



Engaging the mind. Engaging the world.

***STUDENT / PARENT HANDBOOK
2010-2011***

Desert Academy
313 Camino Alire • Santa Fe, NM 87501
p 505.992.8284 • f 505.992.8270

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Overview

Philosophy

Mission Statement

Desert Academy is dedicated to academic and personal excellence. We provide a quality college preparatory education in a diverse school community that values individuality and character, promotes self-confidence and fosters global understanding.

Academic Philosophy

Desert Academy's emphasis on concurrent study of humanities, science, mathematics, physical education and the arts, provides continuity of scholarship and cultivates critical thinking skills.

Through experiential learning, discussion, investigation, independent research and writing across the curriculum, students gain competence that will sustain a lifetime of learning.

Students are encouraged to acknowledge their responsibility to themselves, their classmates and the global community. Learning at Desert Academy is not a means to an end, but rather a bridge to further engagement with the world at large and as a result, a more meaningful, thoughtful life.

Diversity Statement

Desert Academy is a diverse community with a conviction that successful education develops basic human values such as respect and integrity.

Our academic curriculum, advisory program and school activities foster tolerance for differences in gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic group, religion and sexual orientation. We affirm that varying perspective enrich the life of our school community and the world around us.

Governance

Board of Trustees

Desert Academy, a 501(c)(3) corporation, is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees composed of current parents of Desert Academy students and interested members of the Santa Fe community at large. Board officers include a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Board of Trustee Standing Committees are listed in the school by-laws and ad-hoc committees are appointed on an 'as-needed' basis. Trustees serve as volunteers and receive no remuneration for their service.

The Board is entrusted with the fiscal security of the corporation, perpetuating the founding purpose of the school and advancing the mission of Desert Academy through long-range planning and fundraising. The Board also creates policies as adapted to current circumstances and evaluates the performance of

the Head of School.

Trustees have specific and needed expertise that they bring to bear upon general deliberations of policy and planning. They do not promote particular agendas or political or personal perspectives. The Board of Trustees does not field complaints, set curriculum, hire or supervise faculty or administrators (other than the Head of School), determine salaries or in any way intervene in the daily operations of the school.

Trustees serve as leaders within the Desert Academy community and to the greater Santa Fe community by promoting the school for admissions and fundraising. Each Trustee acts as an ‘ambassador’ for the school in community and professional organizations. Most importantly, Trustees serve as leaders in fundraising efforts by their participation in philanthropic efforts for the school at whatever level of giving is comfortable, and by introducing the school to individuals and organizations or companies that can provide significant financial support to the advancement and overall mission of Desert Academy.

Academic Program

Desert Academy Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from Desert Academy, a minimum of 29 credits is required.

English (Language A)	4 credits
Humanities	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits (effective 2011-2012)
Science	4 credits
Foreign Language (Language B)	4 credits (same language) (2011-2012)
Physical Education	1 credit
Fine Arts	3 credits
Technology	1 credit
Electives (can include Additional fine arts, PE, Technology, or any other Subject area)	2 credits
CAS (Pass/Fail)	1 credit
Senior Seminar/mentorship (Pass/Fail)	1 credit

Every student must take a minimum of four academic courses each school year, regardless of whether or not they have fulfilled their graduation credit requirements.

Concurrent enrollment at various accredited institutions for extra credit, make-up work, or college credit is offered at an additional cost and with the approval of the Assistant Head of School and parents.

Middle School Required Curriculum:

English (Language A)	2 years
Humanities	2 years
Science	2 years
Mathematics	2 years
Foreign Language (Language B)	2 years
Fine Arts	2 years
Technology	2 years
Physical Education	2 years
CAS	2 years (see CAS guide)

**High school courses taken during the middle school years are reflected in the student's high school career GPA.*

***Students entering Desert Academy in the eighth grade are not required to make up credits if their seventh grade program differs from Desert's requirements.*

Please see the Desert Academy Curriculum Guide available at the front office or on the website for more information on each course offered at Desert Academy.

CAS: Creativity, Service, Action

In order to graduate from Desert Academy, students must complete 1 CAS credit made up of a student's yearly participation in the CAS program. In addition, middle school students must complete 45 hours per year in order to be promoted to high school.

The CAS program emphasizes experiential learning in the creative arts, bodily action, and community service. Students learn by becoming involved in tasks that have real consequences and reflecting on these experiences over time. The goal of CAS is to consistently involve students in their communities in order to encourage life long learning and active citizenship.

Over the course of the school year, students complete a certain number of CAS hours, depending on their grade level. These hours should be evenly distributed between creativity, action, and service. CAS tasks should be ACTIVE; passive pursuits, such as attending sports events, viewing art, or attending performances do not qualify for CAS credit. The focus should be on developing new skills and taking on new roles.

Upon completion of an activity or project, students must complete a written reflection - the CAS self-evaluation- and

turn it in to the CAS coordinator in order to get credit. The CAS coordinator will hold an orientation session during the first week of school to familiarize students with the CAS program.

CAS requirements by grade level:

Grade Level	7	8	9	10	11	12
Hours Required per School Year	45	45	60	60	75	75

What defines a CAS activity?

Creativity - This aspect of CAS is interpreted as imaginatively as possible to cover a wide range of arts and other activities outside the normal curriculum, which include creative thinking in the design and carrying out of service projects.

Action - This aspect of CAS can include participation in individual and team sports and physical activities outside the normal curriculum; it also includes physical activity involved in carrying out creative and service projects.

Service - Service involves interaction, such as the building of links with individuals or groups in the community. The community may be the school, the local district, or it may exist on national or international levels (such as undertaking projects of assistance in a developing country).

All activities/projects - Students should be encouraged towards group and team activities, and undertaking new roles, but an individual commitment is acceptable where the general requirements of CAS are met: goals are set and the student reflects on progress.

Desert Academy facilitates a number of activities throughout the school year that qualify for CAS. These activities are announced in assembly, posted on the CAS board, and posted to the weekly e-news.

Academic Policies

Assessments/grading

At Desert Academy, we strongly believe that learners construct their own meaning. In devising meaningful learning and assessment, three questions must be considered; What do we want to learn? How best will we learn? How will we know what we have learned?

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do, and feel at different stages in the learning process. Everyone involved with assessment, the community as a whole, must have a clear understanding of the reasons for the assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the method by which the assessment is made. Assessment focuses on the process of student learning as well as on the quality of the products of that learning. Assessment is an essential part of the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching. It is the foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. It is integral to guiding students through the learning process.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The criteria and point values vary for each of the eight disciplines, but all are derived from four core components:

- Knowledge: Facts that the student should be able to recall to ensure competence in the subject
- Understanding: How the student will be able to interpret, apply, or predict aspects of the subject
- Skills: Shown through tasks that allow the student to apply what has been learned to a new situation
- Attitudes: Ways in which the student is changed by the learning experience

Teachers use a variety of methods of assessment including essays, projects, portfolios, exams, oral presentations, and discussions. Students are provided with rubrics for all major assignments.

Quarter grades are issued after the closing date for each quarter, as indicated on the school calendar. Written assessments are included with grades twice a year, at the close of the first and third quarters. The grades for the first and third quarter are only a progress report; they do not appear on the student's permanent transcript and are intended to provide feedback to students and parents about the student's progress in a given course. Only the semester grade appears on a student's transcript. A student who earns a grade of "incomplete" for any marking period has six weeks to make up missing work, after which the "incomplete" becomes a failing grade. "Incompletes" are generally not given at the end of the 2nd semester except for medical reasons.

Course Outlines

At the beginning of the semester, students will receive course

outlines that detail the requirements for each of their courses. Please take the time to read these carefully. Among other things, course outlines list required materials, assessment policies, and minimum requirements for credit.

Semester and Final Exams

A semester exam and final exam schedule will be provided to students at least two weeks before the end of each semester. The faculty also provides review assignments and time for review. The faculty is required to specify for students the weight of a semester or final exam in the student's final grade. Certain faculty members and courses substitute a major project for the final exam.

Grading Scale

All Desert Academy courses use the following grading scale:

A	4.0	C+	2.33	D-	.67
A-	3.67	C	2.0	F	0
B+	3.33	C-	1.67		
B	3.0	D+	1.33		
B-	2.67	D	1.0		

Online Grade book Program

Parents and students have 24-hour access to an online grade book program that allows teachers to post current grades, missing assignments, and information about homework. Teachers are required to update the posting of grades at least every two weeks.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Desert Academy is a school community based on trust, integrity, respect, and fairness. In conjunction with these core values, Desert Academy does not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating include, but are not limited to: taking credit for work created, authorized, or prepared by another; not giving credit for sources of material; copying from others' papers; using cheat sheets, electronic devices with stored information, or other inappropriate materials.

Consequences may vary depending on the severity of the situation and on whether it is a first or repeat offense. Consequences for clear cut situations of plagiarism and cheating include: receiving zeroes on work, conferences with the student, parents, teacher, and administration, suspension and expulsion.

Homework Policy

Desert Academy works to balance academic needs, extracurricular activities, and family life. Middle School students will typically have an average of one to one and a half hours of homework a night. High School students will typically have an average of two to two and a half hours of homework a night. Students enrolled in IB Diploma Programme classes may have different homework requirements. Long-term projects and/or research assignments will

require additional time, and students are strongly encouraged to pace themselves on these assignments.

Dropping or Adding Courses

Scheduling changes involving individual students and affecting graduation requirements are made only after consultation with the Assistant Head of School. Students are responsible for obtaining the add/drop form from the registrar's office and completing the process according to the policy. After the first three weeks of school, no changes are allowed for the remainder of the semester.

Academic Probation:

Any student who receives one or more F's or two or more D's for a semester is placed on academic probation. Also, a student who misses 10 or more classes (excused or unexcused) will be placed on academic probation. If a student remains on academic probation at the end of the third quarter, his contract may be held for reenrollment pending his academic performance during the remainder of the school year. An eleventh or twelfth grade student on academic probation will lose his or her lunchtime off-campus privileges.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme:

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Desert Academy provides students with the opportunity to participate in a challenging, internationally recognized curriculum based in a mission and educational philosophy that mirrors Desert's own commitment to valuing the individual, teaching the whole student, and privileging inquiry and process over absolutes and products.

Who can participate in the IB Diploma Programme?

Because the IB curriculum is such a natural complement to Desert's own philosophy and mission, we want to ensure that each student has the opportunity to participate in the Diploma Programme if they so choose.

There are two different levels of participation in the Diploma Programme at Desert. Full Diploma students are students who have chosen to participate in the full Diploma Programme which consists of taking classes in each of six prescribed subject areas as well as taking the Theory of Knowledge course, completing CAS requirements, and completing the Extended Essay (please see the IB Guide for more information on the structure and content of the IB Diploma Programme). Full Diploma students will be given priority in filling IB classes. Certificate students are students who have chosen to take between one and several IB courses, but not to participate in the full Diploma Programme. At the end of each IB course, certificate students will take the IB exam and receive a certificate for that subject area from IB in addition to the credit received for taking the class here at Desert.

How does a student apply to become a full diploma candidate?

There are two components of this process: a statement of intent and the mutual interview.

Statement of Intent - In the winter of their sophomore year, students wishing to join the Diploma Programme write a one page statement of intent. This statement should answer the question "why do you want to be a part of the IB Diploma Programme?" Students are encouraged to be honest and creative in their responses. The purpose of this statement is both to give us a written account of the students' intent and motivation, and to give the students the opportunity to reflect on paper about their

readiness to meet the challenges of the Programme.

The Mutual Interview - The mutual interview is designed to give students a chance to ask questions about the Diploma Programme and have their concerns addressed, as well as to give the school a chance to get a deeper sense of the student's readiness and motivation. Students schedule their interviews as soon as they submit their Letter of Intent.

Prerequisites

In order to be considered for the full Diploma Programme, students must have completed Algebra II and three years of a foreign language (with the exception of Chinese) by the beginning of their junior year.

While in the Diploma Programme, students are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA. If a student's GPA drops below 3.0 during the course of the programme, the student's candidacy will be reconsidered.

IB Diploma Programme Coordinator

The IB Diploma Programme Coordinator acts as a resource for the students, families, and faculty in navigating the requirements, deadlines and services of the programme. The Diploma Programme Coordinator also acts as a liaison between the International Baccalaureate Organization and the students, families, and faculty at Desert Academy.

Educational Planning

The Assistant Head of School, Registrar and the College Counselor make certain that credit requirements are being met in a timely and manageable fashion. Every effort is made to involve the student in developing his or her educational plan. In the spring, students receive course request forms for the following school year to be filled out in consultation with their advisors and parents.

Advisory Program

Every student at Desert Academy has a faculty advisor. The role of the advisor is to support students by listening, facilitating solutions, and providing students with a skill set necessary for success. Advisors may act as liaisons for students when needed. Advisors also write parents a personal letter about each of their advisees at the end of the first semester.

Topics covered in Advisory include time management, organization, coping with stress, goal setting, and life skills. In addition, Advisory uses a character curriculum that focuses on developing specific core values and attributes such as responsibility and respect.

College and Career Counseling

Desert Academy's college and career counseling offers every student the opportunity to be in a position to attend college.

Students receive information regarding local, state, national and international options for higher education, guidance in their academic and activity involvement based on what colleges expect, SAT/ACT testing, college application deadlines and procedures, and assistance in the application process.

While we make every reasonable effort to assist with the college application

process, Desert Academy cannot be responsible for students who do not complete their applications or who do not do the appropriate research for financial aid resources. The process is lengthy and involved and requires family commitment.

9th Grade - *students consult with members of the administration team to ensure that their academic schedules meet college requirements. College counselor gives overview of college search and enrollment process.*

10th Grade - *continued oversight of academic goals. PSAT recommended. PLAN required.*

11th Grade - *continued oversight of academic goals. PSAT required. ACT prep course offered in the spring. SATI, SATII Subject Area Tests, and ACT recommended. Students and parents meet with college counselor to start to create their college lists. College visits begin. Students begin regular special sessions meetings in the spring of the junior year with ACT Prep.*

12th Grade - *continued oversight of academic goals. Students and parents meet with our college counselor. Seniors continue regular special sessions meetings for college counseling and ACT Prep. College selection process finishes; college applications and visits continue. Students take SATs and ACTs in fall for spring application deadlines.*

A college financial aid workshop is offered every year for all interested parents of student's grades 7-12.

Counseling Services

Desert Academy takes a collaborative approach to serving student's mental health needs as they relate to their academic success.

The School Counselor may initiate appointments with students. If a student wants to see the School Counselor, he/she can make an appointment at the front desk, or call the counselor, or just stop by the counselor's office during the hours posted near the door. Students are encouraged to ask the counselor for assistance at any time during the school day.

Under State law, students 14 years of age and over have full confidentiality between themselves and a counselor. They can seek counseling or medical care without consent from a parent. The content of the counseling session is confidential between that student and the counselor. With middle school students (under 14), the counselor notifies the parent that the student has been referred in order to discuss the general nature of the issue with the parents. Legally, the counselor can share information concerning a student (who is under 18) with a parent when necessary for the effective treatment of the student, though the counselor maintains sensitivity in honoring the confidentiality of the student whenever possible.

The exceptions to maintaining confidentiality are:

- If the student is being harmed or neglected*
- If the student is harming themselves*
- If the student is harming someone else*

- *If the legal system is involved*
- *If there is a risk of serious and imminent danger to the student or others*

The counselor will discuss the necessity of breaking confidentiality with the student if it becomes necessary, and will contact a parent or child protective services when indicated.

The counselor will inform the Head of School in cases where the student is at high risk of self harm, experiencing suicidal ideation, is threatened by others, is threatening harm to others, or is being harmed by others.

Students may self refer, or they may be referred to the counselor by teachers, administrators, peers or parents. Students are referred for a variety of reasons including concerns about behaviors, moods, relationships, family problems, anger issues, loss of interest in school, friends, and activities. Issues that are frequently addressed or explored are: unidentified learning issues, depression, anxiety, grief, eating disorders, drug or alcohol problems, high risk behavior, self-harm, suicidal ideation/threats/acts.

The counselor will assess the situation and, when indicated, contact parents and/or makes referrals for the individual or family appropriate services. These include but are not limited to tutoring, learning specialist, psychiatric services, psychological evaluations, counseling services, family counseling, medication management, medical services, visual or hearing assessment, occupational therapies, or physical therapist. It is the responsibility of the counselor to inform the student and/or parent of the available options in dealing with their particular issues.

With permission from the parents and/or student, teachers are notified if the student is in crisis and needs either temporary or long term accommodations. Teachers are usually notified in general terms.

The counselor works collaboratively with collateral sources in addressing issues of concern with the permission of the parents or student.

The counselor attempts to make a connection with all new students in order to make them aware of the services available to them within the school environment as well as in the Santa Fe community.

Learning Services for Students with Learning Differences:

The main goal of the Learning Services Program at Desert Academy is to help students with identified learning differences become strong self-advocates. Students who thoroughly grasp how they learn and what works best for their individual learning styles help their teachers understand how to best guide them and capitalize on their strengths both within and outside the classroom.

Desert provides extra support and some academic accommodations for students with identified learning differences (specific learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD). Typical accommodations at Desert Academy include extended time on tests and assignments, preferential seating, and the use of technology. These services are coordinated by our Learning Specialist with the

student's classroom teachers.

Students receiving accommodations must have diagnostic testing that is no more than three years old, and we require testing information be kept current in order to receive academic accommodations. Current testing is also required for accommodations on standardized tests such as the ACT and SAT.

Diagnostic testing is not provided by Desert Academy; however, we are happy to provide a list of individuals and organizations that provide this testing. Students with a professional learning evaluation should provide their formal report to the Learning Specialist, who will review the documentation and summarize the report including suggested accommodations in a one-page document to be shared confidentially with the student's teachers. Each student with current diagnostic testing will meet with the learning specialist at least once per semester to review academic challenges and to evaluate the usefulness of accommodations and support.

Many students with learning differences do well at Desert, because we offer specific class tutorials, summer school classes, and small class-size that allow for a degree of individualization. Desert does not provide specialized instruction, modified curriculums, modified grading, or individual tutoring or instruction for specific learning problems. Desert's learning specialist maintains a list of tutors as a referral for our students who need additional support outside the classroom.

Parents of new students with diagnosed learning differences must meet with Learning Specialist prior to acceptance to discuss appropriate accommodations and to ensure that a student's needs can be met.

Standardized Testing

All incoming Class Seven students and new Class Eight-Ten students take the complete battery of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills during the first weeks of the school year. Seventh and eighth grade students take the ITBS during the last weeks of the school year.

Ninth and Tenth graders take the Iowa Test of Educational Development.

In addition, all students take the writing ERB yearly.

These tests are used to measure individual student achievement as well as the effectiveness of the school curriculum.

PSAT testing is administered on campus. This test is required of all juniors and open to all sophomores. Information on these tests will be available during the first weeks of school.

SAT/ACT

A minimum of one college placement test (SAT or ACT) is required for all 11th and 12th graders. Additionally, students are urged to take both the SAT II Writing and Mathematics Subject Area Tests. Registration materials are available from Margaret McNally, College Counselor, or you may register on-line at www.act.org for the ACTs, and www.collegeboard.com for the SATs. Those students who qualify for extended time testing will need to make special arrangements through the learning specialist. All standardized testing

takes place at various Santa Fe schools and colleges. See registration bulletins for locations.

All juniors and seniors take an ACT Prep course as part of Desert's "Special Sessions" program.

Please see the Testing Grid on the Desert Academy website for more information on standardized testing.

Student Records and FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he/she turns 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom rights are transferred are 'eligible students'.

Under FERPA:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. School may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to require that a school correct records that they believe are inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to a formal hearing.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - Other schools to which the student is transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
 - Accrediting organizations
 - To comply with a judicial order or subpoena
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health or safety emergencies
 - State and local authorities
- Schools may disclose, without consent, the directory information such as student's name, address, telephone number, date of birth. Schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information.

Desert Academy discloses directory information to colleges and universities, photographic studios for yearbook pictures, to local newspapers when the student receives an award or graduates, to DA staff, and other purposes

deemed reasonable by the Administration. If a parent would like a student's directory information withheld, the parent should submit a letter of request to the school Registrar.

Student Life

Desert Academy expects students to commit to the basic core values of honesty, responsibility, diligence, compassion, respect, citizenship, courage, fairness, and integrity. To this end, each Desert student is asked to take the following pledge:

I pledge that...

- *My behavior shows respect for myself and others.*
- *My words and deeds represent truth and honesty.*
- *My decisions are based upon having the courage to do what is right.*
- *I will accept responsibility for my choices and behavior.*

Specifically, students are expected to honor this pledge in the following ways:

- *Take charge of their own learning, completing assigned work in a timely and responsible manner, and, if necessary, negotiating adjustments in their academic program respectfully.*
- *Work to their potential in all areas.*
- *Be involved in solving their own academic and social problems.*
- *Respect the common goals of our community and strive to make a contribution towards achieving them.*
- *Recognize and respect diversity.*
- *Attend all scheduled activities on time, and be fully prepared to participate.*

School Environment

In the interest of creating and maintaining a safe, appropriate climate that supports learning, students are expected to observe the following standards for behavior within the school facility:

- *Behave in a mature and respectful manner appropriate to a learning environment.*
- *No running, yelling, pushing, horseplay, whistling, loud noises, ball playing, or other disruptive behavior within the confines of the school property.*
- *No public displays of intimate physical contact.*
- *No foul language.*

Dress Guidelines

Students are free to express themselves through their attire, provided that it does not:

- *Promote or suggest racism, bigotry, sexism, or intolerance.*
- *Cause disturbances or distractions in school.*
- *Promote, advertise, display, or advocated alcohol, drugs, smoking, or substance abuse.*
- *Promote or advocate violence.*
- *Suggest sexual labels or stereotypes.*
- *Contain profanity or vulgar language.*

In addition, dress should be appropriate to a school environment.

- *Shorts and skirts should be an appropriate length.*
- *Students may not expose skin at the waistline.*
- *No low-cut shirts, strapless shirts or tube tops.*

- No exposed underwear.
- No sunglasses may be worn in the school facility or at indoor school-sponsored events.
- No hats may be worn in the school facility.

While the dress guidelines promote freedom of expression, interpretation of these guidelines is solely at the discretion of Desert Academy. It is the decision of the school to determine if the dress guidelines have been violated. Students who choose not to follow the dress code will be asked to change. Continued violation of the dress code will result in logical and appropriate consequences.

Rules of Conduct

**All rules apply to school-related functions, both on and off campus. Campus is defined as anything within a ½ mile radius of the school building.*

Tobacco

The use of or possession of tobacco products on school grounds or at any school function is prohibited.

First Offense for Use or Possession of Tobacco Products

- Student may be suspended from school for up to five (5) days.
- Parent conference will be required before readmission.
- Suspension may be modified or reduced if a student enrolls in and completes a smoking cessation class approved by Desert Academy. If the student does not complete the recommendations of the assessment or the smoking cessation class, then any remaining suspension will go into effect.

More serious consequences will result for repeated incidents, including the possibility of expulsion.

Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Students will face serious consequences when there is reasonable cause to believe they have violated the prohibition against possession, sale or use of alcohol, illegal drugs or mind-altering substances. Reasonable cause shall mean specific observable facts that can be described and that indicate a particular student is in the possession of or has used alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or mind altering substances, or that which purports to be, on or adjacent to school property or at school sponsored activities.

First Offense for Use or Possession:

- Student may be suspended for up to ten (10) school days.
- Parent conference will be required.
- Law enforcement agency may be contacted. This decision rests with the Head of School.
- Suspension may be modified if a student participates in an assessment by an agency approved by Desert Academy. Desert Academy requires release of the assessment information and that the student follows the assessment recommendations(s). If the student does not complete the recommendations(s) of the assessment, any remaining suspension days will go into effect. Child Protective Services may be contacted if the parents or guardians do not follow through with the recommendations.

Second Offense for Use or Possession:

Same as the first offense except:

- *Student may be placed on a long-term suspension or an emergency expulsion depending on the circumstances of the offense.*
- *Expulsion is a consideration.*

First Offense for Selling and/or Delivering:

- *The student shall be expelled from Desert Academy.*
- *Law enforcement agency may be contacted.*

Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

It is the policy of Desert Academy to provide a positive and productive educational and working environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying or relational aggression. Desert Academy prohibits harassment, intimidation and bullying by students, employees, and other members of the school community. For purposes of this policy, school community includes but is not limited to employees, students, parents, Trustees, contractors and non-employee volunteers. Desert Academy will not tolerate harassment (malicious, sexual or otherwise), intimidation or bullying activity by any member of the school community.

Harassment (malicious, sexual or otherwise), intimidation or bullying means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by any characteristic of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristic, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

1. *Physically harms a school community member or damages their property;*
or
2. *Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education on an employee's work; or*
3. *Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational or work environment; or*
4. *Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.*

"Other distinguishing characteristics" may include but are not limited to: physical appearance, clothing or other apparel, socioeconomic status, gender identity, and behavioral attributes.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, or relational aggression may take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. "Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the educational environment. Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of

harassment, intimidation or bullying may still be prohibited by other School policies.

In addition to the provisions stated above, this policy shall also include the prohibition of all types of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, unwelcome or uninvited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexual comments, cartoons, innuendoes, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual or sexually intimidating nature.

Sexual harassment can occur student-to-student, adult to student, student to adult, adult-to-adult, male to female, female to male, male-to-male, or female-to-female.

The School will take prompt, equitable and remedial action within its authority on reports, complaints, and grievances alleging harassment, intimidation or bullying that come to the attention of the School, either formally or informally.

Depending upon the frequency and severity of the conduct, appropriate responses to violations of this policy may include intervention, counseling, correction, discipline and/or referral to law enforcement to remediate the impact on the victim and the climate, and to change the behavior of the perpetrator. Allegations of criminal misconduct will be reported to law enforcement, and suspected child abuse will be reported to law enforcement or New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (New Mexico's Family and Protective Services agency), as required by law. The goals of this policy include appropriate intervention, restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. Students, staff, or School contractors who engage in harassment, intimidation or bullying will receive appropriate discipline, sanctions, or other appropriate interventions. Other school visitors who engage in this conduct will have their access to school property and activities restricted, and their actions will be reported to the proper authorities, as appropriate.

False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitute violations of this policy.

Coercion, discrimination, or reprisals taken against persons filing complaints or persons acting as witnesses to complaints shall result in appropriate disciplinary action or sanctions according to school policy or other applicable laws or regulations. Persons who knowingly file false allegations, or report or corroborate false allegations, shall also be subject to appropriate disciplinary action or sanctions according to School policy or other applicable laws or regulations.

Cell Phones

The use of cell phones within the school environment is inappropriate because it distracts students from their primary purpose, which is to engage completely in the learning process. In addition, attention to cell phones is disrespectful of the teacher's classroom environment. The ringing of cell phones disrupts learning. In addition, cell phone text messaging and imaging can be used to distract students, harass other students, and/or cheat on tests

and other assignments.

Students are expected to adhere to the following rules regarding cell phone use:

- 1. Cell phones must be turned off and stored out of sight between 8:20 am and 3:20 pm. Cell phones may not be used as calculators, planners, or for any other purpose during class.*
- 2. Cell phones may not be used between classes for any purpose.*
- 3. Cell phones may not be used during breaks or meetings or during lunch as this encourages students to disengage from the school community.*
- 4. Students requiring the immediate use of a phone must obtain permission from a teacher or administrator to go to the front office where they may use the school phone or their own cell phone if granted permission.*
- 5. Cell phones may be used after school only.*

Students who choose not to follow these rules will have their phone taken away for the day. Continued violation will result in more serious consequences that may include asking a parent to pick up the phone as a condition of it being returned, a requirement that a student check in the phone at the front office each morning, or other disciplinary measures.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices include but are not limited to cell phones, iPods/MP3 players, headphones, Blackberry/PDA's, handheld video games and laptop computers.

The use of personal electronic devices often disengages students from the school environment, making them unavailable for both learning and social interaction. Because Desert is a school that values community, the following rules regarding personal electronic devices will be enforced:

- 1. Use of personal electronic devices is prohibited. Students are not allowed to bring devices such as iPods, headphones, handheld video games on school grounds during the school day. The only exception to this rule is the use of laptops for class projects and notetaking with the permission of the student's teacher.*
- 2. Students may lose the privilege of using a laptop in class if they use it to play games, surf the Internet, text message, or engage in any other activity not directly related to the assignment at hand.*
- 3. Students who choose to disobey these rules will have his/her electronic device taken and a parent will be called to pick up the device. A student who repeatedly violates these policies will be subject to disciplinary procedures.*

Food and Drink in the Classroom

In an effort to create a cleaner school environment, students are expected to observe the following rules regarding eating and drinking in the classroom:

- 1. No food or drinks, except water, will be permitted in class unless initiated by the teacher for a specific activity or event.*
- 2. Water containers must have secure lids such as plastic water bottles.*

Weapons

Possession of a weapon on school property or at any school-sponsored event is prohibited.

Willful Destruction of Property

Destruction of any school property, including but not limited to, graffiti anywhere, writing on desks, tables and chairs, etc., will not be tolerated and may require monetary reimbursement besides other consequences to violations of school policies.

Theft

Theft of personal property of students or staff, or of school property is unacceptable at Desert Academy. Any student who steals from a member of the Desert community will face consequences, which may include suspension, notification of legal authorities, and expulsion.

Right to Search

The administration of Desert Academy has the legal authority and right to search school grounds, facilities, student lockers, cars, students and student's upon reasonable suspicion.

Disciplinary Procedures

Desert Academy is committed to taking the time and using the necessary resources to find solutions for behavioral issues in the school community. Whenever disciplinary action has to be taken, sincere and professional attempts are made to locate and address the underlying cause of a behavioral difficulty. Desert Academy also carefully assesses the changes expected from the student in such situations. The most important aspect of Desert Academy's disciplinary process is that it is a team approach, involving the student, the student's parents, and the student's teachers and administrators at school.

Desert Academy's disciplinary system consists of three basic tiers:

1. Classroom Teachers
2. Division Deans
3. Assistant Head of School, often in collaboration with the teachers and deans

Teachers are expected to consistently enforce school policies and procedures, assigning consequences when necessary.

When violations are severe or repeated, teachers refer problems to the Middle and High School Deans, who address these issues with the student and, when necessary, inform parents of the situation. In addition, the Middle and High School Deans handle issues that arise outside the classroom. Deans are also responsible for ensuring class cohesion, mutual respect, and positive contribution to the school community.

The Middle and High School Deans also work in collaboration with the Assistant Head of School to address disciplinary cases and assign appropriate consequences.

Example Disciplinary Actions handled by Middle and High School Deans:

- *Tardies*
- *Dress Code Violations*
- *Cell phone and headphone violations*
- *Classroom behavior problems*
- *Disrespect of the school community*
- *Bullying*

Example Disciplinary Actions handled by the Assistant Head of School and the Middle or High School Deans:

- *Repeated Bullying*
- *Plagiarism/Cheating*
- *Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco*
- *Weapons*
- *Other serious offenses*

Removal from Class

At times, a student might be disruptive in a particular class. A student might be asked to leave that class and report to the Middle or High School Dean. Class work and homework must be made up if a student is removed from class.

Loss of Privileges

Certain aspects of daily life at school are a privilege to the students, and these privileges can be temporarily or permanently removed in response to a behavioral difficulty or rule infraction. A student could lose a privilege for repeated tardiness, violation of the cell phone or headphone policies, a dress code violation, or other infractions. Privileges include a free lunch period, on-time dismissal from school, open campus privilege for 11th-12th graders, and the driving privilege for 10th-12th graders. Loss of any privilege is only imposed after, at minimum, a conference with the student discussing the reason for disciplinary action.

Detention

Lunch time or after school detentions may be assigned to students who have violated school rules or policies. Parents will be notified of after school detentions in advance.

In-School Suspension

Students are assigned in-school “suspension” as a symbolic separation from the school. The student spends the day isolated from the student body, but is allowed to do school work during the day if his/her teachers agree to provide assignments. Students who are in in-school suspension may not attend any school-sponsored activities, on or off campus, for the duration of the suspension.

Suspension

Students are suspended for serious breaches of community standards, as a warning that they are in danger of being removed from Desert Academy, or to afford them a “cooling off” period away from school. A student is not allowed to make up the schoolwork missed while he/she is suspended. Students who

are suspended from school may not attend any school-sponsored activities, on or off campus, for the duration of the suspension.

Probation

This option is available for students who are willing to commit to a program of academic and/or behavioral change. Probation involves a contract between the student and the school, which specifies the required behavioral and/or academic change to which the student is willing and able to commit. The contract also specifies the length of the probationary period and the consequences of violating the probation contract, as well as what support the school will provide in helping the student meet the stated goals. One important aspect of the probationary contract is the commitment to make restitution to the school community through school service, or monetary restitution in the case of damaged facilities or stolen property.

Restitution

A student may be assigned a special project or job as restitution for a behavioral transgression. These projects may include administrative work in the front office or helping to serve lunch.

Expulsion

For serious events that may lead to expulsion, students are put on suspension until the expulsion process is complete. During this suspension period, the student may not attend any school-sponsored activities on or off campus. A student is expelled from Desert Academy only after the following process:

- *Notification and conference with the student, and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s), to review: 1) all documentation of previous disciplinary action (if any), 2) the need for the expulsion, and 3) the reasons for expulsion, making certain they are clear to all concerned.*
- *Notification of the President of the Board of Trustees of Desert Academy, including a review of the need for the expulsion.*

The Assistant Head of School and Head of School make the final decision regarding expulsion.

Appeal process for Expulsion

Parents, legal guardians, and students have the right appeal the decision to expel. The Head of School, as expressly written in Board policies, makes the final decision regarding any appeals of expulsions of students.

Non-Renewal of Enrollment

Desert Academy reserves the right to decline the offer of a re-enrollment contract to any student with significant behavioral issues or for failure to meet the basic academic standards of the school.

Attendance

Absences

Parents are required to call the school excusing your student's absence by 8:30 am. If an absence is not excused, the student will be subject to disciplinary action.

In general, an absence is excused if it is due to illness. Extended student absences require special support for students, and it is understood that students' learning is sometimes disrupted by such absences. Family vacations which conflict with scheduled school days are strongly discouraged.

A student who misses 10 classes per semester, whether or not those absences are excused, will be placed on academic probation. Missing more than 30 minutes of a 90 minute class or 20 minutes of a 65 minute class (Friday schedule) will constitute an absence. This status requires a plan to address missed work approved by the student's teachers, parents, and the Assistant Head of School. Failure to fulfill an approved plan will result in loss of academic credit for that semester. In addition, eleventh and twelfth graders on academic probation lose their lunchtime off-campus privileges.

Tardiness

*In order for learning to take place, students must be on time to class. In addition, promptness is a courtesy that shows respect for the learning environment and the school community. Students are entitled to **one** tardy per week without consequence. This tardy applies to any class throughout the school day. If a student is tardy two or more times per week, that student will be required to serve a lunchtime detention. Students who are tardy must obtain a pass from the front office that admits the student to class. Teachers will uniformly send students to the office if they arrive without a pass. A student who acquires more than six tardies per quarter will be subject to further disciplinary action.*

Truancy

Students absent without consent of the school and parents are considered truant. Examples of truancy are:

- Leaving school without permission from the front office*
- Being absent from class without permission*
- Coming to school, but not attending classes*
- Obtaining permission to go to a specified place and not going there*

Students who are truant are subject to disciplinary action as well as the policy regarding unexcused absences.

Visiting the school

*Desert Academy is open to the entire community. Parents are free to visit at any time during regular school hours, with or without an appointment; however, for the safety of our students, **all visitors to the building must check in with the front office manager at the front desk and receive a Visitor Pass.** Due to faculty schedules and administrator appointments, a visit to address a specific issue or question is usually more productive if scheduled in advance. Students sometimes are uncomfortable having their parents visit their classes, and we request sensitivity in regard to this issue. When you do visit, every effort is made to welcome you and address your concern.*

Items required for Student Files

Immunization Forms

State and Federal law mandate that Desert Academy have immunization records on file for each student, or an exemption from immunization form. In order to best serve each student, Desert Academy also needs to know about pre-existing medical conditions, medications, and other pertinent information.

Prior School History

Upon application, families authorize a release of records from prior schools. Students cannot be officially enrolled at Desert Academy without submitting an official transcript and full disclosure of all information pertinent to your student's education from the previous school, along with all application requirements (diagnostics, educational evaluations, suspension/expulsion history, disciplinary/behavioral records, immunization records, academic references). Withholding information is a serious infraction that may void your contract with the school.

Medical Authorization Forms

Each student has on file a form authorizing Desert Academy and its employees to seek medical treatment for that student in the event of an emergency. Students are not permitted on campus without a current Emergency Medical form on file, signed by parents or legal guardians.

Computer and Internet Use

Desert Academy is pleased to offer students access to networked computers for learning, email communications, and the Internet. To gain access, all students must obtain parental permission on the Internet use permission form. All computer usage, Internet navigation, and printing activities by each user are automatically recorded and subject to review. Because of the need to keep our computer systems consistently available, safe, and secure, we have also developed the following these rules to guarantee users a rich and productive computing experience at Desert Academy.

General Advice

- Use Desert Academy's computer technologies for school-related purposes only.
- Seek the guidance and help of Desert Academy's technology instructors.
- Both Mac OS X and Windows XP operating systems are available on most machines.

Rules Regarding Computers

- Do not install any new programs on Desert Academy computers unless you have permission from the tech department.
- Do not download or install any games or music.
- Food or drink is prohibited in the computer labs at all times.

Rules Regarding Files and Information

- Save all files to your network folder or on a USB flash drive-- never save them "locally," on the computer itself.
- Never give your log-in password to anyone else.
- If your password becomes compromised, ask for another one.

Rules Regarding Internet Use

- *Stay clear of inappropriate websites, e.g. adult, hate, etc. We use filtering to prevent access to these types of sites.*
- *Never give your personal email address to promotional websites or in response to unsolicited emails.*

Books

Textbooks are assigned to students and should be returned to the teacher at the end of the course or at another time as indicated by the teacher. Students will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks. Novels and other paperback books are to be kept by the student, unless they want to return them for future use.

Lost and Found

The school is not responsible for lost or stolen property, but effort will be made to locate missing property. A lost and found area is located in the front office. Periodically, unclaimed clothing items will be donated to charity.

Lunch

We offer a hot lunch program provided by Marja's Natural Foods Catering. Students should sign up for the lunch program on a quarterly basis with the front office manager.

Medications

Desert Academy does not have a nurse on duty at the school. Students taking prescribed medications during the school day must leave this medication with the school office, along with instructions for times and dosages. Prescription medication is to be administered by school personnel. Students are not permitted to carry prescription medication with them during the school day, or to keep prescription medication in their lockers.

No student may give, dispense, or administer any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to another student.

Permission Forms

A general permission form is on file for each enrolled student, allowing Desert Academy employees to take students on trips that occur during regular school hours. Special field trip permission forms are sent home for certain trips and activities, and a parent signature is necessary for student participation in these trips. Parent chaperones for these trips are sometimes needed, and welcome.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition must be paid on time, per the enrollment contract. Students may not be permitted to attend classes or school events at the start of any quarter if payments are delinquent. Throughout the school year, you may be billed for additional or special fees, e.g. athletics, special programs, etc. These must also be paid by their due dates (usually the first of the month following the bill).

Cars and Driving

Desert Academy and its Board of Trustees have enacted the following regulations in order to ensure the safety of all student drivers and passengers. Our primary concern is the safety and well being of each student. The following parental permission and safety issues will be monitored and strictly enforced. Desert Academy is not responsible for any damage done to vehicles on or off campus belonging to students, visitors or faculty as a result of an accident, vandalism or neglect.

On-Campus student parking privileges

On campus student parking is limited to juniors and seniors in good standing with a valid drivers license, parental permission, current auto insurance, a 50 dollar fee, and a school parking sticker. Students will be assigned a parking spot. Students are not permitted to park on Alto Street. Sophomores are allowed to park on campus as space permits.

Courtesy and respect are required of all members of the school community in the campus parking lot. The parking privilege will be revoked in the case of a student who displays unsafe driving.

Driving and Off-Campus Privileges

A student in grades 11 or 12 may go off campus for lunch provided that he/she meet the following requirements:

- 1. Any student leaving campus during lunch must have a permission form on file granting permission to leave campus during lunch. This applies to all drivers, passengers and pedestrians going off campus for lunch.*
- 2. Students and parents must sign a form that releases Desert Academy from any liability for events that take place once the student leaves the Desert Academy campus during lunch.*
- 3. Students on academic probation will lose their off-campus lunch privileges.*

In addition, students must obey all rules of basic safety and must comply with all motor-vehicle laws.

Students found in violation of any of the requirements for off-campus privileges or any student who fails to meet the responsibilities listed immediately above may have his/her off-campus privileges revoked immediately. With regard to a violation of a law, the privileges may be revoked if a law enforcement officer finds a student to be in violation of a law, or if the student is observed violating any law. Once off-campus privileges have been revoked, they will be reinstated for that student at the sole discretion of the Head of School.

A senior in good standing may also go off campus during any free period. No one else may leave campus during any class period, free period, or break unless signed out by a parent.

Parent and Student Drivers

The "right turn in, right turn out only" to the Desert Academy campus rule

will be strictly enforced. Our permit to occupy the school stipulates this requirement at both 313 and 311 Camino Alire. Violation of this rule may lead to loss of assigned parking and/or loss of off-campus privileges for students. Parents please drop off and pick up your student only on the north side of the main building (the casita side). The back north door will no longer be open for student entry before school. Students should enter through the courtyard gate or through the front office door. No drop offs or pick-ups are allowed on the curb in front of the school. No turning around or parking in neighboring driveways or lots is allowed. Not only do these infractions create dangerous situations, but failure to comply will result in possible citations and/or costs. Students are not allowed to park at NDI.

Parent Involvement

Parent Association

Desert Academy parents are encouraged to participate in many different areas of the school. The Parent Association meets at least once a month and organizes several events throughout the school year including the annual rummage sale. The Parent Association at Desert Academy exists for three reasons:

- 1. to support parents;*
- 2. to enhance the life of students, and;*
- 3. to address parenting during the adolescent years.*

The Grade Representatives and chairpersons (determined at the beginning of each school year) of the various committees are the governing body for the PA. The PA also provides volunteer coordination for the teachers and special projects whenever needed.

Financial Aid

Desert Academy is committed to providing access to families who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend the school at full tuition. Our financial aid program is guided by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) principles.

The Financial Aid is responsible for setting the due dates for applications, decision dates, providing materials and instructions to parents requesting such information, processing applications and notifying parents of decisions.

Financial need is determined using information from the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) in Princeton, NJ, tax returns and other supporting documents. Families must reapply for financial aid every year. All forms must be resubmitted each year in order to be considered for aid.

*Awards are based on financial need, date of application (first come - first served), and the demonstrated desire on the part of the family to be an active and productive member of the school community. Returning students in good standing are given preference. “**Good standing**” is broadly defined as:*

- Academically - the student demonstrates reasonable commitment to working to his/her potential, in the judgment of Desert Academy’s faculty, administration and learning specialist*
- Socially - the student has a good attendance record, no major violations of Desert Academy policies or rules, and demonstrates commitment to Desert Academy through involvement in school activities, in the judgment of Desert Academy’s faculty, administration and other employees of the school.*
- Financially - the family regularly pays its invoices and has not defaulted on any payments to Desert Academy.*

Deadlines for requesting aid and filing all forms for the following school year will be published during the first semester of the current year.

Development and Fund Raising

The heart of any independent school consists of students, parents, board, faculty and staff. Desert Academy values each of these groups and is honored to have them participate in the advancement of the school. All groups volunteer time and talent to make the learning environment richer and more complete. Families, board, faculty and staff donate money to help with the operating expenses of the school and to defray the cost of tuition so that a diverse student body is maintained.

During the school year, you will hear about the following from the office of the Director of Development:

- **Annual Fund** - This campaign will launch at the beginning of the school year and will contribute to the general operating budget of the school. Participation by all families is key to the success of the Annual Fund, regardless of the size of the contribution. Watch for informational signs and announcements at back to school events.
- **Charitable Gifts** - Major gifts, that is those over \$5000, will be solicited from foundations and businesses, and will be key to our long term viability as an organization.
- **Events** - Our 6th annual **Golf Classic**, held October 8, will be an exciting time for the Desert Academy community to get together for a day of fun, challenging golf at Las Campanas. All money raised from sponsorship and green fees will go to Financial Aid and Merit Scholarships. In April, we will hold our **annual auction**, which will be a night of fun and laughter and bidding! Proceeds from this event go to the general operating budget, helping us attract and retain faculty. We are working on a **new event** for the spring that will be tons of fun. More about that later...
- **Grants** - Foundations supply funds to non-profit organizations that match the mission of the foundation. Desert Academy faculty and staff have applied for grants in the past for large and small amounts; some have been used for specific programs such as library or athletics or science while others have augmented broad-ranging activities such as the arts or the general fund. This year will be no exception. You will hear when we are successful!

As a Desert Academy family, we hope you will participate as a volunteer at events, invite your friends to attend the Golf Classic and the auction, contribute financially when you can, inform us of organizations you know of that support independent education, and speak to the community about the great things happening at our school

Appendix 1

Daily Schedule - 2009-2010

1 Day: (Monday and Wednesday)

8:20-9:50 am: Period A

9:55-11:25 am: Assembly/Advisory/Special Sessions—Period B

11:25-12:10: Lunch

12:10-1:40 pm: Period C

1:50-3:20: Period D

2 Day: (Tuesday and Thursday)

8:20-9:50 am: Period E

9:55-11:25 am: Period F

11:25-12:10: Lunch

12:10-1:40 pm: Period H

1:50-3:20: Period I

3 Day (Friday)

***The Friday schedule rotates between 1 day and 2 day classes every other Friday.**

8:20-9:25: A/E block

9:27-10:32 am: B/F block

10:32-10:43 am: break

10:43-11:48 am: C/H block

11:50-12:55 pm: D/I block