



**Alma del Mar  
Charter School**

**Scholar & Family Handbook**

Effective August 1, 2019

These guidelines supersede any prior statements, policies, or guidelines.

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# Section I: Our Mission

Alma del Mar is an inclusive Expeditionary Learning school that puts New Bedford scholars on a college trajectory and challenges them to be service-minded leaders. By engaging in a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on meaningful work, our scholars will master essential skills and content, take ownership of their learning and think boldly while addressing complex academic and community issues.

## About Commonwealth Charter Schools

Alma del Mar is a charter school. Charter schools were introduced in Massachusetts via the 1993 Education Reform Act passed by the Legislature. Charter schools are independently managed public schools that operate under a five-year charter granted by the Massachusetts Board of Education. Alma del Mar opened in 2011 and was recently renewed for its second five year charter.

Charter schools have the freedom to organize around a core mission, curriculum, theme, or teaching method, and are allowed to control their own budgets and hire (and fire) teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate strong academic results and organizational viability or the charter will be revoked. Parents choose to send their children to charter schools; scholars are selected by random public lottery when demand exceeds the number of seats available. Charter schools are public schools embodying freedom, choice, and accountability.

## Alma Habits of Character:

The Alma community lives by a set of Habits of Character that outline the values, mindsets and skills we want our scholars to learn.

### Responsibility

- **I take responsibility for my learning.**

### Consideration

- **I consider others in my choice of words and actions.**

### Service

- **I serve my crew and community.**

## Section II: Board of Trustees

**Jan Baptist (Board Chair)** has forty years of experience advancing and defending the ideal of equal opportunity, access and student success in higher education. In 2009, Jan retired from Bristol Community College after 36 years of service with 14 as the Director of Disability Services and the Assistant Director of the SSS/Quest for Success Program. She now teaches as an adjunct faculty member in the Psychology and English departments.

**Christopher Arnold** is the co-founder of Educational Directions Incorporated, in Portsmouth, RI. Mr. Arnold has taught Latin, ancient Greek, philosophy, history, and English; coached lacrosse, wrestling, and football; and held a variety of independent school administrative positions at the Pomfret School in Pomfret, CT, Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, MA, Lakeside School in Seattle, WA, and Heritage Hall in Oklahoma City, OK.

**Christopher Bator** is a retired assistant U.S. attorney from Boston who now serves on the faculty of the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School. He also currently serves as treasurer and a board member of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Bator prosecuted violent, drug, and organized crime cases as an Assistant US Attorney in Boston for more than 27 years. He obtained his bachelor's degree from Harvard College in 1976, and his J.D. from Boston University Law School in 1985. He was an associate at Hale and Dorr (now Wilmer Hale) in Boston from 1986-1990.

**Vanessa Brown** is an Associate at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP in Boston. She is part of a team that counsels clients in a range of litigation matters, including business and corporate disputes, corporate investigations and criminal defense, environmental, securities, toxic tort, and product liability. While attending the University of Chicago, Vanessa was active in the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic's Criminal and Juvenile Justice Project. Prior to attending law school, Vanessa was a middle school special education teacher with Teach for America.

**Bronwen Cunningham**, MBA, worked in financial services at Fidelity, served on the Board of the Wellesley ABC program and of Babson College, and serves as a mentor and coach for students at Babson.

**David Eckert** is a retired CEO who, for 25 years, led businesses and served on many corporate boards of directors. Before his CEO roles, Mr. Eckert was a partner at business consultants Bain & Company.

**Gail Fortes** is the Executive Director of the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts. She was named The Standard-Times' 2015 New Bedford Woman of the Year for her years of work advocating for justice and equality, especially on behalf of women.

**Lucile (Cile) Hicks** received a Masters of Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School in 1986, after spending several years teaching high school math and science in San Francisco and Philadelphia. She served for 16 years in the Massachusetts House and Senate and was a member of the Joint Committee on Education.



**Martha Kay**, M.Ed. is a former Principal of Gomes Elementary School and serves on the Board of Directors of Gifts to Give.

**Dr. John Polk** practiced surgery in the SouthCoast area for 25 years. A retired surgeon, John now devotes his work to educating tomorrow's professionals. He teaches science literacy to Boston area high school students from academically challenged backgrounds, as well as advanced literacy skills to college students. John also founded Directors in Coaching, an independent professional coaching consultation business in Boston focused on professionals and organizations who seek to make positive changes in their lives and within their industry. He also serves as an assistant dean Boston University's School of Medicine.

**Maria Rosario** has served for 11 years as Executive Director of NorthStar Learning Centers, a minority-led nonprofit that serves disadvantaged New Bedford area children and families. She has emerged as an influential leader in building support for strengthening the relationships between the schools, families, and the community at large. She resides in New Bedford.

## Section III: Who to Contact for What

**Alma del Mar: Sarah D. Ottiwell Campus** Front Desk: 774-206-6827

**Alma del Mar: Frederick Douglass Campus** Front Desk: 774-762-4064

All members of the Alma del Mar staff will respond to phone calls and e-mails during the week within 24 hours or one business day. Staff contact lists for each campus will be shared with families at the beginning of the school year.

Concern	Staff Member
I have questions about my scholar's academic progress.	Your scholar's teacher
I have questions about homework.	
I have questions about school activities (field work, events, etc.).	
I have concerns about discipline issues.	
My scholar has an allergy; my scholar needs medication during the day.	School Nurse
I don't know whether to send my child to school because he/she may be sick.	
I have questions about standardized testing.	Principal
I have questions about instruction or management not answered by others.	
I have big picture questions about instruction, academics, or teaching.	
I want to change where my scholar is going at dismissal.	Front Desk (by 1:00 PM)
My scholar will be absent or late.	Front Desk
I would like to enter my scholar's siblings into the lottery for next year.	
I need a copy of the calendar or other materials.	
I need to get an emergency message to my scholar during the day.	
I need help ordering uniforms.	
I need help with housing, food, clothing, or community resources.	
I have questions about transportation.	
I have concerns about my child's educational progress; I think they may need to be evaluated to determine if they have specialized needs.	Dean of Scholar Support / Senior Specialist
My child already has an IEP/504 plan and I would like to hold a team meeting.	
My child is an English Language Learner and I have a question about their progress.	
I have concerns about my child or another child being bullied	Ottiwell Campus: Dean of Culture  Douglass Campus:
I would like to volunteer; I would like to join one of the Parent Councils.	
I have concerns about discipline issues after speaking with my	

scholar's teacher.	Principal
I have questions about mental health services offered at Alma.	
I have questions about the afterschool program.	After School Coordinator
I would like to make a donation of goods, services, or money to the school.	Director of Development
I am interested in applying for a job at Alma.	Director of Talent

## Section IV: Family Engagement

Alma del Mar strongly believes that scholars succeed when the adults in their school and at home are working together. We expect that all parents and guardians will take an active role in the education of their scholars. Alma del Mar is committed to doing whatever it takes to overcome barriers to engagement and to ensure that all parents and guardians have the opportunity to be part of the school community. We also strongly encourage the engagement of extended family members.

In order to allow for communication, it is critical that the school have updated contact information for all parents and guardians. Anytime a phone number or email address changes, please contact the Front Desk within 24 hours to provide updated information.

*Anytime a phone number, address, or e-mail address changes, please notify the front office immediately.*

### Phone and email communication

All parents or guardians will be provided with the cell phone number and email address for their child's teacher. Scholars and parents should feel free to call the school or email when they have a question, concern, or suggestion. All Alma del Mar staff members will be available on weekdays between 7:45am-5:00pm and will typically respond within 24 hours or 1 business day.

Teachers and other staff members will contact parents to share both positive and negative developments in areas including academic performance and behavior. Alma del Mar expects all parents to respond to phone calls, texts, and e-mails regarding their scholar within 24 hours or 1 business day. If communications are not returned, staff members may conduct a home visit to discuss the matter.

Alma del Mar asks family members to approach staff members in an appropriate manner. We do not tolerate threats or abusive language at school or toward our staff. We reserve the right to ban from the premises anyone who engages in this or other disruptive behavior.

Alma del Mar also uses an automated communication system to distribute important information to parents. Parents will receive automated calls, text messages, and e-mails regarding upcoming events, professional days, and other matters. In addition, all families will receive automated phone calls and text messages in the case of school closure due to weather, early dismissal due to weather, or another emergency situation. If parents are not receiving these communications, please contact the front office.

### Initial Home Visits

A member of the Alma del Mar team will conduct an initial home visit with all families prior to the start of the school year. If parents are not comfortable with a visit at home, the meeting may occur at another location of the family's choosing, including at the school.

### Family - Teacher Conferences

The Alma del Mar academic year is divided into four quarters. We conduct family-teacher conferences following the end of each of the first three quarters. An additional family-teacher conference will be held at the end of the year if necessary to address individual needs. Each

parent or guardian will be expected to sign up for an appointment during this time window. The dates of family-teacher conferences are listed on the school calendar to allow parents and guardians sufficient notice to request time off from work if necessary.

### **Family Days of Service**

Family Days of Service offer the opportunity for scholars and their family members to demonstrate their commitment to service by participating in community service projects. Extended family members are welcome to attend Days of Service. Several Family Days of Service will be held each year. These events are not mandatory, but participation is strongly encouraged.

### **Expedition Nights**

Every scholar participates in two Expedition Nights (called Culminating Events in Middle School) every year. Expedition Nights offer scholars the opportunity to showcase their work and teach parents and community members about what they have learned. Scholar participation in these evenings is **required**, and family members are strongly encouraged to attend.

### **Open House/Back-to-School Night**

At the start of each year, Alma del Mar will host an Open House or Back-to-School Night so that families can learn more about their child's class. Throughout the year we will offer other events.

### **Family Organizations**

The Alma Family Advisory (AFA), the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), the English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council, and the Alma Booster Club engages parents in shaping the school and developing programming that will advance the mission of the school.

*The schoolwide Alma Family Advisory and Special Education Parent Council will work together to ensure that the needs of all scholars are addressed. All parents and guardians are encouraged to participate.*

### **Alma Family Advisory**

The Alma Family Advisory is responsible for developing programming and services for families, giving input on school policy, recruiting new scholars, and conducting other activities as determined by the members. Meeting times are published on the school calendar each year. All parents are encouraged to participate.

### **Alma Booster Club**

The Alma del Mar Booster Club is a parent-led organization that supports all scholars at Alma del Mar. Past Booster Club hosted events included a Bingo Night, a Movie Night, a talent show and an all-school cookout to celebrate the end of the year. All Alma parents, grandparents, and other family members are welcome to attend Booster Club meetings.

### **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)**

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council will promote parent engagement in the development and modification of programs serving scholars with special needs.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, duties of the Special Education Advisory Council will include, but not be limited to:

- advising the school on matters pertaining to the education and safety of scholars with special needs
- meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school's special education programs
- offer workshops and educational programming of interest to parents of children with special needs, including about the rights of special education students and their parents/guardians
- All parents are encouraged to participate

### **English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELLPAC)**

The English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council will promote parent engagement in the development and modification of programs serving scholars who are English Language Learners

In accordance with the LOOK Act, duties of the English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council will include, but not be limited to:

- advising the school on matters pertaining to the education of English language learners
- meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school's ELL programs
- offer workshops and educational programming of interest to parents of ELLs
- All parents of current or former ELLs are encouraged to participate

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

Alma del Mar encourages all parents and family members to volunteer and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent has the opportunity to do so in a way that accommodates his or her schedule. Volunteer opportunities include the following:

- Classroom tasks –assisting teachers with organizing classrooms, creating teacher materials, copying, laminating, and making bulletin boards
- Office tasks – filing papers, making photocopies, covering the front desk during staff breaks
- Enrichment activities – leading or helping to lead dance, music, or sports classes
- Field work – chaperoning scholars during field trips

In accordance with school policy, parent volunteers will be required to complete a background check prior to engaging in any volunteer activities that could involve direct and unsupervised contact with scholars. A notary public will be available at parent orientation to complete background check forms with parents.

### **School Visits**

Alma del Mar maintains an open policy in regard to visitors. Parents and other individuals involved in a scholar's life are encouraged to visit classrooms. In order to support the learning of all scholars, visitors are asked to abide by the following policies:

- Please turn all cell phone ringers off prior to entering a classroom and refrain from using your cell phone for recording video or audio in the classroom.

- Please sign in at the Front Desk as soon as you arrive. At that time, you will receive a nametag. You are required to display this nametag throughout your visit.
- Unless otherwise instructed by the teacher, please remain in the back of the classroom to avoid distracting our scholars.
- Please do not disrupt classroom activities. Parents wishing to speak with teachers may schedule a meeting when the teacher is available.
- Except in special cases, we ask that parents refrain from visiting during the first two weeks of school in order to allow us to build strong school culture and during MCAS administration periods.

Alma del Mar reserves the right to request a visitor to leave at any time if that visitor is disrupting school activities or making any member of the school community uncomfortable.

### **Town Hall**

Every Friday, the Alma del Mar community comes together to recognize outstanding scholar achievement in the domains of academics, behavior, and character. Parents are welcome to attend this community gathering.

### **Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**

Because our scholars need every possible minute to focus on the work that will put them on the path to college, we do not allow birthday celebrations during the school day. Parents may send a birthday snack to be consumed during closing circle. If parents are sending a snack, please follow the guidelines listed below:

- Send enough snacks for each child in the classroom to have one.
- Treat must be store bought and nut free
- No fast food, soda, or caffeinated beverages
- Please give the teacher a week's notice as to allow time for scholar's with specific allergies to bring an individual treat

Invitations to birthday parties may not be distributed at school unless every child in the class is invited.

As a diverse school, we know that not all of our families, staff, or community members celebrate the same holidays. It is important to us that our school is an inclusive place. As a result, we do not encourage celebrations of holidays and do not permit edible treats on those days which exacerbate distractions. Food is not allowed to be brought for celebrations of holidays (ex. Valentine's Day, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day). If food is brought for such occasions, it will be sent home with the scholar.



# Section VI: Academic Program

Alma del Mar was founded on the belief that all scholars can achieve at high levels. As such, Alma del Mar's educational program is designed so that scholars master critical content and skills, create quality work, and develop the habits that will put them on the path to college and enable them to be service-oriented leaders. Alma scholars will attend a school that provides data-driven individualized scholar support, an emphasis on service leadership, and a rigorous curriculum that builds core background knowledge starting in the early grades.

## Academic Subjects

### Humanities and Writing

Alma del Mar's literacy program is content centered and incorporates a standards-based approach to ensure that all scholars become proficient and critical readers and writers who are motivated to read and write throughout their lives. In the younger grades, scholars spend significant time on Read Aloud, Comprehension, Word Study, Guided Reading, and Writing. In Middle School, scholars read and write throughout all their subjects, in addition to a dedicated Humanities block. Scholars will receive, at minimum, 90 minutes of literacy instruction each day.

*Literacy is our  
foundation.  
Scholars read  
and write all  
day long.*

### Mathematics

The Alma mathematics standards come from the Common Core Standards. Using the Singapore Math Curriculum, scholars develop a conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts, the problem solving processes necessary to tackle complex and novel situations, and basic numeracy and number sense skills. The mathematical processes are common in every grade in order to improve our scholars' understanding of mathematics and to encourage communication of mathematical ideas and models.

### Science and Social Studies

In Elementary School, Science and Social Studies instruction is taught through interdisciplinary learning expeditions planned in conjunction with Massachusetts Science and Social Studies Frameworks. These expeditions are designed to make the standards come alive through long-term, comprehensive investigations that include case studies, projects, fieldwork, experts and service learning. Middle School scholars attend daily 70 minute Science and Social Studies classes that ensure mastery of content knowledge and skills. In addition, Middle School scholars complete final products or culminating events twice a year as an opportunity to showcase high quality work that makes explicit interdisciplinary connections in their studies.

### Co-Curriculars

Scholars in K-2 participate in physical education, art, and music every week. Scholars in 3-8 participate in physical education, art, music, spanish, and programming every week. Scholars in the middle school are given the opportunity to rate and attend their preferred co-curricular for each half of the year. All lessons are planned in accordance to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Visual Arts, Physical Education and Music and are designed in accordance with scholars' developmental needs. Additionally, our co-curricular teachers ensure that these standards are integrated, when appropriate, into classroom studies of other disciplines.



## Expeditionary Learning

Alma del Mar is part of the EL Education network. EL Education is a leading K-12 nonprofit helping to build great schools in diverse communities across America. For over 25 years, EL Education has been bringing to life a three dimensional vision of student achievement that includes mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high-quality student work.

Alma del Mar combines the best practices of the highest performing urban charter schools with EL Education's in-depth approach to teaching content. In every subject, Alma scholars both master the fundamentals and apply their learning in new ways.

Scholars embark on 6-12 week investigations into key topics (with a focus on science and social studies) during their Expedition class. Scholars gain a rich understanding of a subject and leverage this knowledge to strengthen our community.

## School Supplies

Alma del Mar provides scholars with the materials they need at school to be successful. We pride ourselves on ensuring that scholars have access to all needed materials during the school day. It is important that scholars have necessary supplies at home to successfully complete homework. Alma del Mar recommends that scholars have access to the following supplies at home:

- Lots of pencils
- Erasers
- Pencil sharpener
- Crayons and markers
- Lined paper
- Glue sticks and scissors
- Pocket folders

Additionally, scholars must be prepared each day with their required supplies, including but not limited to, writing utensils, homework assignments, small book bag, and independent reading books. These required materials will be provided at the beginning of the year.

## Homework

Homework serves multiple purposes, including reinforcing the ideas and concepts taught throughout the day, helping teachers to determine whether a child has mastered the concepts, keeping parents connected to the school, and showing families what their scholar is learning. Homework also teaches scholars responsibility and accountability. Opinions on and experiences of homework vary widely. There is no one policy or guideline that will meet all needs and desires.

*The most important  
homework for all  
scholars is silent  
reading every single  
night.*

Alma del Mar scholars are expected to complete all assigned homework in a high quality manner each night and each weekend. That homework will be collected by teachers and be used to plan instruction and make recommendations for individual scholar support if needed.

The most important homework for all scholars is silent reading every single night. Homework should be able to be done by every child without adult support beyond focus and monitoring.

### Types of Homework Assigned

**Independent reading:** Scholars will always have independent reading homework. This involves reading a choice or assigned book and completing a log or summary. Independent reading may require a parent's signature or short form completed by scholars to confirm.

**Nightly homework:** Teachers may assign homework each weekday night (Monday-Friday) for completion by the following school morning. Homework is reviewed for completion and quality by teachers each morning. Friday homework is reviewed on Monday. In older grades, scholars may be assigned homework over longer periods of time. In addition, incomplete and make up work may be sent home for completion. Teachers will notify parents in these cases.

### Amount of Homework Assigned

Time estimates are approximate. They will vary by child and class. If you have any concerns please speak directly with your child's teacher.

Grades	Independent reading	Weekday homework	How is it Provided?
K-2	20-30 min.	None	Reading log sent home by teacher
3-4	30-45 min.	30 min.	Weekly packet sent home by teacher
5-8	30-60 min.	30-45 min.	Scholars record daily

### Homework Completion and Quality Expectations

Assigned homework needs to be completed by the child by the due date. Failure to complete homework will result in a consequence at school and the requirement to complete the incomplete homework. Homework is considered complete only when it is done, shows effort, and meets teacher requirements for quality. Written pieces may have requirements regarding number of sentences.

Families should review your scholar's homework for quality and completion. The following rubric offers guidance as to what parents should look for when reviewing homework:

Quality	Completion
Did your scholar write in complete, complex sentences?	Did they attempt to answer all of the problems, even the most difficult?
Is the homework legible?	Did your scholar do the correct assignments?
Does the homework include the correct heading, including first and last name?	Did they put their work in the proper place after completion to ensure it returns to school on time?
Is this their best work?	

## Homework Help

If a scholar needs support with a homework assignment, the following steps should be taken in the order listed.

1. Ask a parent or other family member for assistance.
2. Call a classmate.
3. Call your teacher by 6:00 PM and ask for help. If you cannot reach your teacher, leave a detailed message explaining what you need help with.
4. Try your hardest! Not getting in touch with someone is not an excuse for incomplete homework.

Scholars who do not turn in quality homework assignments may be required to complete that work during the school day or after school until homework completion meets Alma standards. The teacher will contact parents to inform them if their child is required to stay after school.

## Grading Policies

Alma del Mar scholars will be evaluated in all subject areas using a common set of performance standards. These standards, based on a four-point scale (1-4) commonly used in college, will define mastery for scholars, parents, and teachers. They provide clear, ambitious goals for learning. Scholars' report cards will be based on their academic standing with a separate report being offered for performance in the areas of the Habits of Character.

The following tools are used to share information regarding the progress of scholars:

## Report Cards

At the end of each term, parents and guardians will receive a more detailed picture of their child's progress on a report card. The report card outlines scholar performance in all of the areas taught.

## Conferences

Family-Teacher Conferences will be held at the end of quarters 1, 2, and 3. During conferences, teachers will use examples of scholar work to show parents and guardians evidence of their children's progress. Our goal is for 100% of our parents and/or guardians to attend these conferences. Parents may request a conference at the end of Quarter 4 if desired, and this conference will be arranged.

## Promotion and Retention Policies

Alma del Mar's promotion and retention policy reflects our commitment to our Habits—we take the responsibility of putting our scholars on the path to college seriously. Promotion to the next grade is earned by demonstrating mastery of the rigorous academic standards and the responsibility necessary to come to school on time every day and demonstrate behaviors that show the school's values.

## Promotional Criteria

Scholars may be retained in their current grade level for one or more of the following reasons:

- Failure to demonstrate proficiency (level 3 or 4) in 75% of the essential standards for each subject
- Continually poor performance on assessments
- Sustained difficulty completing class work, including collaborative work
- Reading significantly below grade level, as indicated by the Fountas & Pinnell assessment
- More than 13 absences during the school year or more than 25 tardies

Alma del Mar recognizes that retention can be difficult for scholars and parents and will work aggressively and proactively both to notify parents of concerns and to support struggling scholars at risk for retention. The decision to retain a scholar is only made if Alma believes that repeating the same content for an additional year is in the best long-term interest of the scholar's academic future.

Scholars with IEPs will be provided with all accepted accommodations, modifications and services per their IEPs. The school will hold all scholars – including those with IEPs – to rigorous academic, behavioral and promotion standards.

## **Assessments**

Various assessment tools will be used throughout the year to evaluate the progress of Alma del Mar scholars.

### **Internal Interim Assessments**

Several times during the year scholars will take comprehensive assessments in math and literacy. Middle School scholars will take assessments in science as well. These assessments will include both standards from the current quarter and from earlier quarters. A scholar's performance on the interim is a significant factor in determining his or her report card grades.

### **Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)**

To measure Alma scholars' performance on statewide standards, scholars in grades 3-8 will take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test. This high quality, computer-based assessment in Mathematics and English Language Arts gives teachers, schools, scholars, and parents better information on whether scholars are on track for success after high school, and helps teachers customize learning to meet scholar needs.

### **Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessments**

Fountas & Pinnell reading assessments include a series of texts used to identify a scholar's current reading level and progress along a gradient of text levels over time. They are also useful in determining a scholar's independent and instructional reading level, identifying scholars who need literacy intervention, and establishing reading instruction groups.

### **Teacher Created Tests and Quizzes**

Alma teachers provide scholars with many opportunities to "show what they know." Teacher-created assessments may be used at the beginning of a unit of study to guide planning or at the middle or end of a unit to check progress of scholars' learning.

## **High Quality Final Products**

In many classes scholars will complete projects that measure their learning over a unit. These final products will demonstrate their learning and ability to grow by involving multiple drafts and one final piece of work that represents their learning.

# Section VII: Code of Conduct

Alma del Mar strives to create a safe, welcoming and orderly environment in which every scholar can achieve his or her highest potential. Scholars are expected to make appropriate choices regarding their personal conduct on a daily basis and will be supported in their efforts to practice their best behavior. In both the classroom and the school as a whole, explicit rules and fair consequences govern scholar conduct.

## Alma Habits of Character

At Alma del Mar, “discipline” is defined as the set of habits, routines and beliefs that scholars must develop in order to do high quality work and be successful. A scholar who demonstrates the habits of Responsibility, Consideration, and Service contribute to not only our Alma community but the entire New Bedford community. It is the responsibility of both the school and the family to teach and reinforce these Habits and to cultivate the desire to be service minded leaders both at school and in the community.

Alma del Mar scholars practice the following Habits:

### Responsibility: I take responsibility for my learning.

What responsibility looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I learn from my mistakes.
- I come prepared to learn every day.
- I improve my learning by asking questions and seeking help.
- I persist when things are hard, no matter what.

### Consideration: I consider others in my choice of words and actions.

What consideration looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I communicate politely and kindly.
- I stand up for what’s right.
- I recognize the impact of my words and actions.
- I show empathy for the perspectives of others.

### Service: I serve my crew and community.

What service looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I identify the needs of others and use my skills to meet them.
- I help my whole crew achieve success.
- I leave no crew member behind.
- I use my learning to create a better world.

## Consequences for Failure to Adhere to Behavioral Expectations

Alma del Mar’s goal is to create a school culture in which scholars want to follow the school’s behavioral expectations. Behaviors that interfere with the safety and well-being of the school

population or interfere with the teaching or learning processes will not be tolerated. Such behaviors will lead to consequences aimed at modifying the inappropriate behaviors and investing scholars in changing their behavior.

## **Classroom Consequences**

Alma del Mar teachers use low-level interventions to diffuse situations and prevent behaviors from escalating. These low level interventions are logical and minimize the time scholars are out of the classroom. Some examples of these interventions include changing a scholar's seat in the classroom, private one-on-one conversations, requesting the scholar write a reflection or apology letter for his or her behavior, and time out of lunch or other free / choice activities.

Alma teachers understand the importance of consistency and use the following guiding principles when administering consequences:

- They respect the dignity of individual scholars and never intentionally shame them.
- They anticipate behavior before it happens and address it proactively.
- They reinforce positive scholar behavior and draw as little attention as possible to negative behaviors.
- They issue logical consequences and deliver them with empathy, and as soon as possible after the behavior occurred.

## **Community Violations**

Community Violations are earned when scholars engage in repeated or extreme disruption of the learning environment (including issues of integrity), destroy property, or engage in behavior(s) that put themselves or other scholars at risk. While this list is not comprehensive, the following are examples of Community Violations that would warrant an immediate removal from class:

- Cheating
- Stealing/Theft
- Repeated or blatant disruption of instruction or work time
- Continued refusal to follow directions
- Lack of respect for teacher or peers
- Any type of physical altercation (ex: pushing, shoving, etc)

Scholars who receive a Community Violation will meet with the Behavior Interventionist or an administrator and will be asked to reflect on how they can improve their behavior and their parents/guardians will be notified regarding the incident.

Scholars whose choices have caused them to miss time in class on a particular day may miss afterschool activities that day or the next day to make-up lost learning time. Should this occur, parents and guardians will receive timely notification and will be responsible for arranging a later pickup of their child.

## **Suspension and Expulsion**

Alma del Mar believes that scholars' attendance is critical to their being on the path to college. However, there are occasions when a scholar must be removed from the community. While we will do everything possible to minimize those occasions, we must have the support of families

when suspension is required for disciplinary purposes and when it is required in order to maintain a safe and positive learning environment.

See Appendix 2 for further information on Suspensions and Expulsions.

A re-entry meeting with the scholar, guardian, school administrator, and/or classroom teacher will be mandatory upon the scholar's return to school.

## Attendance

There is no time to waste in developing the habits of scholarship, leadership and service that every scholar needs to be successful in climbing the mountain to college. Good attendance and timely arrival to school and class are necessary and are expected of all scholars. It is impossible to make up everything that is missed during a school day. Valuable learning opportunities such as group work, discussions, and peer interactions cannot be recreated and are vital to a scholar's education.

*Scholars must be in school every day unless they have a contagious illness, another serious medical condition, or a religious conflict. Vacations and family plans are not an excuse to miss school.*

## Excused Absences

The only excusable absences from school are those that result from illness or other serious medical events, required court attendance, death of a family member, school related absence (i.e. sports events, fieldworks, suspensions, verified high school visits), or observation of religious holidays. In order for these school absences to be considered excused, appropriate documentation must be provided to the office. Required documentation may include, but is not limited to, doctor's notes, parent/guardian notes, and travel records.

Parents should schedule all non-emergency dentist, doctor and other appointments such that they do not require scholars to miss school. Appointments may be scheduled for Monday through Thursday after 4:00 PM, Friday after 2:30 PM, professional days, or vacations. Scholars are responsible for make-up work associated with all excused absences.

## Unexcused Absences

Any absence that is not properly documented or that is not included in the above will be considered unexcused. The School may file a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) petition if a scholar has eight or more unexcused absences in a quarter. The School may also file a Failure to Send case if necessary. Scholars who are absent more than 13 days over the course of the year may be at risk of being retained the following year. Students and families will be asked to work with the school regarding any attendance concerns.

## Punctuality

All scholars are expected to be at school by 8:00 AM every day. Any scholar arriving after 8:00 AM without meeting the criteria for an excused absence is considered tardy. A tardy becomes an unexcused absence if the scholar arrives after 10:00 AM without appropriate documentation for the lateness.

Scholars who are tardy more than 25 times or absent (excused or unexcused) for more than 13 days over the course of the year may be at risk of being retained the following year.



## **Attendance Policy**

For Scholars who are absent from school for 5 days or tardy 10 times, the School will send home an Attendance Letter (via US mail and email if available). Per MGL c. 76 s. 1B, a mandatory attendance meeting will be scheduled with School Administration and the Parent(s)/Guardian and the Scholar to develop an action plan to improve the Scholar's attendance.

For any scholar who is absent for 8 days during a quarter or a total of 14 school days during the school year, the School will send home a Second Attendance Letter (via US mail and email if available). The School Administration may consider taking any or all of the following actions:

- Filing a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance legal filing) petition with the juvenile court which could result in a diversionary hearing held with a juvenile court representative and building administrator.
- Filing a 51a Report with DCF
- Filing of a Failure to Send Complaint with the Juvenile Court
- Possible retention in the current grade.
- Possible filing of a complaint with the Department of Children and Families.

## **Cell Phones, Electronics, and Toys**

Alma del Mar scholars come to school every day to learn. As such, scholars are not allowed to bring objects to school, or to any school-related activities (such as field trips), which will interfere with their spending their time learning and which have the potential to distract their peers.

Examples of these objects include, but are not limited to: tablets, e-readers, cameras, game systems, and toys. Although scholars are allowed to bring cell phones to school, cell phones must be turned off and not visible during the school day and in the school building. Texting is prohibited. If a staff member sees or hears one of these objects, he or she will confiscate it, and a parent or guardian will have to come to the school to retrieve the item. Scholars may use the phone at the front desk to contact families if their phone has been confiscated and they have a legitimate reason to do so.

Please note that, while Alma del Mar staff will take reasonable precautions to keep these objects safe, Alma del Mar is not responsible for these items after they have been confiscated. It is the parent and scholar's responsibility to keep personal belongings safe by keeping them at home.

## **Gum, Candy, and Caffeine**

Scholars may not, at any time, be in possession of chewing gum, candy, or caffeinated beverages while at school or at school-sponsored events. Scholars found in possession of these items will be required to throw them away. Scholars who habitually disregard this policy may be issued additional consequences. It is critical that Alma families support these policies and work with the school and their scholar to ensure a healthy and productive school environment.

## **Tobacco Products**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 2A, the use of tobacco products is prohibited within school buildings or school facilities, on school grounds, and on school buses.

## **Application of Policies to Scholars with Special Needs**

The discipline of a scholar who has been identified as having special needs, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, 603 CMR 28.00 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is subject to the requirements of the scholar's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

In the event that a scholar with disabilities faces suspension from school for more than 10 days in any school year (either through in-school or out-of-school suspension), the scholar's special education team must be convened for a determination of whether the scholar's conduct is caused by, or has a direct and substantial relationship to the scholar's disability- this is called a Manifestation Determination. If necessary, the school will conduct a functional behavioral assessment. The Team will also determine whether the scholar's conduct is a result of the school's failure to implement the scholar's IEP or 504 Plan. The result of the Manifestation Determination Team meeting will determine whether discipline will be imposed. Additionally, a record of all offenses committed by scholars with special needs that resulted in suspension will be maintained. Even if the scholar's conduct is a manifestation of the scholar's disability, under certain circumstances, he or she may be removed from school to an interim alternative educational setting. Please contact the school for further information regarding Manifestation Determinations.

# Section VIII: Dress Code

## Elementary School Uniform Options (Grades K-4)

**Elementary scholars are required to wear one of the following top options every day:**



Long sleeve light blue pique polo with Alma logo



Short sleeve light blue pique polo with Alma logo

**Scholars are required to wear one of the following bottom options every day:**



Khaki jumper with Alma logo



Khaki scooter



Khaki pants (straight front)  
(must be worn with belt)



**Permitted in warm weather only.**

Khaki shorts (knee length, not cargo style)  
(must be worn with belt)

**Scholars may wear any of the below optional outerwear. No other sweaters or jackets are permitted in class.**



Navy cardigan sweater with Alma logo



Navy sweater vest with Alma logo



Navy fleece jacket with Alma logo



Navy fleece vest with Alma logo

## Middle School Uniform Options (Grades 5-8)

**Elementary scholars are required to wear one of the following top options every day:**

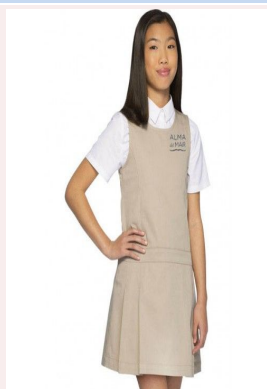


Long sleeve navy blue pique polo with Alma logo



Short sleeve navy blue pique polo with Alma logo

**Scholars are required to wear one of the following bottom options every day:**



Khaki jumper with Alma logo



Khaki scooter



Khaki pants (straight front)  
(must be worn with belt)



**Permitted in warm weather only.**

Khaki shorts (knee length, not cargo style)  
(must be worn with belt)

**Scholars may wear any of the below optional outerwear. No other sweaters or jackets are permitted in class.**



Navy cardigan sweater with Alma logo



Navy sweater vest with Alma logo



Navy fleece jacket with Alma logo



Navy fleece vest with Alma logo

## Additional Specifications for All Scholars

Item	Specifications
Shirts	Shirts must be tucked in at all times. All undershirts must be white.
Belts	Scholars are required to wear a solid black belt with all pants and shorts.
Ties	Scholars may wear ties as long as they are neat and do not present a distraction to the scholar wearing the tie or to other scholars.
Tights/socks	Socks or tights must be worn at all times. All socks and tights must be solid white with no pattern.
Shoes	All shoes must be solid black. Shoes must be closed-toed and have a rubber sole. Scholars may wear solid black boots.  Scholars who wear boots or slip on shoes are encouraged to bring athletic shoes to change into for PE. These athletic shoes can be of any type but will need to be removed after PE.  No colors, visible logos, wheels, or lights are permitted
Jackets	Scholars may wear a navy blue fleece with the school logo purchased from the uniform store. All other jackets must be removed when scholars are indoors.

## Obtaining Dress Code Items

### Ordering Information

All shirts, jumpers, jackets, sweaters and skirts can be ordered at Superior Logos, 7 Brook St. NB, MA 02746. Pants and shorts can also be purchased at Superior Logos, or at any other local retailer provided that they meet the specifications described above.

### Financial Assistance

Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that the cost of uniforms is not a barrier for any scholar. If families feel that the cost of uniforms would pose a significant financial hardship, they may contact the Front Desk or Dean of Operations who will ensure that their scholars have what they need to successfully begin the school year.

### Donation of Used Uniforms

At the end of the year, families are encouraged to donate uniform items in good condition that no longer fit their scholars. These items will be made available to families at no cost.

## **Dress Code Enforcement**

All scholars are expected to be in dress code at all times during the school day and during the afterschool program. Every morning, a uniform check will be performed as scholars enter the building.

If a scholar is found to be out of compliance, the scholar will receive a uniform violation. The parent or guardian will have an option to bring the scholar the school uniform. If the school uniform cannot be delivered within an hour of the phone call, the scholar will borrow a uniform from the nurses office. Clothing items that do not comply with dress code will be held at the front desk and may be picked up by a parent or guardian only. At the time of pick up, the parent or guardian must return the borrowed uniform items.

If a scholar repeatedly arrives out of uniform, a parent or guardian may be required to bring the necessary uniform items before a scholar may attend class.

Repeated dress code violations may lead to disciplinary consequences for scholars.

## **Section IX: Afterschool Program**

Alma del Mar offers a structured afterschool enrichment throughout the week. Scholars will participate in a variety of activities including athletics, music, dance, and community service.

The afterschool program begins a few weeks after the school year starts. Parents will be notified of start and end dates at the end of the previous school year.

### **Enrollment**

The afterschool program operates in multiple sessions. At the beginning of each session, a signup form will be sent home.

Scholars do not have to participate every day of the week. If a scholar is enrolled in an activity on a given day, the scholar is required to attend that activity every week. Scholars who repeatedly leave early or regularly miss the program will be required to withdraw for the remainder of the session. The only exceptions to this policy are in the case of medical appointments or religious conflicts.

### **Cost**

The program is free for all families.

### **Transportation**

Scholars participating in onsite activities must be picked up at Alma del Mar. Scholars who have selected offsite activities must be picked up at those activities.

All policies surrounding release of scholars at the end of the school day apply at the end of the afterschool program; only individuals listed on the Emergency Card will be permitted to pick up a scholar from onsite or offsite activities.

# Section X: Educating All Scholars

Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that all scholars have the resources that they need to be on the pathway to college and success in life. Thus, Alma del Mar offers a full array of evaluation and support services including, but not limited to the following:

Evaluations	Support Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psychoeducational testing</li><li>• Functional Behavior Assessments</li><li>• Speech therapy evaluation</li><li>• Occupational therapy evaluation</li><li>• Physical therapy evaluation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy/math specialists</li><li>• ELL specialist</li><li>• Social emotional specialist</li><li>• School clinician/Counselors</li><li>• Speech/Occupational/Physical therapists</li><li>• Paraprofessionals</li></ul>

## Evaluations for Special Education

At any time, a parent may request that a scholar be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services. All parental requests should be made in writing to the Dean of Scholar Support. All requests will be responded to within five (5) school days. Within thirty (30) school days after the school receives the Parent's signed "consent to test" form, all required testing will be completed, and within forty-five (45) school days after the school receives the signed consent, the Team will meet to determine eligibility for special education. If the scholar is found to be eligible, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to address the area of need.

Parent participation is critical in the determination of eligibility for special education and in the development of an IEP. Reasonable efforts will be made to schedule meetings such that parents have the opportunity to participate. Parents may also participate by phone if unable to attend the meeting.

## Eligibility for Special Education

In order to be eligible for special education services, a scholar must meet all of the following criteria:

- A. The scholar has a disability.
- B. The disability is leading the scholar not to make effective progress in the general education program.
- C. The scholar requires specifically designed instruction or related services (examples include occupational therapy, speech therapy, or physical therapy) in order to make effective progress.

## Individualized Education Plan

The IEP is a legal document that identifies the services and accommodations that are necessary for scholars to make effective process.



An IEP is reviewed every year by a team including the scholar's teachers, any specialists or service providers involved in the scholar's education, the parent(s)/guardians, and the scholar if the scholar is of an appropriate age to participate.

### **504 Accommodation Plan**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures that a scholar with a disability has equal access to education through accommodations for that scholar. This process is separate and apart from the special education process. However, if a scholar is found not to need special education, a 504 Plan may also be considered. A 504 Plan is a legal document, which is usually, though not always, designed to provide a scholar with classroom accommodations. In order to be eligible for a 504 plan, a scholar must have a disability which "substantially limits one or more major life activities," such as learning. The scholar may still be making effective progress in the general education curriculum but may also require a 504 Plan.

### **Counseling**

Alma employs a full time clinician to meet the mental health needs of scholars. Alma del Mar also partners with Child and Family to offer counseling services to scholars onsite. Any parent may request services at any time. Please reach out to the classroom teacher for a referral form. If a scholar is eligible for services through Child and Family, MassHealth or private insurance will be billed. Services through Alma's clinician are provided at no cost to families. In addition, Alma contracts to provide a part time Licensed Social Worker who can provide counseling services for our scholars. Any questions regarding the mental health services Alma provides can be directed to our Dean of Culture.

### **Homeless Education Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is the federal law that entitles children who are homeless to a free, public education and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school. All homeless scholars have a right to receive an equitable level of services as those provided to other children, including transportation, educational services, and nutritional and health services without discrimination. Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that homeless scholars receive a wide array of services to support their education and their success in life. Please contact the Dean of Culture if you have any questions or require more information.

### **English Language Learners**

Alma del Mar will work with families to ensure that all scholars, regardless of their home language, develop English proficiency, content knowledge, and academic language skills to prepare them for success in mainstream classes. Scholars who speak languages other than English at home will be evaluated when they begin at Alma del Mar to determine their level of English fluency. Massachusetts State Law requires that all English Language Learners receive Sheltered English Immersion unless the parent signs a waiver. Sheltered English Immersion involves English language development taught by an ESL-certified teacher and sheltered content courses taught by a teacher with background endorsement in Sheltered English Immersion.

Scholars whose primary language is not English have equal rights of access to all academic and non-academic components of the Alma del Mar experience.

Alma del Mar will ensure that all parents receive written and oral communication from the school in their home language if they are not comfortable with communication in English. This includes any necessary translation of vital documents or interpretation services.

### **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The Every Student Succeeds Act is a federal law that entitles children who enter into foster care with specific rights in regards to continuing their education in a stable way. This legislation requires schools and the Department of Children and Families to work together to keep children in the same school they were attending when their living arrangements changed due to placement in foster care, so long as remaining in that school is in the scholar's best interest. Please contact the Dean of Culture if you have any questions or require more information.

# Section XI: School Breakfast and Lunch

In order to maximize academic success, all scholars must have a nutritious breakfast and lunch. Alma del Mar is partnering with Revolution Foods to provide healthful and well-balanced meals for scholars.

## Free Breakfast and Lunch

Alma del Mar participates in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP), which provides free meals to all scholars at eligible schools. There is no meal application process required for families at schools in the CEP program.

## Breakfast and Lunch Menus

Menus for each month will be sent home and posted on the Alma website before the end of each month. Families should review the menu with their scholar to determine what meals they will most likely eat.

## Meals from Home

Alma del Mar scholars may bring breakfast and/or lunch from home. Refrigeration and heating will not be available, so families should send foods that may be stored and consumed at room temperature.

The items listed below are prohibited at Alma del Mar:

- Fast food
- Caffeinated beverages, energy drinks, soda

If any of the above listed items are brought to school, they may be sent home, confiscated, or discarded. Scholars will have access to water at all times.

*Scholars may not bring soda, caffeinated beverages, or energy drinks to school. Such items will be discarded.*

Each scholar is given 25 minutes to each lunch. We encourage the food from home to be a light lunch portion. This will help deter snacking throughout the school day.

Due to allergy concerns, scholars are prohibited to share foods or beverages brought from home. Alma del Mar reserves the right to prohibit additional food items as allergy needs necessitate.

## Section XII: Health

Alma del Mar is committed to supporting the health and well-being of all scholars. School nurses provide the following services within the school setting: basic first aid, care for ill or injured scholars, medication administration, education and counseling on health related issues, conduct mandatory screenings, and maintain health records. In addition, the school has a relationship with a local pediatrician who advises the school with regards to health-related matters. Please feel free to contact the Health Office at the number provided on the Staff Contact List that will be sent out at the beginning of the school year.

### First Aid and Medical Emergencies

Minor accidents, cuts, and scrapes will generally be treated at the school by the school nurse or by selected teachers and administrators. The school is not equipped to provide medical services beyond basic first aid for urgent or emergency situations. In the event that a scholar requires emergency medical care, a parent or guardian will be notified as soon as possible and a staff member will accompany the scholar to the closest hospital until a parent or guardian can arrive. It is essential that we have each scholar's Office/Health Information Emergency Card on file, which provides up-to-date contact information for parents and guardians, and which gives the school authorization to begin medical treatment.

### Medical Exclusion of Ill Scholars

School nurses care for scholars who are ill and may medically dismiss scholars from school for certain illnesses. Please keep your scholar home if they exhibit the following:

- Fever over 99.9 within the last 24 hours
  - Scholar may return after 24 hours fever free with no tylenol/motrin, etc.
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
  - Scholar may return 24 hours after symptoms resolve.
- Any contagious illness that require antibiotics such as, but not limited to, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep throat, flu or chickenpox.
  - Scholar may return after 24 hours on antibiotics or with doctor's note permitting return to school.
- Live head lice
  - Scholar may return after they have been treated with a medicated permethrin hair treatment, or prescription treatment, and after they are assessed by the school nurse and found to have no live lice.
  - Please note, lice treatment without complete removal of nits (eggs) will be ineffective and an infestation will return. Nit removal is not required for return to school, however it is required for effective treatment of head lice.

If a scholar is diagnosed with a contagious illness, please contact the school nurse immediately so that she may monitor other scholars for the spread of disease.

Please contact the school nurse should you have any questions about any illnesses that may require the scholar to stay home.

Additionally, if your scholar must stay home due to an illness or injury, the absence can be excused by their doctor. Doctor's orders and absence excuse forms can be given to the Main Office or Health Office.

### **Administration of Medication in School**

The following procedure complies with 105 CMR 210.000 Massachusetts Department of Public Health 105 CMR 210.000 The Administration of Prescription Medications in Public and Private Schools. The Health Office requires that the following forms be completed:

1. The school nurse shall ensure that there is a proper medication order from a licensed, authorized prescriber. For *most* medications a doctor's order must be filled out by the physician and returned to the nurse. For those medications that last 10 or fewer school days, the prescription on the bottle is sufficient for the nurse to administer the medication. For example, eye drops to treat conjunctivitis or "pink eye" are considered short term (lasting 10 or fewer school days) and therefore do not require a signed doctor's order but can be administered by the nurse based on the prescription bottle. *Please note, Epinephrine pens and inhalers used for an as needed basis do not fall under the category of 10 or fewer school days and therefore require a doctor's order.* All doctor's orders must be renewed upon expiration and at the beginning of each academic year.
  - a. The Medication Order form required for those medications longer than 10 school days must include:
    - i. the scholar's name;
    - ii. the name and signature of the licensed prescriber and business and emergency phone numbers;
    - iii. the name, route and dosage of medication;
    - iv. the frequency and time of medication administration;
    - v. the date of the order and discontinuation date;
    - vi. a diagnosis and any other medical conditions requiring medication (if not a violation of confidentiality or if not contrary to the request of a parent, guardian or student to keep confidential);
    - vii. specific directions for administration;
    - viii. licensed prescriber's signature.Every effort shall be made to obtain from the licensed prescriber the following additional information, as appropriate:
    - ix. any special side effects, contraindications and adverse reactions to be observed;
    - x. any known food/drug allergies;
    - xi. any other medications being taken by the scholar;
    - xii. the date of the next scheduled visit, if applicable.
2. The school nurse must have a Parent/Guardian Medication Authorization form signed prior to medication administration. This form must be filled out each academic year.
3. If a scholar has known special health needs such as asthma, life threatening allergies, diabetes, seizure disorder, or any other health concerns, please contact the school nurse as soon as possible to discuss and create an individualized healthcare plan PRIOR to the first day of school or when the condition develops.

In most circumstances, scholars are not allowed to carry medication while at school. A parent, guardian, or responsible adult whom you designated should deliver the medication to the school in a pharmacy manufacturer labeled container. Please ask your pharmacist to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a 30-day supply can be delivered to the school. No scholar is permitted to take any medication, prescription or non-prescription, without proper authorization. Please contact your school nurse for more information regarding circumstances in which a student may self-carry life-saving medications.

## **EpiPens**

If a scholar requires an EpiPen to prevent anaphylaxis, a serious allergic reaction, the parent/guardian is required to bring in the scholar's medication. If the Epinephrine pen is not brought into the school nurse, transported by an adult, then a doctor's note is required stating the Epinephrine pen is no longer needed. If there are any concerns in obtaining the medication, please contact the school nurse as quickly as possible. As with other prescription medications, the EpiPen must be accompanied by a doctor's order and a Parent Medication Authorization form. EpiPens will be administered in case of a possible allergic reaction in accordance with best medical practices. If an EpiPen is administered, local emergency medical services will be notified immediately and the parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible. Please refer to the Medical Emergency Policy.

## **Health Office Over-The-Counter Medications**

The following over-the-counter medications are offered in the Health Office. *In order to receive these medications, a parent or guardian must provide written consent for administration of these medications.* This consent is located on the Health Information form sent home at the beginning of each academic year. New consent forms will be provided upon request once the school year has started.

- Children's Liquid Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 160mg/5ml
- Children's Liquid Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) 100mg/5ml
- Children's Liquid Allergy Relief Diphenhydramine HCl (Benadryl) 12.5mg/5ml
- Acetaminophen Tablets (Tylenol) 325mg per tablet
- Ibuprofen Tablets (Motrin/Advil) 200mg tablets
- Chewable Tablets (Motrin/Advil) 100mg tablets
- Benadryl Gel
- Coppertone Kids Sunscreen Spray SPF 50

Administration of these medications is at the discretion of the Nurse. All medication administered is based on standardized weight and age tables for recommended dosages of each medication.

## **Education and Counseling on Health Related Conditions or Concerns**

Nurses provide individualized instruction related to health issues and can collaborate with other team members as needed. Education commonly provided by nurses include:

- Asthma Education

- Child Development
- CPR/AED and First Aid Training Programs for Staff
- Diabetes Education
- Diet/Weight Management
- Epilepsy
- Food Allergies and Epinephrine Administration Training
- Hygiene and Handwashing
- Oral Health Promotion
- Scoliosis Screening and Treatment
- Specialized Training Regarding the Particular Health Care Needs of a Student
- Sun Safety Awareness
- Tobacco Education

## Screenings

The school nurse will conduct annual screenings in accordance with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The screenings are as follows:

- Vision Screenings- Annually for scholars in grades K-5, and once between grades 6-8
- Hearing Screenings- Annually for scholars in grades K-3, and once between grades 6-8
- Postural/Scoliosis Screenings- Annually for scholars in grades 5-8
- Height and Weight Screenings- Scholars in grades 1, 4, and 7
- SBIRT Screenings- Scholars in grade 7
- Head Lice Screenings- Scholars in all grades, as needed

The school nurse will contact the family if screening results indicate a need for follow-up. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure that identified needs are addressed. The school will provide referrals for appropriate services at the request of a family.

## Massachusetts School Health Record

Alma del Mar must remain in compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's regulations regarding documentation of physical exams and updated immunization records on all of our scholars.

## Physical Exams

According to Massachusetts General Law, physical exams should be performed on students "within one year prior to entrance into school, or within 30 days after school entry, and at intervals of either three or four years thereafter."

Therefore, Alma del Mar requires a copy of a recent physical exam on your child upon entry into the school system. Physical exams are also required, at a minimum, at the start of Kindergarten, grades 4, and 7. Providing yearly physical exams is strongly encouraged.

Alma del Mar enforces the School Immunization Law. Scholars must be fully up to date on their immunizations per the requirements of the Department of Public Health. The only exceptions to this requirement are:

- A doctor provides written documentation that immunization would endanger the health of a scholar or,



- A parent or guardian provides written documentation that immunization conflicts with his or her sincere religious beliefs.
- These documents must be renewed annually at the start of each academic year.

All immunization documentation will be required at the start of each school year. Scholars without an updated immunization record will be considered out of compliance and may be excluded from school. Scholars lacking immunizations may be excluded from school during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases in order to protect their health and that of the school community at large. Scholars may be isolated or quarantined as applicable law provides.

### **Emergency Contact Form**

This form provides important contact information for a scholar and is kept in the Main Office. Specific health information such as the scholar's pediatrician, dentist, and insurance information is also recorded on this form to be used in case of emergency.

### **Health Information Profile and Emergency Waiver**

Each academic year a Health Information and Emergency Waiver form will be sent home. Please send this form back promptly so the nurse can help support your scholar to the best of their ability. Alma del Mar expects families to update medical records throughout the school year. Please notify the nurse and provide documentation anytime a scholar visits the emergency room, undergoes surgery, or is diagnosed with a health condition.

## **Alcohol and Use of Illegal Drugs Policy & Procedures**

### **Overview**

The use and/or abuse of all substances including alcohol and illegal drugs (including steroids), as well as the inappropriate use and/or abuse of legal substances (inhalants, marijuana, electronic cigarettes, herbal supplements, prescription medications, dietary aids and over-the-counter medications) in school is both a violation of law and harmful to the educational purposes of our school.

It is the policy of Alma del Mar Charter School that the school will respond to the use and/or abuse of substances including alcohol and illegal drugs (including steroids), as well as the inappropriate use and/or abuse of legal substances (inhalants, marijuana, electronic cigarettes, herbal supplements, prescription medications, dietary aids and over-the-counter medications) through education, medical/health assistance, and discipline.

### **Education**

An education/medical/health approach will be the first step in an attempt to help scholars decide not to use and/or abuse substances and to assist scholars who are involved.

Every effort will be made by teachers and counselors to educate scholars about substance use and/or abuse and to create an atmosphere of knowledge, confidence, and trust that will encourage young people to seek help in overcoming problems in substance abuse. Education primarily takes place in the school's Health Class, offered quarterly in grades 5-8.

Workshops may be provided as an opportunity to enhance faculty and parent/guardian awareness of the scope of substance abuse as related to our school, community, and society; to provide



knowledge of scientific and medical findings; knowledge of laws relating to substance abuse and legal penalties for violation of the law; and to familiarize teachers with available educational resources. Those who will work in specific drug education areas will be trained for that responsibility.

### **Community Liaisons**

The school will maintain liaisons with rehabilitation, treatment, judicial, law enforcement, and legislative agencies to help ensure that the total community capability is brought to bear on the elimination of substance abuse problems. Specific groups and organizations include:

- New Bedford Police Department
- PAACA
- Youth Court
- Child & Family Services of New Bedford

### **Policy & Procedures**

The use and/or abuse of any substance including alcohol and illegal drugs (including steroids), as well as the inappropriate use and/or abuse of legal substances (inhalants, marijuana, electronic cigarettes, herbal supplements, prescription medications, dietary aids and over-the-counter medications) is strictly prohibited on school grounds. Any possession, use or sale of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, legal substances intended for misuse or alcoholic beverages on the school grounds, at school functions or on school buses is prohibited at all times. To minimize confusion, non-alcoholic beer and wine are not permitted in school at any time.

Alma del Mar's goal to have a "Drug Free School" can only be achieved if the administration has the authority it needs to carry out the Drug/Alcohol policy. Therefore, the administration follows the principle of "reasonable suspicion" not "probable cause." Scholars smelling of alcohol or marijuana, or behaving in a manner that would indicate possession or ingestion of drugs or alcohol, on school property and at school events, are subject to this policy. Additionally, Alma del Mar may also contact the New Bedford Police for further action and/or testing at the New Bedford Police Department's discretion..

The success of this policy depends, in part, on creating a link between the educational community and the local law enforcement agencies. To this end Alma del Mar and the New Bedford Police Department agree to coordinate their efforts to prevent and control scholar substance use and to respond effectively to incidents in or out of school and at school-sponsored events. The purpose of these policies is to ensure the safety and health of all Alma scholars.

### **Procedure**

The following steps will be taken in response to scholar use of substances:

If a scholar voluntarily confides a drug or alcohol problem to any staff member, staff will consult immediately with a school counselor, school nurse, or building administrator, who will then consult the Dean of Culture to develop recommendations. In such instances, the school will work with the scholar and family to address the drug or alcohol concern with the best interest of the scholar in mind.

If a school administrator has reasonable grounds to suspect, through direct observation, that a scholar is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but no contraband is found, an assessment will be made. The scholar may be removed from class, and parental contact will occur immediately.

When a scholar is determined by the school to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but no contraband is found, the Dean of Culture or designee will immediately notify parents and a conference will be held with the scholar and parents before the scholar returns to school. The scholar may be required to attend meetings of an approved alcohol or drug recovery program or other appropriate treatment. In addition, the scholar may be subject to suspension from school.

If a scholar is found to be in possession of a drug or alcohol, the Dean of Culture or designee will notify parents and a conference will be held with the scholar and their parent/guardian. The substance will be sealed and labeled with the date and time of confiscation and noted in the incident report. If it is a legal substance, it may be given to the parent or disposed of at the parent's request. If the substance is illegal, it may be turned over to the New Bedford Police. The scholar may be required to attend an approved alcohol or drug recovery program or other appropriate treatment and may be subject to expulsion from school. There will be formal notification to the police by the school and appropriate action may be taken. Further the scholar may be subject to additional discipline under MGL c. 71 s. 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and MGL. c. 71 s. 37H.

If a scholar is found to be selling, distributing or in possession of a quantity sufficient to be charged with the intent to distribute drugs or alcohol, the Dean of Culture or designee will immediately notify the parent and the police for mandatory removal of the scholar. The police will take appropriate action under the law regarding the sale of drugs in proximity to school buildings. Further the scholar may be subject to additional discipline under MGL c. 71 s. 37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and MGL. c. 71 s. 37H.

The intent of Alma del Mar's Drug and Alcohol Policy is to be proactive so that individuals with drug or alcohol concerns can be readily identified and provided with appropriate services.

## Resources / Supports

If you are concerned about an Alma del Mar scholar and their possible use of drugs or alcohol, we encourage you to contact our Dean of Culture. In addition, here are some here are some resources that families may find helpful:

- [Talking to Your Kids about Marijuana](#) -- Mass Public Health Blog
- [Parent Power](#)- Mass.gov Health & Human Services
- [Alcohol Use and Your Kids](#) - Mass Public Health
- [Prevention Tips for your Middle School Aged Child](#) - Mass.gov Health & Human Services
- <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov> - National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- <http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/> - DEA
- [Office of Adolescent Health](#) - U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
- [Adolescent Substance Abuse Program](#)- Boston Children's Hospital
- [Peer Pressure](#) - American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

## Section XIII: Safety and Security

Alma del Mar will make every effort to ensure that scholars remain safe throughout the school day.

### Weather Closures

If the weather conditions are such that travel to and from school would be extremely hazardous, Alma del Mar will be closed.

If there is a closure or delayed opening due to weather, all parents and guardians will receive a phone call and text message between 6:00 AM and 7:00 AM on the day of the cancellation, if it is not announced the day or evening prior. In addition, cancellation information will be available through local television, radio stations, as well as on Alma's website and social media accounts.

### Visitor Protocols

Alma del Mar welcomes and encourages visitors, both from within and outside our school community. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all scholars and staff, the front door will remain locked at all times. When a visitor arrives, he or she should request entry through the main entrance. Visitors are required to wear an Alma del Mar visitor name tag at all times.

Alma del Mar reserves the right to request that any visitor leave the building at any time.

### Scholar Property

Scholars should not bring anything to school other than a backpack, seasonal outerwear, lunch (optional), and academic materials. Alma del Mar is not able to guarantee the safety or security of any items brought to school.

### Scholar Storage Space

Each scholar will be provided a cubby or other designated storage area for personal belongings. Lunchboxes, backpacks, and clothing may be stored in these spaces.

### Prohibited Items

If a scholar is found in possession of a tablet, toy, or other prohibited item, the item will be confiscated by a teacher or an administrator. If the scholar is observed using a cell phone during the school day and in the school building, the cell phone will be confiscated. The item will only be returned to a parent or guardian. The parent or guardian may come to the Main Office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM to pick up the item.

### Lost & Found

Scholar property that is lost at school will be held in a lost & found at a designated location for at least one week. If not claimed, it will be donated to GiftstoGive.

### Scholar Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its scholars, Alma del Mar reserves the right to conduct searches of its scholars and their property if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the Scholar is engaging in behavior that is in violation of the Code of Conduct. If searches are conducted, the school will ensure that the privacy of the scholars is respected to the extent

possible and that scholars and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search.

School cubbies and desks, which are assigned to scholars for their use, remain the property of Alma del Mar. Scholars should, therefore, have no expectation of privacy in these areas. Such areas are subject to random searches by school officials at any time.

### **Restraining Orders**

If there is a restraining order involving any scholar, parents or guardians must inform the front office immediately and must provide a copy of the Restraining Order as well as a physical description of the other individual named in the order. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure that the school has a current copy of all court documents.

If an adult against whom there is a restraining order enters the building, the scholar named in the restraining order will be held in a secure location, and the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. New Bedford Police Department may be contacted as well.

### **Evacuation Procedures**

In case of a fire emergency (if a scholar or staff member sees fire or smells smoke), he or she should close the door and pull the fire alarm. Upon hearing the alarm, school staff will assemble scholars in their rooms and proceed out of the building according to the fire evacuation plan posted in each room. Scholars should follow the direction of staff members who will verify the safety of the stairwells and lead scholars outside the building to the rear parking lot, where school staff will line up scholars by class and take attendance.

During the first week of school, and then throughout the school year, scholars and staff will participate in fire drills to ensure that the entire school community is familiar with the appropriate responses in the event of an emergency.

In the event that the school day ends early due to an emergency, all parents and guardians will be contacted and provided the option to pick up their scholar. No scholar will be dismissed without permission from an administrator. Parents will be required to sign the scholar out. Scholars will also have the option to remain at a safe location until normal dismissal time and to take the bus home from the holding location.

The school will conduct one staff-only evacuation walkthrough per year. The walkthrough entails staff following the procedures outlined in our Evacuation Plans, with staff lining up scholars in designated areas.

A copy of the complete Evacuation Plan is available from the front office upon request.

## Section XIV: Transportation

Alma del Mar provides school bus transportation to and from school. The morning bus will ensure that scholars arrive at Alma del Mar by 8:00 AM. The afternoon bus will leave Alma del Mar at 4:05 PM on Mondays through Thursdays and at 2:35 PM on Fridays.

An adult must be at the bus stop when the afternoon bus arrives. Scholars will not be released unless there is an adult present. Scholars will be brought back to the school if there is no adult present. Scholars who need to be brought back to the school more than twice during a given quarter may lose the privilege of riding the bus for the remainder of the quarter.

### Eligibility for Bus Transportation

Kindergarten through 5th grade scholars who live more than 1.5 miles away from the school will have the option of taking a bus to and from school. 6th through 8th grade scholars must live more than 2.0 miles away to qualify for transportation.

### Location of Bus Pickup and Drop-off

Bus stops are assigned by Whaling City Transportation based on scholar addresses provided in scholar registration paperwork. Scholars who have IEPs that call for door-to-door transportation will be picked up and dropped off at their homes.

Families wishing for their scholars to be picked up or dropped off near an address other than their home must complete an Alternate Transportation Form. Scholars will only be picked up and dropped off at alternate locations within New Bedford. Alma del Mar requests that scholars be picked up at the same location each day and be dropped off at the same location each day. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on an individual basis.

All families will receive notification of the time and location of bus stops prior to the start of school.

### Behavior on the Bus

Alma del Mar considers the school bus to be an extension of the classroom, and the Code of Conduct applies to behavior on the bus. While riding the bus, all scholars are expected to adhere to the following behavioral standards:

- Remain in the seat
- Keep hands, feet, and head, and all belongings within the bus
- Treat bus equipment with respect
- Keep the bus safe and clean
- Be courteous to other scholars and to the bus driver
- Not engage in harassing behavior, hazing, or disorderly conduct
- Not eat or drink

Scholars who fail to adhere to these standards will face consequences in accordance with the Code of Conduct, and parents will be notified. Alma del Mar reserves the right to suspend

scholars who repeatedly engage in disruptive or unsafe behaviors from the bus. Please see Appendix 2 and 3 for more details.

## **Drop off and Pickup at School**

Parents may drop off and pick-up their scholars at school or may arrange for another adult to do so. Scholars who are being brought to school must be dropped off between 7:45 AM and 8:00 AM. Due to the lack of supervision, scholars will not be permitted to enter the building prior to 7:50 AM, and scholars will be marked tardy if they arrive after 8:00 AM.

Scholars should be dropped in front of the main entrance.  
Drop-off time is not an appropriate time to meet with teachers or other school staff.

Scholars will be dismissed for pick-up between 4:00 PM and 4:10 PM Mondays through Thursdays and between 2:30 PM and 2:40 PM on Fridays. Scholars will not be permitted to leave class early if a parent arrives before the end of the day except in case of emergency. Adults picking up a scholar must sign him or her out in the Main Office.

*In order to pick up a scholar, an individual MUST be listed on the Emergency Card. The individual must bring a photo ID the first time he or she picks up the scholar.*

Scholars will only be released to individuals listed on the Emergency Card. Parents or guardians may add or remove people on this list by coming to the Main Office at any time.

The first time that an individual picks up a scholar, that individual must bring a Photo ID. This ID will be copied and placed in the scholar's file.

If a parent or guardian wishes to authorize pickup by an individual who does not have a photo ID, the parent must accompany the individual the first time they come to the school. At that time, a photograph of the individual will be taken and will be signed by the parent.

## Section XV: Bullying Policy

Alma del Mar will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. Alma del Mar will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. Alma del Mar will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community.

Massachusetts anti-bullying laws include the following definitions of bullying and cyberbullying:

“Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- (b) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property;
- (c) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- (d) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (e) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include cyberbullying.

“Cyberbullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include:

- (a) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; or
- (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions in bullying(a) through (e).

“Cyberbullying” shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions in bullying(a) through (e).



Below is a summary of Alma del Mar's bullying policies. The Bullying Prevention Plan, Harassment Plan, and Non-Discrimination Plan are available on the website and upon request from the Main Office.

### **Bullying Prevention Efforts**

Alma del Mar will utilize research-based approaches to prevent bullying within the school community. Approaches will be implemented within individual classrooms, within grade-level meetings, and within whole-school gatherings.

### **Collaboration with Families**

Alma del Mar expects scholars, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a scholar to report it. Reports may be oral or written. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Reports may be made in any of the following ways:

#### **In-Person Report to Staff Member**

An oral report may be made in person or by phone to any Alma del Mar staff member. All staff members will document oral reports in writing within 24 hours and will share the reports with the appropriate personnel.

#### **Written Incident Reporting Form**

Blank forms in English, Spanish, and Portuguese will always be available on the Alma del Mar website and in the front office, the nurse's office, and the counseling office, and completed forms may be mailed to the school or given directly to the Dean of Culture.

### **Responses to Reports of Bullying**

#### **Safety**

Before fully investigating allegations of bullying or retaliation, the School Leadership Team will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents.

#### **Investigation**

The School Leadership Team will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the scholars involved.

#### **Determinations**

The School Leadership Team will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the School Leadership Team will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to protect the target.

*Alma del Mar will work with families and community partners to ensure that all aggressors and targets have access to appropriate services at Alma del Mar and within the community.*



## **Responses to Confirmed Bullying Incidents**

### **Promoting Safety for the Target and Others**

The School Leadership Team will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well.

### **Efforts to Prevent Future Incidents**

Upon the School Leadership Team determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that Alma del Mar use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

### **Disciplinary Action**

If the School Leadership Team decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the School Leadership Team.

### **Access to Resources and Support Services**

Alma del Mar will offer multiple levels of intervention both for aggressors and for targets of bullying. Teachers and school-based personnel will implement behavior plans with scholars and will provide support as needed to all scholars. In the case that scholars have needs that cannot be met by school staff, Alma del Mar will work in partnership with other organizations.

# Appendix 1: Alma del Mar Pledge

*The success of Alma del Mar depends on the full support of each member of the school's community. Working together, the administration, faculty, staff, parents, and scholars will set scholars on a college trajectory and challenge them to become service-oriented leaders.*

***As an Alma del Mar teacher,*** I commit to serve the Alma del Mar community. I pledge that:

- ✓ I will arrive on time to work every day and will remain at work until 4:30 PM.
- ✓ I will model appropriate behavior for scholars by treating everyone with respect and embodying Alma's Habits of Character at all times.
- ✓ I will help scholars cultivate self-discipline by using appropriate rewards and consequences to manage behavior.
- ✓ I will respond to all parent inquiries within one business day and will proactively reach out to families.
- ✓ I will learn and grow as a professional so that I am continuously striving to be the best teacher I can be.
- ✓ I will help create and maintain a school environment where scholars feel safe, welcome, and respected.

***As an Alma del Mar scholar,*** I commit to serve the Alma del Mar community. I pledge that:

- ✓ I will come to school on time each day.
- ✓ I will always wear the proper school uniform.
- ✓ I will follow the Alma Habits of Character so that I can help myself and everyone around me to learn.
- ✓ I will complete all homework and class work assignments. I will always do my best work.
- ✓ I will ask my teacher or family for help when I need it.
- ✓ I will participate in lessons, asking questions when I do not understand.
- ✓ I will be a leader in my school and community.

***As an Alma del Mar parent/guardian,*** I commit to serve the Alma del Mar community. I pledge that:

- ✓ I will get my child to school on time every day and ensure he or she is able to remain at school throughout the learning day.
- ✓ I will see that my child is picked up from school on time each day.
- ✓ I will hold my child to the highest expectations.
- ✓ I will ensure that my child is in proper uniform each day so that he or she may always remain part of the community, avoid distractions, and miss no learning time.
- ✓ I will demonstrate consistent interest in my child's progress, including, but not limited to, reaching out to teachers, checking in with my child about what he or she learns each day, and participating in school events.
- ✓ I will monitor the completion of all homework assignments and support my child in contacting the teacher if there are any questions.
- ✓ I will communicate regularly with my child's teachers. Means of communication include phone calls, e-mails, meetings, progress reports, and report cards.
- ✓ I will support disciplinary actions as outlined in the Code of Conduct. I will communicate with staff if there are any concerns.

## Appendix 2: Suspension & Expulsion Policies

Under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H 3/4 (also referred to as a “handbook violation”) scholars may face suspension by the Assistant Principal, Dean of Culture, or other member of school staff for any serious disciplinary infraction including but not limited to:

- Possession of alcohol or tobacco products on school premises or at a school sponsored event
- Destruction or attempted destruction of property including arson, or bomb threat
- Endangering the safety of scholars such as pulling the fire alarm or destruction of school property
- Harassment or assault (verbal, physical, sexual) on another scholar
- Threatening to harm another scholar or the school
- Bullying

See page 20 of this handbook for additional information.

Under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H scholars may be subject to suspension or expulsion for the following offenses:

- 1.) Any scholar who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin.
- 2.) Any scholar who assaults any staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games.

The scholar shall receive written notification of the charges against him or her, shall be afforded a hearing, shall be provided with certain rights during a hearing, and shall be notified of his or her right to appeal the suspension or expulsion.

Under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H1/2 scholars may be subject to suspension for the following offenses:

- 1.) The issuance of a criminal complaint against a scholar charging that scholar with a felony or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against the scholar.

A scholar may be suspended under this section if his or her continued presence in the school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The scholar shall receive written notification of the charges against him or her prior to the suspension taking effect, shall be notified of his or her rights including the right to appeal the suspension.

### **In-School Suspension**

The Assistant Principal, Dean of Culture, or another staff member may suspend a scholar for a period of time determined appropriate if, after providing the scholar and parent/guardian with a) notice of the violation, b) an explanation of the evidence, and c) an opportunity to provide his or her explanation of events, they determine that the scholar

committed the offense. During an in-school suspension scholars will be removed from classroom and school day activities but the scholar will remain on school premises. However, any scholar who receives more than 10 in-school suspensions, either consecutive or cumulative school days, shall be afforded a hearing for a long-term suspension for any in-school suspension over 10 days.

As noted above, for any in-school suspension for 10 or fewer cumulative or consecutive days, the school will attempt to contact the scholar's parents/guardian orally to notify the parents of the offense and the suspension on the day of the suspension. The school will also, on the same day as the suspension, send home a letter explaining the incident in detail and the length of the suspension. A parent or guardian will be expected to meet with a school administrator upon the child returns to school to discuss the incident and determine ways to prevent another suspension from occurring in the future. A record of all offenses that received a suspension committed by a given scholar will be kept by the school and will be part of the student's file.

### **Out-of-School Suspension**

Out-of-school suspensions can be short term meaning ten (10) school days or less either consecutively or cumulatively, or can be long term meaning more than ten school days consecutively or cumulatively. All out-of-school suspensions prohibit the scholar from being on school premises. Administration will consider other consequences prior to imposing a long term suspension.

With the exception of emergency removals as outlined below; prior to a short term out-of-school suspension a scholar, his or her parent/guardian will be notified orally and in written form of the offense, potential consequences of the offense, and the opportunity to participate in an informal hearing. Reasonable efforts will be made to contact the parent/guardian prior to the informal hearing taking place. The administrator will provide written notice of their determination after the informal hearing. There is no right to appeal this process.

The school will follow the process laid out above for the short term suspension for a long term out-of-school suspension with the following additional rights: scholars and parents/guardians will be notified of their rights to review the student record and other documents prior to the administrator's decision to suspend, the scholar has a right to counsel or another person to represent them, the scholar may have witnesses appear on his or her behalf, the scholar will have the right to cross examine any witnesses, the scholar may request that the hearing be audio recorded, and that there is a right to appeal a long term suspension to the Executive Director. Scholars will not be suspended for a handbook violation for longer than ninety days in a school year.

Educational services will be provided to all scholars who are suspended on a long term basis.

### **Rights to Appeal Suspensions under MGL c. 71 s. 37H 3/4:**

The Scholar may appeal long-term suspension decision by filing a written notice of appeal with the Executive Director within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the scholar or parent may request and receive from the Executive Director an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days. The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Executive Director decides to reverse the administrator's determination on appeal.

### **Emergency Removal:**

Any scholar who has been charged with a disciplinary offense may be immediately and temporarily removed from the school premises if their continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and in the view of the administration, there is no alternative to the immediate removal of the scholar. Temporary emergency removal will not exceed two school days. Scholars and their parents/guardians will be notified of the reason for the emergency removal, the scholar will have an opportunity to attend a hearing on the removal prior to the expiration of the two school days (unless a longer time is mutually agreed upon).

### **Expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H:**

Under certain circumstances, scholars may be subject to a long term suspension or expulsion by the Principal as explained below.

- 1.) Any scholar who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, prescription medication, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school by the Principal.
- 2.) Any scholar who assaults any staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to a long term suspension or expulsion from the school by the Principal.

Any scholar who is charged with a violation of either paragraph 1) or 2) of this subsection, shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing regarding their long term suspension or expulsion before the Principal. The scholar may have representation by counsel, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at the hearing before the Principal. After the hearing, the Principal may, in his or her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a scholar who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph 1) or 2) of this subsection. A decision to expel the scholar shall be provided by the school to the scholar's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing.

### **Appeal of Expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H:**

Any scholar who has been expelled from the school pursuant to a violation of either paragraph 1) or 2) of this subsection shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Director. The expelled scholar shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which

to notify the Executive Director of his or her decision to appeal. This notification should be in writing. A scholar who has elected to appeal shall be entitled to a hearing before the Executive Director and has the right to counsel at the appeal hearing. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the scholar has violated paragraphs 1) or 2) of this subsection. The Executive Director's ruling on the appeal shall be provided to the scholar's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing.

#### **Expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H1/2:**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H½, upon a scholar being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Executive Director may expel the scholar if the Principal determines that the scholar's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The scholar will receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to the expulsion taking effect. The scholar will also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing the expulsion. The expulsion will remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Executive Director.

#### **Appeal of Expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H1/2:**

The scholar shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Executive Director. The scholar shall notify the Executive Director, in writing, of his or her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Executive Director shall hold a hearing with the scholar and the scholar's parent or guardian within three calendar days. At the hearing, the scholar shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his or her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Executive Director shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Executive Director shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the School with regard to the expulsion.

All disciplinary decisions shall be included in the Student File.

Scholars who have been suspended or expelled under this section shall be provided with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion under M.G.L. section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another school or school district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new school district or school shall either admit the student to the school or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

## Appendix 3: Busing Policy Guidelines for Student Behavior

Students riding the school bus are expected to observe the following rules and regulations:

1. Students are to wait for the bus on the sidewalk until the bus comes to a complete stop (except for students who have door to door transportation).
2. Students should board and leave the bus in a single file.
3. Students are to remain seated until they reach their destination.
4. Students should not put any part of their body out of the bus window.
5. Students should not eat on the bus. No food should be carried on the bus from the lunch programs in school.
6. Bus windows will be opened by the driver or his aide.
7. No objects should be thrown on or off the bus or extended out of it.
8. Students should not damage the bus in any way.
9. Smoking is not permitted on the bus.
10. Students may not make inappropriate use of cell phones/cameras while on the bus which is an extension of their classroom. "Inappropriate" can include, but not limited to: taking improper pictures, sharing obscene or offensive pictures/videos, playing music with obscene or offensive lyrics, using your phone to cause disruption on the bus.
11. Students should observe the rules of courteous, considerate behavior on the bus at all times.
12. Students shall have written parental permission to leave the bus other than at home or school.
13. Fighting, vulgarity, loud noise and other aggressive behavior will not be tolerated on the bus.
14. Students who refuse to obey promptly the directions of the drivers or aides, or refuse to obey regulations may forfeit their ride on the bus for a specified period of time.

### Procedure for Dealing with Bus Policy Violations

1. Verbal warning should be given to offenders by the bus aide, driver or both.
2. All serious offenses should be reported to the Principal by the driver or aide no later than one day following the incident on the prescribed two part form. The Principal shall send the appropriate part of the form to the parent, keeping the second part on file in the school office for the remainder of the school year.
3. Suspension of bus riding privileges are completely within the discretion of the Principal or Dean of Culture. The following suspensions are guidelines only, and the Administration reserves the right to waive the warning, increase the suspension, or attach additional consequences depending on the severity of the offense or the frequency of offenses:

- First violation: Verbal or Written warning by driver
- Second violation: Written warning
- Third violation: Up to Five day suspension
- Fourth violation: Up to Ten day suspension
- Fifth violation: Long term suspension up to one school year

Any of the above may be accompanied by an out of school suspension, assignment to a particular seat, restitution for damages, or other consequence pursuant to the specific action of the student.



# Appendix 4: School Calendar

ALMA  
del MAR

## Alma del Mar Charter Schools 2019-2020 School Calendar

School Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Friday 8:00 AM - 2:30 PM

July 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
7/4- Independence Day 7/29- 8/16- Douglass Full Staff Orientation						

August 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
7/31- 8/6- Ottiwell New Staff Orientation 8/7- 8/16- Ottiwell Full Staff Institute 8/8-8/9- Family Days of Service at Clasky Common 8/16- Douglass Back to School Night 8/19- First Day of School						

September 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
9/2- Labor Day (No School) 9/11- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 9/18- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 9/26- Ottiwell Back to School Night 9/26- Douglass Open House 9/27- Professional Development Day (No School)						

October 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		
10/14- Columbus Day (No School) 10/16- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 10/21- Professional Development Day (No School) 10/22- First Day of Q2 10/23- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 10/29- Picture Day						

November 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
11/1- Book Character Day! 11/7- Family Conferences (12:00 dismissal) 11/11- Veterans Day (No School) 11/27-11/29- Thanksgiving Break (No School)						

December 2019						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
12/4- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 12/11- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 12/18- Douglass Elementary Expedition Night 12/19- Ottiwell Elementary Expedition Night 12/23-1/3- Winter Break (No School)						

January 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
12/23-1/3- Winter Break (No School) 1/16- Ottiwell & Douglass MS Expedition Nights 1/17- Professional Development (No School) 1/20- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (No School) 1/22- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 1/27- First day of Q3 1/29- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 1/30- 100 <sup>th</sup> Day of School!						

February 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2/6- Family Conferences (12:00pm dismissal) 2/17-2/21- February Vacation (No School) 2/26- Alma del Mar Lottery						

March 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
3/18- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 3/23- Professional Development (No School) 3/25- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC *Fridays in March are SPIRIT Fridays! More information to come!						

April 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
4/10- Professional Development (No School) 4/20-4/24- April Vacation 4/27- First Day of Q4						

May 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
5/7- Family Conferences (12:00pm dismissal) 5/13- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 5/20- Art Exhibition 5/25- Memorial Day (No School) 5/27- Douglass AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC						

June 2020						
Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				
6/10- Ottiwell AFA/SEPAC/ELLPAC 6/17- Douglass Elementary School Expedition Night 6/18- Ottiwell Elementary School Expedition Night 6/19- Ottiwell 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Graduation 6/24- Field Day/Last Day of School (12:00 dismissal)						

Vacation/Holiday; No School	Professional Day; No School	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation	AFA = Alma Family Advisory SEPAC = Special Education Parent Advisory Council ELLPAC = English Language Learner Parent Advisory Council
Special Event	New Quarter Begins	Family Conferences	Spirit Days

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# Appendix 5: Student Records

## Student Records

State and federal laws and regulations ensure parents' and eligible students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment and destruction of student records. Copies of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations are available from the Main Office.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

Except where the regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals or organizations other than the parent, eligible student and authorized school personnel are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or eligible student. Authorized school personnel include professional, administrative and clerical staff who are employed by or under agreement with the school department and who need access to a record in order to fulfill their duties. The school department also discloses student records without parent/eligible student consent to officials of other elementary or secondary schools in which a student enrolls, or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll upon receipt of a request from such school officials, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer

School systems are required to provide for the security and confidentiality of student school records. Under these laws, the school principal or his/her designee is responsible for the privacy and physical security of all student records maintained in the school and any computerized systems employed are electronically secure.

All information and data contained in or added to the student record shall be limited to information relevant to the educational needs of the student. Information and data added to the temporary record shall include the name, signature, and position of the person who is the source of the information, and the date of entry into the record. Standardized group test results that are added to the temporary record need only include the name of the test and/or publisher and date of testing.

Screening and Assessment Records are accessible by the screening team, the child's teacher, any specialists involved in the assessment process (testing or implementation of services), and the school principal. Screening and assessment results are used to identify areas where a student may need additional testing, intervention, or other support services that will assist in the learning process.

## Amending the Student Record

The eligible student or the parent has the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant written material to the student record. The eligible student or the parent shall have the right to request in writing deletion or amendment of any information contained in the student record, except for information which was inserted into that record

by an Evaluation Team. Such information inserted by an Evaluation Team shall not be subject to such a request until after the acceptance of the Evaluation Team Educational Plan, or, if the Evaluation Team Educational Plan is rejected, after the completion of the special education appeal process. Any deletion or amendment shall be made in accordance with the procedure described below:

(a) If such student or parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the student record, either student or parent shall present the objection in writing and/or have the right to have a conference with the principal or his/her designee to make the objections known.

(b) The principal or his/her designee shall within one week after the conference or receipt of the objection, if no conference was requested, render to such student or parent a decision in writing, stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the student or parent, the principal or his/her designee shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

### **Inspection of Record**

A parent or an eligible student has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available within ten days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and eligible student have the right to receive a copy of any part of the record, although the school may charge a reasonable fee for the cost of duplicating the materials. The parent and eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional from the school, or may invite anyone else of their choice to inspect or interpret the record with them.

### **Destruction of Records**

The regulations require school authorities to destroy a student's temporary record within seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. In each case, the school must first notify the parent and eligible student and give them the opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before it is destroyed.

### **Non-Custodial Parents Rights**

As required by General Laws Ch. 71, Section 34H, a parent who does not have physical custody of his/her child ("non-custodial parent") may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The Arlington Public School district encourages all parents to be involved in and informed about the education of their children and asks that non-custodial parents follow this process to access their child's records:

- Submit a written request for the records to the school principal
- Include the full name of the student, the name of the custodial parent, and the name of the parent making the request

- When making an initial request, and to facilitate the process, a non-custodial parent may also include a certified copy of a court order indicating that the requesting parent is entitled to:
  - unsupervised visitation with the child
  - eligible to receive student record information pursuant to Section 34H.

School officials are required to contact the custodial parent when they receive such a request in order to provide that parent an opportunity to provide information that may impact the noncustodial parent's eligibility for access.