



The Alternative Learning Center  
Dubuque Community Schools

1090 Alta Vista Street  
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

# Parent/Student Handbook 2019-2020

*Be Proud*  
*Be Positive*  
*Be Respectful*  
*Be Responsible*  
*Be a Problem Solver*

## Alternative Learning Center 2019-2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year. The Alternative Learning Center is a program of Dubuque Senior and Hempstead High Schools. The ALC is in the Alta Vista Campus located at 1090 Alta Vista.

Students who find themselves behind in credits, or challenged in their pursuit of a high school diploma, will be given the opportunity for credit recovery at the ALC. The ALC is designed to meet the needs of students who may succeed best in a smaller setting and a block learning structure. With a 40 day term, students quickly gain a sense of success and can earn credits. This structure allows students to finish two terms before the winter break and have the opportunity to take courses in four blocks. After the break there is a 20 day January term (J-term). During the J-term, students will have two 2 1/2 hour blocks in their school day. The extended time in J-term will offer the chance for emersion into a subject. Students will be able to earn 18 credits in a school year if they participate fully in all five academic terms. To end the school year, students not graduating will participate in an intensive PE opportunity all day for the final six days of school. This opportunity will take students throughout the tri-state area to engage in PE opportunities. In addition, elective, fine arts, applied learning and physical education credits can be earned through documentation of community experiences and student reflection.

The Alternative Learning Center is a small community where all stakeholders - students, parents, paraprofessionals, teachers, and staff, work together to ensure the success of all the students. Many of the students have had challenges in the past, but together with the support of parents and guardians, we can all make a difference. Our goal is to use the challenges of the past as stepping stones to success. It is imperative that students engage in a collaborative way to deepen their own understandings. Student attendance and engagement is always important for academic success.

This handbook will answer many of your questions. Feel free to call our secretary, Amber Rowley, at 552-5803 if other concerns arise.

Sincerely,

*The Teachers and Staff of the ALC*

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## **Alternative Learning Center/DCSD Parent-Student Handbook**

Policies that will be referenced in the handbook may be found online at the Dubuque Community School District's website. Please notice in particular:  
Policy 5200 – Student Behavior: Expectations and Consequences  
Policies 4601/4609 – Tobacco/Substance-Free Environment  
Policy 5107 – School Attendance.

### **Course Syllabus**

Each student is given a syllabus during the first days of each class. The syllabus contains course expectations, grading policy, other information specific to that class. Please review the syllabi.

### **Automated Calling**

Our computer will call a parent/guardian if there is an attendance concern. Please be sure to notify our office when there is a change in your contact information. A member of the ALC staff will notify you if a student is absent in first block. Our teachers will be contacting you after the second absence. Special announcements may also be sent via the automated calling system.

### **Class Progress**

Parents may check student's progress on line by using the parent portal of Power School. Contact the office for login information and password. Parent-Teacher-student conferences will be scheduled during all 40 day terms. Parents can contact your child's teacher to schedule an individual conference if needed.

### **School Hours for Students**

The school is staffed daily from 7:00 a.m. – 3:30 pm. Classes are held from 8:25 am until 2:40 pm. Students have access to computer supported instruction from 8:25 am until 2:40 pm.

### **Office Hours**

7:00 am – 3:30 pm

### **Organization of the Academic Year**

<b>Term 1</b>	<b>Term 2</b>	<b>J-Term</b>	<b>Term 4</b>	<b>Term 5</b>	<b>PE Experience</b>
August 26 – October 18	October 21- December 20	January 2 – January 31	February 3 – April 3	April 6 – May 26	May 27 – June 2
38 Days	40 Days	21 Days	37 Days	35 Days	4 Days

### **Enrollment Expectations**

Students are expected to be enrolled in the equivalent of four blocks a day each term. This can be made up of a combination of teacher taught classes at the ALC, on-line, work credit, applied learning credits or independent study. Students are also expected to enroll for two J-term courses.

### **Lunch**

Lunch is served daily in the school lunch room. Students have a 30 minute lunch break during third block. There is open campus during lunch. Students leaving the campus are expected to return when class resumes. Students who have on-going problems with accepting the responsibility of open campus, such as repeated lateness to class or not being responsible in the neighborhood, may lose open campus. **Students failing to return within 30 minutes will be sent home for the day and parents will be called.**

### **Students Addressing ALC and District Staff**

On a daily basis you will be dealing with many people at the Alta Vista Campus. The staff of the ALC will let students know how they wish to be addressed. When dealing with other adults at the Alta Vista Campus, students should address them as Ms. or Mr., or ask them how they would like to be addressed.

**Staff Directory**  
 Alternative Learning Center  
 1090 Alta Vista Street, Dubuque, IA 52001  
 Phone: 563-552-5800 fax: 563-552-5801  
[altavista.dbqschools.org](http://altavista.dbqschools.org)

<b>STAFF</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>
Chris Oberhoffer	<a href="mailto:coberhoffer@dbqschools.org">coberhoffer@dbqschools.org</a>	Assistant Principal
Karin Anderson	<a href="mailto:kanderson@dbqschools.org">kanderson@dbqschools.org</a>	Graduation Coach
Tracy Patrum	<a href="mailto:tpatrum@dbqschools.org">tpatrum@dbqschools.org</a>	School Counselor
Kaitlynn Moklestad	<a href="mailto:kmoklestad@dbqschools.org">kmoklestad@dbqschools.org</a>	Life Coach
Jeff Hoerner	<a href="mailto:jehoerner@dbqschools.org">jehoerner@dbqschools.org</a>	Student Needs Facilitator
Linda Zillig	<a href="mailto:lzillig@dbqschools.org">lzillig@dbqschools.org</a>	Student Needs Facilitator
Joe Bormann	<a href="mailto:joebormann@dbqschools.org">joebormann@dbqschools.org</a>	Technology Coach/Construction
Amber Rowley	<a href="mailto:arowley@dbqschools.org">arowley@dbqschools.org</a>	Secretary/Business Manager
Kim Schmitt	<a href="mailto:kischmitt@dbqschools.org">kischmitt@dbqschools.org</a>	Nurse
Ann Arnold	<a href="mailto:aarnold@dbqschools.org">aarnold@dbqschools.org</a>	Math
Ellen Jenkins	<a href="mailto:ejenkins@dbqschools.org">ejenkins@dbqschools.org</a>	Art
Rachel Evanoff	<a href="mailto:revanoff@dbqschools.org">revanoff@dbqschools.org</a>	Science
Corrie DeMuth	<a href="mailto:cdemuth@dbqschools.org">cdemuth@dbqschools.org</a>	Special Education
Mike Hoskens	<a href="mailto:mhoskens@dbqschools.org">mhoskens@dbqschools.org</a>	PE
Tim Hitzler	<a href="mailto:thitzler@dbqschools.org">thitzler@dbqschools.org</a>	Social Studies
Robert Kress	<a href="mailto:rkress@dbqschools.org">rkress@dbqschools.org</a>	Math
Kelli Helminiak	<a href="mailto:khelminiak@dbqschools.org">khelminiak@dbqschools.org</a>	Social Studies
Jessica Steve	<a href="mailto:jsteve@dbqschools.org">jsteve@dbqschools.org</a>	English
Nicole Thor	<a href="mailto:nthor@dbqschools.org">nthor@dbqschools.org</a>	English
Anthony Allen	<a href="mailto:aallen@dbqschools.org">aallen@dbqschools.org</a>	Paraprofessional
Lindsey Hoyne	<a href="mailto:lhoyne@dbqschools.org">lhoyne@dbqschools.org</a>	Paraprofessional
Sharon Lively	<a href="mailto:slively@dbqschools.org">slively@dbqschools.org</a>	Paraprofessional
Diane Unsen	<a href="mailto:dunsen@dbqschools.org">dunsen@dbqschools.org</a>	Paraprofessional
Tammy Vandermillen	<a href="mailto:tvandermillen@dbqschools.org">tvandermillen@dbqschools.org</a>	Paraprofessional
<b>SUPPORT SERVICE</b>		
Jason Hoerner	<a href="mailto:jhoerner@cityofdubuque.org">jhoerner@cityofdubuque.org</a>	School Resource Officer

### **Early Dismissal and Late Arrival**

On two hour early dismissal days school is out at 12:05. On two hour late arrival day's school begins at 10:25 and attendance is taken for **all blocks**. School cancellation days will change the total number of days in some terms.

### **Monday – Thursday Schedule**

Block 1 - 8:25 - 9:50

Block 2 - 9:55 - 11:20

Block 3 - 11:20 - 1:15

1<sup>st</sup> Lunch – 11:20 – 11:50

2<sup>nd</sup> Lunch – 11:50 – 12:20

Block 4 - 1:20 - 2:40

### **Friday Core Schedule**

Block 1 – 9:25– 10:20

Block 2 – 10:25 – 11:20

Lunch – 11:20-11:50

Block 3 – 11:50 – 12:45

CORE – 12:50 – 1:40

Block 4 – 1:45 – 2:40

## Academic Requirements for Graduation

The graduation requirements for students entering Dubuque Community School District are as follows:

<b>English</b>	8 credits
English 1-2	2 credits
English 3-4	2 credits
Writing	1 credit
Speech	1 credit
<b>Mathematics</b>	6 credits
<b>Science</b>	6 credits
Earth/Environmental	2 credits
Life Science	2 credits
Physical Science	2 credits
<b>Social Sciences</b>	6 credits
U. S. History	2 credits
World History	2 credits
Government	1 credit
Human/Society Study	1 credit
<b>Wellness</b>	3.2 credits
<b>Fine Arts</b>	2 credits
<b>Applied Learning</b>	2 credits
<b>Elective</b>	10.8 credits
<b>World Cultures &amp; Issues</b>	2 credits
	<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>
	46



### **Ways to Earn Credit**

Many times students are looking for ways to earn credits to help them reach their graduation goal or better prepare them for further study after high school. There are several ways to accomplish this:

1. Students are encouraged to sign up for the maximum course load at the ALC. Which can include:
  - Teacher taught classes
  - Online courses
  - Independent Canvas Courses
  - Work Experience
2. Enroll in summer school. ALC students have been successful taking summer school at Senior or Hempstead. Talk to the Graduation Coach to investigate your options.
3. Driver's education is offered through NICC before and after school.

### **Dropping/Adding Classes:**

Students are encouraged not to drop classes. Students are encouraged to enroll in a credit recovery option when dropping a class. The special education process must be followed for entitled students.

### **Progress Reports**

Families will receive progress reports in the middle of each term at student-parent-teacher conferences. Conference dates are often times different at the ALC than the rest of the district to help report student progress at a time that allows the student to get back on track.

### **Extra-Curricular**

Students may participate in any extra curricular activities through their home high school if they are eligible.

**Business Office Information**  
**Admission/Enrollment**  
**Fees**

The registration fee is \$95.00 for 2018-2019. This must be paid upon enrollment. Registration fees are paid at Senior or Hempstead.

**Fee Waiver**

Students whose families meet the income guidelines for free and reduced price lunch under the Child Nutrition Program, Family Investment Program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), transportation assistance under open enrollment, or who are in foster care may be eligible to have their student fees waived or partially waived. **This waiver does not carry over from year to year and must be completed annually. All persons seeking a waiver of fees must fill out a waiver application.** Decision to grant a waiver of fees will be handled on an application-by-application basis and will be in compliance with state code. If parents would like to appeal a waiver decision, they may call or write the Superintendent of Schools, 2300 Chaney Rd., Dubuque 52001-3095 (552-3012)

**Lunch**

To qualify for free or reduced lunch parents must complete the appropriate paperwork during the eRegistration process. Students may pay for lunch at the time it is served or money can be entered into a student account for future purchases. School lunch is \$3.00. School breakfast is \$1.75.

**Parent Transportation Reimbursement**

According to Iowa Law, parents of public and non-public school students are to be reimbursed by a public school district if school bus service is not provided for eligible students. In general, school bus transportation is to be provided to the parents of elementary students (K-8), who live over two (2) miles from the school designated for attendance purposes by the Board of Education or the private school parent, while for high school students (9-12), the distance is over three (3) miles.

If you live within the boundaries of the Dubuque Community School District and qualify for public school student transportation reimbursement, contact the Transportation Department to receive a claim form. The Transportation Department is located at 1350 West Locust Street (552-3200). Claims for eligible students must be filed on a semester basis by December 1 and June 1 of each school year. Eligible families will be receiving separate checks for public school student transportation reimbursement for the first and second semesters of the school year.

**Enrollment**

General Education: New students may be enrolled in the Alternative Learning Center in grades 11-12 after being referred by one of the high school principals, assistant principals, or through the student needs facilitator from Hempstead or Senior. Referrals come when it is felt that the student is more likely to be successful in an alternative school setting than their current setting. Students are therefore admitted at the beginning of each term. Students who are entitled for special education will follow the same process for referral to ALC. The ALC IEP team will adjust the IEP for any changes that may need to be made to adjust for the alternative setting.

### **Transfer Procedure/Open Enrollment**

General Education: Students wishing to transfer back full time to Hempstead or Senior should see the ALC graduation coach or the home school student needs facilitator about the transfer process. Students may only transfer at the start of a semester (August or January). A student may be referred to Senior or Hempstead by the ALC staff or the home school student needs facilitator if the following criteria to return have been met:

1. Student has dealt with the issues resulting in the original referral to ALC as identified by Senior or Hempstead administration
2. Student has regular attendance
3. Student has earned credits and is on track for graduation
4. Student displays appropriate behavior and has not been suspended
5. Student has recommendation from ALC staff or the home school student needs facilitator

Students wishing to attend a high school other than their home school must complete an open enrollment form and meet the district timeline for application.

### **Attendance**

At the Alternative Learning Center, opportunities to earn credits are offered in a variety of instructional methods, time frames and work patterns. Teacher taught classes will take the form of long-term study of important questions and subjects that include individual and group projects, field studies, performances and presentations of student work. Each student must recognize the vital nature of taking responsibility for his/her own learning and understand the importance of his/her contributions to the learning of others. Whether engaging in the ideas of an author or actively discussing and debating issues about their lives with their peers, this collaboration helps students gain an appreciation of themselves, others, and the world.

Because of the methodology used at the Alternative Learning Center daily, on-time attendance is a crucial part of the learning experience and must be a top priority for the learner. Students who miss a day of school miss a day of learning and that may never be replaced. The depth and scope of an individual student's schedule will be determined by his/her needs as documented by the requirements for graduation set by the Dubuque Community School District.

By enrolling in the Alternative Learning Center, a student makes the commitment to fulfill his/her responsibilities to this learning community and is expected to:

- 1 . Attend his/her scheduled classes.
- 2 . Actively engage in learning opportunities both in and outside of the schedule
- 3 . Make documented progress towards his/her goals for graduation and beyond

## Excused/Unexcused:

### Absences

Parents will notify the school each time their son/daughter is absent and provide documentation of the absence if requested by the principal or designee. When dealing with attendance issues, the principal or designee will make the final determination whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused.

### Excused Absence

The following reasons may be identified as possible excused absences. The principal or designee may request documentation or verification for any of the following absences and may consider an excess of absences (beyond a 10 days) as unexcused truant days.

- ⇒ Personal illness
- ⇒ Professional appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school time
- ⇒ Recognized religious observances
- ⇒ Required court appearances
- ⇒ College visits, a maximum of two days for juniors, 3 days for seniors
- ⇒ Pre-arranged/approved absences\*\*
- ⇒ Schools sponsored or approved activities
- ⇒ Bereavement
- ⇒ Suspensions and interventions

\*\*Permission for such absences **MUST** be obtained in advance of the absence from school. Failure to obtain prior permission may result in the absence being considered unexcused. Parents/guardians are strongly urged to schedule vacation during the summer and various breaks in the school calendar.

### Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences will include, but not be limited to the following items:

- ⇒ Class cuts
- ⇒ Falsely informing the school about the reason(s) for the absence
- ⇒ Absences that have not been pre-arranged and pre-approved as excused

\* School personnel a) will notify students and b) parents/guardians of each unexcused absence.

\* Any unexcused absence will remain unexcused unless it is cleared through the school's attendance office within **two school days**.

Interventions that may occur for excessive absences:

1. Student will meet with graduation coach and/or assistant principal to problem solve.
2. Meet with parents, student and graduation coach and/or assistant principal.
3. Academic probation.
4. Verbal and written communication to parent and guardian.
5. 504 plan.

### **Academic Probation:**

Students not being academically successful will be placed on academic probation. This will result in an individualized improvement plan to help the student be more successful.

### **Re-Enrollment after Dropping Out**

Students who drop out of school may request to be placed on a waiting list for re-enrollment during the next school term. Student will be required to complete credit options outlined by administration before becoming eligible for teacher taught classes.

## **Student Services**

### **Counseling Services**

Counseling services are available to all ALC students. It is encouraged that you meet our counselor early on so that a relationship is in place should a need for services arise.

### **Graduation Coach**

In addition to the administrator, the Graduation Coach will assist students in the registration process. The graduation coach is available to help students with personal and academic issues, as well as setting career goals. Testing information for college admissions is available in the main office, as is college financial aid information. Parents are encouraged to contact the graduation coach with questions about student progress or information about community resources.

### **Life Coach**

Life coaches are available to provide support services to students in order to remove barriers to academic success. Life coaches can provide attendance support, organize community based resources, academic supports, and other services that will increase student success.

### **Health Services**

A nurse is assigned to the ALC and will be utilized for health concerns. There is also a health paraprofessional at the ALC available to dispense medication following district policy. If a student feels ill, the parent will be contacted to discuss the next steps.

### **Immunizations**

Iowa law requires that all students have a current, up to date immunization card to be enrolled in school.

### **Insurance**

Parents/guardians are responsible for school-related injuries through their own private insurance carrier unless the parent purchases student accident insurance.

### **Medication**

All medications given at school require a health care provider's release and permission from the parent/guardian. Medications need to be in their original container with the pharmacy label showing the name of the student, name of the medication, dosage, number of times the medicine is to be given at school, etc. Pharmacies will give you an extra bottle with the appropriate label for school if you ask. Medications, except for those ordered "to be carried" by the student, need to be kept in the nurse's office. No-over-the-counter medications are allowed to be carried by the student. With signed parent/guardian consent, the nurse practitioner can dispense many medications.

### **SBYS**

The ALC's School Based Youth Services Program is coordinated through the health and guidance program. Students and/or their parents may request help from the agencies involved which include the Hillcrest Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Services, Juvenile Court Services through the Truancy Liaison worker, and the Vocational Rehabilitation.

"Schools receive (from law enforcement per Iowa Code 124.415) notification of students under the age of 18 found to be in possession of or arrested for illegal substances. These students will be referred to the school's substance abuse counselor (SASC) for a minimum of one intervention"

## **Conduct Policies**

### **Care of School Property**

The Alternative Learning Center takes pride in the family atmosphere. We respect each other and the learning environment. Keep the building and grounds clean. We remember to dispose of garbage and food items properly. We recycle whenever possible. We are careful with school equipment. We respect our neighbors and their property. We do not litter, nor do we loiter.

### **Cellular Phones/Electronic Devices**

Cellular or other wireless communication devices may be used on school grounds, but MUST NOT be used in the classrooms without teacher permission. Students must turn their phones off or on silent while in the classroom. Talking on phones in class, text messaging on phones in class, or any other phone use in class is a violation of the policy. Phones will be confiscated and a parent/guardian will be required to retrieve them. Teachers and staff establish rules for the office, classroom, learning resource center, or lunch area regarding electronic equipment. Loss or theft of any personal property is not the responsibility of the ALC.

Parents are asked to **NOT** call students on their cell phones during the school day. In case of an emergency, parents are requested to call the main office at 552-5800. Your child will be given the information immediately.

### **Display of Affection**

Inappropriate and excessive displays of affection in public are unacceptable.

### **Profanity**

The educational philosophy of the DCSD does not support harassment, bullying, sexist remarks, discrimination or profane acts.

### **Field Work**

All students must have parent permission in order to participate in field experiences. Students over 18 may sign their own permission form. At registration students and parents are given the permission form to sign and return. The ALC supports the idea that the community is an excellent resource for learning and many classes visit direct sources when available. Students must take the transportation provided by the school district to any offsite opportunities.

### **Food/Beverages**

Appropriate beverages are allowed in the classroom. No food is allowed outside of the cafeteria.

### **Emergency Drills**

During the school year the ALC holds emergency fire and tornado drills. At the beginning of the school year, teachers notify students of the procedures to follow in the event of a drill. Students are all expected to participate in an orderly manner during the drills. Students who pull fire alarms or call in false alarms, in addition to being disciplined under the district's policies, will be reported to law enforcement officials.

### **Illegal Items**

Police trained search dogs may be used on any of the DCSD property. Students found in possession of illegal items are subject to Policy 5200. This includes, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the item in question and referral to the Dubuque Law Enforcement Center. Students in possession of items that do not belong to them are subjected to the same policy.

### **Smoking, Alcohol, and Drugs/Illegal Substances**

Use, possession, sale, supply of or being under the influence of a controlled or illegal substance as defined by Iowa law is prohibited. Appropriate legal action may be taken or legal charges filed. In addition, students may be suspended, or in some cases, expelled from school. Police citations are issued to underage smokers. The new Iowa Smoke free Air Act states that smoking is not allowed on “School grounds, including parking lots, athletic fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and other outdoor area under the control of a public or private educational facility, including inside a vehicle located on such school grounds.” Individuals can not smoke in their vehicle on school grounds regardless of their age. Citations can be issued for violation of this provision in Iowa Code. The use of alcohol or illegal substance is a serious infraction of the DCSD Policy 5200.

If an administrator suspects or has determined that a student has used or possesses illegal substances through initial procedures that include observation and discussion with the student, use of a breathalyzer and/or physical examination by the school nurse:

- The police or school resource officer will be contacted.
- Parents/guardians will be called.
- If a student is 18 years of age, the police will transport the student to the Dubuque law Enforcement Center. If the student is under 18 years of age, the police will release the student to the parent at the ALC. If a parent cannot be reached, the police will release the student to a parent at the Dubuque Law Enforcement Center once the parent is reached.
- The student may receive an out-of-school suspension.
- Appropriate legal action is taken and legal charges filed.
- The program’s liaison from Substance Abuse Service Center will be notified.

### **Inappropriate Clothing/Apparel**

Any form of clothing, apparel, or personal appearance, including pictures or words, which is indecent, lewd, immodest (no exposed cleavage, no excessively low cut jeans, no exposed boxers), vulgar, obscene, disruptive of the orderly operation of the school, or which constitutes a health or safety hazard **is unacceptable**.

Wearing of or exhibition of clothing, apparel, or personal appearance which depict advertise, or promote any substance prohibited by these rules (including beer, alcohol, controlled substances, violence, or tobacco products) **is prohibited**.

No student on or near school property or at any school activity:

Shall wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other things which are evidence of membership in or affiliation with any gang. The DCSD board policy prohibits chains, spikes, etc, that may be considered a safety hazard.



## **Procedures**

### **School materials/Supplies**

Each class requires students to have regular school supplies which may include notebooks, folders, paper, pencils and pens.

### **Access to Alta Vista Campus**

Students are to enter School through the front doors on Alta Vista Street. This is a secure entrance and students will need to ring the buzzer to be admitted. Parking is available in the south parking lot or along Alta Vista. Parking is NOT allowed in the Nativity Church parking lot. The AVC building will be used for office space and meeting rooms for the DCSD. Students are not allowed to go outside of the spaces designated for ALC use. Violation of the expectation may result in suspension from school.

**The use of skateboards is prohibited on school grounds.**

### **Visitors**

All visitors must present a picture I.D. Law enforcement officials are contacted if non-school individuals disrupt the school environment. Visitors must check in at the office and obtain a visitor's pass. The visitor's pass is worn during the entire visit.

Student visitors are not permitted during the school day. Students and parents are encouraged to visit the ALC by appointment when reviewing their child's education options.

### **Closed Campus**

Alternative Learning Center is a closed campus. Students may not leave the campus except for lunch or when supervised on a fieldwork experience. Students who leave the building or grounds without permission will be in violation of the attendance policy. The administrator reserves the right to change this procedure if the surrounding property and businesses are not respected.