

# Desert Garden Montessori

## *Middle Years & High School*

Hello MYHS Families!

It has been a joy seeing everyone and getting to know our students these past few weeks. Despite the reality we are in right now, I feel as though we are really making progress towards creating a small, Desert Garden “bubble” in Suite 100 with some sense of normalcy, and definitely a sense of connection for our students.

As we are wrapping up our third week of school, we wanted to send out a quick note with some updates and reminders. We are here to make sure your student is successful, and that you know how you can support our program with procedures and policies we have in place.

### **Daily Procedures**

#### **Attendance**

A student’s uninterrupted work time is highly valued in an IB/Montessori education. When everyone begins work at the same time, the ability to learn and share with others is facilitated. Students weave their ideas together creating an understanding where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Attendance is taken promptly at 9AM each morning, and throughout the day in each class, in person and on Zoom. Students on Zoom are expected to arrive on time to lessons with cameras on and mics ready.

Unexcused and excessive tardies or absences will be addressed by school administration.

#### **Drop-Off Procedure**

- Students can arrive at school anytime between 7AM-9AM.
- Curb closes at 9AM.
- No student can enter campus after 9AM.
- *If your student has an appointment or a reason for not being able to make it to school by that time, please let your advisory teacher know. Your student should plan to follow their schedule from home on Zoom that day so they do not miss class.*

#### **Pick-Up Procedure**

- Class ends at 3:30 and curb closes at 4:00.

- Please text the Curb Line (**520-344-2781**) 5 minutes before you arrive
- Please do NOT text your student to meet you outside. They will not be dismissed until you have texted the Curb Line (**520-344-2781**).

### **Early Pick-Up Procedure**

- If you need to pick your student up before 3:30 you must follow these steps:
  - Call the DGM Attendance Line (**480-893-6516**) and let the school know what time your student is leaving and why. They will then inform all MYHS teachers.
  - Text the Curb Line (**520-344-2781**) 5 minutes before you arrive for your student.
  - Park in covered parking spots 10-13 by our building.
  - Please wait outside the door of Suite 100 so teachers know you are here (you can't come inside yet!) and they will dismiss your student to you outside the door.

### **Absences**

- If your student is going to miss school, please call the DGM Attendance Line (**480-893-6516**) to let them know.
- As a courtesy, we also encourage you to email your advisory teacher.
- If your student is ill, please make sure you alert the school to symptoms by calling the front desk.
- We require a doctor's note clearing students to return to school after having an illness. In addition, students must be symptom free without medication for 72 hours prior to coming back to school.
- If your student is ill, they do NOT need to attend Zoom lessons. We want them to rest and get better!

### **Technology Expectations - AT SCHOOL**

It has been a long-standing policy in our MYHS student handbook that technology in our environment is for educational purposes only - cell phones, laptops, and tablets.

In this world of Zoom, it has been challenging to find a balance for students while at home and at school. To help encourage healthy habits and ensure students are using their time to connect with one another and be productive at school, we will be enforcing our technology policy across all classes beginning next week. This specifically is of concern during the window of time before class starts, from 7-9AM. We are aware that the amount of time we are forced to spend on technology right now is in excess, so we hope we can encourage moderation during times of the day when that is possible.

- **Cell Phone, Laptop, and Tablet Policy**
  - Technology is to be used for educational purposes only (no games, social media, etc. while at school.)
  - Students can keep their phone in their pocket or bag.
  - If a student uses their phone without teacher permission the teacher will hold onto the phone for the duration of the class period.
  - If your student demonstrates repeated offenses of this policy, we will contact you to put a plan in place.
  - If a student is reported to have videoed or posted video of another student at school, we will have a parent meeting to put a plan in place.
  - This policy applies to students as soon as they step foot on campus – in the building or at lunch time.
  - Students are not to use their laptops to play games at school.
  - If any of these become an ongoing concern for your student, we will contact you.
  
- **During the morning block of 7-9AM, in between classes, and at lunch, we encourage tech-free, healthy habits and choices:**
  - Students need to start bringing an independent reading book to school. (They can bring one from home or Mr. Bill can help them find one in our school library.)
  - We will have sudoku and other brain work available for students to work on if they choose.
  - We always have art supplies (sketch books, etc.) available to students if they want to draw or create.
  - Students are also ALWAYS welcome to chat and *connect* with each other in the mornings before class starts within their classroom family.
  - Students are ALWAYS welcome to use any free time to work on classwork or to turn in projects or assignments.

### **Technology Expectations - AT HOME**

A great challenge lies in students keeping their focus while on their home learning days. We would appreciate your help in encouraging your student to be fully present while on Zoom at home.

- We **prohibit** students from having YouTube videos or music during a Zoom lesson.
- We **encourage** students to wear headphones to minimize background noise.

- We **require** students to have their cameras on.
  - Please Note: If your student is having camera or mic issues, we ask that you email your advisory teacher on behalf of your student that morning.
  - Students frequently tell us their technology is not working.
  - Beginning next week, if students have their cameras off without a parent email about technology issues, the student will be counted as absent for that class.

### **Dress Code Expectations**

Our dress code is designed for two primary reasons: safety and respect for others, as well as for the learning environment. Students must keep in mind that they are seen as role models for the younger children, and that they represent the school to visitors and the outside community.

The following dress code applies to all school functions including field trips:

- Undergarments cannot be visible
- Stomachs must be covered
- T-shirts must not be offensive
- Shorts and skirts lengths should reach to the fingertips when the arms are held straight down by the side
- Hats and sunglasses are allowed outside only
- Flip-flops are allowed except when not appropriate for an activity (e.g. PE)

### **Due Dates & Work Expectations**

- All students have now been assigned work in Managebac that will need to be turned in to be graded and receive feedback. Teachers have been using variable due dates, which we know can end up being hard to keep track of for students, especially as they are getting used to systems and this new mode of learning.
- To simplify, we are streamlining due dates for each teacher. Please make note of the following:
  - Mr. Garry and Mr. Justin – ALL work for the week is due on Sundays by 11:59PM
  - Ms. Steph and Mr. Bill – ALL work for the week is due on Thursdays by 11:59PM
  - Dr. Carlos – ALL work for the week is due on Fridays by 5PM
  - *ALL ASU Prep course work is due on Sundays by 11:59PM*

- Managebac will reflect these due dates starting next week. We hope this will make things easier to track.
- *Please Note: Students will have lessons throughout the week, but it is the graded assignments that will be due according to the information above. If a student does not turn in their work by the due date, it will be marked as a zero until it is turned in, at which point they can still receive full credit.*

### **Managebac**

We realize the parent view of this learning management system can be a bit “clunky.” Teachers have been working on streamlining tasks and lessons and are actively working to training students on how to use the system. As with all new systems, it takes time. As we iron things out, we appreciate your patience. I will be scheduling a parent webinar and sending out a parent tutorial in the coming weeks to help answer questions on how you can use the system from a parent perspective.

We will review this information with ALL students tomorrow during our Community Meetings, and we will begin actively enforcing the policies above next week. We are here to support your students, ensure they have meaningful, productive learning experiences, and develop healthy habits.

If you have any questions, please let me know!

Ms. Krista

Krista John, M. Ed.

**Director of Middle and High School**

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