



Parent/Student Handbook 2025-2026

Austin ISD Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

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Table of Contents

<u>WELCOME</u>	3
<u>MISSION</u>	3
<u>MOTTO</u>	3
<u>GUIDING BELIEFS</u>	3
<u>PURPOSE</u>	3
<u>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</u>	4
<u>ENROLLMENT</u>	4
<u>PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS</u>	4
<u>DRESS CODE</u>	5
<u>SAFETY AND SECURITY</u>	5
<u>PROHIBITED ITEMS</u>	6
<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>	6
<u>EXTRACURRICULARS AND TRESPASSING</u>	7
<u>INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES PROGRAMS</u>	7
<u>ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES</u>	7
<u>SUCCESSFUL DAYS</u>	7
<u>STUDENT MEALS</u>	8
<u>ACADEMIC NEEDS</u>	9
<u>PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED</u>	9
<u>REVIEW AND TRANSITION</u>	9
<u>STAFF CONTACTS</u>	9

WELCOME

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

J Hodges

Principal of Special Campuses/ALC

Austin Independent School District

MISSION

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

MOTTO

“See a child differently, you see a different child.”
- Mary Meredith

GUIDING BELIEFS

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

PURPOSE

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

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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

ENROLLMENT

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

New student orientation occurs Monday-Thursday at 8:30-9:00 am (**please arrive on-time, late arrivals will not be allowed and will need to register the following day**) and will prepare new students and their families for the expectations and guidelines they are expected to adhere to while at the ALC. Families will have an opportunity to meet with counseling staff, our campus nurse, and secure bus service at this time. Upon successful completion of the new student orientation process the student will be enrolled in their appropriate classes at ALC.

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

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

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

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

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

DRESS CODE

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

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

Students must wear:

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

Students may wear:

- Only all black sweaters (no logos or designs) without hoodies or long sleeve t-shirts may be worn
- Plain gold, silver, black, white, or gray wristwatches (no Smart watches)
- Plastic transparent studs may be worn

Students may NOT wear:

- V-necks, jackets or shirts with hoodies are not permitted
- Shirts with large logos or designs.
- Coats and jackets may not be worn inside the building.
- Belt buckles may not have initials and logos
- Sagging jeans or sagging shorts are not permitted
- Layering under jeans or shorts is not permitted. These layers **must be removed and left outside the building.**
- Nylon, sweats, vinyl, wind suits, or plastic clothing are not permitted
- ~~Jeans with holes are not permitted~~ **Jeans/chino pants with rips, multiple layers, patches, tears, embellishments (ex: rhinestones, beads, hanging tags, multiple zippers, etc.), and printed designs.**
- Tight, see-through, torn, frayed or holes in shirts are not permitted
- Hats, caps, or hair coverings, hair brushes or hair combs of any type are not permitted
- Smart watches, jewelry and accessories of any kind are not permitted
- Illicit tattoos must be covered at all times, i. e. gang related, violent, drugs/alcohol or zip codes. Covering should be done by taping or wearing appropriate clothing that completely covers the tattooed area.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Students pass through a metal detector each morning and receive a pat search. This search entails patting the student's outer clothing and checking pockets, socks, shoes, hems and waistbands for prohibited items. Pat searches will be conducted by staff that are the same

gender as the student. Prohibited items will be confiscated (failure to comply could lead to suspension).

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Personal cell phones, iPods, smart watches or other electronic devices/equipment are not permitted and should not be brought on the bus nor to the campus. Students should not have more than five dollars daily. Amounts over five dollars will be held by administration until a parent picks up the difference in person. These items are considered contraband: cosmetics of any kind, including lip-gloss or lip balm, illegal substances, prescription medication, non-prescription medication, vape and cartridges, tobacco products, food, drinks, chewing gum, candy, cookies, etc. All perishables (food, beverage, makeup, etc.) will be thrown away. **Any prohibited items will be confiscated during the pat search and will need to be collected by parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian isn't able to pick up the confiscated items they will be returned to the student on their last day.**

TRANSPORTATION

During the enrollment process, Austin ISD bus transportation arrangements are made. Austin ISD buses are available for all qualifying students and they will pick up students and return them to the same location at the end of the day. **Students may not drive to or from school or park vehicles in the ALC neighborhood.** Student vehicles parked on campus are subject to be towed and impounded at the owner's expense. **Parents please note that AISD transportation for special education students is scheduled by the home school during the removal process.** Until such transportation is finalized and scheduled, parents are responsible for getting their child to and from the ALC. Any changes to bus stops must be requested in person in our Registrar's Office (512) 414-3692/3658.

Students may ONLY ride on their assigned school bus. At the end of the school day we escort all students to the designated bus area which is the Northwest side parking lot of our campus. Students who choose to take the city bus home also depart the building from the Northwest exit. Parents, if you are picking up your student, please do so no later than 4:30 pm. ALC follows Austin ISD's Bus Rules and Expectations:

- Students should be at their assigned bus stop at the assigned time. Due to traffic issues, please arrive 15 minutes prior to pick-up time and wait 15 minutes after your assigned time.
- Bus drivers will pick up and drop off students only at the bus stop selected by their parent/guardian. Students are prohibited from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Students are to remain seated, and follow all bus driver directions. Please note that bus drivers are authorized to assign seats.
- Please remind your student not to drop or throw objects inside or outside of the bus and to keep hands, feet and head inside the bus.
- **Please be aware that AISD bus drivers write referrals for misbehavior and such referrals may result in suspension of bus privileges. In the event that a student is suspended from riding the school bus, the parent/guardian must provide an alternate means of transportation.**
- If needed, bus depot phone numbers are: South Base (512) 414-6500, North Base (512) 414-6520, and Southeast Base (512) 414-8510.
- Austin ISD Transportation offers the WheresTheBus app to provide families with timely information about the location of the bus: austinisd.org/transportation/wheres-the-bus

Other modes of transportation include: walking, parent/guardian drop off/pick up, ride share arranged by parent, or city bus.

EXTRACURRICULARS AND TRESPASSING

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

INVEST AND POSITIVE FAMILIES PROGRAMS

The INVEST program must be offered each time a secondary student is assigned to DAEP for misdemeanor level drug or alcohol offenses. After successfully completing INVEST the student may return to the home campus following the last INVEST class, with a minimum of ten (10) successful days (not including excused absences). Parent involvement is optional.

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

The four sessions of INVEST are offered Mondays & Wednesdays from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and Saturdays from 8:00am to 12:00pm. The four sessions of Positive Families are offered Tuesdays & Thursdays from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and Saturdays from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. The weekday classes may not be combined with the Saturday classes.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

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

- Parents will receive a phone call if their student is absent.
- All absence notes must be received within 48 hours.
- Students arriving after 10:30am will be allowed to stay for the day but their day will not be counted as successful unless accompanied by an approved excuse
- ALC staff will coordinate with home schools to file on students who violate the compulsory attendance laws due to excessive absences.
- Absence notes can be emailed to: debra.powell@austinisd.org

SUCCESSFUL DAYS

What Qualifies as a Successful Day

A student earns a **successful day** by consistently meeting all ALC expectations, including:

1. Follow Staff Directions:

- Listen and comply promptly with instructions from all ALC staff.

2. Respect Hallway Procedures:

- Walk in a single file line, stay quiet, and keep hands to yourself during transitions.

3. Follow the Dress Code:

- Be in full dress code at all times, including wearing the required plain black crew-neck t-shirt, proper bottoms, and approved footwear. Shirts must be long enough to be tucked in without coming untucked.
 - **Pants must be worn at or above the waist** at all times. Students are expected to wear a **plain black belt** to keep pants secure.
 - If a student does not have a belt, staff will use **zip-ties** to ensure pants remain at the required level.
 - **Sagging or removing zip-ties** will result in an **unsuccessful day**.
 - Students arriving out of dress code will be expected to get in compliance. They will be permitted to remain on campus but their day will be unsuccessful.
- 4. Keep the Classroom Orderly:**
- Maintain a clean area, stay seated unless given permission, and avoid damaging or writing on school property.
 - Opening classroom doors or damaging property will result in an **automatic unsuccessful day**.
- 5. Respect Others:**
- Use appropriate language and actions.
 - Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- 6. Stay Engaged:**
- Participate in class activities, complete assigned work, and remain awake and on task.
 - Sleeping or refusing to work after redirection may result in an **unsuccessful day** or being sent home.
- 7. Avoid Prohibited Actions:**
- Fights, possession or use of illegal items, leaving campus without permission, displaying gang signs, bringing prohibited items to the campus or using inappropriate gestures will result in an **automatic unsuccessful day** and may lead to additional disciplinary consequences.

Completion of Placement

- Students must **earn all assigned days successfully** to complete their ALC placement.
- **Unsuccessful days** do **not** count toward the total number of assigned days.
- **Absences, including excused absences, do not count** toward a student's placement.
 - Students must be **physically on campus and earn a successful day** for the day to count toward their assigned placement.

Additional Note

Any behavior **not explicitly listed** in this section but that is **deemed by staff or administration to compromise the safety, order, or learning environment** of the ALC campus may result in an **unsuccessful day**.

STUDENT MEALS

- **Free meals for all throughout the 2025-26 School Year!**
- Students enrolled at the Alternative Learning Center automatically receive free meals without any application or documentation regardless of income. We do not collect or process meal applications from students enrolled in our program.

- **Please note that students are not allowed to bring lunch, gum, candy, sodas, chips or any other food or drink items.** These items will be confiscated and disposed of immediately. Parents if your child has diabetes, medical dietary restrictions, food allergies, etc., please consult with the ALC nurse at time of registration.

ACADEMIC NEEDS

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

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED

The Alternative Learning Center works with a wide array of community partners to provide restorative programs and services to students while they are enrolled at our campus. A list of current programs and services is available upon request. Information will be provided during registration for all qualified students and families.

REVIEW AND TRANSITION

Any student removed to the ALC for more than 20 school days is eligible for review by their home campus behavior committee. The review process is a collaboration between the ALC and a student's home campus which focuses on attendance, academics, behavior, and individual growth. Student progress will be documented and distributed for review by the home school, and they will determine whether a student is eligible for a shortened removal. If the student's removal will continue, the home campus behavior committee is responsible for providing measurable objectives for the student to complete before their next review. It is the mission of the Alternative Learning Center to provide a robust and rigorous academic environment for students, through the lens of cultural proficiency and responsiveness, by attending to the needs of the Whole Child and providing a restorative climate invested in healing harms and preparing students for a continued chance at academic and behavioral success. To guarantee our students have a smooth transition back to their home campus, transition facilitators will work collaboratively with the home campus to ensure prevention and effective intervention to student's education. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

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

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

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

STAFF CONTACTS

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