



Valley of the Sun Waldorf Association
dba Desert Marigold School

6210 S 28th St Phoenix AZ 85042
☎(602) 243-6909 🌐DesertMarigold.org

Desert Marigold School Parent Engagement

Creating the Community

Successful education of children occurs when there is a strong partnership between parents and teachers. This partnership is essential to the well-being and achievement of the children who are collectively in our care. However, it is always necessary to have clarity on the different roles of teacher and parent.

The school as an organization, and each student and each adult within the community, is constantly growing and evolving. Therefore, ongoing communication is essential to maintain a shared understanding and to work through necessary changes and adjustments in school or community life.

This involves attending parent meetings, reading all communications sent, mailed or emailed home, coming to parent/teacher conferences and bringing any questions that you have directly to teachers in a timely manner. It is important that you stay in close communication with your child's teacher not only about schoolwork, but also about social progress in school and social and/or emotional developments at home. Do not underestimate the transformative power of these simple acts.

Communication Builds Community

Desert Marigold School uses the following methods to communicate with and to strengthen our community:

Weekly Email Updates

Weekly notices and updates about upcoming events, classroom activities, and committee/faculty/board business are included in the ***DMS Bee***, a weekly bulletin emailed to parents by the administration office.

A few times per year a longer electronic newsletter is sent, the ***DMS Bloom***, which

gives reports on past events as well as information in more depth about school educational, administrative, financial or policy matters. Sign up for the Bee on the school website.

Class Parents also send out notices to their class lists, which provide information from the class teacher, as well as about community events and information from the Parent Council.

Parent Square

For information on current main lessons, homework, class meetings, plays, field trips and school related documents please utilize our parent-teacher portal called Parent Square. There is a link on the website to sign up. This portal also allows the school to send out broadcast text messages.

Social Media Sites

DMS maintains a website, FaceBook and Instagram accounts. Any community accounts created by families are not sanctioned by the school and do not represent the school.

Community Bulletin Board

Bulletin boards and/or chalkboards are set up at the main office and outside the kindergarten and preschool rooms and the high school for the purpose of posting general-interest notices of current events in the valley, as well as for updating the community on various goings-on at the school. All postings must be brought to the administration for approval and before being put up.

Parent Council Meetings

Parent Council is Desert Marigold's parent-teacher organization and meets monthly to support our students' educational experience, our teachers and the school as a whole. The Parent Council exists to develop strong social bonds by supporting parent education, school activities, active volunteerism, celebrations and special events; thereby building a vibrant community.

DMS Board Meetings

Desert Marigold operates as a part of Valley of the Sun Waldorf Education Association (VSWEA), a 501 (c)(3) not for profit corporation. The VSWEA Board of Directors meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. These are open meetings, and parents are welcome to attend. Agendas are posted outside the office. During the year there are also Budget or Finance meetings, which take place in the spring budgeting period or are called as needed. Minutes of Board meetings are posted on the website.

Community Town Halls

A community meeting usually takes place once in the autumn and once in the spring. Depending on the need, these may be just open forums for parents to bring their questions, or a presentation on specific matters of school-wide importance.

Building Community Around the Education

The most essential form of parent participation starts with supporting your child to be a successful student and a responsible, caring and compassionate community member. This includes making sure he or she gets plenty of sleep, arrives at school regularly and on time, comes with a healthful lunch and completes homework (where age-appropriate).

Educating by Example

Desert Marigold's primary focus is to provide the best possible learning environment for the children in our care. All adults in the community—teachers, staff members and parents—should consider themselves at all times to be role models. The benefit to the children is immense when we speak respectfully to each other, avoid gossip, take concerns to their source, forgive readily, observe school policies and courtesies and follow through with what we say we are going to do.

We believe that it is what we do on a day-to-day basis that speaks most loudly to our children. Our goal is to develop a culture where we work together to hold ourselves accountable to these ideals. In order to do this, we believe it is necessary to pay close attention to our interactions with each other as adults, and to our interactions with students and in the presence of students.

Parent Code of Conduct

- **We are a drug- and smoke-free campus.** Drugs, alcohol and tobacco may not be consumed on campus or in the presence of students.
- **Respect the boundaries.** Teachers are on campus to teach our students. Please respect their work. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classroom activities; however, these visits must be pre-scheduled with the teacher and or office. Parents are not permitted to enter a classroom unannounced.
- **We are a cell phone-free campus.** Please discontinue conversations and put away your cell phone once you enter the classroom areas, i.e., once you are past the Barn and Administration Building.
- **Do not reprimand or try to discipline students.** Unless you are functioning in an official chaperone or supervision capacity, do not take it upon yourself to

discipline any student. If you observe any behavior that you feel is inappropriate, report it directly to the responsible teacher so that it can be handled in a timely manner.

- **Speak constructively.** We all come from different backgrounds and have differing views and tolerance levels. A comment intended innocently may be interpreted differently. The best policy is to avoid sarcastic “joking” and “teasing” and focus on constructive communication.
- **Use discretion.** Be aware of the types of conversations you are engaging in. For example, it is not helpful to discuss a conflict with or concern about a staff member, parent or student in the presence of students, whether at school or in your home. What is often known as “parking lot” talk is very undermining to a healthy educational environment.
- **Do not spread rumors.** Check your facts with someone who has real information.
- **Profanity is not permitted.** It is expected that everyone interacting with students use appropriate language at all times.

Please follow these guidelines on campus (and in the immediate vicinity) and during any school sponsored activity, whether on or off campus.

Conflicts that Arise

As we work to find deeper connection with each other, conflicts inevitably arise. However, to the extent that we are successful in working with these interpersonal challenges, we may find that they can actually strengthen the fabric of our community and lead us to a deeper understanding and appreciation of those around us. Keep the following in mind:

- Consider your own part in any concern or conflict and ask yourself if there’s anything you can do to help the situation.
- If you have a concern that involves another adult, please meet face to face to resolve the issue with the person(s) involved, rather than talk with others about the conflict.
- Similarly, if someone comes to you with a concern about another person, direct him or her to that person first. If the person with the concern seems unwilling to take that step, see whether they can think of a third party for assistance.
- If a conflict arises on campus during school hours, go immediately to the school office and seek a private space to talk it through, or take it off school grounds.
- **If the conflict or concern involves a student, please contact the student’s teacher or go directly to the office. Do not address or discipline the student yourself.**