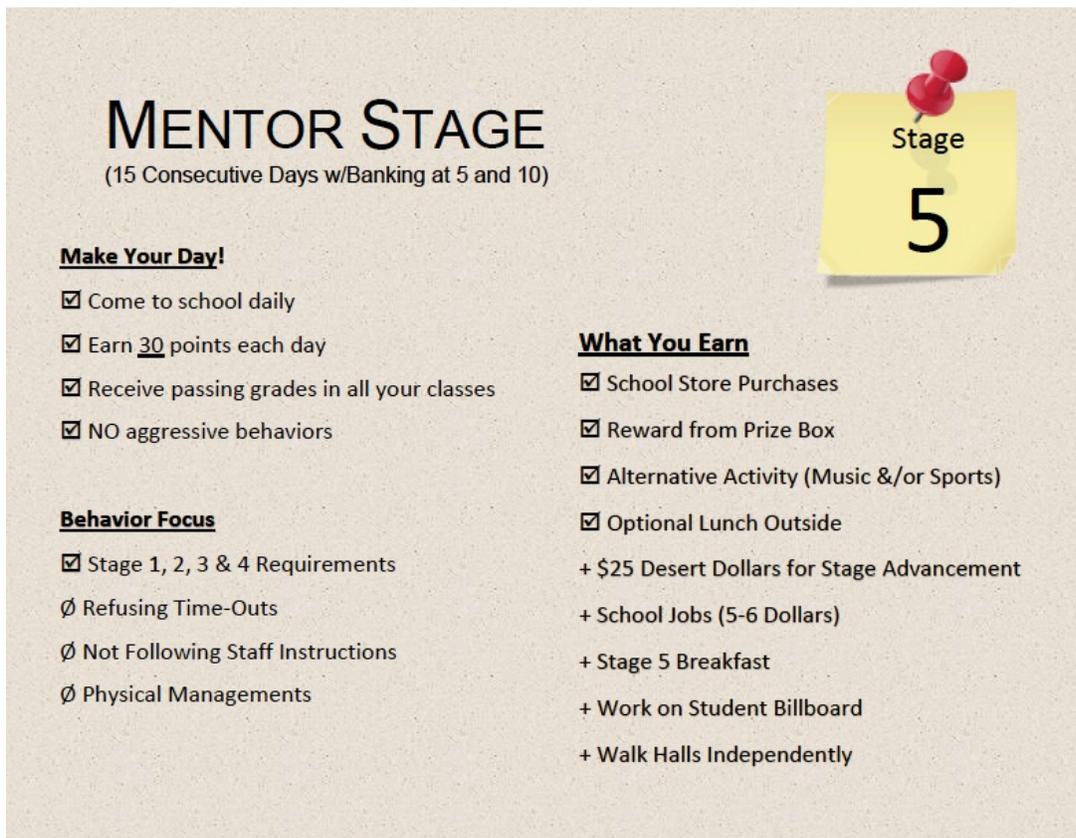
- Stage 1, 2 & 3 Requirements
- Ø Disrespect to Staff/Student
- Ø Harassment/Teasing
- Ø Physical Managements

What You Earn

- School Store Purchases
- Reward from Prize Box
- Alternative Activity (Music &/or Sports)
- + \$25 Desert Dollars for Stage Advancement
- + Optional Lunch Outside
- + School Jobs (3-4 Dollars)

STAGE 5: 'MENTOR STAGE'

As a Mentor, the student has arrived! They have shown themselves and others they have achieved success in our program. Mentors consistently practice transition skills necessary for academic and vocational success beyond Desert Heights Academy. As the name implies, Mentors lead by example. Through their positive behavior, they strengthen those around them. They provide encouragement to Rookies and guidance to Apprentices, Starters and Veterans. Mentors have earned the trust of staff to accept and handle independent activities. In order to maintain at this stage, students need to complete the following tasks on a day to day basis:



MENTOR STAGE
(15 Consecutive Days w/Banking at 5 and 10)

Make Your Day!

- Come to school daily
- Earn 30 points each day
- Receive passing grades in all your classes
- NO aggressive behaviors

Behavior Focus

- Stage 1, 2, 3 & 4 Requirements
- Refusing Time-Outs
- Not Following Staff Instructions
- Physical Managements

What You Earn

- School Store Purchases
- Reward from Prize Box
- Alternative Activity (Music &/or Sports)
- Optional Lunch Outside
- + \$25 Desert Dollars for Stage Advancement
- + School Jobs (5-6 Dollars)
- + Stage 5 Breakfast
- + Work on Student Billboard
- + Walk Halls Independently

PROGRESS MONITORING:

Students keep track of their progress through weekly point sheets. Every morning they identify their stage and their daily goal to help them advance for that day. Although it is our focus to help students advance in their stages, the journey toward academic success often presents challenges. Students can move up AND down the stages depending on their behavior. For instance, if a student does not achieve their daily and weekly responsibilities, they will meet with staff to discuss a possible change of stage. This process allows the student to recognize they need continued practice in that area.

CONSISTENCY = TRUST

At DHA, we recognize the importance of being consistent in applying our Positive Behavior Management model. Staff are trained that consistency builds trust with students. Toward that end, we consistently follow a stepwise system to handling negative behavior. This includes:

Step 1: Staff REDIRECT the student to be behave appropriately.

If student continues to behave inappropriately...

Step 2: Staff DIRECT the student to take a 'Time Out'

If student continues to behave inappropriately...

Step 3: Staff refers student to BIP.

If student refuses to walk to the BIP...

Step 4: Staff escort the student to the Behavior Intervention Program.

TIME OUT:

Time Out is used to help students calm their emotions and regain their focus on appropriate and positive behavior.

When asked to take a time out, students are placed in a low stimulation area, typically facing a wall. Staff monitor students while in Time Out and help the students rejoin class when they are ready.

Time Out is NOT a punishment

Most people make use of Time Out no matter their age or occupation. Therefore, at DHA, we see the effective use of Time Out as a positive development for the student.

AGGRESSIVE AND UNSAFE BEHAVIOR:

Students who choose to behave in an aggressive and unsafe manner are physically managed. As an organization, we need to protect the safety of our students and staff as well as the integrity of our program. In certain cases, the police will be involved. Our focus is to apply consequences that parallel the real world.

Unsafe and aggressive students are referred to the BIP room where they work on violence and coping skills worksheets. Additionally, aggressive students are required to pay restitution for the hurt / disruption they caused.

PHYSICAL MANAGEMENT

In order to maintain a safe and positive learning environment, we practice physical management in situations where students are behaving in an unsafe manner. All staff are trained in the non-violent physical management techniques.

It is our focus to promote and reinforce self-control. However, if a student is demonstrating unsafe and out of control behavior, we will engage the student in physical management to ensure the students, staff, and fellow classmates' safety.

In order for students to attend Desert Heights Academy, the parent / guardian needs to sign a Physical Management Consent form.

The physical management procedure used at Desert Heights Academy involves a 3 step procedure. It is used only as a means to ensure student and staff safety. The stepwise format allows for the student to have psychological control over the procedure. Student behavior determines how restrictive the physical management needs to be. In efforts to ensure student and safety, a minimum of two staff participate in the physical management procedure.

- Step 1 (Arm Hold): Two staff, standing to the side of the student, secure both arms of the student by holding the student's wrist and upper arm (above elbow).
- Step 2 (Standing Hold): Lead staff moves behind student, securing student's arm across their body while assist staff remains holding student's arm around wrist and upper arm (above elbow).
- Step 3 CPI team control position: The *CPI Team Control Position* is used to manage individuals who have become dangerous to themselves or others. Two staff members hold the individual as the auxiliary team member(s) continually assess the safety of all involved and assist, if needed. During the intervention, staff members who are holding the individual will
 - Face the same direction as the acting-out person while adjusting, as necessary, to maintain close body contact with the individual.
 - Keep their inside legs in front of the individual.
 - Bring the individual's arms across their bodies, securing them to their hip areas.
 - Place the hands closest to the individual's shoulders in a C-shape position to direct the shoulders forward.



- ✚ Documentation: All staff involved in the physical management are required to complete their documentation following each PM. A designated administrator phones the student's parent / guardian about the PM incident if it involves The *CPI Team Control Position*.
- ✚ The *CPI Children's Control Position* is designed to be used with small children. DHA may use this position with students smaller than staff, and only when one staff is available.
- ✚ Desert Heights Academy will primarily use the *CPI Team Control Position and the CPI Children's Control Position* as a last resort in cases of physically dangerous behaviors presented by students. However, there may be cases where a student may require a more restrictive physical intervention for safety. In that instance DHA staff will use a five-step model that continues to allow for the student to have psychological control over the procedure.
- ✚ Physical management incidents are recorded and used to help determine student readiness to transition from DHA to another educational / vocational setting.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Office Hours: 7:30-3:15

School Hours 8:30-2:30/ 187 days

Early Release each Wednesday 12:30

Desert Heights Academy

2018 - 2019 School Calendar

August '18						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

September '18						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October '18						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November '18						
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December '18						
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30	31					

January '19						
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27	28	29	30	31		

February '19						
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March '19						
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31						

April '19						
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28	29	30				

May '19						
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June '19						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July '19						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



School Closed/ Holidays



First Day of School



Early Release 12:30 / Professional Development



ESY Begins / Ends



End of Quarter



Last Day of School / ½ day