



TIGERS

4000 High Desert Dr.

Globe, AZ 85501

Phone: (928) 402-5900

Parent - Student

Handbook

2025 - 2026

"Tiger Ready. Future Ready"

Principals message to Parents and Students,

Welcome to High Desert Middle School!

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to the 2025–2026 school year at High Desert Middle School! I hope you enjoyed a restful and memorable summer with your family and friends, and that you are ready to begin another year of growth, discovery, and success.

At High Desert Middle School, we stay steadfast in our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and academically challenging environment. Our exceptional team of educators and staff provide all students with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive both academically and personally.

This year, we will continue to focus on building a strong school culture rooted in our core values of **Tiger Pride—Innovation, Integrity, Resilience, and a Commitment to Excellence**. Our academic programs are supported by new initiatives in literacy, math fluency, and career exploration, as well as dynamic extracurricular opportunities. From clubs and sports to leadership programs and enrichment activities, we are expanding avenues for student engagement and achievement.

We recognize that student success is best achieved when schools and families work together. I encourage all parents and guardians to stay actively involved, join our **Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), Site Council, Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program**, and attend school events and conferences. Your partnership is vital in creating a dedicated support system for your child and for the entire HDMS community.

We are excited to welcome new students and families to our school, and we are equally thrilled to reunite with those returning. No matter where you are starting from, our mission is to help every student feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Let us make 2025–2026 a year of excellence, purpose, and pride. Together—students, parents, staff, and the community will continue cultivating a school culture where **there is no limit to what we can achieve**.

Welcome back and let us have a momentous year!

Tiger Ready. Future Ready.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Armenta

Principal, High Desert Middle School

HIGH DESERT MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

**IF WE CREATE A CULTURE WHERE EVERYONE BELIEVES
WE NEED TO IMPROVE, NOT BECAUSE WE ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH
BUT BECAUSE WE CAN BE EVEN BETTER
THERE IS NO LIMIT TO WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE.**

High Desert Middle School Parent/Student Handbook Our Core Values: The T.I.G.E.R. Way

At High Desert Middle School, we believe that developing a strong character and a commitment to learning prepares our students to succeed in school and life. Our school-wide expectations are rooted in our T.I.G.E.R. values, which guide our actions, decisions, and interactions every day.

T.I.G.E.R. Values

Letter	Value	What It Means at HDMS
T	Tenacity	We persevere through challenges, always putting forth our best effort.
I	Integrity	We are honest, responsible, and make good choices, even when no one is watching.
G	Grit	We work hard, stay focused, and prove courage and determination in all we do.
E	Empathy	We show kindness, compassion, and always understanding toward others.
R	Respect	We treat ourselves, others, and our environment with care, dignity, and consideration.

These values are part of everything we do at HDMS, inside the classroom, in the cafeteria, on the field, in the community, and at home. Students are expected to model these values daily and parents are encouraged to partner with us in reinforcing them.

"Tiger Pride! A culture where there is no limit to what we can achieve."

What This Means for Our School Community:

- **Students** are expected to practice T.I.G.E.R. values through their behavior, academic effort, and interactions with peers and staff.
- **Staff** will model and recognize these values through classroom instruction, school-wide initiatives, and character education.
- **Parents/Guardians** are encouraged to support and reinforce these values at home and in communication with school staff.

Together, we are building a **safe, supportive, and future-ready learning environment** for all our students.

TIGER READY. FUTURE READY.

High Desert Middle School

Telephone: (928) 402-5900

Mailing Address: 460 N. Willow Street Globe, Arizona 85501

Website: <http://www.globeschools.org>

School Office hours: 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Mascot: Tigers

School Colors: Orange and Black

School Contact Information

Principal – Robert C. Armenta	928-402-5902
Assistant Principal/TKO Director – Suzy Morales	928-402-5902
Administrative Assistant – Teresa Sanchez	928-402-5902
Attendance Clerk – Denise Lopez	928-402-5903
Athletic Director – Ed Mendoza	928-402-5900
Counselor – Sarah Steele Harris	928-402-5900
Health Aide – TBD	928-402-5915
SRO – SGT. Jeremy Cochran	928-402-1040

*All staff emails are located on our website at www.globeschools.org

Bell Schedule

Monday through Thursday Schedule --No School on Friday

6th Grade Schedule		7th & 8th Grade Schedule	
P. 1	8:45-9:55 (70 min.)	P. 1	8:45-9:55 (70 min.)
P. 2	9:58 - 11:03 (65 min.)	P. 2	9:58 - 11:03 (65 min.)
P. 3 Advisory	11:06 - 11:51 (45 min.)	P. 3 Advisory	11:06 - 11:51 (45 min.)
P. 4 - Lunch	11:54 - 12:34 (40 min.)	P. 4	11:54 - 12:59 (65 min.)
P. 5	12:37- 1:42 (65 min)	P. 5 - Lunch	1:02 - 1:42 (42 min)
P. 6	1:45 - 2:50 (65 min)	P. 6	1:45 - 2:50 (65 min)
P. 7	2:53 - 4:00 (67 min.)	P. 7	2:53 - 4:00 (67 min.)
EARLY RELEASE SCHEDULE			
P. 1	8:45 - 9:34 (49 min.)	P. 1	8:45 - 9:34 (49 min.)
P. 2	9:37 - 10:22 (45 min.)	P. 2	9:37 - 10:22 (45 min.)
P. 3 Advisory	10:25 - 11:10 (45 min.)	P. 3 Advisory	10:25 - 11:10 (45 min.)
P. 4 - Lunch	11:13 - 11:53 (45 min.)	P. 4	11:13 - 11:58 (45 min.)
P. 5	11:56 - 12:41 (45 min.)	P. 5 - Lunch	12:01 - 12:41 (45 min.)
P. 6	12:44 - 1:28 (45 min.)	P. 6	12:44 - 1:28 (45 min.)
P. 7	1:31 - 2:15 (44 min.)	P. 7	1:31 - 2:15 (44 min.)

* Students have 3-minute passing time to move from one class to another. Any student who is not in the classroom when the bell rings will be counted tardy. It is each student's responsibility to arrive at class on time. Students must also respect the rights of others during class-change times. Running, shouting, rough play, or public displays of affection are unacceptable behaviors and will be treated as such.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

2025-2026 School Calendar

Globe Unified School District
 "Capturing Hearts, Empowering Minds"
 460 N. Willow St.
 Globe, AZ 85501
 928-402-6000 (Fax) 928-425-8912

July 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

- July TBD Capturing Kids Hearts
 July 21-25 New Teacher Days
 July 22-25 Returning Teacher Days
 July 22-25 SY Classified Staff Return
 July 25 Professional Learning Day
 July 28 Students Return/1st day of Semester
 August 15 Professional Learning Day
 August 21 Early Release Day
 September 1 Labor Day
 September 12 Professional Learning Day
 October 2 End of 1st Quarter
 October 6 40th Day
 October 13-16 Fall Break
 October 22-23 Parent Teacher Conferences
 November 7 Professional Learning Day
 November 11 Veteran's Day Holiday Observed
 November 26-27 Thanksgiving Break
 December 18 End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester
 December 22 - January 1 Christmas Break
 January 19 Martin Luther King Day Jr.
 January 30 Professional Learning Day
 February 12 Early Release Day
 February 16 Presidents Day
 February 24 100th Day
 March 12 End of 3rd Quarter
 March 16-19 Spring Break
 March 25-26 Parent Teacher Conferences
 May 21 Student Last Day/End of 2nd Semester
 May 22 Teacher Last Day
 May 25 Memorial Day
- Calendar Overview**
 1st Quarter ends October 2-39 days
 2nd Quarter/1st Semester ends December 18-37 days
 3rd Quarter ends March 12-38 days
 4th Quarter/2nd Semester ends May 21-36 days
- 150 Student Days
 159 Continuing Teacher Days
 160 New Teacher Days
- Graduation: May 21 Baccalaureate: May 17

Information
 All PL/PO Days are full days
 Prof. Learning: 7/25, 8/15, 9/12, 11/7, 1/30
 Early Release Days Incl Parent/Teach Conf:
 08/21, 10/22, 10/23, 2/12, 03/25, 03/26



Testing:
 IE Pretest (GHS & HDMS)
 CBAS 1 - All Schools
 CBAS 2 - All Schools
 IE 2 Posttest (GHS & HDMS)

School Closed/Holiday	Make-up Day if necessary	Professional Learning	Parent/Teacher Conferences
40th & 100th Day	Early Release	First & Last Day of School	
Pay Day			

GUSD FIGHT SONG

Orange and Black

Whenever Globe High Tigers fall in line
We're going to win this game another time
And for the dear old school we love so well,
And for the Orange and Black we'll yell, and yell, and yell
We're going to fight, fight, fight, for every yard
And circle in and hit that line real hard
We're going to roll Miami on the side
Yes we are, RAH! RAH! RAH!



GO TIGERS!
HDMS Building Champions!

TIGER READY. FUTURE READY.

High Desert Middle School

Our Commitment to Student Success and Community Engagement

At **High Desert Middle School**, we are deeply committed to fostering a supportive, inclusive, and high-achieving educational environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our mission is rooted in meeting the diverse needs of our learners while cultivating strong, collaborative partnerships with families and the broader community.

I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Equitable Access to Learning

- Every student is provided access to high-quality instruction, digital tools, and academic resources.
- Targeted programs address opportunity gaps and support underserved populations.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Curriculum and instructional practices are designed to reflect diverse cultural perspectives.
- Teachers are equipped to honor, engage with, and incorporate students' lived experiences and identities into the learning process.

Individualized Student Support

- Personalized learning plans and differentiated instruction support academic growth.
- Specialized services include Exceptional Student Services (Special Education), English Language Learner (ELL) support, and Gifted Education.

II. Social, Emotional, and Economic Support

Community Partnerships

- We work with local agencies to provide access to healthcare, nutrition programs, clothing, mental health services, and more.
- Our school serves as a hub to connect families with vital community-based support networks.

Family Engagement

- Strong two-way communication is maintained through newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, school events, and digital platforms.
- Workshops and family learning nights equip caregivers to support student success at home.

Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Campus Culture

- Positive school culture is cultivated through programs such as **Jostens Renaissance Education**, **PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)**, and **Stand for the Silent**.
- We promote an environment where all students feel **respected, safe, valued, and empowered** to achieve their full potential.

At High Desert Middle School, we believe student success is built on **equity, excellence, and engagement**—with our families and community standing proudly beside us.

III. Academic & Personal Development

Academic Excellence

- Rigorous instruction fosters critical thinking and creativity.
- Raising awareness about the importance of fostering collaborative relationships between educators and families is essential. By creating partnerships rooted in trust and shared goals, schools can strengthen their community bonds and enhance student success.
- standards guide student achievement and growth.

Social & Emotional Growth

- Counseling, character education, and enrichment opportunities.
- Students explore interests in arts, athletics, and leadership.

College & Career Readiness

- Students build skills for success in high school and beyond.
- Lifelong learning, adaptability, and resilience are emphasized.

IV. Continuous Improvement

Data-Driven Practices

- School decisions are informed by academic data and stakeholder input.
- Parents, students, and staff take part in planning processes.

Professional Development

- Ongoing training and collaboration among staff.
- Focus on best practices to meet diverse student needs.

V. Parent & Community Engagement

Communication

- Consistent updates through meetings, platforms, and announcements.

Volunteering & Participation

- Parents support school events, committees, and advisory councils.

Workshops & Training

- Topics include leadership, homework help, curriculum, Career Exploration, STEM/STEAM, Tiger Ambassadors, and growth mindset.

Parent Involvement Committees

PTO Involvement -The primary goal of a PTO is to enhance the educational experience for students and strengthen the school community by bringing together parents, teachers, and school staff to support students' education and well-being.

PTO can:

- Reinforce **Tiger Pride** by supporting school culture initiatives.
- Partner on incentive programs tied to student achievement, attendance, and behavior.
- Help recognize student and staff accomplishments publicly and positively.

1. Builds School Community

- Organizes events that bring families, students, and staff together (e.g., fall festivals, movie nights, open houses, book fairs).
- Encourages parent involvement and fosters positive relationships between families and school staff.

2. Fundraises for School Needs

- Raises money for classroom supplies, field trips, library books, playground equipment, and technology.
- Funds special programs, teacher grants, or school improvement projects that the school budget may not cover.

3. Supports Teachers and Staff

- Provides classroom or holiday appreciation gifts.
- Organizes Teacher Appreciation Week activities.
- Assists with duty-free lunch coverage, snacks during testing, or staff breakfasts.

4. Enhances Student Learning

- Funds enrichment activities such as guest speakers, assemblies, or STEM nights.
- Supports after-school clubs or tutoring programs.

5. Facilitates Communication

- Serves as a liaison between parents and school leadership.
- Helps keep families informed through newsletters, social media, and meetings.

6. Recruits and Organizes Volunteers

- Coordinates parent volunteers for school events, supervision, or academic support.
- Mobilizes help for school beautification, book fairs, or athletic events.

II. HDMS Site Council - School-based leadership and advisory team made up of administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students (at secondary schools), and sometimes community members. Its primary role is to ensure **shared decision-making** and **collaborative leadership** at the school level.

Primary Responsibilities of a Site Council

1. Guides School Improvement Planning

- Reviews and contributes to the **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** or **Continuous Improvement Plan**.
- Helps set academic, behavioral, and cultural goals based on data (e.g., test scores, attendance, discipline).
- Monitors progress toward goals and recommends mid-course adjustments.

2. Oversees Budget and Resources

- Provides input on how **school site funds** are allocated (e.g., Title I, literacy grants, classroom resources).
- Prioritizes spending that aligns with school goals and student achievement.

3. Supports Policy Development

- Reviews school policies on attendance, discipline, homework, dress code, and campus safety.
- Advises on school-wide expectations and culture-building efforts.

4. Promotes Parent and Community Involvement

- Encourages collaboration between the school and families.
- Helps plan and promote outreach activities, surveys, and community engagement efforts.

5. Advocates for Students

- Brings student and parent perspectives into school decision-making.
- Ensures equity and inclusivity in decisions affecting all student populations.

Site Council could:

- Review benchmark data and support initiatives like **MobyMax/Lexia**, or **Renaissance Education**.
- Provide feedback on the **student handbook, behavior matrix, and academic contracts**.
- Help improve school reputation through community partnerships and strategic improvement planning.
- Collaborate with the **PTO** to align goals and maximize impact.

VII. Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Grant Program

The **Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Grant Program** at **High Desert Middle School (HDMS)** provides supplemental educational support tailored to the unique cultural and academic needs of eligible Native American students. Funded through a federal grant administered by the Arizona Department of Education's Office of Indian Education, the program aims to enhance educational opportunities that may not be fully addressed by the standard public-school curriculum.

Key Benefits of the JOM Program at HDMS

1. **Academic Support**
 - Offers tutoring, homework assistance, and academic enrichment activities.
 - Provides school supplies and resources to support student learning.
2. **Cultural Enrichment**
 - Facilitates programs that promote Native American heritage, including language preservation, traditional arts, and cultural events.
 - Encourages student participation in cultural activities to strengthen identity and community ties.

3. **Parental and Community Involvement**

- Engages families through meetings and events, fostering collaboration between the school and Native American communities.
- Supports the formation of Indian Education Committees (IECs) to guide program development and implementation.

4. **Student Advocacy and Support**

- Provides guidance and resources to help students navigate educational pathways.
- Addresses barriers to academic success by connecting students with necessary services and support systems.

High Desert Middle School actively promotes the JOM program through regular meetings and events. For instance, a JOM meeting are scheduled regularly, to discuss program initiatives and gather community input. These meetings provide a platform for parents, students, and community members to collaborate on enhancing educational outcomes for Native American students.

For more information or to get involved with the JOM, Site, and or PTO HDMS, please contact the school's administration or Globe Unified School District #1 at 928-402-6000.

Together, with our families and community, High Desert Middle School is committed to preparing every student for success—academically, socially, and personally.

III. Parent Support

Parent support is a critical component of school success. Here are **five key areas** where parent involvement and support can be clearly identified and leveraged to strengthen school-community partnerships:

1. Academic Support at Home

- Ensuring students complete homework and study regularly
- Monitoring grades and attendance through the parent portal
- Encouraging reading, project completion, and a positive attitude toward learning
- Supporting consistent school attendance and morning routines

2. Communication and Collaboration

- Staying in regular contact with teachers and school staff
- Attending parent-teacher conferences and school events
- Responding to school surveys or calls for feedback
- Advocating for student needs in a respectful, solution-oriented way

3. Volunteering Time and Talents

- Assisting with school activities, field trips, clubs, or classroom help
- Joining committees like PTO, Site Council, or booster clubs
- Offering professional skills (e.g., photography, carpentry, mentoring, etc.)

4. Supporting Positive School Culture

- Reinforcing school rules, behavioral expectations, and character education at home
- Modeling respectful behavior toward school staff and students
- Promoting a growth mindset and celebrating student effort and success

5. Advocacy and School Improvement Participation

- Participating in school improvement discussions or Title I meetings
- Helping organize or support fundraisers and community partnerships
- Sharing ideas or concerns that help move the school forward

High Desert Middle School

Student Expectations & School Commitments

"Tiger Ready. Future Ready."

At **High Desert Middle School**, we believe that high expectations, consistent support, and a strong sense of community lead to academic success and personal growth. As a proud **Jostens Renaissance School**, we commit to fostering a positive school culture built on respect, responsibility, and the celebration of student and staff achievement.

Our School Commitments

We are dedicated to creating a safe, engaging, and inclusive environment where all students can thrive. We commit to:

- **Recognizing Academic Success**
We celebrate students who demonstrate excellence, growth, and perseverance in their academics.
- **Fostering Character and Integrity**
Through consistent expectations and positive behavior programs, we cultivate a culture of honesty, kindness, and accountability.
- **Building Strong Relationships**
We empower students and staff to build positive, respectful relationships rooted in trust and empathy.
- **Promoting School Spirit and Belonging**
We actively promote unity, pride, and participation in school events, athletics, and student leadership.
- **Valuing and Supporting Educators**
We uplift and recognize our staff, knowing that a motivated and appreciated team inspires student success.

Student Expectations

All HDMS students are expected to demonstrate the core values of **Tiger PRIDE**:

- P** **Prepared** – Arrive on time, ready to learn, with all materials.
- R** **Respectful** – Show kindness and respect to peers, staff, and school property.
- I** **Integrity** – Be honest, take responsibility for your actions, and do the right thing, even when no one is watching.
- D** **Determined** – Give your best effort, stay focused, and embrace challenges with a growth mindset.
- E** **Engaged** – Participate actively in class, clubs, and school events with a positive attitude.

As a Renaissance School, We Believe:

- Every student matters and every effort counts.
- Celebrating progress fuels motivation and success.
- Positive relationships are the foundation of a thriving school.
- Recognition isn't just a reward—it's a catalyst for culture change.

Together, we rise, we grow, and we lead—**Tiger Strong!**

Technology Use

At **High Desert Middle School (HDMS)**, part of the Globe Unified School District, technology is integral to our educational approach, enhancing learning while promoting responsible digital citizenship. Below is an overview of our technology use policies and commitments for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Chromebook Use & Digital Learning

HDMS provides students with Chromebooks to support academic activities. Key guidelines include:

- **Educational Purpose:** Chromebooks are designated for classwork, research, and other educational tasks.
- **Personal Use:** Limited personal use is permitted, provided it does not interfere with educational responsibilities.
- **Accountability:** Students are responsible for the care and proper use of their assigned devices and are to immediately report any damage upon receiving device
- **Support:** Technical issues should be reported via the district's IT support system using school email credentials. Parents will be notified when inappropriate words or topics are searched for while on student Chromebook.
- **Resources:** Access tutorials and FAQs via the school's technology resource page.

For technical assistance: globeschools.org

By adhering to these guidelines, HDMS students contribute to a safe and productive digital learning environment, preparing them for future academic and professional endeavors.

See the **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** for full guidelines. Violations may result in disciplinary actions.

Cell Phone & Personal Device Policy

To maintain a focused learning environment, HDMS enforces the following regarding personal electronic devices:

- **Usage Restrictions:** Cell phones and personal devices should remain off and stored during instructional time.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** Unauthorized use may lead to confiscation and disciplinary measures in line with the school's code of conduct.
- **Emergency Communication:** In emergencies, students may request permission to use their devices under staff supervision.

Digital Citizenship & Online Conduct

HDMS emphasizes the importance of responsible digital behavior:

- **Appropriate Use:** Students must use technology resources in accordance with school policies, avoiding any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or access to inappropriate content.
- **Privacy and Security:** Students should not share personal information online and must report any security concerns to staff immediately. Students should not access anyone personal information. Consequences will be assigned for those who use another students personal information.
- **Academic Integrity:** All digital work should reflect the student's own efforts, adhering to the school's academic honesty standards.

High Desert Middle School: Student Conduct and Campus Policy Handbook (2025-2026)

"Every School Day Counts at HDMS – Show Up, Stand Out, Succeed!"

Success starts with showing up. Be present. Be proud. Be Tiger Strong!

Attendance Policy In accordance with Arizona law, regular school attendance is mandatory. Students must be in class by **8:45 AM**. Absences will only be excused for legitimate reasons such as illness, bereavement, family emergencies, religious observances, or unavoidable medical appointments.

Reporting Absences:

- Parents/guardians must contact the school **before 8:00 AM** at (928) 402-5900 or use the "Report an Absence" button on the school website.
- Early pick-ups must be communicated **30 minutes in advance**.
- Unverified absences are marked **unexcused**.
- Students must complete missed assignments upon return.

90% Attendance Rule: Students must attend **at least 90%** of the 150-day school year (no more than 15 absences) to be eligible for grade promotion. Both excused and unexcused absences count toward this rule.

Chronic Absenteeism: Students with **10% of current school days of unexcused absences** may be referred to the HDMS **Attendance Diversion Program**. Failure to complete the program may result in legal consequences.

Family Vacations: Must be reported **48 hours in advance**, limited to **5 days per semester**, and may be placed on the Attendance Diversion Program if absences cause the student to exceed the 10% rule. Teachers do not have to reteach missed material but may provide general assignments.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures:

- Drop-off: **8:00–8:45 AM- No Student Supervision prior to 8:00 a.m.**
- Pick-up before dismissal: Notify the office **30 minutes in advance**. Due to core classes being taught until the end of the day, please limit early check out.
- Sign-out: Only approved individuals may sign out students. Early departures before the 7th hour may be recorded as partial absences.

- **be smart. be present. be here.**

Attendance matters to your student's academic success and future. Each day a student is absent, he has lost time in the classroom, and lost opportunity to gain experience.

Parents: We want each student to attend classes each day. Successful attendance + behavior + grades = positive student outcomes, including high school graduation. Data shows students with high absences are less likely to graduate from high school. You may access your student's attendance through the parent portal.

TARGET ATTENDANCE 6 or fewer days per year - excused or unexcused - leads to positive outcomes & educational benefits	WARNING ATTENDANCE 7-9 days per year - excused or unexcused - can place the student several days behind, making learning and progress more challenging	CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM 15 or more days per year - excused or unexcused - leads to academic difficulty and school failure with each absence
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ABSENCES

A student who does not attend a class or arrives 15 or more minutes late is considered absent. Absences can be defined as excused or unexcused. Students are allowed **7.5 absences (excused or unexcused) per semester**. The 7.5 absence in any semester class may result in failing classes unless there are extenuating circumstances. If a student misses a class due to a pre-approved school-related activity, or a school suspension, it will not count as an absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: A parent or legal guardian must call the attendance office hotline within **24 hours** of the absence to officially excuse the student. An excused absence may be due to, but is not limited to, these conditions:

- Serious family illness (documentation req'd)
- Personal illness or health conditions
- Death in the immediate family
- Religious holiday
- Court appointments (documentation req'd)
- Doctor or dentist appointment (documentation req'd)

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: Any absence that is not excused within 24 hours of the absence by a parent or legal guardian is recorded as unexcused. Students are still accountable for information missed while they are out. Teachers are recommended to give no credit for any test, assignment or other work missed due to unexcused absences.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM: Occurs when a student misses greater than 10% of school days due to absences - regardless of reason. Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) §15-803 (B) states that absences may be considered excessive when the number of absent days exceeds ten percent of the number of required attendance days prescribed in A.R.S. §15-802. Ten percent equates to (7.5) days of absences per semester regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused. NOTE (150 Schools Days for Students – 2025-2026 SY)

SUSPENSION: Even though a suspension is considered a serious consequence for discipline issues, the days missed while suspended do not count as absences for purposes of keeping track of days missed from school. Suspended students are still responsible for all makeup work.

CONSEQUENCES FOR ABSENCES: The following actions will be taken after five (5) and after (7.5) excused/unexcused absences per semester and if a student reaches 10 consecutive absences in a semester:

1. **Five Absences** When a student reaches five (5) absences, whether excused or unexcused, they will receive the 5-Day Absence Warning Letter. The parent/guardian will receive the letter via email (or U.S. Mail if email is not available).
2. **Seven point five (7.5) Absences** When a student has (7.5) absences, whether excused or unexcused, they will receive the 7.5-Day Absence Final Warning Letter. The parent/guardian will receive the letter via email (or U.S. Mail if email is not available).

3. **7.5+ Absences** Once a student reaches 7.5 or more absences, they will be referred to administration for excessive absenteeism and report and submit a truancy referral to school resource officer (SRO) for diversion program. Parent/Guardian will be responsible for attending diversion program meetings.
4. **10 Consecutive Absences** After 10 consecutive days of absences per semester, the state requires schools to automatically withdraw the student.

TARDIES

TARDY TO SCHOOL: In order for a student to be excused from class when he/she is late to school, the student must check in at the attendance desk to be signed in. To excuse being tardy, the attendance office must receive a phone call 30 minutes prior to start of school or email within a 24-hour period from a parent/guardian using a verified phone number or email on the student's file. A note from the doctor's office, dentist's office or court system will also excuse a student in lieu of a parent calling. An unexcused reason for a tardy will result in an unexcused pass to class. For the first period of the student's school day, he/she will be allowed three (3) unexcused tardies. For every three (3) unexcused tardies, the student will be assigned to lunch detention. A student can also receive in school suspension for excessive excused tardies if the tardies are becoming frequent, excessive, disruptive, or for any other reason believed necessary. For every (3) unexcused tardies a student receives in any class it will be counted as an absence.

TARDY TO CLASS: Students who's tardy is unexcused for any period (except the student's 1st period of the day) will receive consequences based on the teacher's classroom policy (i.e. detention, loss of points, etc.). A parent/guardian may not call in to excuse a tardy that occurs when a student is traveling from class to class; students are expected to arrive at class on time.

Lunch detention will be issued as follows:

5-10 tardies = 1 lunch detention per each occurrence. Admin. conference with student

11-15 tardies = 2 lunch detentions each occurrence. Admin., student, parent conference

15 + = 1 day in school suspension each occurrence. Admin. Student, parent conference and student contract

Ditching a class: Students caught ditching will be assigned disciplinary consequences and can receive other disciplinary consequences, detention, ISS, OSS suspensions for multiple occurrences.

Restroom Use: Restrooms are **closed during passing periods** and the **first and last five minutes** of each class. Emergencies will be accommodated. Students should use restrooms before/after school and during lunch.

Hall Passes (Smart Pass / E-Pass etc.)

Students must complete a hall pass to leave class for:

- Restroom
- Nurse
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Front office, technology office, or another classroom

Teacher, Office Staff, School Counselor, or Administrators' approval is needed before leaving the room or being called for an appointment.

Lost and Found

HDMS is not responsible for lost items. The found items are stored in the **nurse's office**. Students should check regularly for missing belongings.

Volunteering & Visitors

- **Volunteers:** Complete the application via the school website or district office.
- **Visitors:** All visitors must check in at the front office and wear a visitor's badge.

- **Note:** Student guests or non-parent visitors are not allowed during the school day.

Student Records & Information Updates

Student records are confidential.

To update contact, custody, or medical information, please call the registrar on **928-402-5900**.

Athletics, Clubs, and Activities

Athletics Offered: Cross Country, Volleyball, Football, Basketball, Softball, Baseball, Soccer, Wrestling, Track & Field, Cheer.

- A current **sports physical** is needed.
- Behavior and academic performance affect eligibility.
- Activity fees may apply.
Refer to the **GUSD Athletic Handbook** for detailed policies.

Clubs/After-School Programs: Availability depends on staff and student interest. A full list is available on the school website.

Counseling Department and Services

Mrs. Sarah Steele Harris serves as the full-time school counselor at High Desert Middle School, providing comprehensive support to all students in the areas of:

- **Academic Support** – Goal setting, organization, time management, and improving study habits
- **Behavioral Support** – Positive behavior interventions, restorative practices, and coordination with staff and administrators
- **Peer Mediation** – Helping students resolve conflicts and build healthy relationships
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** – Promoting self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience
- **E-Therapy Services** – Coordinating virtual mental health services for eligible students
- **504 Plan Coordination** – Managing documentation, meetings, accommodations, and communication with families and teachers

Mrs. Steele Harris is committed to fostering a safe, supportive environment where all students can thrive. Students may request an appointment by visiting the counseling office or notifying their teacher or the front office.

Conflict Resolution & Anti-Bullying Policy

HDMS is a **Be Kind Campus**. We celebrate diversity and provide a safe space for all.

Definitions:

- **Conflict:** A natural disagreement between individuals.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, intentional aggression involving a power imbalance.
- **Cyberbullying:** Bullying via digital communication.
- **Harassment:** Behavior that is threatening or disturbing based on identity or appearance.
- **Intimidation:** Intent to instill fear emotionally or physically, including online threats.

Students should report incidents to a trusted adult or administrator.

Contact the School Counselor or Administrators for support.

Student Complaints & Grievances

(Policy JII-EB – GUSD)

Students may file a grievance concerning:

- Constitutional violations
- Discrimination or harassment
- Intimidation or bullying
- Unequal participation opportunities

Process Overview:

- Complaints must be given within 30 days of the incident.
- Complaints should be made to a staff member or administrator.
- Forms are available in the office.
- False or retaliatory complaints will result in disciplinary action.
- Law enforcement may be involved if necessary.

Students contact school counselor or administrator to start the complaint process.

Arizona Tax Credit Program: Invest in Student Success at HDMS

Support High Desert Middle School through Arizona’s **Public-School Tax Credit Program**—a powerful way to help our students while reducing your state tax liability.

Arizona law allows taxpayers to **direct their state income tax dollars** to a public school of their choice. You can contribute up to **\$400 per married couple** or **\$200 per individual**, and receive a **dollar-for-dollar tax credit** on your Arizona state taxes.

Why Your Tax Credit Donation Matters:

Your contribution directly enhances programs that enrich the student experience at HDMS, including:

- After-school tutoring and enrichment clubs
- Fine arts and athletics programs
- Character education and leadership opportunities
- Classroom supplies and academic competitions
- Field trips and experiential learning activities

Who Can Donate?

Anyone—**Arizona residents and even non-residents**—can make a difference. Whether you’re a parent, grandparent, business owner, or community member, your support has a lasting impact on our students’ education.

How to Donate:

To make your tax credit donation or learn more, contact the **Globe Unified School District Business Office** at **928-402-6130** or visit the district website.

Thank you for supporting our students, staff, and the future of education at High Desert Middle School.

Food and Beverage Guidelines: To keep a clean, safe, and distraction-free environment:

- **No food or drinks** are allowed in classrooms unless a teacher has received **prior administrative approval**.
- **Only water** is allowed on campus in sealed containers.
- Other beverages may be bought through the **Food Services Department** during meal periods.
- **Outside food deliveries** (e.g., DoorDash, Uber Eats) are allowed **only during grade-level lunch periods**.
- Deliveries must come **from a parent or guardian** and be **intended for their student only**.
- **Group deliveries or food sharing** are not allowed due to health regulations.
- Responsible gum chewing is allowed at teacher discretion.

Classroom Autonomy for Teachers

At High Desert Middle School, teachers are granted professional discretion to establish classroom-specific expectations regarding matters such as gum chewing, restroom access, hat wearing, acceptance of late work, and other student behaviors. These classroom guidelines must align with and support the broader school-wide policies to ensure consistency, equity, and a positive learning environment for all students.

Classroom Deliveries and Celebrations

To minimize disruptions to the learning environment:

- Deliveries are processed **twice daily** through the front office.
- **Celebration items** such as balloons, flowers, treats, and drinks **are not permitted during school hours**. Any items delivered to campus will be held in the front office until dismissal.

Student Cell Phone & Personal Device Policy (Grades 6–8)

Effective: July 30, 2025

Policy Based on Arizona State Law HB 2484

“Away for the Day” Policy Bell to Bell (8:45 AM to 4:00 PM)

At High Desert Middle School, we believe that a focused, respectful learning environment is essential for academic success. In accordance with **Arizona House Bill 2484**, student use of personal cell phones and similar electronic devices is **not permitted during the instructional day** unless explicitly authorized by a staff member for educational purposes.

Approved Devices Covered:

- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- Wireless earbuds/headphones
- Tablets and personal gaming devices

When Devices Must Be Off and Out of Sight:

- During **all instructional periods**
- During **assemblies, classroom transitions, and restroom breaks**
- From the **first bell to the last bell of the school day**
- Cell Phones must remain powered off or in silent mode in the students backpack or in the cell phone rack provided in the classroom.
- Devices must be stored in backpacks or designated classroom phone holders—not in pockets or on your person.

- Use of phones, earbuds, smartwatches, or other personal electronics is **only allowed with explicit staff permission**.
- Phones and personal devices are **prohibited in restrooms and during class transitions**.
- Taking photos or recording videos of students or staff is strictly prohibited.

All devices must be **powered off and stored** in the student’s backpack or locker unless granted permission by school personnel.

Exceptions to the Policy:

- Authorized educational use as part of a lesson (teacher discretion)
- Medical alerts/monitoring devices as documented in a health plan
- Emergencies requiring parent/student communication (must go through front office)

Parents should not call or text students during school hours. Please contact the front office at (928) 402-5900 for urgent messages. Please help us reduce classroom disruptions.

Unauthorized Use Includes:

- Texting, calling, or using social media during school hours
- Listening to music or using earbuds without permission
- Taking photos or recording video/audio
- Using Airdrop or Bluetooth to send/receive files

Consequences for Violations

Violation	Consequence
1st Offense	Verbal reminder and phone held in office until end of day.
2nd Offense	Device confiscated. Parent/guardian must pick it up. Student receives lunch detention.
3rd Offense	Device confiscated, ISS, OSS, detention assigned, and student signs a behavior contract. Parent meeting may be scheduled.

Chronic violations may result in loss of device privileges for the quarter or semester.

In Case of Emergency: Parents/guardians should contact the HDMS Office directly at **(928) 402-5900**.

Dress Code Policy

HDMS enforces a clear and respectful dress code to promote a safe, distraction-free learning environment appropriate for middle school students.

General Requirements:

- Clothing must **fully cover undergarments and private body parts**.
- **Tops:** Must have sleeves or wide straps, cover the midriff, and not be sheer. Hoods must remain down while indoors. Hats are not allowed indoors.
- **Bottoms:** Must reach **mid-thigh**; any holes in pants must be below mid-thigh.
- **Shoes:** Must be secure with heel straps—flip-flops, slippers, or wheeled shoes are not allowed.

Not Permitted:

- Pajamas (except on designated spirit days)
- Clothing or accessories displaying **drugs, alcohol, profanity, or violent imagery**
- Slippers, chains, wallet chains, or novelty items not related to education
- Face coverings such as hoods, bandanas, or sunglasses inside the building
- Excessive makeup or items that distract from learning

Public Displays of Affection (PDA)

To maintain a professional school atmosphere, PDA is **not allowed** on campus. Students are expected to maintain respectful and appropriate behavior on campus. Public displays of affection, such as kissing, prolonged hugging, or close physical contact, are **not permitted** and may result in disciplinary action.

Permitted: Side hugs and handshakes as respectful greetings

Zero-Tolerance Policies

The following violations will result in **immediate disciplinary action** in accordance with the GUSD Code of Conduct:

- **Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, vaping devices, or tobacco products**
- **Weapons or simulated weapons of any kind**

Prohibited Items

Students may not bring the following items to school:

- Weapons, toy weapons, or weapon simulations
- Drugs, alcohol, vape pens, or tobacco products
- Toys, stuffed animals, gaming devices, or non-instructional electronics
- Non-approved books, magazines, or media
- Pets or live animals
- Speakers, laser pointers, fireworks, lighters, aerosol sprays, mace
- Poppers or any explosive devices
- Drones, Go-Pros, cameras, video recorders, robots, or all personal sports equipment used for recess without prior approval

Final Note

High Desert Middle School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and academically focused environment. Parents and students are expected to read, understand, and comply with all policies outlined above.

For questions or clarification, please contact the HDMS Front Office at (928) 402-5900.

WHAT NOT TO WEAR TO MIDDLE SCHOOL



What Not to Wear to School



Dress Code Guidelines

Shirt/dress must have sleeves or wide straps with non-see through fabric from underarm to waistband.

Shirt should overlap waistband.

Shorts, skirts, and dresses should come to the mid-thigh or longer.



Dress Code Guidelines

Tops paired with leggings or yoga pants should extend past the student's wrist with arms by their sides.



Bicycles, Skateboards, and Similar Equipment

To help keep our campus safe, students are not permitted to ride bikes, skateboards, scooters, or other equipment on campus grounds, including the front sidewalk, bus bay area, and parking lot—before, during, or after school. All equipment must be walked until students are completely off school property.

- Bicycles, scooters, and skateboards should be placed in the designated bike rack in front of the auditorium and secured with a personal lock.
- Scooters and skateboards may also be stored in the school office storeroom for the day upon request.

School Dances

School dances are sponsored by Student Council and may be held by grade level throughout the year. Students will receive invitations and are encouraged to attend!

- **Dress code and cell phone rules apply** to all after-school and evening events.
- **Only HDMS students may attend**—no guests or younger siblings.
- Students must attend the **entire school day** to be eligible to participate in a dance.
- Dances begin **immediately after school**. Students must enter by **4:15 PM**. The dance ends at **6:00 PM**, and students must be picked up by **6:15 PM**.
- Students who leave the dance will **not be allowed to re-enter**.
- Referrals may result in non-participation of dance.
- Parents are welcome to attend and support our events!

Medication at School

All medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicine, and cough drops, must be turned in to the Health Aide. Students are not permitted to carry medication on campus.

- Medications must be in the **original container with a label**.
- A **High Desert Middle School Medication Permission Form** is required for all medications and is available through the Health Aide.
- For over-the-counter medication, parents should submit the completed form included in the online enrollment packet.
- For questions, please call the Health Aide at **928-402-5900**.

Fundraising Sales

To ensure fairness and limit disruptions, **individual student fundraising** is not allowed at school unless it is part of a **school-sponsored activity or club**.

Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

Safety drills will take place throughout the school year to ensure students know what to do in case of an emergency. All students must:

- Take every drill seriously.
- Follow all staff instructions.
- Remain quiet and respectful during procedures.

During a drill, visitors will be asked to **wait outside the building** until it is completed.

Hazing Policy

Hazing of any kind is **strictly prohibited** at High Desert Middle School. This includes:

- Initiation rituals that involve harassment, abuse, or humiliation.
- Encouraging or participating in hazing behavior.
- Hazing of any individual currently enrolled or intending to enroll in the district.

Students or parents may report hazing concerns to any staff member. All staff are required to take reasonable steps to prevent and respond to such incidents.

Bullying is never acceptable. It causes pain, fear, and lasting emotional damage. If you or someone you know is being bullied, please speak up. Tell a trusted adult—we are here to help.

Student Discipline Policy – 2025–2026

At High Desert Middle School, student behavior is guided by a commitment to providing a **safe, respectful, and inclusive environment** where learning can thrive. Discipline is essential to maintaining order and ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education without unnecessary disruption.

Philosophy of Discipline

Discipline is rooted in mutual **respect, accountability, and personal responsibility**. Students are expected to follow all school rules, district policies, and classroom expectations at all times. When behavior does not meet these expectations, we aim to guide students toward positive change through **restorative practices**, logical consequences, and support systems.

Parental Support for School Discipline

At High Desert Middle School, we believe that **strong partnerships between parents, students, and staff** are essential for maintaining a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment. Parental support plays a critical role in reinforcing school rules and expectations and helps students take responsibility for their actions.

How Parents Can Support School Discipline:

- **Familiarize yourself with school rules** and review them regularly with your child.
- **Support teacher and administrator decisions** when discipline is necessary and approach concerns through respectful, solution-oriented communication.
- **Encourage respectful behavior** at home, on social media, and in the community—remind students that their actions reflect not just on them, but on their school and family.
- **Monitor technology and online activity** to ensure safe and responsible use of digital platforms.
- **Stay involved** by attending parent-teacher conferences, monitoring academic progress, and checking in regularly with your child about school experiences.
- **Promptly respond** to school communication regarding behavior or academic concerns.
- **Model problem-solving and accountability**, helping your child reflect on behavior, make amends, and grow from mistakes.

School Resource Officer (SRO) – Sgt. Jeremy Cochran – Globe Police Department

Supporting Safety, Security, and Student Success

High Desert Middle School is proud to have a full-time **School Resource Officer (SRO)** on campus as part of our commitment to maintaining a **safe, secure, and supportive school environment** for all students, staff, and community members.

Our SRO is a **sworn law enforcement officer** trained to work in educational settings, serving in multiple roles:

- **Safety and Security Leader:** Assists in emergency preparedness, campus security, and crisis response.
- **Mentor and Positive Role Model:** Builds relationships with students through guidance, outreach, and trust-based engagement.
- **Educational Partner:** Supports staff in delivering presentations on safety, law-related education, bullying prevention, digital citizenship, and more.
- **Community Liaison:** Works closely with families, school administrators, and local agencies to ensure open communication and proactive solutions.

The presence of our SRO enhances not only physical safety but also the overall school climate by fostering **trust, accountability, and student well-being**.

For questions or concerns regarding campus safety or to connect with our SRO, please contact the front office at **928-402-5900**.

Shared Responsibility

Discipline is most effective when home and school are aligned. When students see that parents and educators and school resource officers are united in their expectations, it strengthens the message that respectful behavior, responsibility, and good decision-making are non-negotiable parts of being a successful student.

We ask all parents and guardians to join us in upholding a culture of **Tiger Pride**, where every student is supported, held accountable, and empowered to succeed.

Together, we are **Tiger Strong**—committed to excellence, growth, and mutual respect.

Progressive Discipline Approach

Minor infractions will be addressed by the classroom teacher or supervising staff member using a variety of interventions, including but not limited to:

- Verbal redirection or warning
- Reflection or time-out
- Loss of privilege
- Detention (during lunch)
- Parent/guardian contact
- Restorative conversations
- Behavior support referral

If these interventions are not successful, or if the behavior is more serious, the student will be referred to administration. Consequences may include:

- Parent conference
- Referral to the counselor or support team
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
- Loss of extracurricular privileges
- Restitution/community service
- Law enforcement referral (when required by law)
- Long-term suspension or expulsion (in extreme cases)

Disciplinary responses will be determined based on the nature and seriousness of the behavior, the student's discipline history, and the impact on the school environment.

Scope of Authority

Discipline policies apply to:

- All GUSD campuses and school-related property
- While traveling to/from school or school events
- At all school-sponsored events, whether on or off campus
- When behavior off-campus negatively impacts school safety or operations

Students are also subject to discipline for conduct that occurs **off school property** if it:

- Endangers the health, safety, or welfare of others in the district, or
- Substantially disrupts the school environment.

Globe Unified School District #1 Code of Conduct

While school administrators have **discretion in assigning consequences**, all disciplinary actions must align with GUSD Policy JK – Student Discipline and Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S. § 15-843). Disciplinary decisions, including consultation with the School Resource Officer (SRO), are made after reviewing all relevant facts and circumstances.

The policy affirms that:

- Disciplinary decisions must not be based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, or any other unlawful reason.
- Serious violations (e.g., threats, violence, weapons, or drugs) may result in **long-term suspension or expulsion**, following due process procedures.

Temporary Removal from Class

Teachers have the authority to **temporarily remove a student** from class when behavior interferes with the learning environment. The student may be referred to the principal or designee following district referral procedures and state law (A.R.S. § 15-841). Time frame will be determined by administrative staff and teachers.

Confinement and Physical Restraint- If confinement is authorized by the Governing Board:

- Parents will be **notified in writing** at enrollment that confinement may be used.
- **Written parental consent** is required, unless a student poses **imminent harm** to themselves or others. In such cases, efforts will be made to notify parents the same day.
- Staff may use **reasonable physical force** when necessary to protect students, staff, or property in accordance with state law.

Prohibited Conduct: Students may face disciplinary action for the following (including but not limited to):

- **Vaping, possession of vape devices, or vape wands** (subject to search with board approval)
- **Bullying, harassment, or hazing**
- **Threats to an educational institution** (may result in expulsion per A.R.S. §§ 13-2911 and 15-841)
- **Fighting or physical aggression**
- **Insubordination or defiance of school authority**
- **Possession of weapons or illegal substances**
- **Cyberbullying or inappropriate use of technology**
- **Theft, vandalism, or destruction of property**

Threatening an Educational Institution

As defined under Arizona law, any student determined to have made a **credible threat** against an educational institution may face **mandatory expulsion for at least one year**. The district may modify this requirement on a case-by-case basis, including placement in an **alternative education program** if the student participates in:

- Mediation
- Community service
- Restorative justice or restitution programs
- Parental involvement in behavior interventions

Due Process Rights

Students have the right to **due process** before being assigned any major disciplinary action. This includes:

- Notification of the infraction
- An opportunity to respond to the allegation
- An investigation and administrative review of the incident
- Documentation of the outcome and consequences

All disciplinary records are kept **confidential** and documented in administrative files. ALL Parents/Guardians are encouraged to keep contact phone numbers up to date for school communication.

If you have any questions about this policy or your child's behavior expectations, please contact the school administration. Together, we will support each student's success while maintaining a respectful and focused learning environment.

Grading & Academic Framework – 2025–2026

Our Commitment to Student Learning

High Desert Middle School is dedicated to preparing students for high school and beyond by fostering a learning environment that prioritizes academic excellence, innovation, and individualized support. Our approach is centered on **mastery of content, critical thinking, and the development of essential life skills** through student-centered learning.

Deeper Learning Competencies

Our instructional model integrates six core competencies to guide student growth:

1. Master Core Academic Content
2. Think Critically and Solve Complex Problems
3. Work Collaboratively
4. Communicate Effectively
5. Learn How to Learn
6. Develop an Academic Growth Mindset

Mastery-Based Education

Students' progress by demonstrating **mastery of skills and standards**, not simply seat time. Teachers assess students based on their ability to show understanding through performance tasks, assessments, and skill application.

Key Features:

- Clear learning targets and rubrics
- Individualized academic recovery plans for students not yet meeting mastery
- Growth mindset to encourage perseverance and resilience
- Students must demonstrate a minimum of 70% mastery to pass a course

Special Programs

- *Gifted Program* – Students that test at 80 and above in the categories of verbally, quantitative, or qualitative will be placed in the gifted program with enriched opportunities.
- *Extended Learning Program* - The design of this program is to provide opportunities for extended and challenging learning beyond what is found in the typical classroom. A student must show achievement as defined in the district-adopted policy concerning placement in the ELP program.
- *English Language Learner* - Students whose primary language is other than English are eligible for ELL services. All students whose primary language is not English are assessed for eligibility in the English Language Learner (ELL) program. A home language survey is included in the enrollment packet.
Para obtener más información sobre el programa ELL, llame al 928-402-5900.
- *Special Education* - Programs are provided for students with disabilities. Programs and support are provided for students with IEPs and 504 plans.

Tutoring Services

- HDMS is committed to helping all students succeed academically. We offer tutoring services for all core contents during the week. Students must be signed up by a parent or guardian to attend. Please see the Academic Services page on our school website for the tutoring schedule and to complete the sign-up form.

Special Education

For questions or services related to IEPs or accommodations, contact the principal, assistant principal, or special education teacher.

Honors Program

Placement in honors courses is based on grades, assessment scores, and teacher recommendations. Honors students must be willing to meet increased expectations and demonstrate consistent effort.

- Honors courses are offered in **Math and ELA**
- **High School Algebra I** may be available to 8th graders (based on staff availability) and may count as **high school credit** with a passing final grade of C or higher and must successfully pass the EOC (end of course) test provided by the high school, with a 70% or better.

Curriculum & Course Offerings

All coursework is aligned to the **Arizona State Standards** and designed to promote deep learning and real-world skills.

Core Classes (Grades 6–8):

- Math
- English Language Arts (ELA)
- Science
- Social Studies

Grade-Specific Courses:

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Math	Math	Math
ELA – English Language Arts	ELA – English Language Arts	ELA – English Language Arts
Science	Science	Science
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
1 st quarter - Enrichment/Reteach 2 nd quarter – PE 3 rd quarter – Art 4 th quarter - Health	1 st quarter - PE 2 nd quarter – Art 3 rd quarter – Enrichment/Reteach 4 th quarter – Intro. to Drawing/Art	1 st quarter – Art 2 nd quarter –Enrichment/Reteach 3 rd quarter – PE 4 th quarter – Keyboarding/Office Skills

Grading System

The school year consists of **two semesters and four quarters** (150 instructional days). Only semester grades are recorded on official transcripts.

Grading Scale:

- A: 90–100%
- B: 80–89%
- C: 70–79%
- NY (Not Yet): Below 70% (not passing)

Students earning a **Not Yet (NY)** grade must participate in an **Academic Recovery Plan** to reach the required 70% mastery level.

Performance Expectations:

Teachers may include participation, assessments, projects, homework, and behavior in performance criteria. Students who do not meet the minimum performance threshold must **reteach, retake, or recover content** to pass.

Eligibility for Activities

Students must maintain a **C or better** in all classes to be eligible for extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

- Weekly grade checks begin **Monday, August 11**
- Ineligible students must complete an **Academic Recovery Plan** before regaining eligibility
- Students may attend meetings and practices but may **not participate or travel** until eligibility is restored
- Student athletes must attend school the day of an event and the next scheduled school day after the event for eligibility reasons. If a student needs to miss school prior to an event after they must contact school attendance clerk, athletic director, or administrator for clearance.
- *Note please refer to GUSD Athletic Student Handbook for all district athletic policies.

Honor Roll Recognition

HDMS celebrates academic achievement each semester during award assemblies:

- **Principal's Honor Roll:** 4.0 GPA
- **High Honor Roll:** 3.5–3.99 GPA
- **Honor Roll:** 3.0–3.49 GPA (no grades below a C)
- **Principal's Growth Honor Roll:** GPA increase of 0.25–0.5 from the previous semester

8th Grade Promotion Requirements

Please be advised that each student is limited to 4 tickets per family to attend the promotion. Promotion is based on mastery of academic standards in **reading, writing, math, science, and social studies**, along with the following criteria:

- **Passing grades (70%+) in all quarters including a check 3 weeks prior to promotion**
- **Fewer than 10 unexcused absences**
- **No suspensions in Quarter 4**
- **\$0 balance on the student's lunch account**
- Teacher recommendations and retention team review

Promotion/Retention

Teachers who identify a student with early signs of academic struggles will conference with parents and student and develop an academic success plan as a team, for the student by the 6th week of school. Continued meetings will occur during Parent Teacher Conferences to follow up and ensure the student is on track. If students do not show signs of improvement, nor followed the plan, the retention process will be initiated by the end of the semester.

Promotion decisions are made using objective data and with input from the **school's Promotion/Retention Team**. As per **ARS § 15-521(3)**, teachers have final authority on promotion or retention.

Appeal Process:

Parents who disagree with a promotion/retention decision may appeal to the **GUSD Governing Board** following the formal process outlined in **ARS § 15-342**

Consequences

Students who do not successfully complete the required promotion requirements will be assigned Summer School. Failure to complete Summer School will result in retention.

Intervention may include one or more of the following:

1. Tutoring- Before/After School
2. Reteach
3. Added academic support courses in lieu of Specials or Electives.

Homework

Homework is defined as any activity or assignment directed by the teacher to be performed outside the classroom that may include practicing skills learned in class, reading, studying, projects, or completion of assignments.

Homework Guidelines

The purpose of our homework policy is to help students practice skills learned in class and develop good study habits. Due dates are given to help students learn to manage their time and to aid parents in structuring home study periods. Students should assume that homework assignments are to be completed by the date specified by the instructor unless special arrangements have been made with the teacher. When absent, the student may have as many days to make up work missed as the number of days he or she was absent.

Rules for Homework

- Connected to grade level or subject matter curriculum.
- Connected to class instruction.
- Engaging purposefully and relevant.
- Consideration shall be given to quality over quantity.

Scheduling time and Parameters

Homework may be given Monday through Thursday. Weekends and holidays are primarily reserved for family time. Students will be issued a planner at the beginning of the year and be required to have it with them every day. A replacement planner may be purchased from the front office for \$5.00. Students may elect to use weekends to review materials, makeup work, complete projects, and enjoy recreational reading. Assignments shall be designed so that the typical student can complete all homework, including time for studying and preparing for exams, in the average minutes shown. Special education students may receive modified assignments based on their IEP.

Makeup Work

Students who miss schoolwork because of an excused/unexcused absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be provided. As decided by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed - 1 day for every day absent unless other arrangements have been made **with** the teacher. *******Students will not receive full credit if homework is not turned in to the teacher on time*******. Students will receive full credit if course work turned in with days allotted. Students will receive 75% credit if one day late. 50% credit for two days late, 25% credit for 3 days late, and 0% credit for 4 or more days late. Student circumstances will be taken into consideration for emergency situations such as student illness, family emergencies, bereavement, or legal issues.

Students who are suspended from school shall be given assignments to complete. The teacher of any class in which a student is suspended may require the student to complete tests missed during the suspension. Students suspended must have their work completed and returned within a week of return for credit.

It is the responsibility of the student, parent, and teacher to provide and receive missing assignments due to an absence. For students with consecutive absences, make-up work will be provided upon return by student/parent request.

State Testing Tentative Dates:



Assessments

2025-2026 Assessments Overview - Tentative Test Windows

Achievement Assessments

Assessment	Grade(s)	Test Window	
AASA (ELA and Math) **/*/*/*/*/*/*/*/*	Grades 3-8	Computer-Based Testing: March 30 - April 24, 2026 (Grades 3-8 Writing and Grade 3 ELA Oral Reading Fluency must be completed by April 10, 2026)	Paper-Based Testing: March 30 - April 8, 2026 (Grades 3-8 Writing must be scheduled for March 30 or March 31, 2026) (Grade 3 ELA Oral Reading Fluency must be completed by April 10, 2026)
AzSCI (Science) ****	Grades 5, 8, and 11 (Cohort 2027)	Computer-Based Testing: March 16 - April 10, 2026	
ACT Aspire ***/*/*/*	Grade 9 (Cohort 2029)	Computer-Based Testing: March 30 - April 24, 2026	Paper-Based Testing: March 30 - April 8, 2026
ACT (with Writing) **/*/*/*/*/*/*/*	Grade 11 (Cohort 2027)	Test Window 1: Paper (Standard): March 24, 2026 Paper (Accommodations): March 24-27, March 30-31, April 1-3, 2026 Online: March 24-27, March 30-31, April 1-3, 2026	Test Window 2: Paper (Standard): April 7, 2026 Paper (Accommodations): April 7-10 & April 13-17, 2026 Online: April 7-10 & April 13-17, 2026

English Language Proficiency Assessment

Assessment	Grade(s)	Test Window
AZELLA Placement **/*/*	KPT & Grades 1-12	Two weeks before the first instructional day of school through May 8, 2026
AZELLA Spring Reassessment **/*/*	Grades K-12	January 26 - March 13, 2026
Alt ELPA Screener **/*/*	Eligible students in Grades K-12	August 4, 2025 - May 8, 2026
Alt ELPA Summative **/*/*	Eligible students in Grades K-12	January 26 - March 13, 2026

Alternate Assessment

Assessment	Grade(s)	Test Window
MSAA – ELA and Math **/*/*/*/*	Eligible students in Grades 3 - 8 and 11	March 9 – April 24, 2026
MSAA – Science ****	Eligible students in Grades 5, 8, and 11	March 9 – April 24, 2026

National and International Assessments

Assessment	Ages	Test Window
NAEP – Math and Reading	Grades 4 and 8	Selected schools will be notified of specific test window and students to be tested

Legend:

*Used in Federal Accountability: Participation (95% Tested)

***Used in State Accountability: Participation/Proficiency/Growth

^Used in Federal Accountability: Growth (K-8)

****Used in State Accountability: CCRI, Acceleration Readiness, or Other

**Used in Federal Accountability: Proficiency/Growth

Note: Distinctions are subject to change based on State Board determination regarding the State Accountability System.

Academic Misconduct

High Desert Middle School expects all students to abide by ethical academic standards. Academic dishonesty—during state testing is prohibited. State test will be invalidated. HDMS Academic Integrity Policy covers all school-related tests, quizzes, reports, class assignments, and projects, both in and out of class. The purpose of HDMS Academic Integrity Policy is to prepare students for the reality created by the technology explosion, for the world of college and beyond, where cheating and plagiarism have dire consequences.

The determination that a student has engaged in academic misconduct shall be based on specific evidence provided by the classroom teacher or other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from others. Students found to have engaged in academic misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action (note GUSD discipline matrix)

The following acts are considered Academic Dishonesty:

- A.I. – Artificial Intelligence
- CHEATING – Cheating includes the actual giving or receiving of an unauthorized aid or help or the actual giving or receiving of unfair advantage on any form of academic work.
- PLAGIARISM – Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, idea and/or thought of another and representing it as one’s own original work.
- FALSIFICATION – Falsification includes the verbal or written statement of any untruth.
- STEALING – Stealing includes getting another’s possessions without right or permission.
- FORGERY – Forgery includes the illegal copying of another’s name or signature.
- ATTEMPTS – Attempts toward completion of any act described above would constitute a violation and may be punishable to the same extent as if the attempted act has been completed.

Note: Studying with other students to prepare for class assignments or examinations is not academic dishonesty unless such actions are prohibited or limited by the teacher.

Progress Notice and Report Cards

Parents will be notified every two weeks via email for “Not Yet” (F) grades. Progress Reports/Report Cards are sent home via email and available upon request in paper form at the end of each quarter (if the student is not here, the report card is mailed home).

Synergy Parent Portal

Synergy is the online grading system we use as the final gradebook of record. Our expectation is that parents access their child’s grades and stay up to date on their school progress. You can access your child’s current grades and attendance via the Internet. The website location is on the school website.

If you have Internet access at home or at work, you can view the information on your child at any time. Please keep your passwords confidential so only you can access the information. If you have any questions, need help creating an account, or need password information, please call our office on 928-402-5900.

RECOGNITION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

HDMS acknowledges student success with the following incentive programs:

- Academic/ Behavioral Recognition Activities/Incentives
- Individual Teacher Recognition
- Breakfast with the Stars (Honor Roll Breakfast)
- Lunch with the Principal

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

Students are not to stay after school unless they are supervised by a school employee and have parental permission. Students may not stay to watch an athletic event unless they are under the direct supervision of *their* parent/guardian. Please see athletic schedules for event times and venue.

POSTERS AND BULLETINS

To ensure neatness and proper care of school property, no posters or bulletins may not be placed in the hallways unless they are approved by the Administration. These items are to be placed in a designated area.

Any outside organization that is not a sanctioned school club or activity must send posters to the district for prior approval. The daily announcements are reserved for school clubs or activities only.

Important Notice!

High Desert Middle School is Not Responsible for Stolen, Lost, or Damaged Personal Property

Please be aware that students bring individual property such as cell phones, iPads, earbuds, and other electronic devices to school at their own risk. High Desert Middle School is not responsible for any stolen, lost, or damaged items while on school premises.

To minimize the risk of loss or damage, we recommend the following:

- **Keep Valuables at Home:** Avoid bringing valuable items to school unless necessary.
- **Secure Your Belongings:** Use lockers and always keep personal items in a secure place.
- **Label Your Property:** Clearly label your personal belongings with your name and contact information.
- **Be Aware:** Always be mindful of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping to keep our school in a safe and secure environment for everyone.

Thank you for your understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We have reviewed the contents of the student-parent handbook. Together we will support, contact, collaborate, and support the school. We also agree to abide by the policies, procedures, and rules in the Parent – Student Handbook for School Year 2025-2026.

Student Signature: _____

Parent(s)/Legal Guardian’s Signature: _____

DATE: _____

*****This form must be returned to the school.***