

# Alternative Learning Center



**Parent/Student Handbook 2021-2022**

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## WELCOME

### **Austin Independent School District's Alternative Learning Center(ALC)**

As the Principal of Special Campuses/ALC, I am excited and 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

Austin Independent School District

## 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 hearing 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 hearing. At that time, the home campus will initiate the enrollment process by distributing a registration packet to the family. All registration materials must be completed before arriving at the Alternative Learning Center for new student orientation. Students must be enrolled by a parent or legal guardian.

New student orientation occurs Monday-Thursday at 8:30am (**please arrive on-time, late arrivals will not be allowed and will need to register the following day**) and will prepare new students and their families for the expectations and guidelines they are expected to adhere to while at the ALC. Families will have an opportunity to meet with counseling staff, our campus nurse, and secure bus service at this time. Upon successful completion of the new student orientation process the student will be enrolled in their appropriate classes at ALC.

## PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

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

## 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.

## TRANSPORTATION

During the enrollment process AISD bus transportation arrangements are made. AISD buses are available for all qualifying students. AISD buses pick up students near their home 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.

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 at 4:15 pm at the front of the school on Gonzales Street.

### **AISD 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 if the bus is late.
- Bus drivers will pick up and drop off students only at the bus stop selected by their parent/guardian.
- Students are to remain seated, and follow all bus driver directions. Please note that bus drivers are authorized to assign seats.
- Students are prohibited from eating or drinking on the bus.
- 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.
- **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.**
- If you need to contact the bus depot, phone numbers are as follows: South Base (512) 414-6500, North Base (512) 414-6520, and Southeast Base (512) 414-8510.

## DOCUMENTS FOR COMPLETION OF PROGRAM

Before a student is reassigned to ALC for a discretionary offense (first and subsequent offense) the request must be approved by the appropriate Associate Superintendent. (A review of documentation of prior interventions will be conducted as part of this process)

If approved by the appropriate Associate Superintendent, the 1st and subsequent discretionary DAEP placement during the current school year will be for 20 School days. Offense specific interventions (Invest, Positive Families, etc.) must be offered at the due process conference for each discretionary DAEP placement.

After successfully completing INVEST or Positive Families, and with a minimum of ten (10) successful school days at the Alternative Learning Center, the student may return to their home campus.

## INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES PROGRAMS

1. The INVEST program must be offered each time a secondary student is assigned to DAEP for misdemeanor level drug or alcohol offenses. After successfully completing INVEST the student may return to the home campus following the last INVEST class, with a minimum of ten (10) successful days. (For first time reassignment parent involvement is optional, on subsequent assignments, parental involvement is mandatory)
2. 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.



## 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.

## ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

Students must be in attendance every day and are subject to the state's 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)

## 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. **Students not in dress code compliance will not be allowed to enter the campus and must leave the grounds. Parents will be contacted and must arrange options for students to get home.**

## STUDENT MEALS

### Free Meals for All Through the 2021-22 School Year

- AISD will provide free meals for all students through June 2022.
- Meals are free for all students regardless of income, or without any application or documentation.
- At AISD, we encourage all students to take advantage of free school meals. As a federally funded program, we receive reimbursement for each meal served; the more students who eat with us the more funding we have to invest in the quality of our food, maintain local jobs, and support the Texas



economy.

**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 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.

## REVIEW AND TRANSITION

Any student removed to the ALC for more than 20 school days is 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 ALC staff and home school behavior

committee in attendance (when possible)

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

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

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED

The Alternative Learning Center works with a wide array of community partners to provide restorative programs and services to students while they are enrolled at our campus. A list of current programs and services is available upon request.

Information will be provided during registration for all qualified students and families.

## STAFF CONTACTS

Staff contacts can be found at [www.alc.austinschools.org](http://www.alc.austinschools.org)