



2017-2018

# Sequoia Choice AZDL Handbook

Phone: 480-461-3222

Website: [sequoiachoice.org](http://sequoiachoice.org)

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# Dear Students and Families,

Congratulations on your commitment to online learning. Online learning can be exciting, challenging, and different from any type of school experience you may have had. There are many advantages to learning online, but two key advantages are flexibility and convenience. You are given much more control over your learning experience on a daily basis. But first, you must be committed to your own success.

To be a successful online learner you will need to be committed to the following:

**Persistence:** Students who succeed learning online need to be willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily in every class, and persist through challenges. If you should run into trouble, keep trying and ask for help. We want to help you!

**Effective Time-Management Skills:** Flexibility is one of the advantages of distance learning, but it can also be one of the biggest challenges. You will need to be able to manage your time well. You will need to set up a study schedule and stick to it, even when it gets hard. You will need to be able to keep up in your classes without daily reminders from your teachers.

**Effective and Appropriate Communication Skills:** Your teachers are very willing to help you. They look forward to assisting you over the phone, in online teaching sessions, and through email. The teachers will need you to communicate when you need help. If you do not ask, there is no way of knowing you need help. Helping students succeed is why we are here.

**Basic Technical Skills:** Basic technical skills will be needed throughout your classes. If you do not know how to do something it is important that you ask your advisor or teacher. We are always willing to teach you anything you need to know to learn.

**Motivation and Independence:** You must want to succeed. Online learning requires independence, internal motivation, and responsibility. Students who are motivated and independent will have many opportunities in an online environment.

**A Good Study Environment:** To be successful you will need a good place to study. You will need peace and quiet away from games. You will need to turn off your cell phone during your school time. You also need to be aware that that surfing the internet does not mean you are working in your courses.

As you begin to learn about your new school, remember there are many great people who are eager to get to know you, and who willing to work hard to help you succeed. We are all here because of students just like you.

Warm Regards,

Cindy Chleborad  
Principal  
Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning

## Our Mission and Vision:

*As a learning community we will help all students achieve their maximum potential, through a caring environment of high expectations, individual attention, great teaching, and advanced technology.*

Each member of our community will accomplish this mission by:

- Knowing each student on a personal and data-driven basis, through conversations, meaningful assessments, and highly interactive teaching;
- Promoting a consistent, caring environment of high expectations and accountability, by creating effective policies, fun incentives, and opportunities for family involvement;
- Being an integral part of our learning community, in which students, families, teachers, partnering organizations, and staff share knowledge and support one another;
- Using all talents and resources to achieve our mission, with a reflective, teachable, forward-looking attitude of constant renewal;
- Preparing students for successful continuing education experiences and careers by allowing them to build individualized, relevant, and creative curricula within a standards-based framework.

## Our Story

Answering the call of families across the state of Arizona, Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning has provided flexible options in education since 1998. Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning combines technology with certified and highly qualified teachers and accredited curriculum that meets state standards providing students the best education possible.

Because Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning operates a number of state-wide programs, students are afforded personalized education, the right educational atmosphere, and flexibility needed to be successful. Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning (Sequoia Choice Schools, LLLP) is a legal educational agency (LEA) and public charter school in Arizona. It was one of the original schools authorized by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to provide distance learning services to Arizona students in grades K-12.

### Individualized Education:

Academic Centers: Our Academic Centers combine a traditional classroom with an online learning environment. With the assistance of Academic Coaches, advisors, and face-to-face contact with the instructor, the students are set to succeed.

Home Learning: Students may learn at home with the support of their parents under the direction of a certified teacher. The student may move at a flexible pace, and can select the materials best suited to their learning styles from our diverse collection of resources.

Credit Recovery: We offer a Credit Recovery Program to those students needing to maximize their courses within a compressed time frame.

Partners in Education: Sequoia Choice Partners in Education provides an opportunity for schools and school districts to serve their students better while retaining much, and in most cases all, of the Average Daily Membership (ADM).

**REACH:** Sequoia Choice has several R.E.A.C.H. program in Maricopa. This program exists to provide resources, enrichment, academics, and curriculum to our families of elementary students who are home educated.

## Accreditation

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning is accredited by AdvancED. To obtain accreditation, a school must meet a rigorous set of protocols and processes. These protocols evaluate the school's organizational effectiveness programs and cultural context to determine how well the school meets the needs of the individualized student.

To learn more about our accreditation visit [www.advanc-ed.org](http://www.advanc-ed.org).

Student athletes may visit the NCAA website for information on NCAA eligibility and approved courses.

To learn more about the Sequoia Choice approved courses please use the CEEB code 030608. If you should have any other questions please contact your advisor, academic coach or school counselor.

## Our Programs

### Elementary

Arizona Distance Learning (AZDL) Elementary is a tuition-free charter school which provides the tools for academic excellence in our students' homes. Our school provides:

- Flexibility which encourages an individualized education;
- High level of parent/student involvement;
- State aligned, friendly curriculum;
- Data driven decision making.

Each family develops a personal relationship with a highly-qualified teacher who provides student tutoring and parent coaching. Everyone benefits from a clear understanding of expectations and regular communication.

Many of our home educated students attend a REACH program in their area.

Our motto: "Every child is individually known," reflects our desire to help every child gain a love of learning that will last a lifetime.

### Jr. High and High School Programs

Sequoia Choice's Jr. High and High School Programs offer a variety of opportunities for the students.

Sequoia Choice has a team of highly-qualified teachers who deliver curriculum and instruction through online courses, Collaborate group sessions, and individual teaching sessions. The teachers provide feedback to encourage student growth and concept mastery.

Jr. High and High School students are offered a large array of electives taught by our core course teachers and through outside providers.

Sequoia Choice students may enroll in courses through the community colleges, Williamsburg Academy, and several other curriculum providers - provided the necessary requirements are met.

## **ELMS (Edkey Learning Management System)**

ELMS is Sequoia Choice's learning management system. Through ELMS, students can access their online courses and other resources. ELMS also provides resource materials for parents and families.

## **Expectations**

### **Student Expectations**

Students enrolled in Sequoia Choice are an essential part of the learning team. Students need to be committed to working on their schoolwork the allotted amount of time. A model student will also:

- Work hard at home under the direction of his/her parent or Advisor/Academic Coach.
- Speak with his/her teacher on a regular basis on the phone, or through the internet.
- Call or email his/her teacher for help. This may be hard at first, but will become easier as you get to know your teacher better.
- Try his/her best on all benchmark testing and state testing.
- Do his/her work on his/her own: The parent or Advisor/Academic Coach may help, but the student needs to have the leading role when completing work.

We realize that our students come to us with a vast range of experiences and skills. Parents and Advisor/Academic Coaches are encouraged to persuade their students to be a part of the on-going communication with the teacher. Not only will this help your child realize they are capable, but it will also help your child develop the skills needed to be self-assured adolescents and adults.

## **Parent Expectations for Elementary Students:**

### **Communication**

At the beginning of your child's journey with AZDL, you will receive a phone call from one of our elementary teachers. This will be the beginning of a partnership that will benefit your child. Students that do well at any school, do best when their parents are actively involved. We encourage and welcome on-going communication with your child's teacher. They welcome your assistance with your child's education.

### **Time with Your Child**

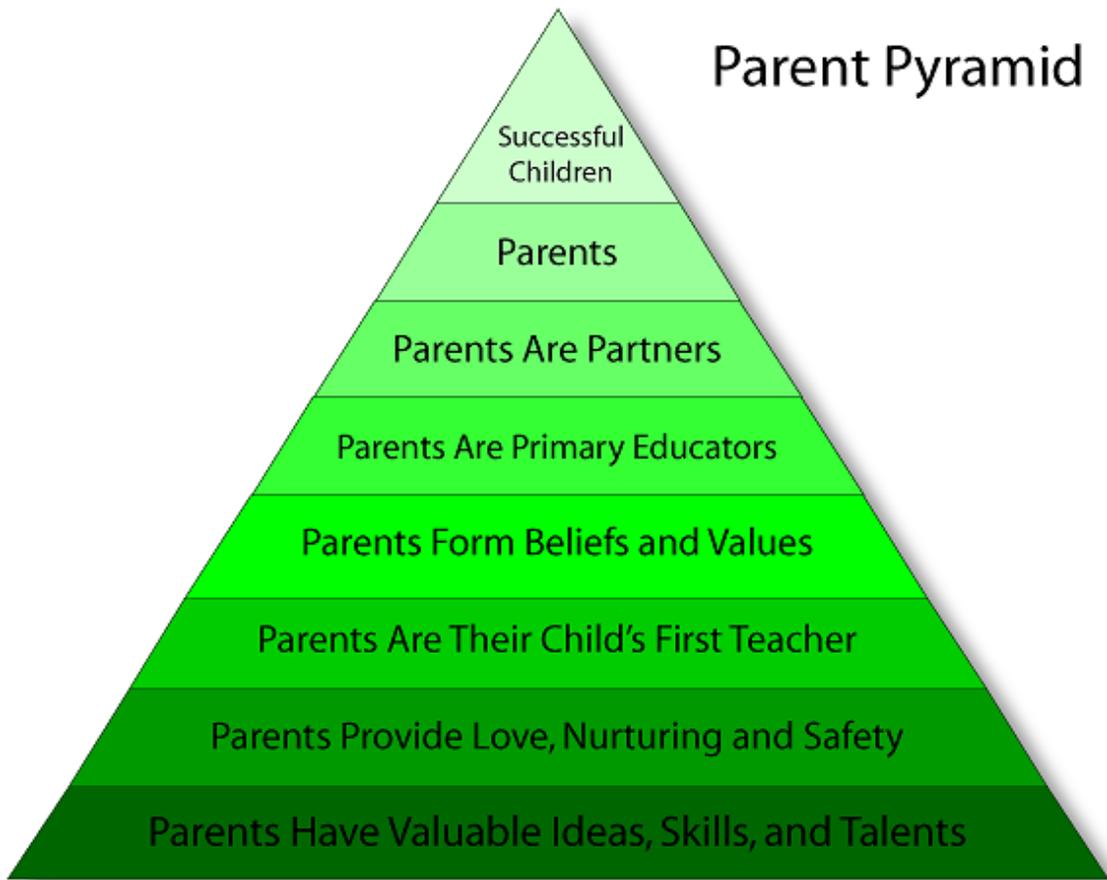
Elementary students are at the beginning of their educational career. They still need support and interaction with those that are providing their education. Since your child will be doing the majority of learning in your home, parent time is necessary for student success. Most children will spend between 4-5 hours working on schoolwork each day. Parents can

expect to be directly involved with their children for as much as three hours each day. Most parents who have decided to enroll their children in distance learning cherish this time, and view it as one of the most important things they will do in raising their children. Parents are encouraged to enjoy their child's learning process, and our teachers are available to assist you in establishing the structure needed for success.

### Meeting State Requirements

AZDL is part of Sequoia Choice Charter School and there are state requirements that we are obligated to follow. As we are partners in your child's education it is important that all state requirements are met. These requirements are:

- Participation in state testing and benchmark testing;
- Weekly reporting of attendance;
- Meeting the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards;
- Devoting the age-appropriate amount of time to school work;
- Turning in work regularly to your child's teacher as agreed upon.



## Parent Expectations for Jr. High and High School Students:

### Parent Checklist for Helping Your Child with Distance Learning

Helping your child with distance learning schoolwork is an opportunity to improve your child's chances of doing well in school and in life. As a parent, you are your child's first teacher and mentor. As a distance learning parent, you are your child's daily face-to-face contact.

### Show You Think Education and Schoolwork are Important

- Do you set a regular time every day for schoolwork?
- Does your child have the papers, books, pencils, computer, internet access, and other things needed to do assignments?
- Does your child have a well-lit, fairly quiet place to study?
- Do you set a good example by showing your child that the skills he/she is learning are an important part of the things he/she will do as an adult?
- Do you stay in touch with your child's teacher/advisor?

### Monitor Assignments/Progress

- Do you know what classes your child is enrolled in?
- Do you know how many lessons are in each of your child's courses?
- Do you know what your child's assignments are? How long they should take? If/when should you be involved in them?
- Do you see that your child starts and completes assignments?
- Do you require your child to show you feedback or responses when he/she submits work for grading?
- Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
- Is TV viewing, internet surfing, or video game playing cutting into your child's schoolwork time?
- Do you use consequences or incentives tied to school performance and/or progress?

### Provide Guidance

- Do you help your child get and remain organized? Does your child keep a planning calendar or assignment book? A book bag, backpack, folder, or shelf for storing all schoolwork?
- Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (for example, scheduling enough time for big assignments like portfolios; creating study guides or practice tests)?
- Do you discourage procrastination by stressing the importance of finishing required work before engaging in leisurely activities?
- Do you talk with your child about assignments? Does he/she understand them?

### Talk with the Teacher/Advisor to Resolve Problems

- Do you check your school e-mail regularly for updates on your child from the teacher/advisor?
- Do you contact the teacher/advisor early in the year before any problems arise?
- If a problem comes up, do you speak with the teacher/advisor?
- Do you cooperate with the teacher/advisor to work out a plan and schedule to resolve schoolwork problems?
- Do you follow up with the teacher/advisor and your child to make sure the plan is working?

This document is an adaptation of the Checklist for Helping Your Child with Homework re-printed by the Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services. The original form appeared on the U.S. Department of Education web-site at [www.ed.gov/pubs/parent](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parent).

## **Expectations for Elementary Teachers:**

### **Teacher/Student Interaction**

The teacher/student relationship is a special one. Every child likes to be known by their teacher, and likes to know their teacher. Our teachers enjoy interacting with their students. Depending on your location, you may see your teacher regularly for tutoring sessions, or see your teacher on SKYPE for online tutoring. Your child may have the opportunity to work with other students during their tutoring sessions as well.

Your child's teacher is a part of his or her education. They are encouragers and accountability partners. Your child's teacher can be reached to speak with your child, assist with their schoolwork, and offer a supportive voice.

### **Teacher/Parent Interaction**

Just as the teacher/student relationship is special, so is the teacher/parent relationship. This relationship is essential to the success of each student. Open communication optimizes student progress. Our teachers are your partners in your child's education. They are available to help with planning, curricular choices, and the overall educational journey of your child. When our parents and teachers work well together, the results are exciting for everyone. Every child deserves to grow every year. Through on-going, direct communication, children can reach their full potential.

Parents are encouraged to share the good and bad with their teachers. Feedback is essential, and will always benefit the student.

### **Feedback**

It is the responsibility of your child's teacher to provide you with on-going feedback about your child's progress. AZDL students benchmark test four times a year. These benchmark tests provide up-to-date information about your child's progress. Teachers share the results of the benchmark testing, and will use it for reflection when working with you to continually monitor and adjust your child's educational path. Teachers also provide feedback on the assignments that are submitted for grading.

Students of AZDL are given regular progress reports and report cards. These are discussed and are used to formulate the best educational decisions for your child.

## **Expectations for High School and Jr. High Teachers:**

### **Online Teachers**

The teachers that educate the AZDL students are part of a much larger network that provides instruction for all Sequoia Choice students at home or at labs throughout the state. Our teachers are highly qualified in their areas of expertise and enjoy teaching in the online environment. Sequoia Choice teachers are responsible for:

- Presenting content to the students in a meaningful way;
- Providing relevant and helpful feedback on assignments;
- Encouraging and providing additional assistance through tutoring when needed;
- Communicating with students and parents when needed to facilitate learning;
- Keeping current academic records.

Although the students will always be the most important part of the equation, the teachers and advisors are highly committed to helping students be successful.

### **Advisors and Academic Coaches**

The role of the advisor is to be an intermediary between the student and our school program and opportunities. The advisor serves as a guide, a coach, a mentor, and an intervention aide as the student navigates their educational journey. The advisor is responsible for the ongoing administrative tasks that are needed for school success. AZDL advisors also:

- Provide an orientation period
- Begin classes with the student
- Map out graduation plans
- Help students with course work, teacher interaction, and school planning
- Hold students accountable when coursework is sub-par and attendance guidelines are not being met
- Communicate with students and parents about school progress and expectations.

One of the highlights for all advisors is celebrating graduation with students and their families.

### **Guidance Counselor**

The guidance counselors at Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning are available to help you with your current high school goals, as well as your future goals. The guidance counselors can help you with career and college planning and preparation, providing information to colleges and universities, assist with scholarship opportunities, and provide support for any academic concerns you may have.

## **Enrollment and Admissions**

### **Enrollment**

Incoming students may enroll three different ways:

- **Online** at [azdl.org](http://azdl.org)
- **Call** 480-461-3222
- **Print** the enrollment form from [AZDL.org](http://AZDL.org) and send it in the mail or bring it to 323 N. Gilbert Rd. Mesa, AZ 85203, Ste 106.

### **Admission Requirements**

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning is an Arizona Charter School. We enroll students' year around. Students enrolling with Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning must provide the following documents to be fully admitted:

- Birth Certificate

- Immunization Records
- Proof of Residency
- Completion of the PHLOTE form (part of the enrollment form)
- Completion of the McKinney-Vento form (part of the enrollment form)
- Completion of the Federal Funding Form (part of the enrollment form)
- Completion of the school enrollment form
- Transcripts (High school only)

## **Release of Records**

Upon enrolling at Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning, a signed records release will be sent to the student's previous school. Transcripts and previous school records will be used to determine a student's course placement and graduation plan. For elementary and junior high students, previous school records will be used to help determine how we can best assist the student in reaching their academic potential.

## **Student Age**

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning accepts students who are five, but not older than 21 on or before September 1 of the current school year. These students may attend for free.

Children who are under five on or before September 1 of the current school year may be admitted on a case-by-case basis. Early kindergarten students will be given an academic assessment, as well as a readiness inventory. Once the child has completed both of these, the teacher and the parent will work together to determine if the child is ready to begin kindergarten.

Arizona State Statute prohibits early entry kindergarten students from repeating kindergarten. If an early entry kindergartener is not ready for first grade, they are still promoted, most often delaying the necessary retention to the end of their first grade year. Because of this statute, Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning feels it is critical to properly assess and determine if an early entry kindergarten student is ready to begin their school career.

Students who are older than 21 years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year may still attend Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning to complete their high school diploma for a nominal fee.

## **Student Status**

### **Full-Time Student**

Elementary and Jr. High students will typically have between four to six courses. Elementary students are expected to report 25 hours of attendance each week, and Jr. High students are required to report 30 hours of attendance each week.

Students who attend Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning as their primary school are considered full time. High school students who are full time may have fix to six classes, and are required to report 25 hours each week of attendance. If the student takes courses outside of the school operating system, such as early college credit and Williamsburg Academy courses, they are still considered full time, and should report attendance for these courses.

### **Part-Time Student**

Part time students do not take the full complement of courses offered each semester. Students taking credit recovery, extra courses, or blend home-schooling and Sequoia Choice may be considered part time. Part time students should work with their advisors or academic coaches to determine the amount of attendance they are expected to report weekly.

Many part time students may be enrolled at another school. If a student is taking credit recovery or working ahead, and they plan to transfer the credit to another school, prior approval from the student's primary school is recommended.

### **Anti-discrimination Policy**

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning does not discriminate, exclude from participation, or deny benefits of an educational active on the basis of race, color, religious preference, or national origin.

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning complies with the American Disabilities Act of 1990.

## **Attendance**

### **Attendance Policy**

Distance learning allows students the flexibility to arrange their academic schedule in many different ways. Students may study at various times during the day, and may use the weekend to get ahead or to catch up in their work. All Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning students must devote enough time to their education, demonstrating appropriate academic progress and experiencing success in their courses.

Students, whether they are at a lab site or at home, must meet the weekly attendance requirements. Although Sequoia Choice allows students to schedule their courses according to their personal needs and preferences, minimum attendance hours must be fulfilled. Below are the attendance hours required.

- Kindergarten: 12.5 hours per week
- Grades 1-3: 20 hours per week
- Grades 4-6: 25 hours per week
- Grades 7-8: 30 hours per week
- Grades 9-12: 25 hours per week

Note: With distance learning, attendance hours are extremely important because they represent the total time spent on educational activities. Non-attendance has a profound affect on a students learning and causes the school great concern.

### **Consequences for Non-Attendance (hours recorded)**

The State of Arizona requires that all students with more than 9 absences per semester be withdrawn. For this reason, Sequoia Choice cannot maintain the enrollment of students with excessive absences or insufficient attendance hours.

If, despite the school's repeated attempts at contact, a student falls more than 9 days behind in recorded attendance, Sequoia Choice may automatically withdraw the student.

## **Illness/Extended Inability to Participate**

Students who are expecting not to participate in their schooling for more than three days are expected to contact their teachers, advisors and academic coaches. The school staff is willing to work with any student to recover from a lengthy absence. Students who do not communicate an upcoming or on going absence, may be withdrawn from the school.

# **Student Learning**

## **Course Placement**

The partnership between students, parents, teachers, advisors, and academic coaches is essential in decided each student's course placement.

## **Grades K-8**

Students are assigned to a grade level based on prior grades successfully completed and the student's age. Often teachers may elect to have the students take additional assessments to help determine the appropriate grade placement. Parent input is also an important part of student placement. Although Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning values the input of parents in student placement, the school reserves the right to make the final placement of students.

## **High School Students**

Students who are entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade are expected to be able to demonstrate success on state testing and successful completion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade English and Math. Students who need remediation to be successful in high school will be given the appropriate remediation prior to being placed into the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. If necessary, additional placement tests may be given.

## **Credit Transfer**

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning accepts credits from most other accredited secondary schools. We reserve the right, however, to accept, reject, and adjust credits at our discretion. Students hoping to transfer credits must provide official transcripts from their former schools and consult with a Sequoia Choice counselor to determine how their previous courses will apply toward a Sequoia Choice HS Diploma.

Because Sequoia Choice is an AdvancED accredited school, our credits are generally transferable to other institutions. Even so, each school has its own policies regarding the acceptance of credits, and students intending to earn a diploma from another institution should consult with that school about its transfer policies.

Students entering Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning with a home-school transcript may elect to either retake the equivalent course or take a challenge exam to obtain the desired credit.

## **Course Withdraw**

Students may withdraw from course within the first 30 calendar days upon enrollment without penalty. After the 30 calendar days, students who withdraw from a course will receive a grade of 'F'.

## Course Pacing

### Grades K-6

Our elementary school relies on the parent-teacher partnership. Parents and teachers work together to determine student expectations and pacing. Parent pacing guides are provided for all subject areas. Parents are expected to work with their students to keep their students on pace and provide proper documentation through summary sheets and work samples to demonstrate student progress.

### Grades 7-12

Students in grades 7-12 are enrolled in online courses. Within ELMS is the course checklist and the timeline for completion. Students are expected to meet the deadlines as outlined by the checklists. Students who fall behind in course may be withdrawn from a course, or in the case of English or Math they will be withdrawn from the school for the remainder of the semester.

## Academic Engagement Policy

Distance Learning is a unique opportunity for students who desire to learn outside the typical school setting. At Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning, this model meets the needs of most of our students, but it requires a high level of independence and self-awareness.

Arizona distance-learning schools and their students are legally held to a comparatively high standard. Fortunately, Sequoia Choice students who consistently work in their online courses, and produce a steady flow of valid, completed assignments are almost guaranteed to pass their courses. In most cases, consistent students should also receive a terrific final grade (B or above).

Some teenagers are still growing to become self-reliant learners. For these students, distance learning may not provide an effective path to graduation. Students who are unable to meet the requirements of their distance learning courses should consider other educational environments.

Sequoia Choice takes student success very seriously. Our commitment to providing quality educational services requires us to be honest when a student fails to progress in his or her course work.

- Students who fall 25% behind in any course (indicated by a progress report), receive a progress warning, as well as an opportunity to catch up, with the support of their teacher and advisor.
- Advisors and Academic Coaches will work with students and their parents to encourage course participation and completion.
- Students who choose not to engage adequately after the progress warning will need to notify the teacher once they re-engage.
- If lack of engagement leads to withdrawal from a core English or Math course, the student is to be withdrawn from SCAZDL.

We desire that every student be successful. We encourage students who feel they are more than 15% behind in their course to contact their teachers and advisors to design a plan for success.

## Appeal Process

Students who are withdrawn from Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning because of failure to academically engaged have the right to appeal. The appeal process will be overseen by an administrator. Through the appeal process, students must demonstrate they are committed to their academic success. If a student is not allowed to return to their course work, they may re-enter Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning the next semester.

## Assessment and Grading

### Assessment

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning requires all students to participate in a variety of assessments to monitor student progress, provide intervention and enrichment, and to monitor the effectiveness of our courses and curriculum.

#### Challenge Exams

Arizona State Statute states that students who can demonstrate competency in a particular academic core or subject must be given the opportunity to do so without enrolling in a course or in lieu of classroom time. Sequoia Choice students may request a challenge exam through their advisor or academic coach. Students may attempt a challenge exam once during a semester for any one course. Students must request a challenge exam prior to being in the course for 75 days, and must finish the exam prior to being in the course for 90 days.

Students who choose to take a challenge exam must earn an 80% or better on the exam to demonstrate successful application of the standards. In some subjects, such as math, the student must demonstrate a competency of 80% on each standard tested. Some challenge exams have multiple parts that may take a few weeks to complete. Students should plan accordingly. The grades awarded on the challenge exam will be the grade awarded in the course. Challenge exams can be used to replace a previous failing grade in a course. In the case of a student failing to demonstrate the required skills, the student may continue in the course without penalty.

#### State Testing

All students in grades 2-10 must participate in the state testing each April. Students in high school second semester courses will also test in October. Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning will arrange for testing sites throughout the state, and students will be assigned to the testing location that is closest to the address on file. We strive to have a testing site within an hour's drive one way. Students who do not participate in state testing will be withdrawn from the school per state statute.

#### Benchmark Testing

All students who are enrolled in Sequoia Choice classes are expected to take benchmarks throughout the school year. Each benchmark cycle is a two week window. Students are encouraged to begin taking the benchmarks at the beginning of each cycle. Benchmark tests results are shared with students and their parents. Because students are expected to complete the benchmarks on their own and do their best, the results are used by the teachers to provide additional instruction for the individual student.

## Final Exams 7-12

Final exams for students in grades 7-12 must be proctored. Students and advisors/academic coaches work together to schedule final exams. Once students take a course final, they may not go back into their courses to complete and/or resubmit assignments. Students are encouraged to check through their course to ensure it is completed to their satisfaction prior to starting a final exam by contacting their teacher.

## Grades K-6

Students in grades K-6 are expected to complete all the assessments within in their classes. Some of these assessments may be online, and others may be pencil and paper. Teachers work with parents to insure that the proper assessments are submitted. Submitted assignments are used to determine a student's grade and assign necessary interventions.

# Grading

## Grades K-3

Younger students are just beginning their learning process. The rate of learning varies considerably between students. Students in grades K-2 are graded on a competency scale which reflects a student's progress toward mastery of the standards within a course. Competency is demonstrated through student engagement, student growth, mastery of standards, and ownership of their own learning.

### Grade Definition-

O+ = Superior

O = Excellent

O- = Very Good

S+ = Good

S = Fair

S- = Below Average

N = Needs Improvement

IP = In Progress

W = Withdrawn

## Grades 4-12

Students in grades 7-12 are graded on an A-F scale. Grades are awarded based on student performance throughout the course of study. Grades reflect student engagement, competency, and overall course success.

### Grade Definition-

A = Excellent

B = Above Average

C = Average

D = Below Average

F = Failing

NC = No Credit

IP = In Progress

W = Withdrawn

## Course Credit

High school credit is earned when a course is successfully completed. Credit is awarded on a semester basis. Each high school level course is worth .5 credits for the semester. Students who take community college courses will earn .5 credit for a 1-2 credit college course, and 1 credit for a college course worth over 3 college credits.

## Competency Credit

Competency credit may be awarded when a high level of mastery is demonstrated on a standardized test such as the ACT, SAT, GED, or Accuplacer. Competency credit may also be awarded after a student successfully completes a college course of higher rigor in the same subject area. Competency credit cannot be used to replace a previous failing grade.

## Grade Point Average (GPA)

GPA is determined using the potential credit of a student's high school courses and the traditional 4.0 scale:

- A = 4 points
- B = 3 points
- C = 2 points
- D = 1 point
- F = 0 points

As an example, a student who has attempted 22 credits and earned 77 points would have a 3.500 GPA.

Sequoia Choice does not weight GPA for any courses or credits. GPA is calculated to the third decimal place.

## Determining Class Rank

Class Rank is determined based on a student's GPA as compared to other students in his or her cohort or graduating class.

## Credit Recovery

If a student has failed a course in a prior semester, they may retake the course to earn the required credit. Credit will be awarded once the student has successfully completed the course.

## Transcripts

Transcripts provide a wealth of information. Transcripts include all high school courses and credits, graduation progress, GPA, AIMS ELMSs, and class rank (upon request). We are happy to provide official or unofficial transcripts to any students or parents who ask. We will also send transcripts to a student's new school upon receipt of a records request from that school.

# Graduation Plans and Diploma Information

## Graduation Plans

Sequoia Choice offers two possible graduation plans to our students. The Standard graduation plan prepares students with a general background suited for enrolling in a community college or a trade or technical school. This diploma requires 22 credits. The Academic graduation plan is the more academically rigorous program and is intended for students who want to enter a four-year college or university directly after high school. This diploma requires 23 credits, including more rigorous math and science courses and two years of a foreign language.

**Sequoia Choice offers two diploma options:**

### 1. Standard Diploma

The **Standard Diploma** is the most flexible. It prepares students with a general background suited for entering the workforce or enrolling in a community college. This diploma requires 22 credits.

### 2. Academic Diploma

The **Academic Diploma** is the most academically rigorous program and is intended for students who want to enter a four-year college or university directly after high school. This diploma requires 23 credits, including more rigorous math and science courses and two years of a foreign language.

Diplomas are awarded to students who have fulfilled all [graduation requirements](#) and received their final grades. Sequoia Choice holds a full graduation ceremony annually in Mesa, Arizona at the end of the school year. Graduates who cannot attend the ceremony receive their diplomas by mail. We will loan caps and gowns to all of our graduating students.

## ECAP

You will begin hearing the term ECAP (pronounced E-CAP) fairly often. ECAP stands for Educational and Career Action Plan. The state of Arizona requires that starting with the graduating class of 2013, every student have an Educational and Career Action Plan.

So, what exactly is ECAP? Aside from the acronym, ECAP means every student must give some serious thought as to what he or she wants to do after high school. Whether it's writing a cover letter, preparing a resume, picking out a college or technical school, or deciding on a career or major, students will begin to prepare for their lives post-high school.

Students can take ECAP as a class for credit through Sequoia Choice, or students can work on their own through the [Arizona Career Information System](#). Either way, it is important that students think about their future plans.

## Early College Credit

High school students can participate in our Early College Credit program, full-time or part-time. They don't even have to leave their current school! Students can attend local community colleges (even online through Rio Salado), and Sequoia Choice covers the cost for tuition and books. The college courses result in college credit and high school credit at the same time.

Some students may wish to attend a college or university that is not part of the community college system. Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning will reimburse up to \$84 per credit hour.

Students apply for the Early College Credit program through their Sequoia Choice advisor and guidance counselor.

## Academic Integrity Policy

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning encourages students to do their very best. Sequoia Choice maintains a strong commitment to the principles of academic integrity and expects students to behave with honesty in all their school interactions.

- Students are honest in all their dealings with school administrators, teachers, advisors, specialists, staff, and other students.
- Every student assignment represents the student's best effort at the time.
- Students do not allow others to copy their work: Every assignment submitted should represent the student's individual knowledge and ability.
- Students do not share specific information regarding lesson assessments or exams with other students.
- Students use only authorized notes and materials while taking tests or completing assignments. Students should openly disclose all materials used on assignments and tests to parents, teachers, advisors, and other school officials, and use only those materials allowed for each assignment.
- Students do not allow others (including parents/guardians, tutors, or family members) to complete their work for them. While Sequoia Choice encourages parents/guardians to actively participate in their student's education, adults should exercise careful judgment when helping their student complete assignments. All student work must accurately reflect the student's abilities, effort, and time spent on task.
- Students do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as using another's words, information, or ideas without giving credit to the original source. It involves copying the work of other students, authors, organizations, or individuals and presenting it as the student's own.
- Students are expected to follow rules of "Netiquette", and use common courtesy when engaging in dialogue with online instructors.

Electronic resources and the internet, greatly expand opportunities for plagiarism, making it easy to copy and paste others' work into student documents, or even download entire papers and claim ownership for them. These practices are severe

violations of academic integrity. Sequoia Choice teachers and advisors will thoroughly check student work for authenticity, and use technologies that search the internet and other sources to detect work that is not original.

## Acceptable Use Policy

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning uses the Internet as the deliverer of educational materials.

While enrolled with Sequoia Choice, students and parent/guardians should abide by the following:

- I recognize and accept the responsibility for my actions and conduct on the internet.
- I will not participate in any type of inappropriate behavior while online. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to: accessing, viewing and/or distributing vulgar or demeaning language, images and/or audio; hacking; and damaging and/or altering software, data and/or hardware so as to harm and/or inconvenience others.
- I will be courteous and respectful of property (including but not limited to data, programs, and/or information) and people on the internet.
- I will not use Sequoia Choice computers and internet resources for commercial purposes without prior written consent.
- I understand the use of the internet and computers of Sequoia Choice is a privilege, not a right. Abuse and/or misuse of that privilege may result in loss of computer or internet privilege and/or other disciplinary action, including mandatory withdrawal.
- I recognize that Sequoia Choice cannot control and is not responsible for filtering incoming internet email, nor the content of online chat or news groups not related to the school. Sequoia Choice strongly encourages parent/guardians to monitor their student's at-home computer.

## Behavior Policy

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning may elect not to admit students who are currently under disciplinary action, or who have withdrawn pending such action from another school. If the school discovers that a student has been previously expelled, the student's enrollment may be terminated.

A student who has been suspended or withdrawn pending disciplinary action from Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning may not return to the vicinity of the campus during the school day or attend any school functions: Doing so may result in the student's expulsion/and or police involvement. An exception to this policy will be made for the student if he/she is supervised by a parent/guardian while attending the school function of a sibling.

During the school day, including lunchtime, students may not associate with individuals who are suspended or who have been expelled. Such associations may result in their own suspension or expulsion.

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning students should avoid all individuals and groups who are involved in acts that violate the school's Student Code of Conduct. Students who associate with others who are violating the Student Code of Conduct may be deemed guilty by association and disciplined accordingly.

A student or his/her possessions may be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion that they are in possession of illegal, dangerous, or inappropriate items and/or substances. A student's refusal to cooperate with such a search may result in suspension or expulsion.

A student may be required to undergo alcohol or drug screening if there is reasonable suspicion of substance abuse. A positive test result or a student's refusal to submit to such a test may result in suspension or expulsion.

Students who have been long-term suspended or expelled from Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning, or who have withdrawn pending disciplinary action may not attend school functions or return to the school campus at any time. Doing so will be considered trespassing and may result in police involvement.

Following a suspension, the student and a parent/guardian are required to attend a conference with a Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning administrator to discuss readmission. A student who is readmitted may be placed on probation. Any misconduct occurring during probation may result in long-term suspension or expulsion.

## Conduct Policy

Our school is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing atmosphere of respect that fosters the love of learning. A parent or guardian must be present to supervise their student's academic work. Please read and discuss these guidelines with your child. Your signature below demonstrates your approval of this contract and your willingness to uphold and abide by it. Both you and your student must sign and submit the enrollment forms.

### **Expectation #1: Students will respect and obey the law.**

Any illegal activity occurring while participating in any school activities, while with other students, or with school property will be met with zero tolerance resulting in immediate suspension or expulsion. These activities include, but are not limited to: possession or use of tobacco or alcohol; activities related in any way to the purchase, use or possession of drugs; gang related activities; possession of weapons; or abuse. Theft, vandalism, or other mistreatments of property belonging to others (including the school) will result in consequences, which may range from an informal conference to expulsion, and may include restitution of stolen or damaged items, or police involvement.

### **Expectation #2: Students will respect the ideas, beliefs, cultures, and individual differences of others.**

Students engaging in verbal or written abuse, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, disrespect of authority, fighting, profanity, obscene behavior, extortion, gang-related activities, or other such behaviors will receive consequences ranging from an informal conference to expulsion based on attitude, severity, and prior history.

### **Expectation #3: Students will respect the privilege of education.**

Plagiarism, lying, cheating, dress code violation (when on campus and/or participating with others in school activities), public displays of affection (when on campus and/or participating with others in school activities), or any form of academic misconduct will result in consequences ranging from an informal conference to expulsion based on attitude, severity and prior history.

### **Expectation #4: Students will have the ability to use a computer daily.**

All students must have daily access to a computer with internet access, and must have the basic computer skills needed to use a computer. Students and parents must be familiar with, and know how to operate a windowed computer environment. E-mail skills, including receiving and sending attachments, are required. Minimal typing skills are also essential. Most importantly, students and parents should not be afraid of the computer, or learning new technology.

### **Expectation #5: Students will be responsible citizens of the Internet.**

Students and parents/guardians must agree to abide by the following as users and citizens of the internet:

- I recognize and accept the responsibility for my actions and conduct on the internet.
- I will not participate in any type of inappropriate behavior while online. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, accessing, viewing, or distributing vulgar or demeaning language, images and/or audio; hacking; and damaging or altering software, data or hardware so as to harm or inconvenience others.
- I will be courteous and respectful of property (including, but not limited to, data, programs, and information) and people on the internet.
- Sequoia Choice computers and Internet resources will not be used for commercial purposes without prior written consent of Sequoia Choice Governing Board.
- Use of the internet and computers of Sequoia Choice is a privilege, not a right. Abuse or misuse of this privilege may result in loss of this privilege or other academic or disciplinary action.
- Parents and students recognize that Sequoia Choice School can do nothing about, and is not responsible for, filtering incoming internet e-mail nor the content of chat groups or news groups. We suggest that parents monitor computer use carefully.

### **Expectation #6: Parents/Guardians realize upon student enrollment, they become active participants in a "technology assisted" educational program sponsored by Sequoia Choice, and chartered by the State of Arizona.**

Parents/Guardians work closely with teachers in developing an individual instruction plan, which includes a variety of educational opportunities and experiences assisted by technology.

Students whose parents/guardians fail to communicate or responsibly work with teachers and staff for the benefit of their student(s) may be withdrawn from the program. Parents and students should check the school site and their e-mail daily.

Upon withdrawal or termination from the program, parents/guardians agree to return all school materials within two weeks.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for ensuring their home computer is connected to the internet. If an internet connection is down, it is the parents/guardians responsibility to contact the school to inform us. The student's computer is expected to be online again as rapidly as possible.

### **Expectation #7: Parents/Guardians will monitor attendance.**

Educational hours are tracked in the categories set forth in the Arizona State Standards. Failure to submit attendance on a weekly basis may result in probation, which may lead to withdrawal of the student. Full-time students need to log the following educational hours:

- Grade K = 10 hours per week
- Grades 1-3 = 20 hours per week
- Grades 4-6 = 25 hours per week
- Grades 7-8 = 30 hours per week
- Grades 9-12 = 25 hours per week

The parent/guardian is legally responsible for recording and reporting attendance.

### **Expectation #8: Parents/Guardians will be responsible for student transportation.**

Parents must provide transportation to the campus whenever necessary to complete tests and for all other requirements. These requirements include AIMS testing, Stanford testing, hearing screenings, and placement tests. It may also be necessary to transport your student(s) to participate in optional field trips or activities.

## **High School Students—Please read this notice carefully:**

Sequoia Choice does not discriminate in its enrollment policy. Students applying for enrollment may be tested to determine appropriate placement regardless of age or prior grade level. If it is determined that a student is not ready for high school courses, it will be necessary to give them appropriate curriculum for their level.

### **Academic Center Policies (All Academic Center Locations)**

- Students will respect the safe learning environment of the Academic Center.
- Ignorance of the rules will not be considered justification for violating the rules.
- Profanity and obscenity are not permitted in the lab or on the campus.
- Public displays of physical affection are not permitted in the lab or on the campus.
- Plagiarism, cheating, forgery, and gambling are not permitted in the lab or on the campus.
- Possession and voluntary viewing of pornography is not permitted in the Academic center
- Possession of alcohol, tobacco, and controlled substances is not permitted in the Academic Center or on the campus.
- Possession of weapons is not permitted in the Academic Center or on the campus.
- Students who are current on hours will be “in good standing.”
- Students who are not current on hours will be “not in good standing.”
- Students should arrive at the Academic Center ready to work.
- Full-time Students may take a break with the Academic Coaches permission.
- Full-time Students may take one, 45-minute lunch break each day, from 45 minutes past the hour until 30 minutes past the hour.
- Students must sign in every time they enter the Academic Center.
- Students must sign out every time they leave the Academic Center.
- Students must fill out a weekly attendance log and submit it each Friday.
- Students should list the classes they are enrolled in on their weekly attendance log.

Cellular phones, tobacco products, and shelled food products are prohibited in the Academic Center and campus.

Students who wish to participate in the work-study program must show proof of employment, as well as a letter from their employer outlining knowledge they will gain from performing their job duties.

Any student may be placed “not in good standing” by a Teacher or Academic Coach.

Academic Coaches have the right and responsibility to determine when an Academic Center policy has been violated. This includes interpretation regarding profanity, obscenity, pornography, cheating, etc.

Academic Center policies are subject to change at any time.

## Privacy Policy

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning strongly protects the privacy rights of its students and only collects personal data that families choose to supply to the school. Sequoia Choice Distance Learning abides by the regulations set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Under this act, the following individuals have access to student records (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest
- Other schools to or from which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for auditing or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- Individuals with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law
- Military recruiters, post-secondary educational institutions, and prospective employers as specified.

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning staff is not authorized to disclose student information to any other individuals or institutions without written permission from the student's parent or legal guardian, or the student him/herself if over 18.

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning also upholds the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 98), which governs the administration to students of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of eight protected areas. This amendment requires parental notification and/or written consent in advance of the administration of such surveys.

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning follows the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. For more information please contact the Arizona Department of Education.

**Arizona Department of Education** 1535 West Jefferson Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007; 602-542-5393; 800-352-4558

## Technology Requirements

Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning students *who are **not** working from a Lab site* must have daily access to a telephone and an adequately equipped computer with high-speed internet access. Students should make sure their computers have the following:

- Latest version of Flash, Java, and Adobe Reader
- Word processing and spreadsheet programs
- Up-to-date internet browser

Students need to have basic computer skills, including:

- Fundamental typing
- E-mailing
- Sending and receiving e-mail attachments

## Where to Go When You Need Assistance

The staff at Sequoia Choice Arizona Distance Learning desires for your time in our school to be a time of great learning that is easily accessible and highly enjoyable. To make this happen, communication is essential.

When you need assistance you are encouraged to start with the person closest to you in our educational setting, or closest to the problem.

**Advisors and Academic Coaches** are your liaisons, advocates, and accountability partners in this educational setting. They desire to help you with any concern you may have. Since this is the best place to start, find a way to keep their contact information handy.

**Teachers** are wanting and able to answer questions regarding student progress, submitted work, and individual course expectations. To locate the contact information for your child's teachers you may contact your advisor/academic coach, call our main office at 480-461-3222, or log into your child's ELMS account. All teacher contact information can be found on the individual class splash page.

**Administration** is also available to assist you. General questions, comments or concerns can be shared by calling 480-461-3222. You may also contact the Principal, Cindy Chleborad, at [cchleborad@edkey.org](mailto:cchleborad@edkey.org) or the Vice Principal, Ja-Queese Dightmon, at [jdightmon@edkey.org](mailto:jdightmon@edkey.org).

Wishing you the best for an amazing school year!