



# **Alternative Learning Center**

## **2023-2024**

### **Parent/Student Handbook**



**Austin ISD Disciplinary Alternative Education Program**  
**4900 Gonzales Street | Austin, TX 78702**  
**512-414-2554**

**New student orientation occurs Monday through Thursday from 8:00am to 8:30 am. Please make sure to arrive on time. Late arrivals after 8:30 am will need to return the following day in order to complete the entire session. Please try to complete all registration materials before arriving at the Alternative Learning Center.**

**Students must be enrolled by a parent or legal guardian.**

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## **WELCOME**

As the Principal of the Alternative Learning Center, I am honored to be serving the AISD community in such a transformative role. It is my belief that the purpose of the ALC is to provide a most needed opportunity for students to restore themselves socially, emotionally, and academically. At ALC, we have the opportunity of ensuring that all students are provided an equal opportunity to get a fresh start and make a commitment to get on track and work on personal goals. Together with the dedicated professionals serving our students at ALC, we will continue to support students, families, and the greater Austin community to ensure that we are working to address the needs of our students.

*Chris Jones*

*Principal of Special Campuses/ALC*

## **MISSION**

It is the mission of the Alternative Education Department to provide a robust and rigorous learning environment for students, through the lens of cultural proficiency and responsiveness, by attending to the needs of the Whole Child and providing a restorative climate invested in healing harms and preparing students for a continued chance at academic and behavioral success.

## **MOTTO**

“See a child differently, you see a different child.”

- Mary Meredith

## **GUIDING BELIEFS**

1. Every experience with students is a teachable moment.
2. All students can learn responsible behavior when they are provided with a safe, predictable, and rewarding environment.
3. Every student is an individual with unique learning needs.
4. All students must be treated with dignity and respect.
5. All students can achieve social, behavioral, and academic success when basic needs are met, social skills are taught, relationships based on mutual respect and trust are present, behavioral structure is firmly in place, and high levels of achievement are expected.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Alternative Learning Center is to provide students with the ability to maintain academic success in a school setting while addressing behavior and/or disciplinary issues.

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The ALC is a Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Students are removed here after a due process removal conference at their home campuses. The Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 37 establishes the statutes related to student discipline in public schools. This chapter details the operational guidelines, requirements, and responsibilities of DAEPs. Please be aware that the school district is required by statute to provide courses of study necessary to fulfill a student's high school graduation requirements. Furthermore, all DAEP teachers are required to meet all certification requirements established by the State of Texas. Moreover, DAEPs must meet the needs of students with disabilities.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Students and their families will be made aware of their removal by their home campus during the due process removal conference. At that time, the home campus will initiate the enrollment process by distributing a registration packet to the family. Please try to complete all registration materials before arriving at the Alternative Learning Center for the new student orientation. Students must be enrolled by a parent or legal guardian.

**New student orientation occurs Monday-Thursday from 8:00 am to 8:30 am. Please arrive on-time as late arrivals after 8:30 am will not be allowed and will need to register the following day. Doors open at 8:00 am and close at 8:30 am.** Orientation will prepare new students and their families for the expectations and guidelines they are expected to adhere to while at the ALC.

## **PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS**

**CLASS SIZE:** maximum of 15 students per teacher by law.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION / 504 STUDENT MANAGEMENT:** All Change of Placement Manifestation Determination ARDs are to be conducted by the home school, both upon entry and exit.

**THE ALC CURRICULUM:** Teachers use Austin ISD curriculum documents in planning and delivering content. In addition, the Austin ISD Yearly Planning Guide (YPG) is used to ensure students entering and leaving the ALC are where all other students are within the curriculum. Every student also takes a mandatory Social Skills class while at the ALC.

The ALC placement will not prohibit a student from completing coursework required for graduation. Students are expected to complete all classwork, will have computers available and contact with the home school teachers through Austin ISD email & BLEND. Students are encouraged to complete home campus coursework with priority. ALC follows the AISD curriculum as mandated for all schools.

## **DRESS CODE**

Parents, familiarize yourself with the dress code and ensure that your student arrives at the ALC in dress code compliance each day including registration/first day of removal. **For the first offense, students not in compliance with the dress code will be given the opportunity to change and comply with the dress code. If they refuse or continuously repeat being out of dress code, they will not be allowed to remain on campus and must leave the grounds. Parents are responsible for students getting home when they are contacted for dress code violations.**

**Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. Clothes must be worn in a way such that the abdomen, genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric.**

### **Students must wear:**

- A plain black crew neck "Tee" shirt or polo shirt without large logos. Shirts must be long enough to not show undergarments or must be tucked in at all times. Small logos on the front of shirts must be smaller than a square inch.
- Black or blue jeans or knee-length denim shorts at or above their waist. If undergarments can be seen, a plain black belt must be worn. Belt buckles may not have initials or logos.
- Jeans/shorts with holes are acceptable as long as holes are covered underneath: no skin showing!
- Shoes and laces must be primarily black, white or gray
- All shoes must be closed-toed. No boots, sandals or flip flops

### **Students may wear:**

- Only all black sweaters without hoods or long sleeve t-shirts may be worn
- Plain gold, silver, black, white, or gray wristwatches
- Plastic transparent studs may be worn

### **Students may NOT wear:**

- V-necks, jackets or shirts with hoods are not permitted
- Coats and jackets may not be worn inside the building.
- Belt buckles may not have initials and logos
- Sagging jeans or sagging shorts are not permitted
- Layering under jeans and shorts is not permitted. These layers will be confiscated and discarded
- Nylon, sweats, vinyl, wind suits, or plastic clothing are not permitted
- Jeans with holes that are not covered and show skin are not permitted
- Tight, see-through, torn, frayed or holes in shirts are not permitted
- Hats, caps, or hair coverings, hair brushes or hair combs of any type are not permitted
- Smart watches, jewelry and accessories of any kind are not permitted
- Illicit tattoos must be covered at all times, i. e. gang related, violent, drugs/alcohol or zip codes. Covering should be done by taping or wearing appropriate clothing that completely covers the tattooed area.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Students pass through a metal detector each morning and receive a pat search. This search entails patting the student's outer clothing and checking pockets, socks, shoes, hems and waistbands for prohibited items. Prohibited items will be confiscated (failure to comply could lead to suspension). Male students will be searched by trained male staff and females are searched by trained female staff.

## **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

Personal cell phones, iPods, smart watches or other electronic devices/equipment are not permitted and should not be brought on the bus nor to the campus. Violations will result in a \$15 assessment upon pickup by the parent/guardian or at the end of the student's placement. Students should not have more than five dollars daily. Amounts over five dollars will be held by administration until a parent picks up the difference in person. These items are considered contraband: cosmetics of any kind, including lip-gloss or lip balm, illegal substances, prescription medication, non-prescription medication, vape and cartridges, tobacco products, food, drinks, chewing gum, candy, cookies, etc. **Any prohibited items will be confiscated during the pat search and may be discarded.**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

During the enrollment process, Austin ISD bus transportation arrangements are made. Austin ISD buses are available for all qualifying students and they will pick up students and return them to the same location at the end of the day. **Students may not drive to or from school or park vehicles in the ALC neighborhood.** Student vehicles parked on campus are subject to be towed and impounded at the owner's expense. **Parents please note that AISD transportation for special education students is scheduled by the home school during the removal process.** Until such transportation is finalized and scheduled, parents are responsible for getting their child to and from the ALC. Any changes to bus stops must be requested in person in our Registrar's Office (512) 414-3692/3658. **Students may ONLY ride on their assigned bus.** At the end of the school day we escort all students to the designated bus area which is the Northwest side parking lot of our campus. Students who choose to take the city bus home also depart the building from the Northwest exit. Parents, if you are picking up your student, please do so no later than 4:30 pm. ALC follows Austin ISD's Bus Rules and Expectations:

- Students should be at their assigned bus stop at the assigned time. Due to traffic issues, please arrive 15 minutes prior to pick-up time and wait 15 minutes after your assigned time.
- Bus drivers will pick up and drop off students only at the bus stop selected by their parent/guardian. Students are prohibited from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Students are to remain seated, and follow all bus driver directions. Please note that bus drivers are authorized to assign seats.
- Please remind your student not to drop or throw objects inside or outside of the bus and to keep hands, feet and head inside the bus.
- **AISD school buses are an extension of the classrooms—and student safety and behavior on buses are a top priority. Please be aware that AISD bus drivers write referrals for misbehavior and such referrals may result in suspension of bus privileges. In the event that a student is suspended from riding the school bus, the parent/guardian must provide an alternate means of transportation.**
- Please keep in mind routes and stops may change periodically.
- If necessary, the telephone numbers of the bus stations are: South Base (512) 414-6500, North Base (512) 414-6520 and Southeast Base (512) 414-8510.
- Austin ISD Transportation offers the **WheresTheBus app** to provide families with timely bus location information: The free app is available on any internet-enabled device (smartphone, tablet, personal computer, iPad) and installs in less than five minutes. Instructions are available at <https://www.austinisd.org/transportation>.



## **EXTRACURRICULARS AND TRESPASSING**

As outlined in the Texas Education Code **students placed at a DAEP may not be on the campus of any other school and or attend any school related function or event at any time during their ALC placement.** Going to another campus or to a school related event or function while removed to the ALC will subject the student to further disciplinary actions and trespassing citations.



## **INVEST - Intervention Program now during the School day**

A first offense of possession, use, or influence of a THC e-cigarette/vape pen, marijuana, or alcohol will result in the student being assigned a 10 successful day placement at the Alternative Learning Center (DAEP). The student will complete an intervention program during the placement, during the school day. A second offense of possession, use, or influence of a nicotine/tobacco or THC e-cigarette/vape pen, marijuana, or alcohol will result in the student being assigned to the Alternative Learning Center (DAEP) for 15 successful days. The student will complete an intervention program during the placement, during the school day. On the third, and subsequent offenses of possession, use, or influence of nicotine/tobacco or THC e-cigarette/vape pen, marijuana, or alcohol, a student will be assigned to the Alternative Learning Center (DAEP) for 20 successful days. The student will complete an intensive intervention program during the placement, during the school day.

\*\*Each offense of selling or distributing nicotine or THC e-cigarettes/vape pens, marijuana, or alcohol will result in the student being assigned a 20 successful day placement. Students will receive a support program based on the number of offenses above.

\*\*Felony Level THC/Marijuana Possession or Distribution will result in the student being assigned a 30 successful day placement to the Alternative Learning Center (DAEP). Students will receive a support program based on the number of offenses above.

## **POSITIVE FAMILIES PROGRAMS**

The Positive Families program must be offered to secondary students for any discretionary (and Mandatory) abusive conduct violation, i.e. fighting, physical aggression. Positive Families must also be - provided for the following low level mandatory abusive conduct; assault with injury to student/adult, false report (no charges), retaliation adult (no charges), or terroristic threat (no charge or misdemeanor). After successfully completing Positive Families the student may return to the home campus following the last Positive Family class, with a minimum of ten (10) successful days. Parent involvement is optional. This course is outside of the school day. Students are required to complete the course on Zoom while adhering to the ALC dress code.

## **ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES**

Students must be in attendance every day of their removal and are subject to Texas' compulsory attendance laws.

- Parents will receive a phone call if their student is absent.
- All absence notes must be received within 48 hours.
- Students arriving after 10:30am must be accompanied by an adult.
- ALC staff will coordinate with home schools to file on students who violate the compulsory attendance laws due to excessive absences.
- Absence notes can be emailed to: [debra.powell@austinisd.org](mailto:debra.powell@austinisd.org)

## **STUDENT MEALS**

- **Free meals for all throughout the 2023-24 School Year!**
- Students enrolled at the Alternative Learning Center automatically receive free meals without any application or documentation regardless of income. We do not collect or process meal applications from students enrolled in our program.
- **Please note that students are not allowed to bring lunch, gum, candy, sodas, chips or any other food or drink items.** These items will be confiscated and disposed of immediately. Parents, if your child has diabetes, medical dietary restrictions, food allergies, etc., please consult with the ALC nurse at the time of registration.

## **ACADEMIC NEEDS**

Students removed to the ALC are taught by appropriately certified teachers in the four core academic areas of Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, and Math. Please be aware that the ALC follows the AISD mandated curriculum for all classes. An ALC placement will not hinder a student's academic advancement. See ALC Curriculum section for further information.

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED**

The Alternative Learning Center works with a wide array of community partners to provide services to students while they are enrolled at our campus. If requested, information about services can be provided during registration for all qualified students and families.

## **REVIEW AND TRANSITION**

Students removed to the ALC for more than 20 school days are eligible for review by their home campus behavior committee. The review process is a collaboration between the ALC and a student's home campus which focuses on attendance, academics, behavior, and individual growth. Student progress will be documented and distributed for review by the home school, and they will determine whether a student is eligible for a shortened removal. If the student's removal will continue, the home campus behavior committee is responsible for providing measurable objectives for the student to complete before their next review.

It is the mission of the Alternative Learning Center to provide a robust and rigorous academic environment for students, through the lens of cultural proficiency and responsiveness, by attending to the needs of the Whole Child and providing a restorative climate invested in healing harms and preparing students for a continued chance at academic and behavioral success. To guarantee our students have a smooth transition back to their home campus, transition facilitators will work collaboratively with the home campus to ensure prevention and effective intervention to student's education. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Completion of "ALC Student Transition Plan" by campus support staff and teachers
- Linking of student grades earned while at ALC to maintain academic progress
- Transition meeting with home campus behavior support team and transition facilitator in attendance as requested.

For more information on the ALC transition process, please visit:

<https://alc.austinschools.org/parents/transition-meetings>



## **STAFF CONTACTS**





Staff contacts can be found on our webpage at <https://alc.austinschools.org/>