



# Sunset Ridge Middle School Handbook

## 7th - 8th Grade

### 2021-2022

Welcome to another exciting year at Sunset Ridge! As you have reached your “middle school” years, the expectations for you both personally and academically may be higher than you have been exposed to in the past. Know that you have an incredible support system in your parents, teachers and even your peers. If you truly want to excel, there will be nothing to hold you back.

This handbook will outline general expectations and rules that you will be held accountable to throughout the year. You will also be receiving a subject-specific syllabus for each of your core classes that will provide more detailed information. Remember that each class is different and there will be expectations and class rules that go beyond what is in this document.

### ***STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES HANDBOOK***

It is very important that all students and their parents/guardians make themselves familiar with the rights, the discipline and due processes afforded all students in Deer Valley Unified School District. You can view and/or download a copy of the SR&R Handbook on the *School Information* page on our school website found at <http://sunsetridge.dvUSD.org>.

### **ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICY**

Each class will provide a detailed syllabus which will outline that class’ specific policies on assignments, homework and grading procedures. It is important that every student reads each syllabus carefully and keeps track of the differences between classes. In addition, the following are district policies that all classes will be following:

#### Grading Scale For 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grades

- 4** Evidence demonstrates a high level of proficiency of the learning standard(s)
- 3** Evidence demonstrates proficiency of the learning standard(s)
- 2** Evidence demonstrates partial proficiency of the learning standard(s)
- 1** Evidence demonstrates minimal proficiency of the learning standard(s)
- 0** No evidence of proficiency of learning standard(s)

## WHY STANDARDS BASED MINDSET FOR GRADING?

Parents:

- Progress reports are less mysterious and have more meaning
- Parents are aware of exactly what their child knows, is able to do, and next steps for progress
- Parents know in what areas their child needs more support
- Parents are empowered to increase their child's confidence and help their student set goals

Students:

- Learning targets are clearly defined and aligned with state standards.
- Students are offered multiple opportunities and ways through which to demonstrate proficiency
- Students monitor their own progress toward the achievement of specified targets
- Specific feedback on progress helps build self-esteem, pride, and motivation

Teachers:

- Teachers know exactly where students stand in their progress toward learning targets and what support needs to be provided
- Teachers of the same courses have aligned expectations and standards
- Assessment results help teachers determine when students need extra help and when they need more challenging work

Missing Work: If an assignment is not turned in (either in person or on Canvas when absent), the student will receive a score of a "0". This "0" can be replaced if and when the assignment is turned in, however, if the assignment is not turned in within two weeks by the end of a unit or quarter, (look at individual teacher policies) the "0" will remain as a final grade. Credit will not be given when work is not turned in.

Late Work: All work is due within two weeks of the assigned date and/or end of the grading period. Late work is accepted for full credit, however we always expect students to turn in work "on time" in order to create good work habits. In the event that work is not being completed students may need to use alternate times to complete assignments.

*A "0" will be entered in the gradebook until the work is submitted. A notation of "M" for missing or "L" for late work will also be denoted in the gradebook.*

*Students will still be responsible for turning in late work in addition to their current coursework, which results in the natural consequence of a heavier workload. The primary consequence for students not completing the work is to complete the work.*

Tests/Retakes: Students will have the opportunity to retake or make corrections to assessments. Students are required to show evidence of learning and applying the teacher's feedback in order to earn a reassessment opportunity. Therefore, Students must complete ALL formative work to qualify for retaking a summative assessment. Each teacher may have a different procedure for this actual process, but all teachers will offer the opportunity to improve a final grade on a test/assessment.

PowerSchools – All students and their parents/guardians have access to their grades 24/7 through the website PowerSchools. Once you get your username and password (it is different for parents/guardians and students), go to: <http://ps.dvusd.org/public>.

Canvas - The DVUSD canvas application will be used on a daily basis. The weekly schedule, assignments, announcements etc. will be updated daily. Please check on a regular basis.

# CURRICULUM

Each teacher is responsible for covering all of the grade-level specific information set by the Arizona Department of Education. To see these standards, please visit <http://www.azed.gov/standards-practices/>.

## Resources for Parents:

- [DVUSD Math Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD English Language Arts Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD Social Studies Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD Science Resources for Parents](#)

## PLAGIARISM/CHEATING

According to Encyclopedia Britannica Online, plagiarism is defined as *“the act of claiming to be the author of material that someone else actually wrote.”* This is a very serious offense, and at Sunset Ridge there is a zero tolerance policy for any type of cheating in any class. And it is important to note that cheating is not simply copying work from another student or source, but cheating is also giving your work to another student to copy.

If a student plagiarizes, a score of “0” will be given, and a disciplinary consequence will follow. An opportunity to complete an alternate assignment will be offered. If they choose not to complete it, the “0” will remain.

## BEHAVIOR POLICY

As teachers, our goal is to enhance each student's awareness of his/her personal responsibility by providing an orderly and predictable set of expectations. We believe that the best discipline is self-monitored, and that each student should assume responsibility for his/her actions.

Sunset Ridge is a safe, orderly environment that is conducive to learning. Positive school climate contributes significantly to managing student behavior. A positive school climate is a caring environment where every student feels he or she belongs. Establishing that sense of belonging and security can be facilitated by specifying expected behavior.

Sunset Ridge is committed to promoting a safe and healthy learning environment where students can focus on their pursuit of educational success - free from the distracting incidents of disruptive behaviors by others in their school setting.

Teachers have at their discretion many ways to reinforce positive behaviors. They may use: verbal praise, personal notes, and positive phone calls to parents, special privileges, individual class reward activities, grade level rewards, and team celebrations.

Students are responsible for knowing the school rules, understanding their importance, and abiding by them throughout the school year. All rules and regulations are in effect whenever a student represents Sunset Ridge. This includes during school hours, school grounds, during extra-curricular activities, in school vehicles, and on school trips. Consequences may include detentions or suspensions. If a student is suspended from school, he or she is responsible for making up any missed work. Bus privileges may be suspended for violation of school rules on the bus.

If a student is suspended – either in-school or out-of-school – he or she is responsible to keep up with the work.

## Behavior Expectations

No matter where a student is while at school or representing Sunset Ridge, they will be expected to follow certain behaviors that center on being safe, respectful, showing achievement, and being responsible. If a student chooses not to follow the expectations there will then be a series of corrective actions that would take place. The following is a breakdown of those expectations along with a discipline flow chart:

# Discipline Flow Chart

**Minor Incident Handled in Class** \*

- Defiance/disrespect towards staff
- Dress code violation
- Electronic devices
- Food/gum and drink
- Minor disruptions
- Not being prepared
- Off task
- Physical display of affection
- Refusing to work
- Tardies
- Throwing objects

**Universal Teaching Practices**

- Be prepared
- Bell-to-bell instruction
- Consistency in teaching, student interaction & discipline
- Model what we want to see from students
- Standards –based instruction

**Major Incident Sent to Office** \*

- Bullying/Threatening
- Cheating/plagiarism
- Defiance/disrespect towards substitutes
- Disorderly conduct
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Fighting
- Foul language towards students/staff
- Harassment-Verbal/Physical/Sexual
- Hate Speech
- Physical aggression
- Sexual/abusive language
- Theft
- Truancy
- Vandalism
- Weapons

## **In-Class Procedures**

The following is a progression of discipline but a teacher can move directly to any step based on the circumstances

**1st Infraction**  
Conference with the student-Communicate and practice expectations. Use of recovery in the classroom.

**2nd Infraction**  
Parent contact by call/email - If a message is left, must have at least one follow-up call.

**3rd Infraction**  
Parent contact by call/email - If a message is left, must have at least one follow-up call. After school detention is assigned

**4th Infraction**  
Parent/teacher conference including student. Administration may be invited 2<sup>nd</sup> after school detention is assigned

**5th Infraction**  
Electronic office referral is submitted with attached behavior tracking sheet.

**Student Responsibilities**

- Attend school
- Be on time for all classes
- Come to class with necessary materials
- Complete all assignments and meet all deadlines
- Obey school rules
- Cooperate with staff
- Respect the person and property of others
- Respect school property
- See that school correspondence to parents reaches home

## **Office Procedures**

**Step 1**  
Follow discipline referral process

**Step 2**  
Outcome based on guidelines set in the DVUSD Students Rights and Responsibilities handbook

**Step 3**  
Each discipline referral will be investigated on a case-by-case basis to ensure just and fair application of the district guidelines.

**Step 4**  
If behavior continues, a behavior plan may be implemented through the MTSS process.

**SNAP POSITION**

S = Sit up straight  
N = Nothing in your hands  
A = Attention to the speaker  
P = Prepared to learn

\* This list is not comprehensive

## **Anti-Bullying**

Sunset Ridge prohibits the bullying of any student during any school-related or school-sponsored program, or on the school bus. This also includes threats made outside of school hours, which are intended to be carried out during any school-related or school-sponsored program or activity. Consequences for bullying, as per the DVUSD Student Rights and Responsibility Handbook, range from a conference to expulsion. Depending on the circumstances, violations may

be reported to the police. Students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying regarding themselves or other students. Bullying comes in various forms:

**Physical Bullying** is the most obvious form of intimidation and can consist of kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, hair pulling, and making threats. A bully may threaten to punch you if you don't give up your money, your lunch, etc.

**Verbal Bullying** can accompany physical behavior. This can include name calling, spreading rumors, and persistent teasing.

**Emotional Intimidation** is closely related to these two types of bullying. A bully may deliberately exclude you from a group activity such as a party or school outing.

**Racist Bullying** can take many forms: making racial slurs, spray painting graffiti, mocking the victim's cultural customs, and making offensive gestures.

**Cyber Bullying** is when one or a group of kids or teens uses electronic means via computers and/or mobile phones (emails, websites, chat rooms, instant messaging and texting) to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or target another kid or teen.

### **Cell Phones/Smart Watches/Electronics/Etc.**

Many students want to have the privilege of carrying electronic devices on campus. With that privilege comes the responsibilities of ensuring that those items are not used inappropriately or at inappropriate times on campus or on a bus. If they are on and make a noise, vibrate or otherwise call attention to themselves, the device is creating a disruption. **Unless approved by the teacher, these items must be in the off/silent position and be kept out of sight.** Failure to adhere to these instructions may result in disciplinary actions, including confiscation of the phone, parent notification, disciplinary referral, and/or parent pickup of confiscated devices.

Students should understand that they bring an electronic device on campus at their own risk. **DVUSD assumes no liability for the loss, theft, or damage of any personally owned electronic device on campus.** Without specific and limited permission from a teacher, videotaping is not permitted for any reason. Unauthorized videotaping and/or picture taking on campus, on a bus or during any school event may result in suspension depending on the nature of the incident.

Students are not permitted to bring outside accessories (mice, keyboards, airpods/bluetooth headphones). Headphones are to only be used in class with teacher permission.

School assigned devices must be used responsibly, and brought to class each day fully charged. Students should keep the charger with them at all times.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Arizona State Statute requires that students attend school for 180 days each school year. Consistent school attendance is critical for student success at Sunset Ridge. We understand that emergencies and illnesses happen, but we ask for vacations to be planned around the school calendar. To review the school and district

dates, visit the calendar tab on our school website which is found at <http://dvusd.org/sunsetridge>. We appreciate your cooperation as we provide exceptional learning experiences for your child.

### **COVID Absences or Quarantines**

When students are absent for documented COVID-related reasons (quarantined or self-isolated) by DVUSD in accordance with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) guidelines, students will have access to the curriculum and daily content through Canvas to receive instruction.

### **Other Absences**

When students are absent for reasons other than COVID-related illnesses or quarantine, students have access to the curriculum and daily content through Canvas to receive instruction.

## **DRESS CODE**

Per district policy, any attire that distracts from the learning environment is not acceptable. Students should dress in a manner that, in addition to the following guidelines, takes into consideration the educational environment, safety, health and welfare of self and others.

- Clothing must cover the entire buttocks.
- Shirts and tops may not expose bare midriffs, bare shoulders, nor be deeply or narrowly cut in the front, back, or under the arms. Halter tops, spaghetti straps, and strapless tops are not acceptable.
- Clothing that exposes undergarments will not be tolerated for males or females.
- Bare feet are never acceptable. In the interest of safety, shoes must be worn at all times. Closed shoes are to be worn for any type of physical activity, such as physical education, cheer practice, weight lifting, etc.
- Jewelry or ornamentation shall not be worn if it presents a safety hazard to self and/or others.
- No hats may be worn inside any campus buildings at any time.
- Defamatory writing, obscene language or symbols, or symbols of drugs, sex, or alcohol on clothing or jewelry are expressly prohibited.

If a student is wearing something that is deemed in violation of the dress code they will be subjected to the middle school behavior policy discipline process.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION**

Per DVUSD policy all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders must pass ALL classes for the year – Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, Specials & Exploratory classes (if a class is not for a full year, the average is taken for all classes during that period). Our school counselor will be working closely with at risk students throughout the year to help ensure their success.

The promotion ceremony is a privilege and not a right. The behavior of students over the course of the year can impact whether or not they attend the promotion ceremony. Any student who is given over 15 days of out of school suspension may not be attending the ceremony.

## **COMMUNICATION**

We look at the academic success of each student as the result of the student, parents/guardians and teachers working together as a team. Through the use of PowerSchools, parents and students are able to monitor academic progress so there should never be any surprises. Beyond this, every parent/guardian should feel free to contact any

teacher if they have a question or concern. Please note that for a quicker response, e-mail is usually the most efficient way to correspond; a list of each teacher's email can be found on the school/grade level websites.

We also feel that having an open communication line between teacher and student is vital. Students should discuss with their teachers any academic concerns they have. If time is not available during class, appointments can be set so that time is allocated for collaborative problem solving. Additionally, parents are encouraged to contact teachers with any questions or concerns they may have. Only as a team can we work towards each student's academic potential.

## SCHOOL DAY

The first period of the day begins at 8:45 with the first bell being at 8:40. Breakfast begins at 8:30. There is no supervision before this time so if a student is found on campus early, they will be sent to the office and a parent may be contacted. Students will also not be able to be signed out between 3:15-3:30 so parents need to plan accordingly.

On early release days, students will be dismissed at 2:00 and on half days students will be released at 12:05 - lunch will be served those days.

### Resources for Parents:

- [DVUSD Math Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD English Language Arts Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD Social Studies Resources for Parents](#)
- [DVUSD Science Resources for Parents](#)

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLC's)

Most Fridays, students will be released early so that we are able to participate in PLC work. This work is directly related to the planning, instruction and interventions we implement in our classrooms to ensure that students master the standards.

### Role of PLC

A professional learning community is a group of educators that meet regularly and work Collaboratively to improve teaching practices and the achievement of students. The questions that drive the work of PLC's are:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they learn it?
- How will we respond if some students do not learn?
- How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

### PLC Teams are responsible for collaborating to establish general consistency among the following:

- Assignments, presentations, products, observations and assessments used to determine a student's level of performance in relation to grade-level standards.
- The method and schedule for additional learning opportunities.
- Due dates, deadlines, and procedures for reassessment.
- Create opportunities for common scoring of assessments.

The policies and information listed in this handbook are subject to change at any time. Every effort will be made to send home notification of any changes but to see the most current handbook, please visit the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade section of the school website which is found at <http://dvusd.org/sunsetridge>. For a complete list of all Deer Valley Unified School District policies, see the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook which can also be found at [www.dvusd.org](http://www.dvusd.org)