

2026-2027

Desert Sky Elementary

Parent-Student-Staff Handbook

Mission and Vision Statement:

Our mission is to empower students to unlock their highest potential through active learning and building connections between students, staff, families, and community.

We will:

- *Practice Perseverance*
- *Celebrate Diversity*
- *Foster Creativity*
- *Develop Responsibility*
- *Show Respect*

Dear Families,

Welcome to Desert Sky Elementary school. My name is Nicole Blake and I have the privilege of serving as principal of Richland School District's newest elementary school. I am committed to doing all I can to ensure our school community feels warm, welcoming, safe, and inclusive for all students, families, and staff.

For the 2026-27 school year we will welcome approximately 450 students into 20 classrooms. In addition to daily core instruction, students will enjoy weekly music, art, physical education, and library instruction from our specialist team. Our instructional specialist, paraeducators, counselor, school psychologist, and other staff will help to support language, social, academic, and behavior skills as well as student health and safety.

At Desert Sky Elementary, we understand that parents and families are their child's first teacher and know their child best. We place high value on building relationships and strong home/school/community partnerships. We also recognize that not every partnership will look the same. We consider it a privilege to work with your child and look forward to getting to know the strengths and interests of each individual student so we can work collaboratively with you to help foster your child's interests and talents. We have high expectations of our students, and we have high expectations of ourselves to help all Desert Sky Elementary students learn and grow.

If you have questions about registration please contact Monika Brink, Attendance Secretary, at monika.brink@rsd.edu or (509) 940-5703.

You can contact me at nicole.blake@rsd.edu or call (509) 940-5705.



Looking forward to a great school year!

Nicole Blake

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Desert Sky Elementary Contact Information & Office Staff

Principal	Nicki Blake	nicole.blake@rsd.edu
Assistant Principal	Shyla DeJong	shyla.dejong@rsd.edu
Counselor	Deborah Johnson	deborah.johnson@rsd.edu
Psychologist	Courtney Moffit	courtney.moffit@rsd.edu
Lead Secretary	Sherry Burows	sherry.burows@rsd.edu
Attendance Secretary	Lana Funderburk	lana.funderburk@rsd.edu
Office Hours	7:30am to 4:00pm	
Phone Number	(509) 940-5700	
Fax Number	(509) 713-7835	
Attendance Number	(509) 940-5703	

You may also e-mail attendance messages to:
Lana.Funderburk@rsd.edu or DSE.Attendance@rsd.edu

School Address

Desert Sky Elementary
2100 Sunshine Ave.
West Richland, WA 99353

School, Bell & Meal Schedules

District Calendar

https://www.rsd.edu/calendar

Grades Kindergarten – 5th

Monday – Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

Friday 8:45 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.

Conference Days – No School or 12:30 p.m. release

Morning Bell:

The school bell will ring at 8:40 a.m. Official school start time is 8:45 a.m.

Recess, Lunch and Specialist Schedule by Grade Level:

Kinder	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
10:40-11:00 Recess	10:40-11:00 Recess	10:40-11:30 Specials	11:10-11:35 Recess	9:45-10:35 Specials	8:50-9:40 Specials
11:00-11:25 Lunch	11:00-11:25 Lunch	11:35-12:00 Recess	11:35-11:55 Lunch	11:35-12:20 Recess	11:10-11:35 Recess
12:20-1:10 Specials	1:10-2:00 Specials	12:00-12:20 Lunch	1:45-2:00 Recess	12:00-12:00 Lunch	11:35-11:55 Lunch
2:05-2:20 PM Recess	2:05-2:20 PM Recess	2:05-2:20 PM Recess	2:10-3:00 Specials	1:45-2:00 PM Recess	1:45-2:00 PM Recess

Meal Programs

Our school cafeteria provides both breakfast and lunch for all kindergarten through 5th grade students each day.

Students who are eating breakfast may arrive starting at **8:15 a.m.** and should enter through the cafeteria doors at the back of the building. Please note that supervision is not available before 8:15 a.m (breakfast only).

For all other students, arrival should be no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT LUNCH & BREAKFAST PRICING 2026-2027 School Year

Student Prices	**Elementary**	Adult
Full Price Lunch	$ 3.10	$6.00
Reduced Price Lunch (PreK–12th grade)	$ .00	
Full Price Breakfast	$ 1.85	$ 3.25
Reduced Price Breakfast	$ .00	N/A
Milk	$ .60	$ .60

- If you would like to eat lunch with your child, please have your child tell the teacher when the lunch count is taken in the classroom so we can notify the kitchen of your expected visit.
- Breakfast and lunch menus along with nutritional information are available to view on line at https://www.rsd.edu/departments/nutrition-services
- To promote good nutrition for our students, we do not allow them to drink pop or energy drinks anytime they are at school.

Free and Reduced Information

If you would like more information about our free or reduced lunch program, you can visit the website above or contact the Nutrition Services Department at (509) 967-6114.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

Morning Arrival

We look forward to the arrival of our students on campus each morning. Safety is our number one priority. There is **NO supervision prior to 8:30 a.m.** With the exception of the breakfast program, which starts at 8:15 a.m., **PLEASE DO NOT HAVE YOUR CHILD ON CAMPUS PRIOR TO THAT TIME.**

Student Dismissal:

Student dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. on Monday-Thursday and 2:15 p.m. on Fridays. For safety reasons, students and siblings need to leave the playground immediately after being dismissed. Students can return to campus with parent permission/supervision after 4:00 p.m.

Closed Campus/Playground:

Desert Sky Elementary (DSE) is closed to middle and high school students during school hours. Older siblings (non-DSE students) that walk home with elementary-aged students need to wait off campus until the 3:15 p.m. dismissal bell. Our campus/playground is closed from 8:15 a.m.-3:30 p.m. to all non-approved visits.

Crossing Guards:

Crossing Guards are provided at the following times:
8:15 a.m.-8:40 a.m. Before School
3:15 p.m.-3:30 p.m. After School



Crossing Intersections

- Belmont flashing beacon
- Paradise flashing beacon
- Sunshine and Glena
- Paradise and Belmont

Before and After School Drop-Off & Pickup

Student safety is our highest priority. We have policies and procedures on how to drop students off at the school, and how to pick students up after school. Please make arrangements to drop-off or pick-up your student at the paved area in front of the Desert Sky Elementary's main entrance. This area has been created to provide a safety zone and to keep students from having to be in an area with car traffic.

If you choose to use the drop-off and pick-up area in front of the school, please pull to the curb to allow your child to exit and enter your car from the passenger side directly onto the curb. We will not allow children to walk into the driving lane to enter or exit cars on the driver's side of the car. You must stay in your car if you pull up to the curb, as this is a fire lane. As cars exit this lane, please pull forward to allow more cars to access the curb. Thank you for helping us keep all children safe and teaching your child this procedure.

If you need to come into the school, or wish to meet your child on campus, please park in the center parking lot designated for visitors and cross at the designated crosswalk. If your child is late to school, or if you are picking them up early, parents need to come into the office to either sign them in or sign them out. When walking your child to your car, please use the walkway provided. This is a safety issue.

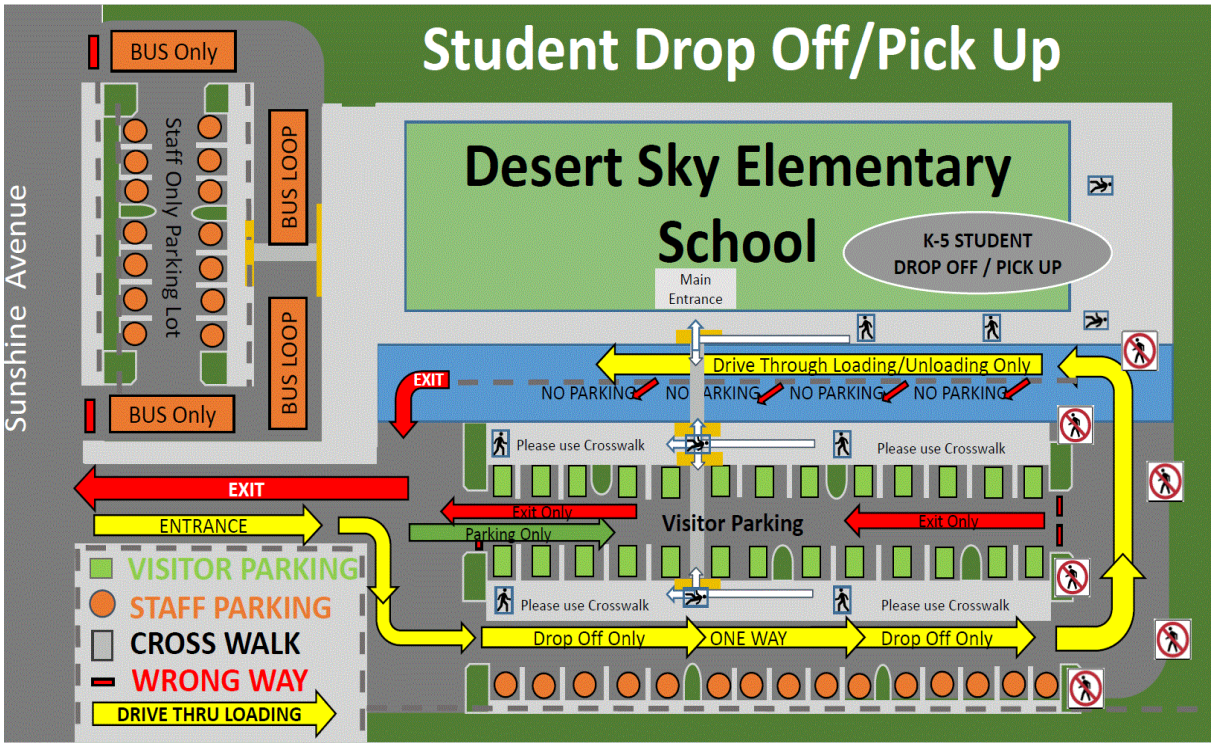
Early Entry Routine

"Early Entry" is a simple way for students to ease into their busy school day with a staggered arrival time between 8:30 a.m. - 8:40 a.m. Students are intentionally taught a morning routine of putting away backpacks, making a lunch reservation, and engaging in a calm classroom activity that eases students into their day. Activities can range from reading a choice book, exploring with manipulatives or games, drawing, completing unfinished work, etc. The school bell rings at 8:40 a.m. signaling the transition to the regular school day. Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:30 a.m. There is no supervision outside the school.

Parking

Desert Sky Elementary has 2 parking lots.
The lot directly in front of the school is designed for visitors (student drop off/pick up requiring entering the building to sign in or out a student).

The parking lot and entrance on the west side of the building is for staff and students who ride the bus. You will NOT be allowed to pick-up or drop-off your child in this area, it is used as a bus loop and for staff parking ONLY.



Bicycle, Scooter, Skateboard, Rollerblade Guidelines

"Walk Your Wheels"

It is the parents' responsibility to determine if their child has enough skill and judgment to ride safely and responsibly.

STUDENTS SHOULD WEAR HELMETS.

Desert Sky Elementary and the Richland School District assumes no responsibility for bicycles or scooters that are brought to school.

All bikes and scooters should be locked, if possible, in the bike racks located at the front East end of the building.

Students must always walk bikes and scooters while on school property. Which means they are not allowed to be ridden while on school property.

Skateboards, shoes with wheels and in-line skates follow the same procedures, "***walk your wheels***" while at Desert Sky Elementary.





PET GUIDELINES

We love pets! But only animals that are part of the instructional program will be allowed in the classroom/school and must be pre approved by the principal. The use of animals in the classroom is appropriate when supporting a specific unit of study. Therefore, these animals will be temporary in nature. Classroom pets are prohibited.

Pets are not allowed on Richland School District property. This includes dogs on a leash or being carried. **Pets need to remain at home or in a vehicle.**

Parent Communication

Parent Square

As a district/school, we have elected to use Parent Square as our online communication resource. ParentSquare allows families to connect with teachers and school staff, receive weather delay and crisis notifications, view school events and securely receive important student documents.

Take Home Folders

Please check with your child each Friday to review their school folder for special announcements, notices of upcoming events, and newsletters from the principal.

PTO

Desert Sky Elementary School loves an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and we encourage all parents/guardians to become involved. The group provides an arena in which parents and staff actively work together to create a positive, meaningful learning environment for all students.

Our PTO raises funds for worthwhile projects, organizes volunteer efforts that benefit our students, and creates new opportunities for our students. Purchasing a PTO membership for your family ensures that the Desert Sky Elementary PTO will be able to continue to serve our students.

Student Assistance Team (SAT)

We closely monitor the well-being of each of our students. As student concerns arise the staff Student Assistance Team is assembled to discuss ways to assist the child and the teacher. Generally, our SAT meets weekly throughout the school year. Please contact our school counselor if you wish to meet regarding your child's needs.

Parental Custody

In the case that a custody issue restricts parental rights to a child, the office must be provided with a copy of the legal documents stating the restrictions. In order to protect children from unauthorized adults taking a child from school, we must have a copy on file of any restraining order or parenting plan issued in the state of Washington. Please contact your lawyer for assistance.

Visitation Policies

We encourage parents to visit and volunteer at our school. Please contact your child's teacher before coming to school to arrange an appropriate time for a visit. Parents are encouraged to make appointments with teachers when the need arises. Safety is very important to us at Desert Sky so all school visitors must sign in using the Richland School Districts Raptor System and wear the approved sticker/badge. Please be sure and bring your drivers license to sign in.

Visitation Procedures

- All visitors need to check into the office and sign in through the Raptor System.
- All visitors must wear their sticker in a visible spot.
- All visitors need to stay in their designated visiting areas.

- Parents visiting for lunch may not bring food to share with students other than their own (allergy reasons).
- Any parents that would like to visit the playground must have pre-approval from the Administration/Office.

Volunteering & Chaperones

All classroom volunteers that work directly with and/or supervise students (field trips, reading groups, etc.) must have a **yearly** current background check and be pre-approved through the RSD district office. The electronic pre-approval process may take up to two weeks. The website for electronic pre-approvals is: **https://richlandvolunteers.hrmplus.net/**



Attendance

Studies have shown a direct correlation between attendance and a child's academic achievement. The Washington State Legislature also recognized the importance of attendance by passing laws requiring regular attendance. State law mandates that we keep a record of excused and unexcused absences for each student and send a report at the end of each grading period to the state. Therefore, it is important that parents, students and schools work together to maximize student attendance.

The following Desert Sky Elementary attendance policy is designed to promote regular attendance, academic achievement, and safety for all Desert Sky students:

Please call the 24-hour school attendance line at 509-940-5703 and leave a voice message by 9:30 a.m. to report your student's absence for the day. This call lets us know your child is safe.

You may also e-mail attendance messages to Lana.Funderburk@rsd.edu or from our school web site DSE.Attendance@rsd.edu

The school office is required to call home for all students not in attendance at the start of the day and for whom no call has been received from the parent. This call is to verify parent knowledge of the student's absence.

STATE GUIDELINES

According to state law, a conference will be scheduled with the parent and building administrator to devise a plan for improved attendance when a student reaches:

- 7 unexcused/excused absences in a month
- 15 or more excused absences in a year

Pre-Planned Absences

For all ***pre-planned absences*** of more than five days, please obtain from the office an absence approval form. This form should be submitted to the office one week prior to the student's pre-planned absence.

Leaving School Early

If it is necessary for your child to leave school during the regular school day, please come to the office and complete the sign-out process. Teachers are instructed not to release a child from the class for an appointment or early release until notified by the office. Only custodial parents/guardians will be allowed to pick up a student during the day unless we have been notified in advance by the custodial parent/guardian. Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of the school day so your child may remain in school.

All students leaving school grounds during the school day must check out through the office. Please bring identification when signing your child out. For student safety, office staff will verify that all students are leaving with approved adults. If your child returns to school later in the same day, please sign them back in through the office.

To limit classroom disruptions, please note the following:

- Teachers are not able to monitor or remind students about early pick-up times during the day.
- The office will call your child down once you are here. For safety reasons, we do not call students to the office before a parent or guardian has arrived.
- We kindly ask that families avoid picking up students during the **last 10 minutes of the school day.** This is a very busy time when teachers are wrapping up lessons, students are preparing for dismissal, and the office is focused on coordinating end-of-day transitions.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and smooth school day for all students.

Tardies and Absences

It is very important for your child to arrive at school on time each day. Students who arrive late not only lose valuable learning time, but also cause a disruption for those students who have arrived on time. Students who arrive after 8:45 AM will be marked tardy and need to check in with the Office before going to class.

The Desert Sky Elementary tardy policy is designed to decrease the number of tardies and have students **in classrooms ready to learn by 8:45 a.m.** Phone contact will be made if students are late for school. Arrangements will be made to alleviate tardiness including requiring parents to meet with administration, putting the student on an attendance contract, and/or filing with BECCA court.

District Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absences and tardies and submit these daily as required by the attendance office.

- Tardies: arriving after the final AM bell at 8:45 a.m.
- Half-Day Absence: missing 1.5 hours or more in AM or PM.
- Full Day Absence: missing ½ to all day.

Excused absences:

Illness or health condition verified by parent or guardian - In case of extended and excessive illness, the building administration may require a statement from a doctor.

Approved pre-arranged activities - An activity scheduled by student and parent, including religious observances, should be pre-arranged and approved by the school building administration at least one week in advance of the activity.

School approved activities - An activity scheduled by the school that causes absence from the classroom.

Accidents or Illness

At times children will get sick or injured at school. It is essential that we have current emergency phone numbers on file so that parents can be contacted. If any doubt exists about your child's condition, you will be contacted.

Regular attendance is encouraged, but ill children should remain home. Children are expected to play outdoors each day during their recess periods. A child too ill to participate in this short activity is probably not well enough to be in school.

School and Bus Transportation

RSD Transportation Department at (509) 967-6150.
RSD Transportation website:
https://www.rsd.edu/departments/transportation

With safety being a high priority consideration, bus stops are located as conveniently as possible for those using the bus.

- Children should be ready for the bus ten (10) minutes before bus arrival.
- If a child misses the bus, parents are responsible for getting the student to school.

Questions regarding bus stops, bus schedules, and other related issues please call the RSD Transportation Supervisor at (509) 967-6150 or visit the RSD website for more information.

Respectful and safe behavior is expected at bus stops and on the bus. The bus driver has the right to deny bus riding privileges to any student who does not follow the rules and regulations provided to parents in the district's parent handbook.

If your student needs to ride a different bus for a day, get off at a different stop, or get picked up by someone else, please call the office to communicate the change. Students are required to have a bus pass from the office to ride a bus different from their own.

Richland School District's policy requires Kindergarten students to have a parent or authorized caregiver at the school bus stop for the driver to release the student(s). Please request a ***Kindergarten Bus Stop Expectation form*** for each of your kindergarten students from the school office. This form will allow the individuals you list to pick up your student from the school bus. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Transportation Department at (509) 967-6150.



Miscellaneous

Promotion and Retention (based on RSD Policy RR2400)

Students at risk of not being promoted will be identified as early as possible in their academic careers. District staff will work with the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to develop and deliver an individualized improvement plan to help the student qualify for promotion. Timely and effective communication among those involved is essential.

The final decision on retention or promotion shall be made by the Student Assistance Team (SAT). The SAT team shall be comprised of the student's classroom teacher(s), principal, counselor, and parent. Consensus of the team is the goal when deciding to retain any student. If the classroom teacher(s), principal, and counselor agree to retain the student, the student will be retained. No more than two retention decisions will be allowed for any student in their educational career.

For complete information on Richland School District Policy 2400 regarding promotion and retention and the responsibilities of the district, parents, and students, go to www.richlandschooldistrict.edu/resources/policies-regulations.

Telephone

The office and classroom telephones are business telephones and should only be used by students in case of an emergency. Students are not to use the phone to make personal arrangements such as requesting to go to another student's home after school. Students may use the phone only after being given permission by the teacher or office staff.

Toys, Cell Phones/Watches, Electronic Devices from Home

Students are asked **not** to bring toys, cell phones/watches and/or expensive items from home. The only exception would be items for sharing in class as requested by the teacher. These items should remain in backpacks before and after sharing time. We are NOT responsible for the security/theft of any electronic devices/personal items brought to school.

If we see students with toys, cell phones/watches, or other personal items, we will take it for safe keeping and return it to the student later. If your student does have a cell phone to call parents after school, it needs to stay silenced and in their backpacks all day long. This is in accordance with Richland School District Policy 3245.

Withdrawal

If you are leaving the Desert Sky Elementary area and need to withdraw your child from our school, please come to the school office and inform us of your move. Before your child can be withdrawn from school:

- All textbooks and library books must be returned.
- All outstanding bills or fines must be paid.
- Withdrawal form needs to be signed by the parent.

Please be sure all personal belongings are picked up from the school.

Child Care

Our on-site childcare is called the Boys & Girls Club and provides before and after school care for children at Desert Sky. Although they are located on our campus, they are a privately operated business with no affiliation with Desert Sky or the Richland School District. For more information, call 509-543-9980

Cold Weather Policy

Because we are concerned for the well-being and health of our students, a Cold Weather Policy has been put in place for the cold weather season. Students will be allowed into the building before the start of the school day (8:30) and kept in from recess whenever the temperature is 20 degrees or colder (including the wind chill factor). Also, in instances of inclement weather such as extraordinary rainfall, wind, snowfall or freezing rain, students will be allowed into the building early and/or kept inside during recess.

Maximizing Teaching and Learning Time

Your help with the following will be appreciated:

- Please leave messages, lunches, or other important items for your child with the secretary by 10:30 am.
- Please make every attempt to schedule after school plans with your child before he/she leaves for school. This will keep classroom interruptions to a minimum.
- If your student is absent and you want to pick up homework assignments, please notify the secretary when you call in the absence. She will leave a note for the Teacher. Homework may be picked up at the office after school.
- Should you desire a conference with your child's teacher, please use Parent Square to contact your child's teacher or leave a message with the office and the teacher will contact you.
- We ask that student use of the school telephone be limited to emergencies only.
- Teachers are not able to monitor or remind students about early pick-up times during the day.
- The office will call your child down once you are here. For safety reasons, we do not call students to the office before a parent or guardian has arrived.
- We kindly ask that families avoid picking up students during the **last 10 minutes of the school day.** This is a very busy time when teachers are wrapping up lessons, students are preparing for dismissal, and the office is focused on coordinating end-of-day transitions.

Dress Code Guidelines

We want all students to have appropriate clothing and footwear at school. **Administration has the authority to determine if clothing is disruptive to learning and/or impacts student safety.**

- Students need to have comfortable athletic style shoes that they can run, play, and be active in. No flip-flops or high-heeled shoes. Sandals with a heel strap are allowed.
- All tank tops need to have shoulder straps that are wider than a ruler (roughly 2" wide).
- Shirts need to be long enough to cover their stomachs and pants need to be high enough to cover their rear-ends.
- Shorts need to be mid-thigh length; shorts should hang lower than a student's hanging arm (tip of fingers).

- No clothing or accessories with Offensive pictures, symbols, or sayings; Demeaning statements; Vulgar statements; Violence; Inappropriate words; Sexual statements; Racial statements; or advertisements that promote tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

A good general policy regarding the dress code is: If there is **ANY QUESTION** about an item being inappropriate, **DO NOT WEAR IT.**

Healthroom

Health Room Staffing

We have a full time Health Room Pareducator at Desert Sky who is supervised by a District Nurse Supervisor. Families should inform the school of any medical problem a child might have. It is necessary for you to let us know if your child has any allergies or if there are other precautions we need to take related to a medical condition.

Medication

State law requires school personnel to assist a student to manage medications taken at school. This may only be done by written order of a physician. The giving of any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form written order is prohibited. This regulation includes various kinds of over the counter and prescription cough syrups and medication for headaches, colds, stomachaches, and other miscellaneous ailments. A signed Medication Authorization Form must also accompany asthma inhalers from the doctor and parent.
All medications must come to school in their original container with a prescription label attached. The label needs to include the child's name, physician's name, drug name, and dosage.
Parents/guardians may come to school to administer an over-the-counter medication to their child.

Emergency Drills

The safety of our students is our primary concern at Desert Sky. Our school has a written safety/crisis-emergency response plan. On a regular basis, we practice emergency drills (evacuation, lockdown, earthquake, shelter in place, etc.) so that all students and staff are prepared and know what to do in case of an emergency. Evacuation drills are practiced, which teach students and staff the quickest and safest way to evacuate the building. Lockdown drills are also practiced where the students stay in the classroom with their teacher behind locked doors in the event this type of protection is needed.

Emergency School Closures

The Richland School District web site (www.rsd.edu) and local radio/television stations give up-to-date information regarding school delays or closures.

Firearms and Dangerous Weapons on School Premises

No person shall have a firearm or other weapon on school premises, at a school sponsored event, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or in other areas of other facilities being used exclusively for school activities. Please refer to Richland School District Policy:https://www.rsd.edu/district/policies.

Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation (RSD Policy 3207)

The Richland School District is committed to a safe and civil educational environment for all students, employees, volunteers, and patrons free from harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying.

The terms "harassment, intimidation, and bullying" shall mean any written or other visual communication, verbal communication or physical act, gesture or omission, engaged in with the intent to, creating a substantial and unjustifiable risk of, creating the threat of, or with the natural end result of physically, emotionally or mentally harming a student, staff member, volunteer, patron or a member of such person's immediate family, or damaging the student, staff member, volunteer or patron's property or that of the immediate family. If your child is the target of any form of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, it should be immediately reported to a Desert Sky staff member. Such complaints will be appropriately investigated and handled according to Richland School District policy. Please refer to Richland School District Policy:https://www.rsd.edu/district/policies.

Full Policy and Procedure List

Richland School District's full list of policies and procedures can be found at https://www.rsd.edu/district/policies.

Parent/Student Rights

As a requirement of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), educational agencies must inform parents/eligible students of the following rights:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with requirements of FERPA.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use/Abuse (RSD Policy 3418)

It is the policy of the Richland School District to provide a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment where students can learn, develop internal strengths, values, and self-esteem. The use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs can destroy the health and well-being of any individual. The use of controlled substances, except under medical supervision, is dangerous. Therefore, it is against school district policy to be in possession or under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Violation of this policy constitutes cause for discipline of a student. The District reserves the right to refer to law-enforcement authorities any act or conduct relating to this policy

which may constitute a crime under any federal, state, county or local law. For more information regarding this policy, please go to Please refer to Richland School District Policy:https://www.rsd.edu/district/policies.

DISCRIMINATION

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Richland School District does not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. This applies to all educational programs, extra-curricular activities, and employment. The following employee(s) has been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination:

Richland School District
6972 Keene Road
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-6000

Title IX Coordinators:

Personnel	Matt Ellis (matt.ellis@rsd.edu) Executive Director, Human Resources
Students	Tory Christensen (Tory.Christensen@rsd.edu) Assistant Superintendent

Section 504 Coordinators:

Personnel	Ken Gosney (ken.gosney@rsd.edu) Executive Director, Human Resources
Facilities	Brad Anderson (brad.anderson@rsd.edu) Executive Director, Support Services
Student Services	Bryan Jones (brian.jones@rsd.edu) Assistant Superintendent

Civil Rights Coordinator and Compliance Coordinator for State/Federal Law:
Ken Gosney (ken.gosney@rsd.edu)

The Richland School District will also take steps to assure that national origin persons who lack English language skills can participate in all education programs, services and activities. For information regarding translation services or transitional bilingual education programs, contact the RSD Special Programs Office at 509-967-6050.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Students and staff are protected against sexual harassment by anyone in any school program or activity, including on the school campus, on the school bus, or off-campus during a school-sponsored activity.

Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior or communication that is sexual in nature when:

- A student or employee is led to believe that he or she must submit to unwelcome sexual conduct or communications in order to gain something in return, such as a grade, a

promotion, a place on a sports team, or any educational or employment decision, or
- The conduct substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile educational or employment environment.

Examples of Sexual Harassment:

- Pressuring a person for sexual favors
- Unwelcome touching of a sexual nature • Writing graffiti of a sexual nature
- Distributing sexually explicit texts, e-mails, or pictures
- Making sexual jokes, rumors, or suggestive remarks
- Physical violence, including rape and sexual assault

You can report sexual harassment to any school staff member or to the district's Title IX Officer, who is listed above.

You also have the right to file a complaint (see below).

For a copy of your district's sexual harassment policy and procedure, contact your school or district office, or view it online here: Policy 3205 & Procedure 3205 https://www.rsd.edu/district/policies/3000-series-students/policy-3205 and

COMPLAINT OPTIONS: DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

If you believe that you or your child have experienced unlawful discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment at school, you have the right to file a complaint.

Before filing a complaint, you can discuss your concerns with your child's principal or with the Richland School District Section 504 Coordinator, Title IX Officer, or Civil Rights Coordinator located at 6972 Keene Road West Richland WA 99353 (509)967-6050

This is often the fastest way to resolve your concerns.

Complaint to the School District

Step 1. Write Our Your Complaint

In most cases, complaints must be filed within one year from the date of the incident or conduct that is the subject of the complaint. A complaint must be in writing. Be sure to describe the conduct or incident, explain why you believe discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment has taken place, and describe what actions you believe the district should take to resolve the problem. Send your written complaint—by mail, fax, email, or hand delivery—to the district superintendent or civil rights compliance coordinator.

Step 2: School District Investigates

Your Complaint Once the district receives your written complaint, the coordinator will give you a copy of the complaint procedure and make sure a prompt and thorough investigation takes place. The superintendent or designee will respond to you in writing within 30 calendar days—unless you agree on a different time period. If your complaint involves exceptional circumstances that demand a lengthier investigation, the district will notify you in writing to explain why staff need a time extension and the new date for their written response.

Step 3: School District Responds to Your Complaint

In its written response, the district will include a summary of the results of the investigation, a determination of whether or not the district failed to comply with civil rights laws, notification that you can appeal this determination, and any measures

necessary to bring the district into compliance with civil rights laws. Corrective measures will be put into effect within 30 calendar days after this written response—unless you agree to a different time period.

Appeal to the School District

If you disagree with the school district's decision, you may appeal to the school district's board of directors. You must file a notice of appeal in writing to the secretary of the school board within 10 calendar days after you received the school district's response to your complaint. The school board will schedule a hearing within 20 calendar days after they received your appeal, unless you agree on a different timeline. The school board will send you a written decision within 30 calendar days after the district received your notice of appeal. The school board's decision will include information about how to file a complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Complaint to OSPI

If you do not agree with the school district's appeal decision, state law provides the option to file a formal complaint with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

This is a separate complaint process that can take place if one of these two conditions has occurred: (1) you have completed the district's complaint and appeal process, or (2) the district has not followed the complaint and appeal process correctly. You have 20 calendar days to file a complaint to OSPI from the day you received the decision on your appeal.

You can send your written complaint to the Equity and Civil Rights Office at OSPI: Email: Equity@k12.wa.us | Fax: 360-664-2967 Mail or hand deliver: PO Box 47200, 600 Washington St. S.E., Olympia, WA 98504-7200 Richland School District August 2022 6972 Keene Road West Richland WA 99353 For more information, visit our website, or contact OSPI's Equity and Civil Rights Office at 360-725- 6162/TTY: 360-664-3631 or by e-mail at equity@k12.wa.us. Other Discrimination Complaint Options Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education 206-607-1600 | TDD: 1-800-877-8339 | OCR.Seattle@ed.gov | OCR Website Washington State Human Rights Commission 1-800-233-3247 | TTY: 1-800-300-7525 | Human Rights Commission Website

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Staff

The District will provide equal employment opportunity and treatment for all applicants and staff in recruitment, hiring, retention, assignment, transfer, promotion and training. Such equal employment opportunity will be provided without discrimination with respect to race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The Board of Directors will designate a staff member to serve as the compliance officer.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities

In order to fulfill its commitment of nondiscrimination to those with disabilities, the following conditions will prevail:

1. No qualified person with disabilities will, solely by reason of a disability, be subjected to discrimination and the District will not limit, segregate or classify any applicants for

employment or any staff member in any way that adversely affects his/her opportunities or status because of a disability. This prohibition applies to all aspects of employment from recruitment to promotions, and includes fringe benefits and other elements of compensation.

2. The District will make reasonable accommodations to the known physical or mental (cognitive or mental health) limitations of an otherwise qualified disabled applicant or staff member unless it is clear that an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the district program.

Such reasonable accommodations may include:
1. Making facilities used by staff readily accessible and usable by persons with disabilities; and
2. Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, the provision of readers or interpreters and other similar actions.

In determining whether or not accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the District, factors to be considered include the nature and cost of the accommodation. The District will not use any employment tests or criteria that screen out persons with disabilities unless the test or criteria is clearly and specifically job-related. Also, the District will not use such tests or criteria if alternative tests or criteria (that do not screen out persons with disabilities) are available. While the District may not make a pre-employment inquiry as to whether an applicant has a disability or as to the nature and severity of any such disability, it may inquire into an applicant's ability to perform job-related functions. Any staff member who believes that there has been a violation of this policy or the law prohibiting discrimination because of a disability may initiate a grievance through the procedures for staff complaints.

Nondiscrimination for Military Service
The District will not discriminate against any person who is a member of, applies to be a member or performs, has performed, applies to perform or has an obligation to perform service in a uniformed service, on the basis of that participation in a uniformed service. This includes initial employment, retention in employment, promotion or any benefit of employment. The District will also not discriminate against any person who has participated in the enforcement of these rights under state or federal law.

Students
The District will provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic, extra-curricular and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The District will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided to those who qualify upon request. Conduct against any student that is based on one of the categories listed above that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to limit or deny the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's course offerings; educational programming or any activity will not be tolerated.

When a District employee knows, or reasonably should know, that such discriminatory harassment is occurring or has occurred, the district will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects. The District's nondiscrimination statement will be included in all written announcements, notices,

recruitment materials, employment applications, and other publications made available to all students, parents, or employees.

The statement will include:

1) notice that the District will not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of any of the above-listed categories;
2) the name and contact information of the District's compliance officer designated to ensure compliance with this policy; and
3) the names and contact information of the district's Section 504 and Title IX compliance officers.

The District will annually publish notices reasonably calculated to inform students, students' parents/guardians (in a language that they can understand, which may require language assistance), and employees of the District's discrimination complaint procedure.

The Superintendent will designate a staff member to serve as the compliance officer for this policy. The compliance officer will be responsible for investigating any discrimination complaints communicated to the District. The District will evaluate the effectiveness of the non-discrimination policy and report its status to the Board semiannually.

The overall responsibility for monitoring and auditing this policy is assigned to the District office.

The duties include:

1. Analysis of the categories of employment in relation to affirmative action goals;
2. Analysis of work force data and applicant flow;
3. Maintaining records relative to affirmative action information;
4. Preparation of semiannual reports of progress toward the goals and recommended changes required to maintain the vitality of the program;
5. Identifying in a written report to the superintendent any employment practice or policy that is discriminatory or that does not meet the requirements of the affirmative action program; and
6. Keeping the Superintendent advised of the progress in implementing the goals and procedures of this affirmative action program.

The District will provide training to administrators and certificated and classroom personnel regarding their responsibilities under this policy and to raise awareness of and eliminate bias and discrimination based on the protected classes identified in this policy.

Legal References:
RCW 28A.400.310 Law against discrimination applicable to districts' employment practices RCW 28A.640.020 Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination — Scope — Sexual harassment policies RCW 28A.642 Discrimination prohibition RCW 49.60 Discrimination — Human rights commission RCW 49.60.030 Freedom from discrimination — Declaration of civil rights RCW 49.60.180 Unfair practices of employers RCW 49.60.400 Discrimination, preferential treatment prohibited RCW 73.16 Employment and Reemployment WAC 392-190 Equal Education Opportunity – Unlawful Discrimination Prohibited WAC 392-190-0592 Public school employment — Affirmative action program NONINSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS 8900 Page 4 of 4 42 USC 2000e1 – 2000e10 Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 20 USC 1681 - 1688 Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972 42 USC 12101 – 12213 Americans with Disabilities Act 8 USC 1324 (IRCA) Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 38 USC

4301-4333 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act 29 USC 794 Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 34 CFR 104 Nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in Programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance 38 USC 4212 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974 (VEVRAA) Formerly Policies 3210 – Non-Discrimination of Students 5010 – Recruitment, Selection and Assignment: Non-Discrimination Adoption Date: June 11, 201

Gender-Inclusive School

STUDENTS

Procedure 3211 Gender-Inclusive Schools

The principal or building administrator—or an appropriate, designated school employee—is encouraged to request a meeting with a transgender or gender-expansive student upon the student's enrollment in the Richland School District or in response to a currently enrolled student's change of gender expression or identity. Before contacting a student's parents, the school will consult with the student about the student's preferences regarding family involvement and honor those preferences.

The goals of the meeting are to:

- develop understanding of that student's individual needs with respect to their gender expression or identity, including any accommodations that the student is requesting or that the District will provide according to Policy 3211 and this procedure and under state and federal law; and
- develop a shared understanding of the student's day-to-day routine within the school so as to foster a relationship and help alleviate any apprehensions the student may have with regard to their attendance at school. The school may not require the student to attend a meeting as a condition of providing them with the protection to which they are entitled under Policy 3211, this procedure, and state and federal law regarding gender expression or identity. The District will not condone the intentional or persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity or gender expression, or inappropriate release of information regarding a student's transgender or gender-expansive status.

  Key Definitions/Terms

  - Assigned sex at birth: The sex a person was given at birth, usually based on anatomy or chromosomes (e.g., male, female, intersex, etc.).
  - Cisgender: A term used to describe people whose assigned sex matches their gender identity and/or gender expression (e.g., someone who was assigned female at birth and whose gender identity and/or gender expression is also female.
  - Gender Expansive: A wider, more flexible range of gender identities or expressions than those typically associated with the binary gender system.
  - Gender Expression: The external ways in which a person expresses their gender to the world, such as through their behavior, emotions, mannerisms, dress, grooming habits, interests, and activities.
  - Gender Identity: A person's internal and deeply-felt sense of being female, male, both, non-binary, gender-expansive, or other—regardless of the gender assigned at birth.
  - Transgender: A term often used to describe a person whose gender identity or expression, or both, are different from those traditionally associated with their sex assigned at birth.
  - Transitioning: The process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another.

Communication and Use of Names and Pronouns

An appropriate school employee will privately ask known transgender or gender-expansive students how they would prefer to be addressed in class, in correspondence to the home, and at conferences with the student's parent/guardian. That information will be included in the electronic student record system along with the student's legal name in order to inform teachers and staff of the name and pronoun by which to address the student. However, the student's legal name should only be accessible by necessary staff members—it should not be visible to other teachers or other staff who have access to the electronic records system. When appropriate or necessary, this information will be communicated directly with staff to facilitate the use of proper names and pronouns. A student is not required to change their official records or obtain a court-ordered name and/or gender change as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. When communicating with transgender or gender expansive students regarding particular issues such as conduct, discipline, grades, attendance or health, school employees will focus on the conduct or particular issues rather than making assumptions regarding the student's actual or perceived gender identity or gender expression.

Official Records
The standardized high school transcript is the only official record that requires a student's legal name. School staff should adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of the student's transgender or gender-expansive status.

The District will change a student's official records to reflect a change in legal name upon receipt of:
1. Documentation that the student's legal name or gender has been changed pursuant to a court order or through amendment of state or federally-issued identification; or
2. A written, signed statement explaining that the student has exercised a common-law name change and has changed their name for all intents and purposes and that the change has not been made for fraudulent reasons.

Schools may change a student's official gender designation upon parent or student request pursuant to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI's) process found at: https://ospi.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/equity-and-civil-rights/resources-school-districts-civil-rights-washington-schools/gender-inclusive-schools

The process should not be overly cumbersome, and the District may not require verification from a physician. The school must use the name and gender by which the student identifies on all other records, including but not limited to school identification cards, classroom seating charts, athletic rosters, yearbook entries, diplomas, and directory information.

Confidential Health or Educational Information
Information about a student's gender identity, legal name, or assigned sex at birth may constitute confidential medical or educational information. Disclosing this information to other students or other third parties may violate privacy laws, such as the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232; 34 C.F.R. Part 99).
Therefore, to ensure the safety and well-being of the student, school employees should not disclose a student's transgender or gender-expansive status to others, including the other school personnel, unless the school is
(1) legally required to do so or
(2) the student has authorized such disclosure.

STUDENTS
Procedure 3211 Gender-Inclusive Schools

Before communicating with parents of transgender or gender expansive students, school employees should ask the student how the student prefers the staff to refer to them when talking with their parents and guardians.

Restroom Accessibility
Students will be allowed to use the restroom that corresponds to the gender identity they assert at school. No student will be required to use a restroom that conflicts with their gender identity. Any student—regardless of gender identity—who requests greater privacy should be given access to an alternative restroom. However, schools may not require a student to use an alternative restroom because of their transgender or gender-expansive status.

Locker Room Accessibility
Use of locker rooms by transgender or gender-expansive students will be assessed on a case-by case basis, with the goal of maximizing transgender or gender-expansive student social integration, providing an equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes and athletic opportunities and ensuring the student's safety. The district will take an approach that conforms with OSPI's guidelines. In most cases, the District should provide the student access to the locker room that corresponds to the gender identity they assert at school.

Reasonable alternatives to locker room conditions for any student who wants additional privacy include, but are not limited to:

- Use of a private area (e.g., nearby restroom stall with a door, an area separated by a curtain, an office in the locker room, or a nearby health office restroom);
- A separate changing schedule (i.e., utilizing the locker room before or after the other students). The school will provide accommodations needed to allow the student to keep their transgender or gender-expansive status private. No student will be required to use a locker room that conflicts with his or her gender identity.

Sports and Physical Education Classes
The District will provide all students, including transgender and gender-expansive students, the opportunity to participate in physical education and athletic programs/opportunities in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity. A student may seek review of his or her eligibility for participation in interscholastic athletics by working through the Gender Identity Participation procedure set forth by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA).

Dress Codes
The District will allow students to dress in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity and/or gender expression within the constraints of the dress codes adopted at their school site and within the constraints of the District guidelines for dress as they relate to health and safety issues (e.g., prohibitions on wearing gang-related apparel). School dress codes will be gender-neutral and will not restrict a student's clothing choices on the basis of gender. The District will take an approach that conforms with OSPI 's guidelines.

STUDENTS Procedure 3211 Gender-Inclusive Schools Other School Activities
In any school activity or other circumstance involving separation by gender (i.e., class discussions, field trips, and overnight trips), students will be permitted to participate in

accordance with the gender identity they assert at school. Teachers and other school employees will make every effort to separate students based on factors other than gender where practicable.

Training and Professional Development
The District will designate one person to be the primary contact regarding this policy and procedure relating to transgender or gender expansive students. The primary contact must participate in at least one mandatory training opportunity offered by OSPI. When possible, the District will conduct staff training and ongoing professional development in an effort to build the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify and respond to harassment and discrimination.

The content of such professional development should include, but not be limited to:

- Terms and concepts related to gender identity, gender expression, and gender diversity in children and adolescents;
- Appropriate strategies for communicating with students and parents about issues related to gender identity and gender expression, while protecting student privacy;
- Strategies for preventing and intervening in incidents of harassment and discrimination, including bullying and cyber-bullying;
- District and staff responsibilities under applicable laws and district policies regarding harassment, discrimination, gender identity, gender expression issues.

Discrimination and Harassment Complaints
Discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender identity, or gender expression are prohibited within the district. It is the responsibility of each school, the District, and all staff to ensure that all students, including transgender and gender-expansive students, have a safe school environment. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination or harassment is given immediate attention and/or reported to the person designated as the primary contact relating to transgender or gender expansive students. The primary contact will communicate with the District's Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as other discrimination and harassment complaints. This includes investigating the incident and taking age and developmentally-appropriate corrective action. Anyone may file a complaint alleging a violation of this policy using the complaint process outlined in the District's Nondiscrimination Procedure 8900. The District will share this policy and procedure with students, parents/guardians, employees, and volunteers. Adoption Date: November 26, 2019

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STUDENTS POLICY 3211 Gender-Inclusive Schools
The Richland School District Board of Directors believes in fostering an educational environment that is safe and free of discrimination for all students, regardless of gender expression, gender identity, or sex. To that end, the Board recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach toward transgender and gender-expansive students with regard to key terms, communication and the use of names and pronouns, student records, confidential health and education information, communication, restroom and locker room use and accessibility, sports and physical education, dress codes, and other school activities, in order to provide these students with an equal opportunity for learning and achievement. This policy is a component of the District's responsibility to create and maintain a safe, civil, respectful and inclusive learning community and will be implemented in conjunction with comprehensive training of staff and volunteers. Specific training requirements are included in the accompanying procedure. The Superintendent will appoint a primary contact to receive copies of all formal and informal

complaints and ensure policy implementation. The name and contact information for the compliance officer will be communicated throughout the District. The District compliance officer will participate in at least one mandatory training opportunity offered by OSPI This policy and its procedure will support that effort by facilitating district compliance with local, state and federal laws concerning harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination. Cross References: 3207 - Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying 8900 - Nondiscrimination 3600 - Student Records Legal References: RCW 28A.642 Discrimination Prohibition 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 34 C.F.R., Part 99 - Family Education Rights and Privacy Act Management Resources: 2014 - December Issue 2013 - December Issue Prohibiting Discrimination in Washington Public Schools - OSPI Guidelines for school districts to implement Chapters 28A.640 and 28A.642 RCW and Chapter 392-190 WAC (February 2012) Adoption Date: November 26, 2019

STUDENTS Procedure 3211 Gender-Inclusive Schools Other School Activities
In any school activity or other circumstance involving separation by gender (i.e., class discussions, field trips, and overnight trips), students will be permitted to participate in accordance with the gender identity they assert at school. Teachers and other school employees will make every effort to separate students based on factors other than gender where practicable. Training and Professional Development The District will designate one person to be the primary contact regarding this policy and procedure relating to transgender or gender expansive students. The primary contact must participate in at least one mandatory training opportunity offered by OSPI. When possible, the District will conduct staff training and ongoing professional development in an effort to build the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify and respond to harassment and discrimination. The content of such professional development should include, but not be limited to:

- Terms and concepts related to gender identity, gender expression, and gender diversity in children and adolescents;
- Appropriate strategies for communicating with students and parents about issues related to gender identity and gender expression, while protecting student privacy;
- Strategies for preventing and intervening in incidents of harassment and discrimination, including bullying and cyber-bullying;
- District and staff responsibilities under applicable laws and district policies regarding harassment, discrimination, gender identity, gender expression issues.

Discrimination and Harassment Complaints
Discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender identity, or gender expression are prohibited within the district. It is the responsibility of each school, the District, and all staff to ensure that all students, including transgender and gender-expansive students, have a safe school environment. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination or harassment is given immediate attention and/or reported to the person designated as the primary contact relating to transgender or gender expansive students. The primary contact will communicate with the District's Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as other discrimination and harassment complaints. This includes investigating the incident and taking age and developmentally-appropriate corrective action. Anyone may file a complaint alleging a violation of this policy using the complaint process outlined in the District's Nondiscrimination Procedure 8900. The District will share this policy and procedure with students, parents/guardians, employees, and volunteers. Adoption Date: November 26, 2019

Proactive & Positive Philosophy

At DSE we believe that students are more likely to exhibit appropriate behaviors in an environment that is positive and respectful. We strive as a staff to model and reinforce respectful behaviors throughout our school. We also work to ensure we have adequate supervision and communicate clear & consistent expectations to help prevent misbehaviors from occurring.

PBIS Store – "Sky Store"

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a school-wide approach to help all students master social skills necessary for academic success. A PBIS Store is a place where students take the "money" that they've earned for demonstrating positive behavior and then spend their "money" on prizes. At Desert Sky, students are awarded Desert Dollars which can then be used to purchase tangible and non-tangible items from the Sky Store on certain Fridays of the month. Some examples of the items include pencils, rubix cubes, jump ropes, otter pop at lunch, use of the principal's chair for the day, extra recess for class, and many more!

Encourage Student Problem Solving

To help students develop independence and responsibility, we work to teach students self-problem solving skills. This includes providing skilled instruction to all students on how to appropriately deal with day-to-day conflicts that might occur. It also may include more frequent coaching for specific students. Obviously, if a student is having repeat issues or a severe incident presents itself, we are going to intervene as adults.

'Hands-To-Self' Policy

One common misbehavior in any elementary school is aggressive hands and feet. This is one lesson that takes time to develop in some children. To help us be consistent and keep our school safe… we have a 'hands-to-self' policy. There is no reason that students need to place aggressive or rough hands on any other students at DSE. There are two specific expectations that we emphasize with all students:

1. There is never a reason to strike out at another person at DSE (hitting, kicking, fighting) no matter what happened before that or how emotional you may have felt.
2. We have NO rough play or games at DSE where students are hit, kicked, shoved, tackled, pulled, pushed, tripped, wrestled, grabbed, etc…

Discipline

Our goal is to help each of our students become responsible, independent and respectful learners and citizens. The expectations we have of each student are clearly communicated, taught and reviewed throughout the year.

When misbehavior does occur, like in any school, we have a consistent and well communicated system of follow-through that we may use. In dealing with common, low-level incidents, we start at the lowest level of follow-through and move further down the list if this behavior continues.

- Restorative Practice may include conversation with Administration on why and guide behavior through empathy and coaching next steps, "help me understand what is going on". Then review expectations with the student.

The purpose of any school discipline is to modify/change a behavior, and these are most effective if they are consistent, timely, and meaningful.

What is a 'Refocus'?

At Desert Sky, we believe that behavior is something to be taught—just like reading or math. When a student struggles to meet expectations, we offer a process called Refocus to support their growth.

Before a student is sent to Refocus, they are first given a startup prompt. This is a quick chance for them to correct their behavior with a little thinking time and a reminder of expectations. The goal is to help them reset and stay in the learning environment whenever possible.

If the behavior continues, the student may be asked to Refocus in a quiet spot—either in the classroom, at the back of the room, or just outside in a common area.

The Refocus Process:

Refocus is not a punishment. It's a pre-taught strategy that all students learn early in the year. Teachers explain and model how to use Refocus time to:

- Calm their body and brain
- Reflect on their choices
- Think of better ways to handle the situation next time

By teaching and practicing these steps, we help students build self-awareness, responsibility, and problem-solving skills—all part of growing as a learner and a community member.

When do we Contact Parents?

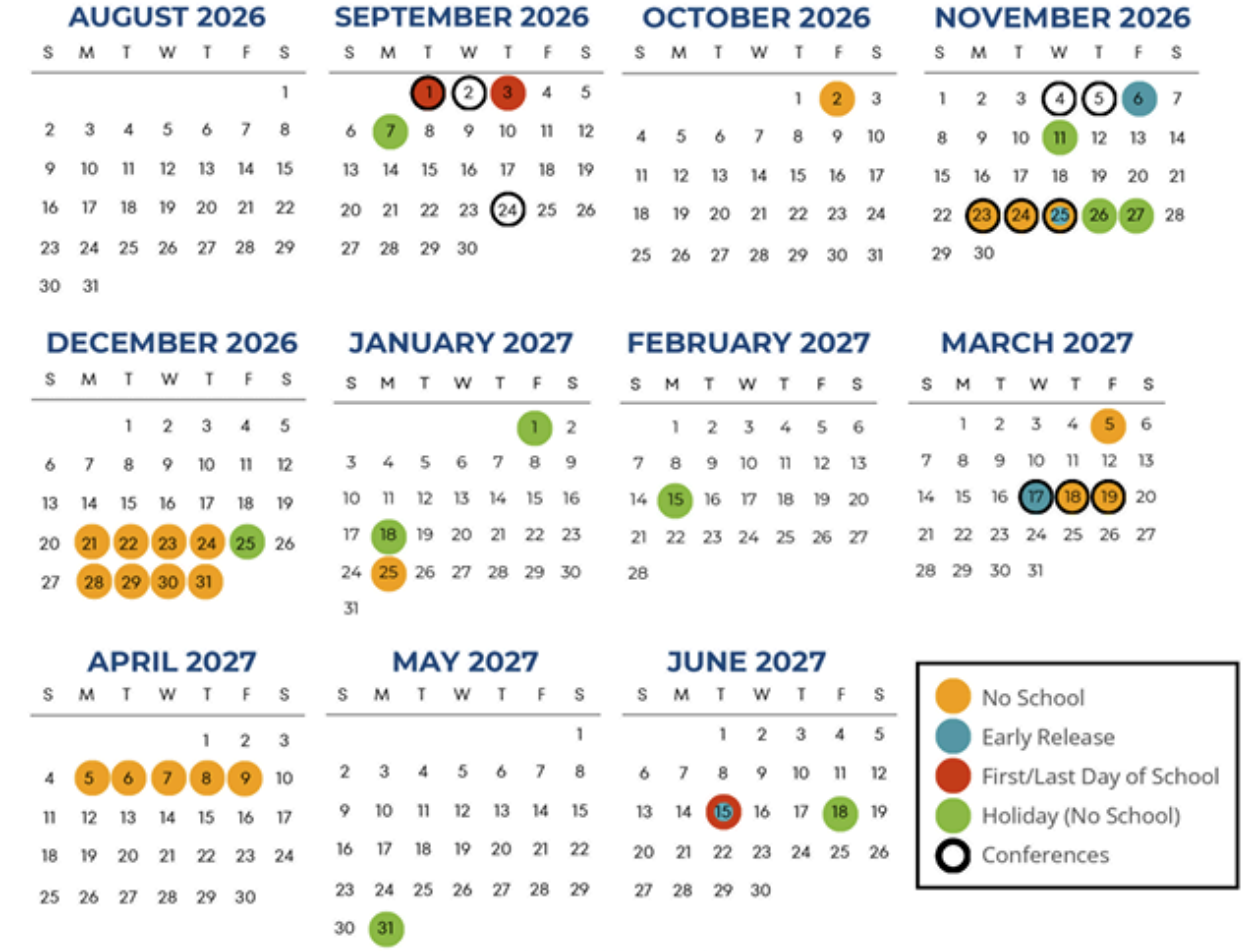
We will communicate with parents if there is a pattern of behavior and/or a severe behavior. Again, we strive to help students develop self-problem solving skills and take ownership for their own actions. We want to give every student an opportunity to correct their own behavior before parents are involved.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:
(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.
Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal [or appropriate school official] a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed.
If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has outsources services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another official in performing his or her tasks.
Under FERPA, Schools may disclose a student's "directory information" which includes information generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The Richland School District has designated the following information as directory information: student's name, address, telephone number, dates of attendance, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, diplomas and awards received, photographs or video of the student, and the most recent school attended. The actual residential address of participants in the state Address Confidentiality Program will not be available for release as directory information. Parents or eligible students, who do not want their directory information released, must notify their school principal in writing. For those who do not wish to have this information released, there is a sample form below.
A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled.
(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:
Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5901

RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR



IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 1	First Day – Grades 1-12
Sept. 1	Kindergarten Family Connection Meetings
Sept. 2	Kindergarten Family Connection Meetings
Sept. 3	First Day – Kindergarten
Sept. 7	Labor Day – No School
Sept. 24	Kindergarten Family Connection Meetings
Oct. 2	Fall Professional Day – No School
Nov. 4	High School Conferences (PM)
Nov. 5	Middle School Conferences (PM)
Nov. 6	Early Release – Grades 6-12 @ 11 a.m.
Nov. 6	End of First Quarter
Nov. 11	Veterans Day – No School
Nov. 23–25	Elementary Conferences – No School K-5
Nov. 25	Early Release – Grades 6-12 @ 11 a.m
Nov. 26–27	Thanksgiving Break – No School
Nov. 30	End of First Trimester
Dec. 21–Jan. 1	Winter Break – No School
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No School
Jan. 22	End of First Semester
Jan. 25	Semester Day – No School
Feb. 15	Presidents' Day – No School
March 5	Spring Professional Day – No School
March 12	End of Second Trimester
March 17	Early Release – Grades K-5 @ 12:30 p.m.
March 17	Elementary Conferences (PM)
March 18-19	Elementary Conferences – No School K-5
April 2	End of Third Quarter
April 5–9	Spring Break – No School
May 28	Snow Make-Up Day or No School
May 31	Memorial Day – No School
June 11	High School Graduations
June 15	Last Day of School – Early Release K-8 (K-5 @ 12:30 p.m. and Grades 6-8 @ 11 a.m.)
June 16-17	Possible Snow Make-Up Days (if needed)
June 18	Juneteenth Holiday - No School

Teaching and Support Staff

Kindergarten

Toni Cuello	Toni.Cuello@rsd.edu
Mary Burk	Mary.Burk@rsd.edu
Staci Wertenberger	Staci.Wertenberger@rsd.edu

First Grade

Anne Simmons	Anne.Simmons@rsd.edu
Leah Smith	Leah.Smith@rsd.edu
Melissa Tunnell	Melissa.Tunnell@rsd.edu

Second Grade

Katey Bryan	Katey.Bryan@rsd.edu
Sarah Gieszler	Sarah.Gieszler@rsd.edu
Kathy Preszler	Kathy.Preszler@rsd.edu

Third Grade

Megan Gillespie	Megan.Gillespie@rsd.edu
Tatia Joyner	Tatia.Joyner@rsd.edu
Corey Wakeley	Corey.Wakeley@rsd.edu

Fourth Grade

Tami Shea	Tami.Shea@rsd.edu
Lindsey Smith	Lindsey.Smith@rsd.edu
Sarah Hall	Sarah.Hall@rsd.edu

Fifth Grade

Jennifer Blaine	Jennifer.Blaine@rsd.edu
Kaitlyn Cleveland	Kaitlyn.Cleveland@rsd.edu
Aaron Rausch	Aaron.Rausch@rsd.edu

Specialists

Art - Katherine Barbour	Katherine.Barbour@rsd.edu
Library - Ken Kays	Ken.Hays@rsd.edu
Music - Teddi Bay	Teddi.Bay@rsd.edu
Physical Ed - Lori Coleman	Lori.Coleman@rsd.edu

Special Education

Life Skills - Laureli Elliott	Laureli.Elliott@rsd.edu
Resource Room K-2 - Nicki Sintay	Nicki.Sintay@rsd.edu
Resource Room 3-5 - Rachel Kamrowski	Rachel.Kamrowski@rsd.edu
Supplemental Support - Melanie Bushman	Melanie.Bushman@rsd.edu

Student Support Staff

Counselor - Deborah Johnson	Deborah.Johnson@rsd.edu
Instructional Specialist - Ashley Dahlgren	Ashley.Dahlgren@rsd.edu
Nurse - Robin Henle	Robin.Henle@rsd.edu
Psychologist - Courtney Moffit	Courtney.Moffit@rsd.edu
Speech Pathologist - Cinda Haselrig	Cinda.Haselrig@rsd.edu
Speech Pathologist - Cassidi Gaul	Cassidi.Gaul@rsd.edu