



**Alma del Mar  
Charter School**

## **Scholar & Family Handbook**

Effective August 1, 2017

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

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# Section I: Our Mission

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

## About Commonwealth Charter Schools

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

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

## Our Five Commitments:

The Alma community lives by a set of commitments that outlines the values, mindsets and habits we want our scholars to learn.

### Service

I will actively contribute to my school and larger community with a spirit of cooperation, volunteering my time and talents to help others.

### Quality

I will do my best work every day and reach for high standards of academic achievement and character.

### Integrity

I will be truthful and respect myself and others through my actions and my words.

### Accountability

I will take responsibility for my conduct and actions, always striving to hold myself to high standards and encouraging those around me to do the same.

### Persistence

I will not give up when faced with challenges. I will ask for help when I need it. I recognize that real learning takes time and effort.

# Section II: Board of Trustees

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

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

**Mary Jean Blasdale (Board Secretary)** is a graduate of Smith College and began her career with New Bedford's first Head Start program. She worked with the Whaling Museum for more than thirty years and is a Past President of the Board of the Grinnell Mansion for Congregate Living and previously served as Chair of the Board of Rotch-Jones-Duff House.

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

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

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

**Bob Unger** served as the Editor/Associate Publisher for the SouthCoast Media Group, most recently as the Editor of The Standard Times, before retiring in 2015. Mr. Unger is currently Principal at Unger Leblanc Strategic Communications and Editorial Director of College Press News. Mr. Unger is also Chairman of the Board for Leadership SouthCoast.

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

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

## Section III: Who to Contact for What

The number at the front desk is 774-206-6827. All members of the Alma del Mar staff will respond to phone calls and e-mails during the week within 24 hours or one business day. Emails for all staff are listed on the last page of the handbook. Please never hesitate to be in touch with questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Concern	Staff Member
I have questions about my scholar's academic progress.	Your scholar's teacher
I have questions about homework.	
I have questions about school activities (field work, events, etc.).	
I have concerns about discipline issues.	
My scholar has an allergy; my scholar needs medication during the day.	School Nurse
I don't know whether to send my child to school because he/she may be sick.	
I have questions about standardized testing.	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
I have questions about instruction or management not answered by others.	
I have big picture questions about instruction, academics, or teaching.	
I want to change where my scholar is going at dismissal.	Front Desk (by 1:00 PM)
My scholar will be absent or late.	Front Desk
I would like to enter my scholar's siblings into the lottery for next year.	
I need a copy of the calendar or other materials.	
I need to get an emergency message to my scholar during the day.	
I need help ordering uniforms.	
I need help with housing, food, clothing, or community resources.	
I have questions about transportation.	
My scholar has an IEP/504 plan; I think my scholar may have special needs.	Dean of Academic Support
I would like to volunteer; I would like to join one of the Parent Councils.	Dean of Culture
I have questions about the afterschool program.	After School Coordinator
I would like to make a donation of goods, services, or money to the school.	Executive Director

# Section IV: Family Engagement

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

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

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

## 1. Phone and e-mail communication

All parents or guardians will be provided with the cell phone number and e-mail address for their child's teacher. Scholars and parents should feel free to call, text, or e-mail any time that they have a question, concern, or suggestion. All Alma del Mar staff members will respond during the week within 24 hours or 1 business day.

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

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

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

## 2. Weekly Updates

Each Monday afternoon, scholars will bring home the weekly Scholarly Times. This double-sided newsletter contains important updates for families, a list of scholars who earned Star Scholar or were in Good Standing during the previous week, and a summary of topics covered at each grade level.

### 3. Initial Home Visits

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

### 4. Family - Teacher Conferences

The Alma del Mar academic year is divided into four quarters. We conduct family-teacher conferences following the end of each of the first three quarters. An additional family-teacher conference will be held at the end of the year if necessary to address individual needs. Each parent or guardian will be expected to sign up for an appointment during this time window. The dates of family-teacher conferences are listed on the school calendar to allow parents and guardians sufficient notice to request time off from work if necessary.

### 5. Family Days of Service

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

### 6. Expedition Nights

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

### 7. Open Houses

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

### 8. Family Organizations

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

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

#### A. Alma Family Advisory

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

#### B. Alma Booster Club

The Alma del Mar Booster Club is a parent-led organization that supports all scholars at Alma del Mar. Past Booster Club hosted events included a Bingo Night, a Movie Night, a talent show and an all-school cookout to celebrate the end of the

year. All Alma parents, grandparents, and other family members are welcome to attend Booster Club meetings.

### **C. Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

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

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, duties of the Special Education Advisory Council will include, but not be limited to, advising the school on matters pertaining to the education and safety of scholars with special needs and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school's special education programs. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council will also offer workshops and educational programming of interest to parents of children with special needs and will play an active role in recruiting scholars with special needs to enter the lottery. All parents are encouraged to participate.

## **9. Volunteer Opportunities**

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

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

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

Prior to volunteering for the first time, parents will meet with a staff member to review protocols for volunteer activities.

## **10. School Visits**

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

- Please turn all cell phone ringers off prior to entering a classroom.
- Please check in at the Front Desk as soon as you arrive. At that time, you will receive a nametag. You are required to display this nametag throughout your visit.

- Unless otherwise instructed by the teacher, please remain in the back of the classroom to avoid distracting our scholars.
- Please do not disrupt classroom activities. Parents wishing to speak with teachers may schedule a meeting when the teacher is available.
- Except in special cases, we ask that parents refrain from visiting during the first three weeks of school in order to allow us to build strong school culture.

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

## **11. Town Hall**

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

## **12. Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**

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

- Send enough snacks for each child in the classroom to have one.
- Acceptable snacks include healthy snacks such as fruit salads, trail mix (nut free) preferred) or muffins. If the snack is not healthy it will not be served in class.
- Please check with your scholar's teachers as to whether any scholar in the class has an allergy. In the case of an allergy, please select a snack that is safe for all scholars.

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

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

# Section VI: Academic Program

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

## 1. Academic Subjects

### A. Humanities and Writing

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

*Literacy is our  
foundation.  
Scholars read  
and write all  
dav longa.*

### B. Mathematics

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

### C. Science and Social Studies

Science and Social Studies instruction is taught through interdisciplinary learning expeditions planned in conjunction with Massachusetts Science and Social Studies Frameworks. These expeditions are designed to make the standards come alive through long-term, comprehensive investigations that include case studies, projects, fieldwork, experts and service learning. In addition, Middle School scholars attend a daily 70 minute science class to build their scientific skills.

### D. Co-Curriculars

Scholars participate in physical education, art, and music every week. All lessons are planned in accordance to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Visual Arts, Physical Education and Music and designed in accordance with scholars’ developmental needs. Additionally, our co-curricular teachers ensure that these

standards are integrated, when appropriate, into classroom studies of other disciplines.

## 2. Expeditionary Learning

Alma del Mar partners with Expeditionary Learning, a national network of over 160 schools that has demonstrated strong results working with scholars from all backgrounds, especially scholars from low-income households, English language learners and scholars with special learning needs. In Expeditionary Learning Schools, the core practices implemented will create school environments that promote deep engagement in learning that allows scholars to achieve at high levels.

## 3. School supplies

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

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

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

## 4. Homework

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

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

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

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

## Types of Homework Assigned

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

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

## Amount of Homework Assigned

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

Grades	Independent reading	Weekday homework	How is it Provided?
K-2	20-30 min.	Less than 30 min	Weekly packet sent home by teacher
3-5	30-45 min.	30 min.	
6-8	30-60 min.	30-90 min.	Scholars record daily

## Homework Completion and Quality Expectations

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

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

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

## Homework Help

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

1. Ask a parent or other family member for assistance.
2. Call a classmate or homework buddy.
3. Call your teacher by 8:00 PM and ask for help. If you cannot reach your teacher, leave a detailed message explaining what you need help with.
4. Try your hardest! Not getting in touch with someone is not an excuse for incomplete homework.

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

## **5. Grading policies**

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

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

### **A. Report Cards**

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

### **B. Conferences**

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

## **6. Promotion and Retention Policies**

Alma del Mar's promotion and retention policy reflects our commitment to accountability and quality—we take the responsibility of putting our scholars on the path to college seriously and will promote them only when they are truly ready to begin the next level of work. Promotion to the next grade is earned by demonstrating mastery of the rigorous academic standards and the responsibility necessary to come to school on time every day and demonstrate behaviors that show the school's values.

### **Promotional Criteria**

Scholars may be retained in their current grade level or recommended for summer work for the following reasons:

- Failure to demonstrate proficiency (level 3 or 4) in 75% of the essential standards for each subject
- Continually, poor performance on assessments such as interims
- Sustained difficulty completing class work, including collaborative work
- Reading significantly below grade level, as indicated by the Fountas and Pinnell assessment
- More than 13 absences during the school year or more than 25 tardies
- Poor performance in any or all areas of the Five Commitments, as measured by behavior referrals, in-classroom participation and teacher observations

Alma del Mar recognizes that retention can be difficult for scholars and parents and will work aggressively and proactively both to notify parents of concerns and to support struggling scholars at risk for retention.

Scholars with IEPs will be promoted to the next grade based on successful accomplishment of the goals of the IEP. The school will hold all scholars – including those with IEPs – to the same rigorous academic and behavioral standards.

## **7. Assessments**

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

### **A. Internal Interim Assessments**

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

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

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

### **C. Fountas & Pinnell Reading Assessments**

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

### **D. Teacher Created Tests and Quizzes**

Alma teachers provide scholars with many opportunities to "show what they know." Teacher-created assessments may be used at the beginning of a unit of study to

guide planning or at the middle or end of a unit to check progress of scholars' learning.

#### **E. High Quality Final Products**

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

# Section VII: Code of Conduct

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

## 1. Five Commitments

At Alma del Mar, “discipline” is defined as the set of habits, routines and beliefs that scholars must develop in order to do great work and be successful. A scholar who demonstrates the commitments to Service, Quality, Integrity, Accountability and Persistence exhibits discipline. It is the responsibility of both the school and the family to teach and reinforce these commitments and to cultivate in all scholars the drive to live them every day.

Alma del Mar scholars practice the following Commitments:

### A. Service

***I will actively contribute to my school and the larger community with a spirit of cooperation, volunteering my time and talents to help others.***

What service looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I look for opportunities to be of service, from holding the door open for someone to organizing a coat drive for the homeless during the winter.
- I am aware of how my actions affect others (e.g. voices in hallways, silence during independent reading time, etc.).
- I take joy in the happiness and success of others.
- I am flexible and able to work with others who may or may not be like me.
- I show gratitude for what I have and always use kind words such as “please” and “thank you.”
- I take pride in making others feel welcome and a part of the community. I greet my classmates, teachers and visitors with a smile.

### B. Quality

***I will do my best work every day and reach for high standards of academic achievement and character.***

What quality looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I do my absolute best work each day.
- I ask for help from my teacher and fellow scholars in order to make my work even better.
- I do as many drafts or rehearsals as necessary to create amazing work.

- I bring my completed homework to school every day, and it is always my best work.
- I am organized and keep everything in its proper place.
- I show pride in my appearance by keeping a clean, neat uniform, showing proper body language (e.g. no slouching) and looking like a scholar.
- I show pride in my ideas and who I am by using appropriate language, making eye contact, connecting with my audience, and using a loud and proud voice when I speak.

### C. Integrity

***I will be truthful and respect others and myself through my actions and words.***

What integrity looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I do the right thing even when no one is watching.
- I am aware of how my actions impact others, and I only want to have a positive impact.
- I am honest, even when my honesty may lead to my facing a negative consequence.
- I show respect for our learning environment by speaking at an appropriate volume and keeping my school clean and free of graffiti.
- I treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I practice academic honesty and do my best work on my own.
- I let an adult know if I hear of or witness a situation I can't deal with on my own.
- I don't "scapegoat" or bully others, or tolerate these behaviors in my school.

### D. Accountability

***I will take responsibility for my conduct and actions, always striving to hold myself to high standards and encouraging those around me to do the same.***

What accountability looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I listen and follow directions the first time they are given.
- I come to school every day on time with everything I need to learn and do my best work.
- I focus on what I am supposed to be focusing on, making sure not to break group concentration.
- I set goals for myself and work hard to achieve them.
- I represent the Alma community well, whether in school or outside of it.
- I respectfully speak with my peers if I notice them do something that is not supportive of our learning environment.
- I give and receive constructive feedback.
- I show self-control and think before I act.
- I show that every minute that I am in school matters to me.

### E. Persistence

***I will not give up when faced with challenges. I will ask for help when I need it. I know that real learning takes time and effort.***

What persistence looks like at Alma del Mar:

- I know that, when I work hard, I can accomplish anything I put my mind to. Instead of “I can’t” and “I’ll try,” I always say “I can” and “I will.”
- I know that things don’t come easily. If I am given work that is too easy, I ask the teacher for something more challenging.
- When I come to a challenge, I work harder. I never give up.
- I know that it is okay to make mistakes, and I want to take good chances. If another scholar makes a mistake or gets a wrong answer, I encourage him or her to keep working hard until he or she succeeds.

## 2. Consequences for Failure to Adhere to Behavioral Expectations

Alma del Mar’s goal is to create a school culture in which scholars want to follow the school’s behavioral expectations. Behaviors that interfere with the safety and well-being of the school population or interfere with the teaching or learning processes will not be tolerated. Such behaviors will lead to consequences aimed at modifying the inappropriate behaviors and investing scholars in changing their behavior.

### A. Classroom Consequences

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

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

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

### B. Community Violations

Scholars commit a community violation when they engage in severe negative behavior or repeated minor misbehaviors. While this list is not comprehensive, the following are examples of Community Violations that would warrant an immediate removal from class:

- Lack of respect for teacher or peers
- Continued refusal to follow directions or cease small misbehavior
- Any type of physical altercation

- Theft
- Possession of a weapon or weapon-like object

Scholars who receive a Community Violation will meet with the Behavior Interventionist or an administrator and will be asked to reflect on how they can improve their behavior. The scholars will be responsible for making up any work missed due to their behavior, and their parents/guardians will be notified regarding the incident.

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

### C. Suspension and Expulsion

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

Scholars who engage in physical aggression against other scholars or teachers (including hitting and kicking) will be suspended.

Other actions that may warrant a suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Vandalism
- Pulling the fire alarm
- Endangering the safety of oneself or others
- Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol, any other drugs, paraphernalia including lighters or matches.
- Possession of a weapon or weapon-like object
- Physical violence or threats towards scholars or staff, including bullying
- The issuance of a criminal complaint charging a scholar with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a scholar

The Dean of Culture or Behavior Interventionist may suspend a scholar for a period of time determined appropriate if, after providing the scholar with a) notice of the violation, b) an explanation of the evidence, and c) an opportunity to provide his or her explanation of events, they determines that the scholar's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. If a scholar is suspended, a phone call and letter will be sent home explaining the incident in detail and the length of the suspension. A parent or guardian will be expected to meet with a school administrator before the child returns to school to discuss the incident and determine ways to prevent another suspension from occurring in the future. A record of all offenses that received a suspension committed by a given scholar will be kept by the school.

Further details regarding suspension and expulsion policies are available in the appendix at the end of this handbook.

### 3. Attendance

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

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

#### A. Excused Absences

The only excusable absences from school are those that result from illness or other serious medical events, required court attendance, death in the immediate family, or observation of religious holidays. In order for these school absences to be considered excused, appropriate documentation must be provided to the office. Required documentation may include, but is not limited to, doctor's notes, parent/guardian notes, and travel records.

Parents should schedule all non-emergency dentist, doctor and other appointments such that they do not require scholars to miss school. Appointments may be scheduled for Monday through Thursday after 3:30 PM, Friday after 2:00 PM, professional days, or vacations.

#### B. Unexcused Absences

Any absence that is not properly documented or that is not included in the above will be considered unexcused. Scholars who are absent more than 13 days over the course of the year may be required to attend summer school and are at risk of being retained the following year.

#### C. Punctuality

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

*If a scholar is late more than 25 times or absent more than 13 times, he or she may be required to repeat the grade.*

Scholars who are tardy more than 25 times or absent (excused or unexcused) for more than 13 days over the course of the year may be required to attend summer school and are at risk of being retained the following year. Days served on suspension are included in a scholar's total absences.

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

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

Examples of these objects include, but are not limited to, cell phones, tablets, e-readers, cameras, game systems, and toys. If a staff member sees or hears one of these objects, he or she will confiscate it, and a parent or guardian will have to come to the school to retrieve the item. Items confiscated multiple times from the same scholar may be kept until the end of the school year.

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

#### **5. Gum, Candy, and Caffeine**

Scholars may not, at any time, be in possession of chewing gum, candy, or caffeinated beverages while at school or at school-sponsored events. Scholars found in possession of these items will be issued a consequence. Scholars who continue to disregard this policy will face increasingly severe consequences including possible loss of privileges.

#### **6. Tobacco Products**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, the use of tobacco products is prohibited within school buildings or school facilities, on school grounds, and on school buses.

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

The discipline of a scholar who has been identified as having special needs, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 69, §1B, M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, 603 CMR 28.00 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is subject to the requirements of the scholar's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP should indicate whether the scholar is expected to meet the requirements of the regular discipline code or if a modification is deemed necessary. The specific modification must be described in the scholar's IEP.

In the event that a scholar with disabilities has been excluded from school for ten or more days in any school year (either through in-school or out-of-school suspension), the scholar's special education team must be convened for a determination in the case of any decision to further exclude or expel the scholar. The team is to notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and determine the appropriateness of the scholar's placement and the relationship (if any) between the scholar's misconduct and his or her condition. The team must either design a modified program for the scholar or provide services during the suspension and any needed modification to the IEP relative to the discipline code. Additionally, a record of all offenses committed by scholars with special needs that resulted in suspension will be maintained.

# Section VIII: Dress Code

## 1. Elementary Uniform Options (Grades K-4)

Elementary scholars are required to wear one of the following top options every day:			
 <p>Long sleeve light blue pique polo with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Short sleeve light blue pique polo with Alma logo</p>		
Scholars are required to wear one of the following bottom options every day:			
 <p>Khaki jumper with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Khaki scooter</p>	 <p>Khaki pants (straight front) (must be worn with belt)</p>	 <p>Permitted in warm weather only. Khaki shorts (knee length, not cargo style) (must be worn with belt)</p>
Scholars may wear any of the below optional outerwear. No other sweaters or jackets are permitted in class.			
 <p>Navy cardigan sweater with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy sweater vest with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy fleece jacket with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy fleece vest with Alma logo</p>

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

Elementary scholars are required to wear one of the following top options every day:			
 <p>Long sleeve navy blue pique polo with Alma logo</p>		 <p>Short sleeve navy blue pique polo with Alma logo</p>	
Scholars are required to wear one of the following bottom options every day:			
 <p>Khaki jumper with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Khaki scooter</p>	 <p>Khaki pants (straight front) (must be worn with belt)</p>	 <p><b>Permitted in warm weather only.</b> Khaki shorts (knee length, not cargo style) (must be worn with belt)</p>
Scholars may wear any of the below optional outerwear. No other sweaters or jackets are permitted in class.			
 <p>Navy cardigan sweater with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy sweater vest with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy fleece jacket with Alma logo</p>	 <p>Navy fleece vest with Alma logo</p>

### 3. Additional Specifications for All Scholars

- Shirts:** Shirts must be tucked in at all times. Undershirts must be white.
- Belts:** Scholars are required to wear a solid black belt with all pants and shorts.
- Ties:** Boys and girls may wear ties as long as they are neat and do not present a distraction to the scholar wearing the tie or to other scholars.
- Tights/socks:** Socks or tights must be worn at all times.  
All socks and tights must be solid white with no pattern.
- Shoes:** All shoes must be solid black. Shoes must be close-toed and have a rubber sole. Scholars may wear solid black boots.  
  
Scholars who wear boots or slip on shoes are encouraged to bring athletic shoes to change into for PE. These athletic shoes can be of any type but will need to be removed after PE.  
  
No colors, visible logos, wheels, or lights are permitted.
- Jewelry:** No distracting jewelry is permitted.  
Bracelets (other than watches) are not permitted. Necklaces must be tucked in and not visible. "Silly bandz" or "Rainbow loom" bracelets are not permitted. Earrings should not dangle or distract.
- Headwear:** No hats, bandanas, or caps are permitted indoors. Religious items are permitted. Hair must be neat at all times. If a hairstyle is distracting from instruction, that style will not be permitted.
- Nails:** A scholar will be required to remove nail polish if it appears to be distracting to the scholar or to his or her classmates.
- Makeup:** No makeup is permitted. Lip gloss is not permitted.
- Jackets:** Scholars may wear a navy blue fleece with the school logo purchased from the uniform store in the building. All other jackets must be removed when scholars are indoors.

### 4. Obtaining Dress Code Items

#### A. Ordering Information

All shirts, jumpers, jackets, sweaters and skirts must be ordered through the school uniform website at <http://almadelmar.epluno.com> or by calling 800-249-5275.

Pants and shorts may be ordered through the website, but they may also be purchased elsewhere provided that they meet the specifications described above.

### **B. Financial Assistance**

Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that the cost of uniforms is not a barrier for any scholar. If families feel that the cost of uniforms would pose a significant financial hardship, they may contact the Director of Operations to request a “starter kit” containing all uniform items that a scholar needs to begin school.

### **C. Donation of Used Uniforms**

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

## **5. Dress Code Enforcement**

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

If a scholar is found to be out of compliance, the scholar will receive a uniform violation. Clothing items that do not comply with dress code will be held at the front desk and may be picked up by a parent or guardian only. At the time of pick up, the parent or guardian must return the borrowed uniform items.

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

Repeated dress code violations will lead to consequences for scholars.

# Section IX: Afterschool Program

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

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

## 1. Enrollment

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

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

## 2. Cost

The program is free for all families.

## 3. Transportation

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

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

# Section X: Educating All Scholars

Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that all scholars have the resources that they need to be on the pathway to college and success in life. Thus, Alma del Mar offers a full array of evaluation and support services including the following:

- Literacy specialists
- Math specialists
- Social emotional specialist
- Counselor
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy

## 1. Evaluations for Special Education

At any time, a parent may request that a scholar be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services. All parental requests must be made in writing to the Director of Scholar Support. All requests will be responded to within five (5) days. Within thirty (30) days after a parent signs a “consent to test” form, all required evaluations will be completed.

Following the completion of an evaluation, a team meeting will be convened to discuss the scholar’s eligibility for special education services. If the scholar is found to be eligible, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to address the area of need.

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

## 2. Eligibility for Special Education

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

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

## 3. Individualized Education Plan

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

An IEP is reviewed every year by a team including the scholar’s teachers, any specialists involved in the scholar’s education, the parent, anyone the parent invites, and the scholar if the scholar is of an appropriate age to participate.

#### **4. 504 Accommodation Plan**

Upon completion of an evaluation, the IEP team will meet and may recommend that a 504 Accommodation Plan be written. A 504 Plan is a legal document, which is primarily a classroom accommodation plan. It is not an IEP. In order to be eligible for a 504 plan, a scholar must have a disability which “substantially limits one or more major life activities,” such as learning. The scholar may still be making effective progress in the general education curriculum.

#### **5. Counseling**

Alma del Mar partners with Child and Family to offer counseling services to scholars onsite. Any parent may request an evaluation of a scholar at any time. Parents must provide written consent prior to an evaluation. If a scholar is eligible for services, MassHealth or private insurance will be billed.

#### **6. Homeless Education Act**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is the federal law that entitles children who are homeless to a free, public education and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance, and success in school. All homeless scholars have a right to receive an equitable level of services provided to other children, including transportation, educational services, and nutritional and health services. Alma del Mar is committed to ensuring that homeless scholars receive a wide array of services to support their education and their success in life. Please contact the Director of Academic Services if you have any questions.

#### **7. English Language Learners**

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

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

Alma del Mar will ensure that all parents receive written and oral communication from the school in their home language if they are not comfortable with communication in English.

# Section XI: School Breakfast and Lunch

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

## 1. Free Breakfast and Lunch

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

## 2. Breakfast and Lunch Menus

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

## 3. Meals from Home

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

The items listed below are prohibited at Alma del Mar:

- Candy
- Sweets or high sugar foods, such as cookies or cake
- Fried food, such as regular chips (baked chips are allowed)
- Sodas (including diet sodas)
- Sports or energy drinks
- Iced teas (including diet iced teas)
- All juices and fruit drinks except those that are 100% juice
- Beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine)

*Scholars may not bring candy, sodas, or sugary drinks to school. Such items will be discarded.*

If any of the above listed items is brought to school, it will be confiscated and discarded. Scholars will have access to water at all times.

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

# Section XII: Health

Alma del Mar is committed to supporting the health and well-being of all scholars. The school staff includes a full-time Registered Nurse. The School Nurse is able to provide basic first aid, care for ill scholars, administer medication to scholars who require it during the school day, and provide counseling on health-related issues to scholars and their families. In addition, the school has a relationship with a local pediatrician who advises the school with regard to health-related matters. Please feel free to contact the Health Office at 508-525-9855. The best time to call is between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Friday.

## 1. Screenings

Scholars in all grades will undergo annual vision and hearing screenings. In addition, scholars in first grade will undergo BMI screenings. The school nurse will contact the family if screenings results indicate a need for follow-up. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure that identified needs are addressed. The school will provide referrals for appropriate services at the request of a family.

## 2. Administration of Medication in School

To ensure the health and safety of scholars requiring medication during the school day, the following procedures must be followed. The Health Office requires that the following forms be completed:

1. Signed consent by the parent/guardian to give the medication.
2. A medication order must be filled out by the physician and returned to the nurse. The order must be renewed as needed and at the beginning of each academic year.
3. If a scholar requires an EpiPen and/or individualized healthcare plan (i.e., asthma, life threatening allergies, diabetes, seizure disorder), please contact the school nurse as soon as possible to discuss and have the appropriate forms signed.

*No scholar will be permitted to take any medication (prescription or non-prescription) without written authorization from a doctor. All medications must be stored with the school nurse.*

Scholars are not allowed to possess medication while at school. A parent, guardian or responsible adult whom you designated should deliver the medications to the school in a pharmacy manufacturer labeled container. Please ask your pharmacist to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a 30-day supply can be delivered to the school. No scholar is permitted to take any medication, prescription or non-prescription, without written authorization from a doctor and parent/guardian written consent. All medications must be stored in the Health Office.

### A. Short Term Prescription Medications

No medication should be brought to school unless prescribed to be given at school. In order to protect all scholars, the following procedure is used when a scholar must take a medication during school hours on a short-term basis.

1. Parent/guardian is requested to ask the physician if it is possible to prescribe the medication other than during school hours.
2. If the medication must be taken during the school hours, the parent/guardian will send no more than a 30-day supply.
3. The accurate dose will be sent in a container labeled by the pharmacy with the name of the scholar, name and dosage of medication, directions for medication, date prescribed and name of prescribing physician.
4. The parent/guardian will send a note to the nurse giving permission to take the medication as prescribed. Only the nurse is allowed to administer the medication. This note will be in the scholar's health record.
5. If the medication is for more than 10 days, a form will need to be completed by the physician and returned to the nurse.

Over the counter medications are not encouraged to be administered in school. Medications for pain relief such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen that need to be taken during the school day require authorization on file signed by the parent/guardian, giving permission to administer the medication as needed during the school year. If a physician recommends that these medications are to be scheduled, a written order from the physician must be obtained along with the information described in #3 above. If authorization is not received, the parent/guardian must come to the school to administer the medication to the scholar.

#### **B. Asthma Inhalers**

If a scholar is prescribed an asthma inhaler and must have it with him/her at school, the parent/guardian must provide the school nurse with the order from the physician stating that the scholar needs to carry the inhaler and that he/she may self-administer. The order must also be signed by the parent or guardian and discussed with the nurse. A second inhaler must be provided to be kept in the Health Office.

#### **C. EpiPens**

If a scholar requires an EpiPen to prevent anaphylaxis, a serious allergic reaction, the parent/guardian is encouraged to bring the EpiPen on the first day of school. As with other prescription medications, the EpiPen must be accompanied by a medication authorization form by the prescribing physician and signed by a parent/guardian. EpiPens will be administered in case of a possible allergic reaction in accordance with best medical practices. If an EpiPen is administered, the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. If the parent or guardian is not able to transport the scholar to a medical treatment facility, the school will have the scholar transported via ambulance.

### **3. First Aid and Medical Emergencies**

Minor accidents, cuts, scrapes, and bruises will generally be treated at the school by the school nurse or by selected teachers and administrators. The school is not equipped to provide medical services beyond basic first aid. In the event that a child requires emergency medical care, a parent or guardian will be notified as soon as possible. If a

parent, guardian, or other emergency contact cannot be reached, the school may need to arrange for the scholar to be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital.

It is essential that we have on file each scholar's Office/Health Emergency Card, which provides up-to-date contact information for parents and guardians, and which gives the school authorization to begin medical treatment.

#### **4. Medical Exclusion**

There are times when a scholar should remain at home for his/her own welfare and the protection of other scholars. Please DO NOT send a scholar to school in the case of any one of the following:

- A fever of 100 degrees or over within the past 24 hours. Please do not send to school unless fever free without medication.
- An undiagnosed skin rash or skin eruptions.
- Your child should stay home until vomiting has stopped for at least 24 hours.
- Untreated conjunctivitis (pink eye). Scholars may return after 24 hours of beginning treatment.
- Untreated head lice. Scholars may return after the first treatment.
- Sore throat and swollen glands. If a diagnosis of strep throat is confirmed, a scholar may return after 24 hours of beginning treatment.
- Mononucleosis (Mono). A physician's note is required to be cleared to return to school.
- Chicken Pox-Scholar needs to be home until there are no new pox marks for 24 hours and existing pox marks are completely scabbed over and not draining.
- Any diagnosed infection requiring antibiotics. A scholar may return after 24 hours of beginning treatment.

If a scholar is diagnosed with a contagious illness, please contact the school nurse immediately so that she may monitor the spread of disease. Please contact the school nurse should you have any questions about any illnesses that may require the scholar to stay home.

#### **5. Medical Records**

Massachusetts state law requires all scholars enrolling in a new school to have a physical examination before entering the school. Before a scholar can enroll in the school, the school must have on file the following forms:

##### **A. Massachusetts School Health Record**

This form contains records showing that the scholar has had a physical exam within the past year prior to the start of the school year, has up-to-date immunizations, and has had all required screenings.

i. **Immunizations**

Alma del Mar enforces the School Immunization Law. According to Massachusetts General Laws, scholars will not be permitted to attend school without a physician's certification of immunization against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and other such diseases as specified by the Department of Public Health unless one of the following conditions applies: A doctor provides written documentation that immunization would endanger the health of a scholar or a parent or guardian provides written documentation that immunization conflicts with his or her sincere religious beliefs. Documentation will be required at the start of each school year. Scholars lacking immunizations may be excluded from school during disease outbreaks in order to protect their health and that of the school community at large.

**B. Emergency Card**

This form contains information about a scholar's allergies, health conditions, physician, dentist, and health insurance. The form also authorizes Alma del Mar to act in case of a medical emergency. No scholar will be allowed to enter school without having this form on file.

Alma del Mar expects families to update medical records throughout the school year. Parents should provide the school with a copy of each physical that the scholar has. In addition, parents should provide the school with documentation anytime a scholar visits the emergency room, undergoes surgery, or is diagnosed with a health condition.

**C. Authorization for Dispensing Medication in School Form**

If a child must receive medication during the school day, this form must contain the instructions and signature of the physician who ordered the medication and be signed by a parent or guardian.

**6. Alcohol and Use of Illegal Drugs Policy & Procedures**

**Overview**

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

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

## Education

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

Every effort will be made by teachers and counselors to educate students about substance use and/or abuse and to create an atmosphere of knowledge, confidence, and trust that will encourage young people to seek help in overcoming problems in substance abuse. Education primarily takes place in the school's Wellness Course.

Workshops may be provided as an opportunity to enhance faculty and parent/guardian awareness of the scope of substance abuse as related to our school, community, and society; to provide knowledge of scientific and medical findings; knowledge of laws relating to substance abuse and legal penalties for violation of the law; and to familiarize teachers with available educational resources. Those who will work in specific drug education areas will be trained for that responsibility.

## Community Liaisons

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

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

## Policy & Procedures

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

Alma del Mar's goal to have a "Drug Free School" can only be achieved if the administration has the authority it needs to carry out the Drug/Alcohol policy. Therefore, the administration follows the principle of "reasonable suspicion" not "probable cause." Scholars smelling of alcohol or marijuana, or behaving in a manner that would indicate possession or ingestion of drugs or alcohol, on school property and at school events, are subject to this policy, and could be asked to submit to a field sobriety test, a search, and/or a breathalyzer test by the New Bedford Police. Refusal to do so will necessitate the scholar's parents being called, and disciplinary action could follow.

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

## Procedure

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

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

If a school administrator has reasonable grounds to suspect, through direct observation, that a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but no contraband is found, an assessment will be made. The student may be removed from class, and parental contact will occur immediately. With the approval of the parent, the assessment may involve a test conducted by New Bedford Police.

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

If a student is found to be in possession of a drug or alcohol, the Dean of Culture or designee will notify parents and a conference will be held with the student and parents. The substance will be sealed and labeled with the date and time of confiscation and noted in the incident report. If it is a legal substance, it may be given to the parent or disposed of at the parent's request. If the substance is illegal, it will be turned over to the New Bedford Police. The student may be required to attend an approved alcohol or drug recovery program or other appropriate treatment and may be subject to expulsion from school. There will be formal notification to the police by the school and appropriate action may be taken.

If a student is found to be selling, distributing or in possession of a quantity sufficient to be charged with the intent to distribute drugs or alcohol, the Dean of Culture or designee will immediately notify the parent and the police for mandatory removal of the student. There will be Out of School Suspension and the student may be subject to expulsion. The police will take appropriate action under the law regarding the sale of drugs in proximity to school buildings.

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

## Resources / Supports

If you are concerned about an Alma del Mar scholar and the possible use of drugs or alcohol, we encourage you to contact our Dean of Culture. In addition, here are some prevention tips provided by the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services within the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

In addition, here are some resources that families may find helpful:

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

# Section XIII: Safety and Security

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

## 1. Weather Closures

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

If there is a closure or delayed opening due to weather, all parents and guardians will receive a phone call and text message between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM on the day of the cancellation. In addition, cancellation information will be available through local television and radio stations.

## 2. Visitor Protocols

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

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

## 3. Scholar Property

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

### A. Scholar Storage Space

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

### B. Prohibited Items

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

### C. Lost & Found

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

### D. Scholar Searches

In order to maintain the security of all its scholars, Alma del Mar reserves the right to conduct searches of its scholars and their property. If searches are conducted, the

school will ensure that the privacy of the scholars is respected to the extent possible and that scholars and their families are informed of the circumstances surrounding and results of the search.

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

#### **4. Restraining Orders**

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

If an individual against whom there is a restraining order enters the building, the scholar will be held in a secure location, and the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately.

#### **5. Evacuation Procedures**

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

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

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

The school will conduct two evacuation drills per year. Drills entail staff and scholars following the procedures outlined in our Evacuation Plans, with staff lining up scholars in the back parking lot. After staff takes attendance, all staff and scholars will promptly return to school.

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

# Section XIV: Transportation

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

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

## 1. Eligibility for Bus Transportation

All scholars who live more the 1.5 miles away from the school will have the option of taking a bus to and from school.

## 2. Location of Bus Pickup and Drop-off

For most scholars, bus stops will be at a corner near their home. Scholars who have IEPs that call for door-to-door transportation will be picked up and dropped off at their homes.

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

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

## 3. Behavior on the Bus

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

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

Scholars who fail to adhere to these standards will face consequences at school, and parents will be notified. Alma del Mar reserves the right to deny transportation to scholars who repeatedly engage in disruptive or unsafe behaviors.

#### 4. Drop off and Pickup at School

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Section XV: Bullying Policy

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

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

## 1. Bullying Prevention Efforts

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

## 2. Collaboration with Families

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

### A. In-Person Report to Staff Member

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

### B. Written Incident Reporting Form

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

### 3. Responses to Reports of Bullying

#### A. Safety

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

#### B. Investigation

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

#### C. Determinations

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

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

### 4. Responses to Confirmed Bullying Incidents

#### A. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

#### B. Efforts to Prevent Future Incidents

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

#### C. Disciplinary Action

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

### 5. Access to Resources and Support Services

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

# Appendix 1: Alma del Mar Pledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Appendix 2: Suspension & Expulsion Policies

The Dean of Culture or Behavior Interventionist may suspend a scholar for a period of time determined appropriate if, after providing the scholar with a) notice of the violation, b) an explanation of the evidence, and c) an opportunity to provide his or her explanation of events, they determines that the scholar's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. If a scholar is suspended, a phone call and letter will be sent home explaining the incident in detail and the length of the suspension. A parent or guardian will be expected to meet with a school administrator before the child returns to school to discuss the incident and determine ways to prevent another suspension from occurring in the future. A record of all offenses that received a suspension committed by a given scholar will be kept by the school.

For any suspension that a) relates to the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a scholar with a felony, b) relates to the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a scholar, or c) is for ten or more school days, the scholar shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Board of Trustees ("Board"). The scholar shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Board. The scholar or his or her parent or guardian shall notify the Chairperson of the Board in writing of his or her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Board shall hold a hearing with the scholar and the scholar's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the scholar's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the scholar shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The Board shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Dean of Culture, including recommending an alternate educational program for the scholar. The Board shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the school with regard to the suspension.

### **Expulsion:**

Under certain circumstances, scholars may be subject to expulsion by the Executive Director as explained below.

Any scholar who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school by the Executive Director.

Any scholar who assaults any staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school by the Executive Director. Assault includes not only harmful or offensive contact, but also the threatening such contact.

Any scholar who is charged with a violation of either paragraph 1) or 2) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing before the Executive Director; provided, however, that the scholar may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Executive Director. After said hearing, the Executive Director may, in his or her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a scholar who has been determined by the Executive Director to have violated either paragraph 1) or 2). A decision to expel the scholar shall be provided by the school to the scholar's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing.

Any scholar who has been expelled from the school pursuant to a violation of either paragraph 1) or 2) shall have the right to appeal to the Board of Trustees ("Board"). The expelled scholar shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in writing of the decision to appeal. A scholar who has elected to appeal shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board, and has the right to counsel at said hearing. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the scholar has violated any provisions of this section. The Board's ruling on the appeal shall be provided to the scholar's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing.

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

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

When a scholar is expelled under the above provisions, no school or school district within the Commonwealth shall be required to admit such scholar or to provide educational services to said scholar. If said scholar does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Executive Director a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

In addition to the categories provided by M.G.L. c. 94C and M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H½, a scholar may face expulsion by the Board, after being provided with the opportunity for a hearing pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, § 17, as a result of the following infractions:

- Repeated or excessive out-of-school suspensions
- Possession of alcohol or tobacco products on school premises or at a school sponsored event.
- Possession or use of a weapon or weapon-like object
- Destruction or attempted destruction of property including arson, or bomb threat
- Endangering the safety of scholars such as pulling the fire alarm, or an assault on another scholar.

# Appendix 3: School Calendar