



**Alief Montessori Community School**

**Student Handbook**  
**2024-2025**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Alief Montessori Community School strives to provide a diverse and supportive learning environment where our students develop a lifelong love of learning and grow to become contributing members of society.

## **HISTORY**

Nancy Lee Chieu founded Alief Montessori Community School (AMCS) as a private school in the fall of 1981. Her graduate work in Educational Psychology and related experiences with special needs students became the basis for her firm belief in Montessori education for young children. Mrs. Chieu strongly supports Maria Montessori's belief that: "Education is to prepare a child for life." The goal of education at AMCS is always the formation of the total person towards independence and to help students develop a lifelong love of learning.

To better serve the community and ensure the growth of AMCS, the school became a State of Texas public charter school in 1998 and now serves children from age 3 through 8th grade.

We are located on three adjoining buildings. The school office and primary classrooms are located at 12013 6th St, more primary and lower elementary classrooms at 4215 H St, upper elementary and middle school at 4203 J St. Our school currently serves about 350 students. Our buildings with natural light from many windows, a garden for each classroom, a library, theater and music room, playgrounds and a wetland nature area. We are one of the few Houston "green" schools built with care and concern for the environment.

## **Recognition and Awards**

Alief Montessori Community School receives the highest recognition for educational excellence. The Texas Education Agency conferred the Recognized or Exemplary or A rating to our school since 1999. The Texas Business and Education Coalition also awarded us the Honor Roll Award.

Alief Montessori was conferred the top 25% progress distinction by the Texas Education Agency for its performance in the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

## **School Administration and Staff**

Superintendent/ Principal

Delia Presillas

Assistant Principal

Cerlito Salarda

Business Officer

Sophia Teng

Administrative Assistants

Shailina Kherani

Flor Benitez

Rahila Khawaja

## **CURRENT PROGRAM**

The school became a Texas public charter school in 1998 and now serves children ages 3 to 14 or grades PK3 through 8th. For primary children, these programs are divided into half-day or full-day classes. Pre-K classes are state funded only for half-day. AMCS provides a very affordable afternoon Pre-K program as well as before and after school care options and a full-day PK-4 and kindergarten. The elementary program is full day and serves 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students . In SY 2019-20, it opened the Adolescent Program consisting of 7th and 8th grades.

The dedicated and well trained teachers, administrators and staff at Alief Montessori Community School have successfully prepared generations of children for success.

## **Montessori Philosophy**

It is essential that parents understand the Montessori philosophy. It is important to recognize that it is the child, not the teacher, who develops his or her potential through constructive work. The role of the teacher is to assist this development by preparing the environment, directing the activity, and encouraging responsible independence.

Montessori education helps children develop and refine the skills of perception, rationalization, and abstraction. Patterns of **concentration, perseverance and thoroughness**, established in early childhood, produce a confident and competent learner. A Montessori education encourages the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social maturity work together to provide the development of true community.

A major goal of the Montessori experience is to encourage **self-discipline**. From their first day in the classroom, children are encouraged to make choices based upon their interest and their knowledge of available activities. They are given security by the presence of clear guidelines for responsible behavior - guidelines that are positively and consistently reinforced.

## **Basic Elements of the Montessori Education**

Montessori education is based on the universal characteristics of childhood which are incorporated into the school learning environment. This environment supports the development of healthy and happy individuals within our community and prepares our students for life.

- Montessori education provides a prepared environment to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child.
- The child develops a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, abiding curiosity, a habit of concentration, initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions and self-discipline.

- The child refines his or her senses, by working from the simple to the complex and the concrete to the abstract.
- The child learns through spontaneous activity directed by the inner needs of their developmental stage.
- The child become self-directed rather than teacher directed.
- Montessori education trusts in the child’s ability to select the meaningful works needed to grow and be successful.
- The child develops a sense of responsibility to self and other members of the class, school and community.

### **Accreditation and Memberships**

Alief Montessori Community School is a Texas Public Charter School accredited by the State of Texas Education Agency. Alief Montessori Community School as an organization and its staff, as individuals, hold essential accreditation and membership with:

American Montessori Society (AMS):  
Individual staff certification and memberships

Association Montessori International (AMI):  
Individual staff certification and memberships

North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA):  
Individual staff memberships



## **FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS**

### **Teachers**

AMCS adheres to the highest standards for its teachers. Montessori training in an AMS or AMI-accredited institution is foundational. Moreover, each teacher must be a good fit for the philosophy of caring that characterizes Alief Montessori Community School.

A Montessori teacher is often referred to as a “guide” or as a “directress” to highlight his/her unique role in relation to the child. As guides, they seek to direct the interests and tendencies of the child, serving as facilitators to the child’s own development.

Each teacher is responsible for directing his/her class in accordance with Montessori philosophy, the guidelines of AMI and the general policies of Alief Montessori Community School. Teachers establish daily plans and long-term goals for each child, and the class as a whole. They strive to develop good communication with the parents of their students.

### **Teacher Assistants**

AMCS endeavors to provide the most caring and committed individuals to assist in the classroom environment. With respect for each child, independence is nurtured as the assistant models Montessori principles in her classroom interactions and in her personal behavior.

Assistants receive ongoing training in Montessori philosophy and child development. This is done to ensure that our philosophy is also carried on in the extended-day and after school programs.

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **The Pre-Enrollment Lottery**

Parents interested to enroll their children in AMCS are offered admission through a public lottery. Each year applications for the admission lottery are accepted beginning on the first week of November until the last Monday of February.

The lottery is held on the second school day after spring break to fill enrollment vacancies in specific grades and classes. Only students eligible for grade-specific openings are included in the lottery. Students not chosen in the lottery remain on the wait list. Students who apply after the application period will be put on the wait list.

Students currently enrolled at AMCS are given first priority for re-enrollment each year they are eligible. Priority placement for vacancies is given to siblings of current students only until pre-enrollment period. Siblings not included in the pre-enrollment will be placed in the lottery waiting list. If there are two or more eligible siblings, a drawing is held between them.

AMCS accepts students zoned to Houston ISD, Alief ISD, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Katy ISD, Lamar ISD and Spring Branch ISD.

The enrollment lottery form is available on the school website: [www.amcsmontessori.org](http://www.amcsmontessori.org).

Parents will be informed of their child(ren)'s selection via email. When the student and parents come for the orientation, they will receive a checklist of the steps and schedule they need to fulfill. Failure to follow any step in the checklist may result in delayed up to cancellation of enrollment.

### **Enrollment Documents**

Once the student is accepted for admission, a copy of birth certificate, immunization record, enrollment form and emergency information shall be completed within seven (7) days upon receipt of enrollment packet. Other documents in the enrollment checklist such as transcripts shall be completed within 30 calendar days after the beginning of class.

### **Child Find**

A free appropriate public education (FAPE) is provided to all individuals with disabilities, ages 4-21, who qualify for special education services.

## **Pre-Kindergarten Program**

At least three years old by September 1 of the current school year, potty-trained; and meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements under TEC 29.153(b):

1. unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
2. is educationally disadvantaged (eligible to participate in the national school lunch program... guidelines about NSLP eligibility can be found in sections 4 and 6 of the Texas Department of Agriculture's Administrators Reference Manual);
3. is homeless, as defined by 42 USC, §11434a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child;
4. is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;
5. is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty;
6. is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Family Code §262.201 or has been in foster care in another state or territory, but currently lives in Texas; and,
7. is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as:
  - a peace officer under Texas Government Code §3106.002
  - a firefighter under Texas Government Code §3106.003
  - an emergency medical first responder under Texas Government Code §3106.004

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of Alief Montessori Community School to comply with non-discrimination provisions of all federal and state laws. AMCS admits students without regard to race, religion, color, gender, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, academic, artistic, athletic ability, marital status, political belief, and limited English proficiency.

Alief Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in providing education or providing access to benefits of education services, activities, and programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and provisions of Title VI. AMCS program admission procedures, facilities and graduation requirements are designed to eliminate discrimination. AMCS will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all programs.

AMCS will deny admission to students with documented histories of a criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC Chapter 37, Subchapter A. If anyone believes that they have been discriminated against, they should write to the Secretary of Education, Washington D.C. 20250.

## **STUDENT GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

The requirements for advancing to the next grade level depend on the grade of the student. In addition, the special needs of certain student populations may also be relevant.

Under the Texas Education Code, a student must demonstrate academic achievement of the subject matter of the grade level in order to be promoted to the next grade. To determine whether this has happened, the school will look to a student's grades, teacher recommendations, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores, and other academic information. If a student is in 5th or 8th grade, the student must perform satisfactorily on the STAAR test in reading and math to advance to the next grade level. Tex. Educ. Code §§ 28.021(a)-(c), .0211(a)(1)-(2).

AMCS requires a grade of 70 or above in RLA, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science for a student in Grades 6-8 to be promoted to the next grade level.

### Special Populations

Students with disabilities may have an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee determine the manner in which the student will be promoted or retained, including grade advancement based on student performance on the STAAR test. For English language learners, a language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) determines appropriate assessment, accelerated instruction and, if necessary, makes decisions regarding grade advancement in conjunction with the grade placement committee. If a student is dyslexic, a student's potential for achievement or proficiency in the subject matter must also be considered. Tex. Educ. Code. §§ 28.021 (b), .0211(i); 19 Tex. Admin. Code § 101.2003.

## **THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

Alief Montessori shall foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Each student is expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers and school personnel. The student's responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment at school and/or school-related activities shall include the following:

1. Attend school each day, be on time by 8:00 am.
2. Adhere to dress code and uniform policy.
3. Show respect towards others, school materials and environment.
4. Conduct oneself in a respectable and responsible manner.
5. Pay required fees and fines.
6. Know and obey all school and class rules.
7. Cooperate with staff in investigation of disciplinary matters.
8. Seek changes in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner through the appropriate channels.
9. Be responsible to update contact information especially phone numbers with the school, as needed.

The Code of Student Conduct has been written to help your son or daughter gain the greatest possible benefit from his/her school experience.

The school needs your help and cooperation. It is important that every student understand the Code and be expected by his/her parents or guardians to follow the rules and regulations set forth in the Code. Please read and discuss the Code with your child. Parent's or guardian's signature at the end of this handbook acknowledges receipt and certify that both parents and children read and follow the Code. It is expected that parents and students will accept their responsibilities as described in the Code.

When the code of conduct is not followed it becomes necessary to clarify what must not be done.

- An individual does not disturb the work of others
- Do not disrespect, threaten or intimidate others
- No adult or child may verbally or physically abuse or harm another
- Do not damage school property (parents are liable)
- No one will misuse or neglect the materials
- Do not be tardy or absent without good cause
- Willful/repeated violation of the school's policies and procedures may result to withdrawal of the student.

## **Student Attendance**

According to Texas Education Code Sec. 25.095, if the student is absent from school 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the student's parent could be referred to truancy court if truant conduct continues even after the truancy prevention measures have been implemented by the school.

### **Attendance Policy**

AMCS requires a student to be in attendance 98% of the school days. Failure to meet this requirement results in truancy court. The student may also be subject to withdrawal from school or being retained in the same grade the following year. Extenuating circumstances could form the basis for an appeal to the School's Board of Directors. The Principal will approve the standards, structure and procedure of the review. The appeal may or may not be granted.

**Pre-K half-day students:** Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 11:30am

**Primary full-day students:** Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 3:00pm

**Lower Elementary** Monday – Friday 8:00am to 3:20 pm

**Upper Elementary  
& Middle School:**

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS:**

There are specific days on the school calendar marked as early release days.

**Dismissal time on early release days:**

**PK Half-day students: 11:30 AM**

**PK full-day students: 1:30 PM**

**Elementary and Middle School students: 1:50 PM**

### **LATE PICK-UP :**

PK-3 late pick up time starts at 11:45 (Everyday) \$1.00 per minute

PK-4 & KG late pick up time starts at 3:16 PM

Elementary late pick up time starts at 3:40 PM

Late pick up from After-care Program (after 6:00 p.m.) : \$1.00 per minute

### **THREE STRIKE RULE:**

Parents and other authorized contact persons on the emergency form on file will be reached to pick up the child after dismissal time. On the 3rd time a child is not picked up on time, the child will be reported to Child Protective Services for child abandonment and referred to law enforcement to be picked up.

## **Parents are responsible for their child's attendance**

- Regular attendance and punctuality are required of every student.
- Poor attendance may result in disciplinary action, truancy court, withdrawal from the school or placement in the waiting list for the next school year.
- Personal illness, sickness, or a death in the family may excuse absences or tardies as may dangerous travel conditions, quarantine, school activities, or religious observances (with permission from the Principal). Other emergencies or unusual circumstances may be submitted to the Principal for consideration.
- Students who have been absent must present a written excuse from their parent or guardian upon their return.
- In case of a prolonged medical absence a doctor's written statement is required for the student to return.
- A doctor's written statement is requested prior to an absence anticipated as the result of a chronic illness.
- Prior to an absence for the observation of a religious holiday, or an emergency trip, a parent or guardian must submit a written request. If approved, the absence will be excused but still counted as absence for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance.
- Leaving school early should be limited to medical appointments or family emergencies. Abuse of early release may result in administrative action, including placement in the wait list in the next school year or withdrawal of the student.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

**Arrival:** Upon arrival, your child must stay inside your vehicle until your child is received by a staff member. Children are not allowed to play on the driveway or benches while waiting. Please follow the arrival and dismissal procedures as directed.

**Primary students:** There will be staff at the front door to receive children from 8:00 -8:15am. After 8:15am, you must bring your child into the office, sign in on the Tardy Sign-In Sheet, and obtain a **tardy pass**. A school staff member will take your child to the classroom.

**Elementary and middle school students:** There will be staff at the front door greeting students from 8:00-8:30 am. After 8:30am, you must come to the office to sign in on the Tardy Sign-In sheet and receive a **tardy pass**, after which you can bring your child into the multi-purpose room to wait for a school staff member to take your child to the classroom.

**Classes start at 8:15 am. Please make sure each child is in the class room by that time.**

**Dismissal:** your child will only be released directly to the parent or the person designated by the parent. Single day pick-up changes require a written notice by the parent or guardian. During pick-up, you must remain in your vehicle and your vehicle must remain in the dismissal line. Place your car tag on window/windshield during dismissal. Failure to follow dismissal procedure you will receive a citation. If you need to visit the school office, please park away from the driveway.

## **Parents Walking Their Children to School**

Secure a walking pass from the office if you walk your child(ren) to school everyday. Attend to your child(ren) while walking and do not allow to run on the way to the school driveway or to the front door. For safety reasons, it is best to drive if you have more than one child to bring to school .



### **Late Arrival/Tardiness**

A primary student will be considered tardy if they arrive at school after 8:15 am. An elementary or middle school student is tardy after 8:30 am. Please note; if your child is tardy three (3) times, you will receive a warning letter. Three tardies count as one unexcused absence. Parents of students with excessive tardies will be required to attend an administrative conference and may be referred to a truancy officer and/or placement in the waiting list in the next school year.

### **Absences**

Unless the parent notifies the office or the teacher in writing or by phone that a student is coming late due to medical/emergency reasons, a child is considered absent for the day when he/she arrives after 10:00 am.

When a student is absent for one day or more, parents must send a letter notifying of the absence upon return. If the student is absent for three days or more, a doctor's written statement must be turned in to the office if absence is due to illness.

### **Early Pick Up Requests**

1. Parent/s or guardian/s need to notify the office in writing or by phone no later than 10 a.m. of the day to request an early pick up of a student.
2. Latest early pick up time allowed is **one (1) hour before** the regular dismissal time on any given day.
3. Each student will be allowed to have a **maximum of three (3) early pick up requests** granted during the school year, except for medical and/or emergency cases.

### **School Closings**

In the event of inclement weather, the school will be closed on the days that Alief ISD is closed. Tune in to your radio or TV for the closing announcements.

In case of public health or safety emergency, please follow AMCS announcements.

### **Advice on the Morning Routine**

Children generally need 10-12 hours of sleep at night. A good night's rest is critical for children's physical and mental development. It also prepares the family for a calm and relaxed morning departure routine.

It is very important to be on time in the morning. Children often feel uncomfortable entering after class has begun. Having a relaxed breakfast and cheerful drive to school will help your child start the day ready to work.

### **Dress Code**

AMCS students are required to wear uniform from Monday through Friday. Clothes should be simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to-manage so the children will be independent when using the restroom. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended.

Colors for the required uniform:

- Pants, shorts, jumpers, and skirts in navy or khaki color
- Polo shirts in white, red, or navy color with no wording or designs
- Shoes will be sneakers, or rubber soled shoes

It is NOT allowed to wear revealing, skimpy or spaghetti-strapped tops, dresses, shorts, miniskirts and footwear that make excessive noise and/or make activity difficult such as clogs, boots, flip-flops open-toe, high heeled shoes, flashing lights shoes and similar types. No jewelries are allowed with the exception of small, plain stud earrings. Hats, caps, hoods and the like are to be removed when inside the school buildings.

## **Change of Clothing**

For the health and comfort of your child in the primary program, every primary child is required to have at school, a complete change of clothing including **underwear , socks and shoes**. The clothing should be in a clear Zip Loc bag with the child's name on it. Please bring it on the first day of attendance.

## **Personal Items for Nap**

All students taking a nap should come with the following items: small mat, one blanket, one child-size pillow and a sheet cover for the mat. All these items must be labeled and parents are responsible for cleaning and returning items at least every two weeks.

## **School Supplies**

**Paying the school supply fee is optional.** School supplies may be purchased by the school or by the parent/s for the student for the entire school year. The supply lists may be found on the school website: [www.aliefmontessori.org](http://www.aliefmontessori.org)

## **Transparent Backpacks**

Primary students do not need to bring backpacks. Notes and other materials sent home from school will be placed in a take-home envelope or binder and a tote bag .

Elementary and middle school students must have transparent backpacks for their school items.

## **Field Trips and Going-Outs**

The teacher for the going-out or field trip is required to have a waiver from each student with the parent or guardian's signature. The teacher must also have a copy of all the students' emergency medical form with them on the trip . There must be at least one adult per 10 students. Teachers will secure enough chaperones to supervise the group. All volunteers are required to have a criminal background check completed before being with any students. Participating students must stay with teacher, assistants and designated chaperones only, at all times.

## **Holidays**

Holidays are celebrated in each class environment according to the discretion of the classroom teacher. Holidays are presented with stories and experiences that embody the true spirit of giving and sharing. It is also a time for talking about all types of celebrations throughout the world.

### **Birthdays and Gifts**

To celebrate a child's birthday, parents are welcome to donate a plant or a book to their child's class. We will not accept food items or goody bags .

If parents are planning a home party, do not hand out invitations at school. If your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child.

### **Classroom Items Brought Home by Students**

Small objects naturally fascinate young children and often end up at home. Be alert for little cubes, golden beads, puzzle pieces, models and other objects brought home from your child's classroom. Be careful not to blame your child; just gently remind him/her that the item belongs at school and the children will need it for their work. Montessori materials are often expensive, and sometimes difficult to replace, so please make sure even the smallest items are returned.

### **School books and materials**

School materials including books lost or damaged by students due to negligence may result to a fine or a replacement to be purchased by the parent.

### **Donations to classrooms, school or school events**

From time to time, donations to the class or school may be requested. Please forward your donations, monetary and otherwise, to the office. All request for donations will be made in writing.

## **Items Not Allowed In School**

Students are not allowed to bring any ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT DEVICE (ECED) items, such as CD players, CD's, MP3 players, video players, text messaging devices, cell phones, tapes, tape players, and audio and video devices (digital cameras, video cameras and camcorders), and DIGI-PETS and game cards . These are strictly prohibited during instructional hours as well as during before and after care periods.

Should this policy be violated, these steps will be taken:

- Item will be confiscated from the student and turned in to the office.
- Parent will be notified.
- Pay \$15.00 cash administrative fee to reclaim device on Tuesdays or Thursdays at the office during school hours.

Drivers are restricted from using cellphones while in a school zone. Violators are subject to fines.

## **Meals and Nutritional Policy**

### **Lunch Program and Lunch from Home**

AMCS participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) lunch program which provides free breakfast and lunch to all children. Parents may send home lunch with their child(ren). Children on home lunch must bring their lunch with them when they arrive in the morning. Fast foods or food in any fast food store packaging is prohibited for lunch brought to school.

## **Breakfast**

Children arriving at school before 7:15 AM are allowed to bring their own breakfast or request school breakfast. Remember children only eat small amounts. All food should be nutritious and of high quality. Breakfast might include instant oatmeal, low-sugar cereal, toast, bagels, eggs, cheese, yogurt, and fruits. Please help your child by providing healthy foods for them. Please read food labels.

## **Mid-Morning Snack**

A mid-morning snack provided by parents and prepared by TAs will be served for students. During a health emergency, students may bring own snacks from home.

## **Suggestions for Food Brought from Home**

Please follow the school nutrition guidelines.

- Water or chilled milk, 100% fruit juice (only with the 100% fruit juice label will be allowed)
- Pasta, rice, bread, crackers
- Salads, carrot sticks, celery sticks, cucumber, tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, bell peppers, or any other vegetables cut into pieces.
- Any fruit, cut small if needed
- Cheese, nuts, soy products, meat (cut small)
- Healthy, unprocessed, fresh and whole foods

**Please follow the list of food items designated by your child's teacher as it is based on allergy information and other dietary restrictions that students in the class may have.**

Please do not send fast food or food high in sugar content. Food of minimal nutritional value like donuts, cupcakes, cream-filled cookies, carbonated drinks, packaged fruit-flavored drinks, artificially-flavored food, pastries, desserts, chips or candy are not allowed at school according to new nutrition guidelines for public schools participating in Federal Child Nutrition Programs.

## **HEALTH POLICY**

### **Medical Records**

The State of Texas requires schools to keep an up-to-date immunization record for each child. All new students must have a health form completed by their physician. Returning students must have immunization boosters on record. All students must list a physician who can be contacted in case of emergency medical care. Students should have a documented visit with their doctor prior to enrolling in school every year.

### **Vision and Hearing Screening**

The State of Texas requires that all students 4 years and older have both a vision and hearing screening. At the beginning of the school year, students in odd-number grade levels and all new students are required to undergo vision and hearing screening.

### **Personal Hygiene**

Students should come to school daily with clean clothes and shoes and clean, combed hair. Coming to school nice and neat promotes a healthy well-being for your child, not just physiologically but also emotionally and socially.

### **Emergencies**

The school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child in the event of an accident or the sudden onset of illness. The child's individual emergency instructions are immediately consulted and their parents will be called. Your updated emergency instructions must be kept on file in the school office. Make sure your phone numbers are kept current. If necessary, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital emergency room by a staff member or an ambulance. In the absence of the parent, the emergency authorization statement signed by the parent will accompany the child so treatment can be given immediately. It is imperative that you keep the emergency contact information updated.

### **Safety First Plan**

All staff and parents must have read the AMCS Safety First Plan found on the school website. A **health screening form** must be completed daily by students and staff coming on campus when directed by the school.

## **Annual Physical Examination**

A physical examination is required for each new student every year before returning to school. Parents need to indicate and certify the student had annual check-up or updated immunization at the back of the student emergency form.

## **Communicable Illness**

The school must be informed if your child has a communicable disease. The school will send notices to parents informing them of any communicable illness reported to the school.

## **Precautions on Illness**

Use the following list of symptoms to guide you in deciding whether your child will be allowed to come to school when they are ill. Do not send your child to school on days when any ONE of the COVID-19 symptoms and/or any of these isolated symptoms are present.

- Fever (temperature over 100.3 F)
- Nausea and/or Vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
- Severe skin rashes or lesions
- Coughing and/or Sore Throat
- Diarrhea
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Stiff neck or headache with one or more of the other symptoms above
- Discharge of mucous, discolored or in profuse amounts
- Complaints of severe pain
- 

Other than for COVID-19 which could result to 14 days or more of quarantine until negative result is confirmed, your child may come back to school after fever has been absent for 24 hours without fever reducing medication or taking antibiotics for 24 to 48 hours under the care of a doctor.

## **Health Education**

Throughout the school year, various health topics are covered in the classroom. The health education program for 4th-8th grade may include topics on body development, reproductive health, drugs and substance abuse, mental health and digital citizenship.



## **MEDICATIONS**

All medication should, if possible, be given by parent or guardian at home. If medication must be administered at school, it can only be given under the following guidelines:

- Medication Authorization must be signed in by the parent and given to a staff member or the child's teacher.
- Medication must be in its original container with child's name and dosage.
- Medication must be prescribed for the child to whom it will be given.
- Medication must not be expired.
- Dosage requested by parent must agree with dosage on the container.
- Staff member must administer the medication and signed form.
- Before giving medication staff members will check name, dosage, expiration date and sign in sheet.
- Medicine will be returned to parent when requested.
- Medication sheets are kept for 1 (one) year.

### **Mosquito Repellent**

Mosquito repellent **without DEET** is considered an over the counter medication and must be accompanied by a medical form and a written permission letter from the parents. Administer the mosquito repellent before sending your child to school.

### **Reporting Accidents and Incidents**

Accidents or incidents occurring during school hours receive the prompt and careful attention of our staff. Should your child become ill at school, the staff will take him or her to a private resting area away from other children. You will be notified to make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible .

An accident or incident report will be given and filed in your student's folder. Parents will be notified promptly of any case of contagious illness in the school. Also please notify the school if any contagious illness is noticed in your child.

### **Students With Asthma Or Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis)**

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the office staff or principal. Provide the office with the **written authorization** from the parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider in order to permit a student to bring and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events.

Student may administer medication to self but must first demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and **to the school staff** the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

### **Additional Health/Medical Related Procedures**

1. A doctor's authorization is required for any of the following:

- Any medication given for more than 10 school days
- Any controlled prescription drug
- Emergency medications kept in school such as inhalers, EPI kits (physician instructions required)
- Annual update of doctor's authorization for long-term use of medication.

2. Upon return to school **after major surgery or hospitalization**, a physician's release must be presented to the office staff or classroom teacher, specifying any necessary restrictions or concerns.

3. When a student is excused from participation in physical education for medical reasons he/she must provide the office or classroom teacher a written note from the parent or guardian for the first 3 days. After that, a note from a physician may be required.

4. **Students with lice or ringworm.** The child will not be sent home immediately if found to have lice. Child may return to school only after treatment is done. Proof of treatment administered must be presented to the office before child could return to class. Students with lice should be treated with FDA-approved over-the-counter or physician-prescribed medication.

Ringworm of the body must be treated with an antifungal ointment, and covered. Ringworm of the scalp requires treatment prescribed by a physician. The approved treatment is oral medication. If proper treatment and/or covering are not followed, the child may be sent home.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ACTIVITY**

All students enrolled in Pre-K (age 3) to 8th grade are required to participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for 30 minutes daily or for a minimum of 135 minutes weekly. The physical activity may occur in P.E., music, structured recess, or breaks for physical activity within the regular classroom. All classes shall schedule PE/recess time after at least a three-hour work period in the morning.

**P.E. Exemptions:** Requests from parents/guardians for students to be temporarily excused from participation in physical education shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the child's teacher for approval. The teacher may accept a written excuse from the parent for the first three days for an obvious condition or injury. On the fourth day, the teacher shall refer the student to the principal, who in turn may excuse the student up to an additional ten school days. At the end of this period, the principal shall require written medical instructions from a physician.

Upon the written request of parents/guardians and of a recognized religious official, a student may be excused from certain physical education activities which may infringe upon an individual's religious convictions. In these instances, the PE instructor and/or teacher shall plan alternative activities within the scope of the program for the individual student.

The PE instructor/teacher may develop physical activities for students who may have physical disabilities (a broken limb, allergies, etc.) in accordance with medical instructions.

## **BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM**

AMCS provides an affordable enrichment program before and after normal school hours. It is designed to complement the child's classroom experience in a nurturing environment. The atmosphere is relaxed, encouraging children to choose activities on their own and accommodating individual spaces and temperaments.

After school time is from 7:00 to 8:00 AM for morning care and 3:15/3:30 PM to 6:00 PM for afternoon care. Students picked up later than 6:00 PM will be charge the late fee of a dollar per minute.

All children have opportunity for outdoor play, weather permitting. Materials are chosen to promote active exploration and independence. Teachers introduce new activities with particular emphasis in the areas of art, music, exercise, language, manipulative work and games, etc. For additional information about the after school care program, please contact our school office.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The opportunities for a child's growth are maximized when the home and the school share common goals and attitudes. Parent involvement and communication are critical to create the environment that will encourage the full development of your child's unique potential. Effective communication between parents and teachers means the teacher will listen thoughtfully to what the parents say and the parent will also listen closely to the teacher. It is a shared process which promotes an expanded awareness and greater understanding of the child. Alief Montessori Community School requires a close collaboration between parents and teachers to insure a positive growing experience for each child. Adherence to the following requirements is necessary to your child's success in the program. **Parents commit to 20 hours of involvement for the entire school year. If the parent involvement agreement is not followed, I understand that my child will not be eligible for re-enrollment.**

### **School Visits and Observations**

The school welcomes visits and observations from parents of our student. Parents wishing to visit the classroom should coordinate with the office and the teacher with sufficient notice in advance.

When you arrive, please check in first with the school office and present proper identification. You will be given a VISITOR'S PASS indicating date and time of your visit to be permitted in the school building. Wait in a common area such as the hallway to avoid interrupting the classroom work cycle. Please be aware of the atmosphere and respect the work of the class. Please refrain from initiating conversation with the children in ways that might interrupt classroom activities.

Parents and grandparents may visit their children's classroom from **October 1 to May 15.**

Also, parents are encouraged to observe in their child's classroom at least twice each year. We also recommend that you observe other age level classrooms within the school to broaden your understanding of the Montessori approach.

### **Parent Education**

Recognizing the challenges of parenting, we are specially committed to provide the following valuable learning resources to parents :

- A primary, elementary and adolescent orientation is provided for parents each year
- Several parent education meetings and/or workshops are offered during the school year
- Special sessions conducted by guest speakers to explore specific relevant parenting issues
- Learn Montessori parenting tips and advice online at [amcsparenting.blogspot.com](http://amcsparenting.blogspot.com) or [www.aliefmontessori.org](http://www.aliefmontessori.org)

### **Parent Conferences**

Formal parent conferences are scheduled twice each year. These are occasions for parents and teachers to share information and insights about your child. We urge both parents to attend these conferences as each has a critical influence upon the child. In addition to regularly scheduled conferences, parents, as well as teachers, may request a conference at any time during the year. Teachers are always interested in any information that provides greater understanding of a child's behavior and needs. Similarly they want to discuss any questions or concerns which parents may have about their child's school experience.

### **Communication**

We strongly encourage you to keep good communication with your child's teacher. Open conversations and regular notes will help to answer your questions.

The parent-teacher conferences scheduled during the year are just one venue to communicate your concerns. Written messages from the teacher, or school, will be sent home with your child, so please check for newsletters and notes. Our monthly school newsletter highlights special projects, explains Montessori theory, showcases plans for development and gives notification of school activities.

### **STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

If a child exhibits learning differences, the parent may contact the teacher to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students who have difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent can request an evaluation for special education services. Within 15 days, the school must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The school must complete the evaluation and provide the report within 45 school days of the date the school receives the written consent. The school must give a copy of the report to the parent. An Admission Review Determination (ARD) meeting will take place 30 Calendar days thereafter.

If the school determines that the evaluation is not needed, the school will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the school. At that time, a ***Notice of Procedural Safeguards-Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities booklet will be provided.***

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child with learning differences or a referral for evaluation for special education is:

Contact Person: The Special Education Coordinator

Phone Number: (281) 530-9406

## **CURRICULUM**

Alief Montessori Community School is a Texas public charter school. As such it is mandated to follow the state curriculum guidelines known as the “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills” (usually referred to as “TEKS”). The TEKS was set forth by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). If you would like to see a copy of the TEKS it is available on the TEA website at, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac> or it may be viewed in our school office. It is important for parents to know that our experienced staff has excelled at the application of the Montessori curriculum to meet the demands of the TEKS. This is borne out by the student’s excellent test scores that have given the school exemplary or recognized status for several years.

Students in third grade and up are required to take the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

### **The Montessori Approach**

Montessori education is a flow experience. It builds on the continuing self-construction of the child – daily, weekly, yearly – for the duration of the program. Although Montessori schools are divided into multi-age classrooms – parent infant (ages 0 to 3), preschool (ages 3 to 6), lower and upper elementary (ages 6 to 9 and 9 to 12), and middle school (ages 12 to 14)--the prepared environments introduce an uninterrupted series of learning passages, a continuum.

The prepared environments and the role of the teacher in the classroom distinguish Montessori from other educational approaches. For example, independent activity constitutes about 80% of the work while teacher-directed activity accounts for the remaining 20%. The reverse percentages are generally true for traditional education.

The Montessori classrooms and materials are designed to promote the ability to reason, draw conclusions, do constructive research and exercise creativity in all areas. Work can be carried out individually or in small groups fostering good social skills and productive interactions with other students and teachers.

The logical, sequential nature of the environment provides orderly structure that guides discovery: Theorems are discovered, not presented; spelling rules are derived through recognition of patterns, not merely memorized. Every aspect of the curriculum involves creative invention and careful, thoughtful analysis. Montessori promotes a true understanding of subject matter rather than rote memorization. This deeper knowledge in each area provides building blocks for future education.

### **Primary Classroom**

The Montessori primary classroom is a "living room" for children. Children choose their work from among the self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and enthusiasm. Normalization is the process whereby a child becomes self-disciplined, ordered, and focused, through work in the environment. The classroom is characterized by a spirit of joyful learning.

#### In the Montessori preschool, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

- Practical life enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.
- Sensorial work gives the child keys to the world as they use manipulative materials to explore size, color, sound, taste, temperature, and musical pitch. These lessons are essential for later ability to classify, recognize differences and order information.
- Montessori mathematics uses manipulative materials which help the child understand concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts. The specialized materials provide students with the ability to recognize patterns and relationships; an essential tool for success in higher mathematics.



- Language include oral language development, vocabulary development, creative writing , reading, grammar study, creative dramatics, and children's literature. An emphasis is placed on true understanding and love of language .
- Cultural activities introduce our students to the world through geography, history, and life science. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

## **Elementary Classroom**

The elementary program offers a continuum built on the preschool experience. The environment reflects a new stage of development and offers the following:

- Integration of the arts, sciences, geography, history, and language that evokes the native imagination and ability to abstract in the elementary child.
- Presentation of knowledge as part of a large-scale narrative that unfolds the origins of the earth, life, human communities, and modern history and human achievement.
- Presentation of the formal scientific language of zoology, botany, anthropology, geography, geology, etc., exposing the child to accurate, organized information and respecting the child's intelligence and interests.
- The use of timelines, pictures, charts, and other visual aids to provide a linguistic and visual overview of the first principles of each discipline.
- A mathematics curriculum presented with concrete materials that simultaneously reveal arithmetic, geometric, and algebraic correlations.
- Montessori-trained adults who are "enlightened generalists" (teachers who are able to integrate the teaching of all subjects, not as isolated disciplines, but as part of a whole intellectual tradition).
- Emphasis on open-ended research and in-depth study using primary and secondary sources (no textbooks or worksheets) as well as other materials.
- "Going out" to make use of community resources beyond the four walls of the classroom.

As in the primary, the Montessori materials are a means to an end. They are intended to evoke the imagination, to aid abstraction, to generate a worldview about the human task and purpose. The child works within a philosophical system asking questions about the origins of the universe, the nature of life, people and their differences, and so on. On a factual basis, interdisciplinary studies combine geological, biological, and anthropological science in the study of natural history and world ecology.

The program is made up of connective narratives that provide an inspiring overview as the organizing, integrating "Great Lessons." Great Lessons span the history of the universe from the big bang theory of the origin of the solar system, earth, and life forms to the emergence of human cultures and the rise of civilization.

Aided by impressionistic charts and timelines; the child's study of detail in reference to the Great Lessons leads to awe and respect for the totality of knowledge. Studies are integrated not only in terms of subject matter but in terms of moral learning as well, resulting in appreciation and respect for life, moral empathy, and a fundamental belief in progress, the contribution of the individual, the universality of the human condition, and the meaning of true justice.

### **Adolescent Community**

Maria Montessori described the period of adolescence as a delicate and difficult time due to the rapid development and change which the [individual] must go through (Childhood to Adolescence, p. 59). Adolescence can be a time of both disorientation and discovery. This is a period in the youth's life that can bring up issues of independence and self-identity. Peers may become more important than family, sensitivity about appearance and social validation matter greatly to adolescents.

Research shows that mental health and self-esteem issues encountered during this period could stay with the person for life. AMCS is able to provide a safe learning environment that will help the students work through their academic, social and emotional challenges independently.

Our middle school teachers are state-certified and Montessori trained. They possess the deep understanding and capability to offer the right balance of academic rigor and real-life applications that will help our budding adults. AMCS aims to help our adolescents know that every one has a valuable purpose in their community and the world.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Prayer or Meditation**

A student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A person may not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **Parental Liability**

Responsibility for a child's actions extends to the parents and guardians. A parent or other person who has the duty of control and reasonable discipline of a child is liable for any property damage proximately caused by:

- The negligent conduct of the child if the conduct is reasonably attributable to the negligent failure of the parent or other person to exercise that duty
- The willful and malicious conduct of a child who is at least 12 years of age but less than 18 years of age.

If a child, age 10 through 16, engages in conduct that results in damage to school property the school may institute formal charges for the purpose of having the juvenile court order the child, or parent, to make full or partial restitution to the school in accordance with law.

## **DISCIPLINE**

A major goal of the Montessori experience is to encourage the development of inner discipline. With intentional effort, we endeavor to create an atmosphere of peace and cooperation:

- Where children, teachers, and staff feel safe and secure.
- Where there is mutual respect between the students, staff, and parents.
- Where everyone feels they belong to the school community.

## Method

From their first moments in the primary classroom, children are encouraged to make choices based upon their knowledge of the environment. They are given consistent and positive guidelines for acceptable behavior. As the child learns and shows an increasing willingness to be responsible, they are given greater freedom of choice. When an adult observes a child's actions, it is very important not to make up one's mind about the behavior too quickly. Take more time to observe and discover the motivations. Once the cause is seen, an intervention can be chosen that is consistent with the child's inner need. In most of these situations, redirection to a new activity will allow the child to refocus their attention and restore the state of inner discipline.

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child
- A logical or natural consequence of the child's actions  
Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and  
directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction which include at least the following:

- Using positive, specific feedback and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding the child of behavior expectations as needed by using clear positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements
- Using brief supervised separation from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age
- Consistent modeling by teachers and parents of the desired behaviors and attitudes.

There must be no harsh, cruel or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishments;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

## **Natural and Logical Consequences**

The AMCS faculty and staff endeavor at all times to follow Montessori principles which assist the child in the development of inner discipline. Foremost are the natural and logical consequences that a child experiences during everyday activities. The child grows by experiencing the natural and logical consequences of their behavior. Natural consequences will often follow an inappropriate choice of behavior. When a natural consequence does not occur the adult will assist the child by initiating a logical consequence.

Here is an example of the application of a logical consequence.

- A child runs across the room with a bucket of water, full to the top. The water spills and the child's clothing is wet.
- The natural consequence of this choice is that the child will not have the water to use for the chosen activity.
- A logical consequence occurs when the teacher comments: "There is water on the floor and your clothes are wet. What do you need to do?" The child then mops up the water and changes clothes.
- The difference is that the natural consequence occurs without the intervention of an adult and the logical consequence is initiated by the adult.

The application of a logical consequence should follow the behavior as quickly as possible and be a direct and expected result of the child's action, rather than an arbitrary "punishment."

For example, if a child were hitting others:

A logical consequence would be to have the child stay with the teacher or work in an area isolated from others. This is a logical consequence because there is a clear and direct relationship between hitting and the consequence of seclusion. The message is obvious: "Since you are choosing to hurt other children, you do not have the freedom to be with them right now."

An illogical consequence would be to tell the child that because she is hitting, she couldn't have snack. There is no direct connection between hitting and not eating a snack.

When seeking to apply logical consequences, adults need to constantly examine their actions and motivations. There is an important difference between applying logical consequences and punishing a child. The adult must be alert to the temptation to simply impose his or her own will. We must always be vigilant to avoid those behaviors which impose our manipulative control over the child's activity.

- Threats or punishments
- Acting out of pride or anger
- Giving direct commands (unless there is danger)
- Rewards or overenthusiastic praise

When we allow children to directly experience the consequences of their choices and encourage them to continue to choose, they develop a willingness to be responsible for themselves and grow in self-discipline. With continued practice they will make more good choices in all areas of life.

### **General Procedures for Resolving Concerns**

If either a parent or a teacher has a concern about a child's behavior, it is important that they work together as soon as possible to outline and follow a consistent plan for the child. Agreement and cooperation among the important adults in a child's life help that child choose behavior that is appropriate and positive. Even with such efforts penalties for misconduct must sometimes be assessed.

### **General Discipline Guidelines for Assessing Penalties**

When administering discipline, teachers and staff shall adhere to the following general guidelines:

- Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain order.
- Students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case.

Factors that will be considered in the administration of student discipline and factors that will be considered in determining the length of any suspension, or expulsion may include such factors as:

- A. Seriousness of the offense & frequency of misconduct.
- B. Student's age & student's attitude

- C. Potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment
- D. State law requirements for certain disciplinary consequences
- E. Whether the facts of the case warrant consideration of self-defense as a mitigating factor in the assessment of any punishment

Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II or higher misconduct.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Incident – Parent notified verbally and/or in writing
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Incident- Written warning and one day suspension
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Incident- The action taken is at the discretion of the Principal after appropriate consultation with the parent.

### **Discipline of Students in Special Education**

Federal law regarding the education of students with disabilities (IDEA and Section 504) imposes specific procedures and limitations on the discipline of students with disabilities. For further information on this topic, please contact the principal, who will direct you to special education staff. Information is also available to parents of student with disabilities in the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards: Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities* and *A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process* published by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Levels of Offenses**

Acts of misconduct are categorized into the following four levels of offenses:

#### **Level I—Violation of Classroom Rules:**

- Offenses that generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher.

#### **Level II—Administrative Intervention:**

- Offenses that are more serious in nature or a continuance of Level I misconduct.



**Level III—Suspension** - A student may be suspended or removed from the regular classroom and/or placed in alternative setting for engaging in the following conduct:

- Foul Language
- Fighting
- Continuous disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Display of disrespect towards school personnel, another student or campus visitors.
- Stealing
- Ignoring or disobeying school rules
- Any ethnical or racial slurs
- Defacing of school property or vandalism
- Offenses that seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or at school-related activities, or a continuance of repeated Level I, II, or III misconduct.

Parents will be required to attend parenting classes with the school when a child commits a misconduct on Level III and/or IV.

**Level IV—Expulsion for Serious Offenses:**

- Offenses for which a student may or shall be expelled under state law; include continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the school's Code of Student Conduct.

Staff members will use their professional judgment to determine the most effective way to correct student misconduct. Disciplinary actions apply equally to all students.

If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with a teacher's decision or explanation, they can meet with the administrator to review the area of concern. If the parents or guardians are dissatisfied with the administrator's decision or explanation, they can make an appeal to the AMCS school board.

### **EXPULSION**

**Procedure:** Before a student is expelled, the student will have an opportunity for a due process hearing that will include the following:

- At least three days prior written notice of the charges and the proposed sanctions to afford a reasonable opportunity for preparation, including a written invitation to the student's parent or guardian to attend the expulsion hearing. The notice will also include the date, time, and location of the hearing and the names of adult witnesses who will present evidence at the hearing;
- Right to a full and fair hearing before the Superintendent or a designee;
- Opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in his or her defense; and

- Opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration and to question the administration's witnesses.

**Representative:** At the hearing, the student is entitled to an adult representative or legal counsel who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the District. The District may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent or guardian, or another adult representing the student attends, provided the District makes a good-faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place of the hearing.

**Evidence:** In an expulsion hearing, the District may rely on hearsay evidence of school administrators who investigate disciplinary infractions. This means that the school administration may present evidence or statements taken from students without revealing the identity of the student. The decision will be based exclusively on the evidence presented at the hearing.

**Expulsion Order:** The administration will deliver a copy of the order expelling the student to the student's parent or guardian, who is responsible for providing adequate supervision for the student during the period of expulsion.

In addition to notifying the parents, and not later than the second business day after the date an expulsion hearing is held, the administration will deliver a copy of the expulsion order to the authorized officer of the juvenile court in the county in which the student resides. The administration will also provide the child's and parent's names and address, names, and addresses of any witnesses, and a complete statement of the circumstances surrounding the conduct to the juvenile board, as required by Family Code §52.041.

**Guidelines for Terms of Expulsion:** An expulsion may be for as brief a time as four school days up to one full year from the date of the order. The administration issuing the expulsion order will use his or her best professional judgment, taking into account the factors considered in all disciplinary actions, in setting a term of expulsion. In some circumstances, an expulsion term may be longer than one year if, after a review, the administration determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to employees or that an extended expulsion would be in the student's best interest.

**Effect of Withdraw:** Withdrawal from school does not affect the District's authority to schedule and conduct a hearing on the conduct and enter an order of expulsion, regardless of whether the student or parent are present to participate. The order of expulsion will be included with the records transferred to the new school district, including another public school, a campus charter program, or an open-enrollment charter school, and that district will be empowered to exercise its authority to honor the expulsion. Furthermore, even if we do not complete the expulsion process and issue an expulsion order, we will send disciplinary records to the next school, and that school has the authority to complete the expulsion process and issue an expulsion order.

Students who transfer out of this District to another public or private school, including students who withdraw from this district for the purpose of home schooling, will be required upon return to the District, to complete the term of expulsion before being allowed to return to the regular campus, unless the student's records indicate the student served the days of expulsion in another district.

**Effect of Transfer into the District:** If a student transfer into this District from another school district in which the student was expelled AMCS may continue the expulsion under the terms of the order provided by the sending school district.

If a student transfers into this District from another school district in which the student was placed in the Juvenile Justice Disciplinary alternative education program, this District shall continue the term of expulsion at the Juvenile Justice Disciplinary alternative education program under the previous school's order.

**Effects on Credits:** Expelled students will not receive credit for courses not completed because of an expulsion. Students may use correspondence courses or credit by examination, within the limits set by District policy, to earn graduation units. Students are responsible for all costs associated with correspondence courses or credit by examination.

## **Emergency Expulsion**

A campus administrator or the superintendent may order the immediate expulsion of a student if the administrator reasonably believes that the action is necessary to protect people or property from imminent harm. At the time of the emergency expulsion, the student will be given oral notice of the reason for the action, which must be a reason for which the student could be expelled on a non-emergency basis. Formal due process will occur within a reasonable time thereafter.

## **Appeal of Expulsion to Board of Trustees**

A decision by the administration to expel a student may be appealed to the Board of Trustees. The request for appeal must be in writing and must be received by the Superintendent/Principal within three days of the date of the order of expulsion. The appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. At the meeting, the Board will review the record made at the expulsion hearing and will provide the parent and/or student with an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board. The administration may also be asked to speak. No new evidence, including witnesses or documents, will be admitted. The Board may set reasonable time limitations for presentations. The student is expelled pending appeal.

## **POLICY ON ANTI-BULLYING**

Bullying is defined in Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression through electronic means, or physical conduct against another student that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, or damaging the student's property; or
2. Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student's person;
3. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
4. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
5. Infringes on the rights of the targeted student's at school.

### **Bullying includes cyberbullying.**

Cyberbullying is defined by Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

The District has adopted policies and procedures to address:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying is prohibited by AMCS and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumorspreading, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another AMCS employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention.

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. AMCS will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged targeted student and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying within three business days.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by completing the contact form by clicking on the 'Contact Us' button on the main page of the school website and completing form or email to the AMCS email: [amcs@aliefmontessori.org](mailto:amcs@aliefmontessori.org). If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

### **Safeguards & Supports:**

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the Board, or its designee, may in response to an identified case of bullying decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another school. The parent of a student who has been determined by AMCS to be a targeted student of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or school.

### **Prevention Programs and Policies:**

1. Universal prevention programs: Reduce risks and strengthen skills for all youth  
Within a defined community or school setting.
2. Selective preventative interventions: Target youth who are at risk for engaging  
In bullying or at risk of becoming a bullying target.

3. Indicated preventative interventions: Tailored to meet the youth's needs, of greater intensity, for those who are already displaying bullying behavior or are being bullied.
- Vast majority of bullying prevention research has focused on universal school-based programs
  - Positive relationships with teachers, parents and peers appear to be a protective factor against bullying
  - Effects of these programs appear to be modest
  - Multi-component programs are most effective at reducing bullying
  -

#### **RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS & COMPONENTS:**

- Use MULTI-TIERED approaches, leveraging universal, selective and indicated programs and activities.
- Make your efforts school-wide to address the social environment, culture and climate. Focus on 'hot spots' and have clear anti-bullying policies
- Utilize data about incidents and prevention programs and activities to monitor progress in addressing bullying and make changes to integrate bullying prevention efforts with other existing programs and supports— few violence prevention programs were developed to specifically address bullying
- Engage families to help with making students feel comfortable about disclosing if they are being bullied
- Integrate bullying prevention efforts with other existing programs and supports— few violence prevention programs were developed to specifically address bullying
- Help build child coping skills. Make your efforts school-wide to address the social environment, culture and climate. Focus on 'hot-spots' and have clear anti-bullying policies.

## **PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

### **Engaging Parents & Youth to Prevent Bullying:**

School staff can do a great deal to prevent bullying and protect students, but they can't do it alone. Parents and youth also have a role to play in preventing bullying at school.

### **Benefits of Parent and Youth Engagement:**

Research shows that school administrators, such as principals, can play a powerful role in bullying prevention. They can inspire others and maintain a climate of respect and inclusion. But a principal cannot do it alone. When parents and youth are involved in the solutions:

- Students feel safer and can focus on learning.
- Parents worry less.
- Teachers and staff can focus on their work.
- Schools can develop more responsive solutions because students are more likely to see or hear about bullying than adults.
- School climate improves because students are engaged in taking action to stop bullying.

Parents can support schools' messages about bullying at home. They are also more likely to recognize signs that a child has been bullied or is bullying others.

How Parents and Youth Can Contribute: Schools can set the stage for meaningful parent and youth involvement, but it doesn't happen overnight. Parents and youth are valued and must avail of every opportunity to contribute their expertise. Some meaningful roles for parents and students are as follows:

- Students can contribute their views and experiences with bullying. They can take leadership roles in school to promote respect and inclusion, communicate about bullying prevention with their peers, and help develop rules and policies.
- Parents can contribute to a positive school climate through the parent teacher association, volunteering, and school improvement events.
- School staff can keep parents informed, make them feel welcome, and treat them as partners. Schools can consider identifying a school coordinator to support parent and youth engagement strategies. Schools can set meeting times that are convenient for parents and youth and may consider additional incentives such as providing dinner or child care.



## HELPFUL WEBSIGHTS:

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/get-help-now>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/facts>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/media-guidelines>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/training-center>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/external>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/research-resources>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/what-you-can-do>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/teens>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/kids>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/videos-social-media>



## **LAST WORDS**

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook carefully. We believe these contents are essential for parents to know. If anything needs to be clarified or addressed, we encourage you to speak to us as soon as possible.

Finally, parents, family, community and school are all part of the team that works with your children. We offer specialized resources, but only as part of a team effort. Let's continue to work together for the children as we increase our communication and cooperation. There is a lot you can do for Alief Montessori Community School, so please stay informed and get involved. Helping a school is one of the greatest things you can do.



Please sign the Parent Acknowledgement of School Policy Form and Return to AMCS office no later than two weeks after school starts. Thank you.

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SCHOOL POLICY FORM

I have read all of the policies and procedures included in this handbook. I agree to follow these procedures for as long as my child is enrolled as a student at Alief Montessori Community School. Failure to sign, return or agree with the contents of this Acknowledgement form does not exempt a student from compliance.

Teacher's Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Grade : \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please sign and return this form to the teacher.**

**Thank You!**