

# CERTIFIED SUBSTITUTE HANDBOOK



**DEER VALLEY**  
*Unified School District*



## **Vision Statement**

Graduating lifelong learners who will successfully compete, lead, and positively impact the world.



**DEER VALLEY**  
*Unified School District*

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide extraordinary educational opportunities to every learner.



## DISTRICT INFORMATION

Deer Valley Unified School District  
20402 N. 15th Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85027

Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm  
Main: 623-445-5000  
[www.dvusd.org](http://www.dvusd.org)



## SUBSTITUTE INFORMATION

HR Substitute Specialist  
Sara Stevens  
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# DEER VALLEY

*Unified School District*

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**DEER VALLEY**  
*Unified School District*

**Dear Certified Substitute,**

### **Welcome to Our Team of Valued Substitutes**

Substitute teachers are a vital part of our educational community. We deeply value the dedication, flexibility, and professionalism they bring to our schools each day. Whether filling in for a short-term absence or providing continuity during longer leaves, substitutes ensure student learning continues with care and consistency. Your role supports not only our students and staff but also the overall success of our district. We are sincerely grateful for the important work you do.

Our district proudly serves students residing within and around our 367-square-mile boundary, which includes parts of Phoenix, Glendale, Peoria, Anthem, New River, Cave Creek, and unincorporated areas of Maricopa County.

We offer a comprehensive educational experience through a variety of schools and programs, including:

- 16 - K–6 Elementary Schools
- 15 - K–8 Schools
- 3 - Middle Schools
- 5 - High Schools
- 1 - K–12 Online Academy
- 1 - Alternative Campus
- 37 - Preschools

Your role is essential in helping maintain the continuity and quality of education for our students. As a Certified employee, it's important to be familiar with the district's policies and procedures, which apply to all assignments you may undertake.

Substitute employees step in for regular staff who are temporarily unavailable due to various reasons. In some cases, substitutes may also serve in positions that are vacant until they are permanently filled.

Please review this handbook carefully. It is designed to support your success and help you thrive in your role with the Deer Valley Unified School District.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Substitute Dress Code:**

As a substitute, you serve as a role model for students and represent both the school district and the educational profession. Your appearance should reflect a commitment to professionalism, respect, and safety. If unsure about appropriate attire, consult your ESI employer for guidance.

- Substitutes are expected to dress in a professional, clean, modest, and safe manner.
- Athletic wear (sweatpants/shorts) is inappropriate unless teaching physical education or supervising related activities. Shorts must be of appropriate length and modest in appearance.
- Substitutes should maintain a professional casual appearance, with emphasis on the word “professional.”
- Substitutes should be easily distinguishable from students.
- Revealing clothing, including anything that exposes cleavage, midriff, or undergarments, is not allowed. Dress and skirt length must be no more than three inches above the knee. Dresses and tops of sheer fabrics, halter tops, tank tops, low-cut shirts, spaghetti straps, and casual t-shirts are not acceptable.
- Clothing with inappropriate writing or imagery, including offensive or discriminatory content, is strictly prohibited.
- Denim is permitted on Fridays, Spirit Days, or non-student days only.
- Shoes must be clean, safe, and appropriate to the role. Heels must be an appropriate height for school duties. Not allowed: Flip flops, Crocs, or excessively worn footwear.
- Personal hygiene must support a healthy and professional work environment. Hairstyles should be clean, in good taste, and not distracting. Beards and mustaches must be neatly trimmed.

### **Job Assignment:**

#### **Substitute Arrival Checklist**

- ✓ Check in with the front office upon arrival.
- ✓ Sign in and obtain the substitute folder/binder and/or keys to the classroom (if provided). *Note: Not all schools issue keys to substitutes.*
- ✓ Receive an overview of school-specific policies from the secretary.
- ✓ Confirm the substitute folder/binder includes the following (as applicable):
  - Method for reporting student absences and tardiness
  - Daily class schedule
  - General school procedures
  - Emergency procedures
  - Duty schedule (if assigned)
  - Campus map
    - ✓ Inquire about any special activities or events that may alter the day’s normal schedule.
    - ✓ Locate the teacher’s lesson plans, which may be:
  - Provided at check-in
  - Uploaded in Frontline

You are compensated for a full day, so schools may assign you to cover additional classrooms during the prep periods. Please keep this in mind when selecting assignments, as you may be asked to substitute in classrooms outside your preferred subject areas or comfort zone. If requested, you are expected to follow the school's direction regarding coverage. Additionally, substitutes are not permitted to leave campus during prep periods.

You are guaranteed a 30-minute lunch. Please speak with the secretary about utilizing the cafeteria to buy lunch, or you are welcome to bring your lunch. Your scheduled lunchtime will be notated on your class schedule in the substitute folder.

### **When You Arrive at the Classroom:**

The materials needed for your day as a substitute should be found on the teacher's desk. Lesson plans, seating charts, a schedule for the day, and other information pertinent to your assignment should be readily available. Review the materials before the students arrive. If you can't find a seating chart, make your own. This is important because it will assist you in calling the students by name and help you to prevent problems from arising.

If plans are not readily available, please check with the grade level or department teachers first to see if they can help. If not, then contact the school office. The principal/assistant principal and the office staff are there to help you make the day a productive one for your students.

Before class begins, review the teacher's management plan, paying close attention to the systems of rewards and consequences in place. If a management plan isn't readily available, consult a neighboring teacher for guidance.

You are expected to implement the teacher's behavior plan firmly, fairly, and consistently. Additionally, come prepared with your own strategies for positive reinforcement and appropriate consequences to support a respectful and productive learning environment.

Maintain a firm but friendly approach. Students respond well to substitutes who demonstrate calm authority and high expectations. A pleasant demeanor helps set a positive tone. Raising your voice or yelling is not an acceptable form of classroom management.

### **When Students Arrive:**

Begin the class with confidence and purpose. A substitute who greets students warmly, makes eye contact, and monitors the room as students settle in sends a clear message of leadership and control.

When the bell rings, start the day promptly and decisively to signal that learning is underway.

Introduce yourself clearly to the class and write your name on the board.

- ✓ Use a friendly demeanor (a smile goes a long way!) to set a positive, welcoming tone.
- ✓ Take attendance promptly and accurately, showing students that instructional time is important.
- ✓ Make eye contact with each student during roll call to establish your presence and authority.
- ✓ Ensure students are under your supervision at all times. *Never leave a class unattended.*
- ✓ In case of an emergency requiring you to leave the classroom:
  - Notify a neighboring teacher or
  - Use the classroom phone to call the front office. *Each classroom is equipped with a phone; key phone numbers are listed in the substitute folder.*

## **Instructional Expectations for Substitutes:**

The primary goal of a substitute teacher is to ensure continuity of learning in the classroom during the teacher's absence. To emphasize the importance of the day's instruction, substitutes should be organized, efficient, and well-prepared.

Minimize time spent on routine tasks such as attendance, and instead focus on delivering meaningful instruction. Be familiar with the lesson plan content, materials, and classroom expectations to keep students actively engaged in the learning process.

Implementing research-based instructional strategies can help maximize student engagement and foster a positive classroom environment:

- Use management and motivational techniques to maintain student attention and participation.
- Avoid giving directions while students are shuffling papers or preparing materials.
- Ask students to repeat directions to reinforce understanding.
- Set time limits to maintain pacing and efficiency.
- Begin class with bell work to establish routines and signal the start of learning.
- Use icebreakers to build rapport and relationships.
- Incorporate charts, graphics, and organizers to support comprehension.
- Use grouping strategies to encourage collaboration.
- Implement bell-to-bell instruction to make use of the entire class period.
- Provide timely feedback on student work; briefly review completed assignments when possible.
- Schedule time to check for understanding and offer support as needed.
- End class with a reminder of homework or upcoming tasks, and recognize students for academic effort and appropriate behaviors.

Following these practices will help substitutes maintain high instructional standards and contribute meaningfully to student learning.

## **At the End of the Day:**

Some schools have assigned duty responsibilities as part of your daily assignment. These duties are not eligible for extra pay, but are an expected part of your role. If you are assigned a duty, please ensure you are in the correct location and fulfill the responsibility as scheduled. Following these steps ensures a smooth transition for both the students and the returning teacher.

Before leaving the classroom, take a moment to ensure the space is left in an orderly condition:

- Straighten the teacher's desk
- Organize and leave any collected student work (graded if applicable)
- Lock the classroom if required

Afterward, please return to the front office to sign out. Make sure to:

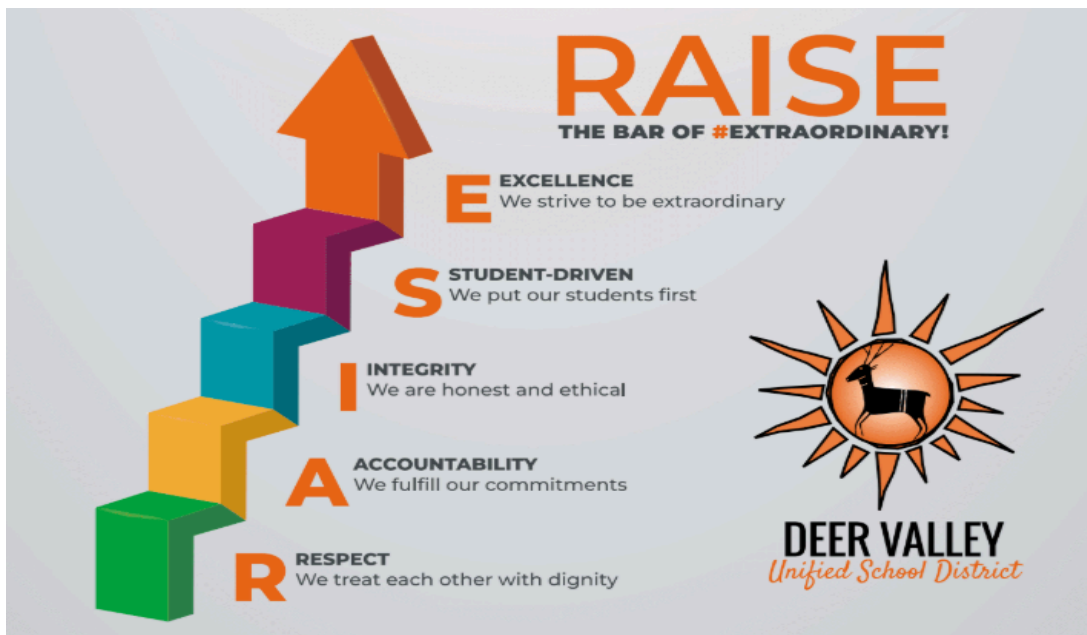
- Return the substitute folder/binder and room keys
- Leave a note or written report for the regular teacher that includes any updates on lesson plans, student behavior, or other relevant issues
- Check with the school secretary to confirm that all responsibilities have been completed

## SUBSTITUTE RECOGNITION

At DVUSD, we believe that recognizing and celebrating the efforts and achievements of our team members is essential to fostering a positive and productive environment. Our recognition program is designed to honor individuals who exemplify our core values, demonstrate exceptional dedication, and contribute meaningfully to our shared success. Through this initiative, we aim to inspire continued excellence and show our appreciation for the outstanding contributions that make our community thrive. The DVUSD Substitute Recognition Program honors the outstanding Certified, Classified, and Nurse substitutes who make a positive impact on students across the Deer Valley Unified School District.

Each quarter, school staff are invited to nominate substitutes from their campuses who have gone above and beyond, exemplifying the District's mission and core values. From the pool of nominees, fifteen exceptional substitutes are selected and invited to the DVUSD District Office for a special recognition ceremony celebrating their dedication and contributions to our schools and students.

As we continue to grow and achieve new milestones together, it's important to pause and celebrate the individuals who help make it all possible. Our recognition program is not just about awards—it's about building a culture of appreciation, encouragement, and mutual respect. Thank you for all that you do, and we look forward to recognizing many more of your accomplishments in the future.



## **SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYMENT**

Employment of any individual is solely at the discretion of Educational Services, Inc. (ESI). The individual has no right to a notice of a hearing in connection with the District's request not to call, or to no longer use the individual as a substitute.

A Substitute is not a permanent position with a set schedule. Substitutes are "at will" employees, and their assignments are based on the needs of the district and are not guaranteed. The school district is not under an obligation to guarantee any job assignments to a substitute.

If you have verbally accepted a job, you must log in to Frontline and verify that it has been entered into the system. It is your responsibility, as a substitute, to verify jobs before arriving at the campus. If the absence is not placed properly and another substitute accepts the job, the substitute in the system is the only one authorized to stay and work the assignment and be paid for the assignment.

If you have been mistakenly assigned to a job where a substitute is not needed or required, we will make every effort to assign you to an equivalent assignment for that day. If we cannot find another assignment, you will be compensated for a half-day's pay. However, you will be required to stay at the school for that half-day and assist with any duties that the administration assigns you, including filing and/or copying.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

All substitutes are required to follow and adhere to Board-approved policies. Adhering to district policies and expectations is essential to maintaining a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment for all students and staff. These guidelines are in place to ensure consistency, fairness, and compliance with state and federal regulations. By following established procedures, we uphold the integrity of our educational system and support the well-being and success of our entire school community. It is the responsibility of every staff member to stay informed and aligned with these policies as part of our shared commitment to excellence.

### **Discipline:**

Review the teacher's management plan and utilize the classroom and school-wide behavior plan in place at the site. Corporal punishment will **not** be used at Deer Valley Unified School District.

Discipline problems are less likely to surface if the students are kept busy and if you are well prepared. The principal/assistant principal is available as a resource to you if needed in case of serious discipline problems arising. ***Do not use any physical force.*** At no time are you to touch a student in any way or administer corporal punishment.

### **Child Abuse:**

The Arizona mandatory reporting law, A.R.S. 13-3620 requires that school personnel, or any person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of a minor, who reasonably believes that a minor has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of this information to the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) and the police. This means that if there are any facts from which one could reasonably conclude that a child has been the victim of one of the above-listed offenses, the person knowing those facts is required to report those facts to the appropriate authorities. This immediate report is to be made regardless of who the alleged perpetrator is. Your duty is to

report, not to investigate. If school personnel fail to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect, then they have committed a crime that is punishable under Arizona state law. Rev. 5/6/24

### **Bullying Information:**

Arizona law requires that each school site have an educational and prevention program in place in regards to bullying. All staff, including substitutes, are responsible for reporting any incident. If an incident occurs, inform administration and complete any required forms that are given to you, and submit to administration before you leave.

### **Profane Language:**

Profane language is never tolerated in the Deer Valley Unified School District. This includes addressing the students as being idiots, morons, stupid, or telling them to shut up.

### **Drug-Free Workplace:**

Per Arizona state law and our commitment to maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive educational environment, the possession, use, distribution, or influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, tobacco products, vaping devices (including wax and THC pens), and any related paraphernalia is strictly prohibited on all school property and at all school-sponsored events.

School property includes, but is not limited to, classrooms, offices, parking lots, school vehicles, athletic facilities, and any location where a school activity is taking place.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and will be addressed per district guidelines and applicable laws.

### **Confidentiality:**

All information concerning students, including those with special needs or 504 plans, is strictly confidential. In accordance with district policy, such information may not be disclosed to individuals outside the organization or to staff members who do not have a legitimate educational or professional need to know.

Staff are expected to handle all confidential information with the utmost care and discretion. If you are uncertain about whether specific information may be shared, consult the school principal, department supervisor, or another qualified staff member before proceeding.

### **Medication:**

If working at a school site, all personal medication must be reported to and stored in the school nurse's office. Even Aspirin or Ibuprofen. A substitute should **never** administer medication of any type to a student.

### **Releasing Students:**

Under no circumstances should a student be released without permission from the principal or teacher. If any person outside of school staff seeks information about students or requests permission to take a student, refer that person directly to the school office. The principal/designee will determine whether the student should be excused and will notify you of the decision.

**Student Injury/Incident:**

If a student sustains or complains about an injury, please send the student to the school nurse to be checked out. When a student sustains an injury that requires immediate medical attention or causes the student to miss more than one-half day of school for home treatment or further evaluation, an incident report will be completed.

**Restroom Policy:**

Each campus has a staff/adult restroom. For safety reasons, substitutes should never use the student restrooms. Please check with the front office for the closest staff/adult restroom.

**Professional Conduct:**

Maintaining a positive attitude and showing respect to all staff members, students, and parents is essential. As a substitute, your demeanor sets the tone for the classroom and plays a key role in creating a productive and respectful learning environment.

Cell phone use is not permitted during instructional time in any assignment. Your focus should remain on students and classroom responsibilities to ensure an engaged and well-managed learning experience.

Avoid discussing personal views on sensitive topics such as sex, politics, or religion. Substitutes should not initiate or participate in conversations, comments, or debates on these subjects unless they are part of the approved curriculum or included in the teacher's lesson plans.

If you have any complaints, concerns, or suggestions, please bring them forward to the Principal, Substitute Specialist, or Human Resources Manager respectfully and professionally. Open and constructive communication helps us maintain a supportive and effective school environment.

## **INCIDENT REPORTS**

Substitute Incident Reports are initiated and completed at the school level by campus administration. When an incident occurs, the school will conduct a thorough investigation, which includes obtaining a statement from the substitute and conducting an interview. The campus administration interview may take place in person, via Zoom, or by phone.

Following the investigation, the principal may request the removal of a substitute if they determine the individual is not a good fit for their campus. Once the investigation is complete, the administrator will notify Human Resources, who will then contact the substitute to communicate the next steps.

Human Resources will evaluate the findings based on the preponderance of evidence and determine whether the substitute will be blocked from returning to the specific site or removed from the district entirely. All incident reports are also forwarded to Educational Services, Inc. (ESI). In some cases, the substitute may be required to report to the district office for a meeting with the HR Manager and Substitute Specialist to ensure a thorough and fair review. After the investigation concludes, both the substitute and ESI will be notified of the final decision.

If Human Resources receives three documented incident reports, the substitute may be terminated from employment with Deer Valley Unified School District (DVUSD). In cases involving egregious misconduct, termination may occur after a first offense. ESI will notify the substitute if they are removed from the DVUSD substitute list.

## **CERTIFIED PAY RATES**

The **FULL DAY** rate of pay is \$130 per day. A full day is over 4.0 hours.

The **HALF-DAY** rate of pay is \$65 per day. A half-day is 4.0 hours or less.

Long-term pay starts at \$130 per day for the first 20 days. On the 21st consecutive day in the same position, the rate of pay increases to \$175 per day for a FULL DAY and \$87.50 per day for a HALF-DAY.

Nurses: Nurse Rate of Pay is \$175/day for a FULL DAY, over 4.0 hours. HALF-DAY is \$87.50/day for 4.0 hours or less.

\*Certified Paraprofessional and Certified Behavioral Tech positions do not qualify for the long-term rate of pay.

### **Long-Term Positions:**

You do not need to be highly qualified for the position to take a long-term position. HR and the school principal will determine if you are a good candidate for the position. However, it is a Federal requirement that schools must notify parents when a teacher/substitute does not meet the requirements as an appropriately certified educator. A letter goes home to the parents/guardians that the substitute isn't properly certified, but is continuing to provide instruction to their child.

An absence during the first 20 days of service will interrupt the continuity of service, causing the 20-day count to reset. In certain cases, Human Resources may grant exceptions depending on the duration and nature of the absence.

Absences occurring after the 20th day are considered unpaid. However, with prior approval from DVUSD Human Resources, the employee's pay rate may remain unchanged, and the 20-day service count will not be reset.

If you are selected for a long-term assignment, the school secretary will provide you with a DVUSD Access and Laptop Request form. Once completed, you will be issued a laptop and granted access to GroupWise, Google, Canvas, and PowerSchool to support your instructional responsibilities. At the end of the assignment, the laptop must be returned to the secretary unless you are scheduled for another long-term position.

All substitutes granted access are required to follow Deer Valley Unified School District guidelines and must sign the DVUSD Electronic Information Services User Agreement during the orientation and annually during badge renewal.

**DVUSD Retirees:** If a substitute meets the DVUSD Retiree requirements, they receive a different rate of pay. Reach out to the Substitute Specialist with questions.

**Sick Leave:** You will need to contact ESI with any questions regarding sick leave or other benefits.

### **Pay Issues/Questions:**

If you have concerns about your paycheck, you will need to contact ESI. ESI is your employer. ESI will contact DVUSD if they need clarification.



Deer Valley Unified School District uses the Frontline Education Absence Management system. You can access their web address 24 hours a day at [app.frontlineeducation.com](http://app.frontlineeducation.com) or by Phone at 1-800-942-3767. PLEASE NOTE THAT FRONTLINE HAS AN 800 NUMBER.

### **UNDERSTANDING CALL PERIODS:**

#### **Frontline Call Schedule**

Frontline places automated calls to fill absences according to the following schedule:

- Sunday through Thursday: Calls are made in the morning and evening.
- Friday: Calls are made in the morning only for same-day absences. No evening calls are made.
- Saturday: No calls are made.
- Sunday: Evening calls only for Monday absences.

Please note: The system does not leave voicemail messages, and missed calls cannot be retrieved.

Do not rely on the automated system to notify you when a job has been canceled. Review your assigned job information prior to leaving for the school site to verify that the job is still assigned to you and has not been canceled.

Canceling an assignment within 24 hours will prevent you from accepting another job for that day. It is your responsibility to cancel assignments in Frontline as early as possible. Please note that leaving a voicemail or message does not constitute an official cancellation. Excessive cancellations may result in removal from the DVUSD substitute system

Report to your assignment 15 minutes prior to the start time of school. This time is built into the substitute hours in Frontline. This allows you the time to familiarize yourself with the classroom and the learning activities planned for that day.

## **REQUIRED ITEMS TO SUBSTITUTE**

To be eligible to substitute, you must have a valid IVP Fingerprint Clearance Card, along with one of the following credentials issued by the Arizona Department of Education: a Substitute Certificate, an Emergency Substitute Certificate, or a Standard Teaching Certificate on file with Educational Services, Inc.

ESI will notify you regarding your expiration dates. However, it is the sole responsibility of the substitute to keep track of their expiration dates on their Substitute Certificate and IVP Fingerprint Card. If your documents expire, you will no longer be able to substitute in a classroom.

### ***Note: Emergency Substitute Certificate***

DVUSD is responsible for issuing the Emergency Substitute Certificate, which is valid for two years. The certificate may be renewed up to two times.

To qualify for renewal, substitutes must complete 30 hours of documented professional development. All documentation must be submitted to DVUSD in order for the renewal to be processed.

### **Keep ESI informed of any changes**

Changes in personal information, such as your address, phone number, banking, or tax information, must be communicated with ESI at [hr@esiaz.us](mailto:hr@esiaz.us) or (480)719-3271.

## **RENEWING FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR**

To remain eligible to substitute in DVUSD for the upcoming school year, please ensure the following steps are completed:

- **Work at least five (5) days** during the current school year.
- **Watch for Web Alerts** in the Frontline Absence Management system with important renewal dates and instructions.
- **Check your email** for communications from DVUSD and ESI regarding:
  - Badge renewal
  - Sign-up for the upcoming school year
- **Respond to ESI** if contacted about your eligibility and intent to return (for substitutes in good standing).
- **Visit the DVUSD District Office** to:
  - Renew your substitute badge
  - Complete any required paperwork

### **⚠ Important:**

Failure to complete the renewal process will be considered a formal indication that you do not wish to continue as a DVUSD substitute teacher.