



Alder Community High School

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Frequently Asked Questions

Pastoral support

Who do I contact with a concern?

Your child's form tutor will generally be your first port of contact and they will usually be accessible by email should you have any queries or concerns. If your concern is more urgent, you can contact your child's Progress Leader or arrange an appointment to meet with them.

How are children at Alder supported pastorally?

Every student has a form tutor, an individual who they will see every morning and can share concerns with. Outside of the form tutor system, Progress Leaders will generally offer support, advice and guidance in times of need. We have a dedicated Learning Mentor in Mrs Vella, who provides more intensive support for some of our students and a strong SEN team to support students with particular learning needs. Based in Headway, we also have Mrs Hines, our Student Attendance and Family Liaison Officer who supports our families and children with attendance concerns. As a school, we also refer or signpost students to external services where there may be a greater need. Typically, we may refer to organisations or individuals such as a visiting health mentor, school nurse, Healthy Young Minds or counselling services. We also support families in need through Early Help Assessments where there is a requirement to do so.

My child is involved with an external agency, should I tell school?

Although there is no obligation to share such information with school, it would be beneficial to ensure that students' specific needs are catered for, or we can keep a closer eye on them from a pastoral perspective. We do not chase organisations for information, nor will they share any information with school without your prior consent.

Academic Progress

How is progress and academic performance monitored?

Subject departments hold initial responsibility for monitoring the progress of students in their area. Progress Leaders and staff involved in achievement meetings observe where students may be performing above or below expectations and further intervention put in place where required.

How are students placed into teaching sets?

Our usual systems for placing students into teaching sets will be different this year. We are currently awaiting updated government guidance about how schools will operate in September. Once we receive this guidance we will be able to advise parents of our setting process for September.

How much homework will my child get?

At Alder, we don't believe in a 'more is better' approach when it comes to homework. Teaching staff will make judgements and set homework which will develop learning and promote progress. There may be times when students receive only a small amount of homework or other times when a larger piece of homework is set. Homework, or independent learning tasks, can be set in a variety of ways, including research, online activities or be project-based to be completed over a period of time.

Behaviour

Do you reward good behaviour at Alder?

We believe that good behaviour is an expectation so students are not rewarded for things such as complying with instructions. Instead, our focus is on rewarding students for their effort, achievement and academic progress.

How do you reward students?

Our students are regularly recognised for their endeavours. During lessons, students may receive 'Alder points' for good effort, work or contributions. These points are monitored with bronze, silver, gold, platinum and black badges awarded based on points total as well as meeting relevant criteria on the student's house passport. Teaching staff may also contact parents via a text message, email or phone call in recognition of good work or progress.

We also have several limited edition badges which cover endeavours such as raising money for charitable causes, going above and beyond and caring for the community. Students have a half term or term to be nominated for these badges and will be rewarded in the next available rewards assembly. Students are also rewarded for meeting criteria for British Values and maintaining 100% attendance through the school year.

My child has an after school detention, can this be done during the day instead?

Our behaviour policy is robust in that detentions issued after school are non-negotiable. This includes all Strike 3 detentions and detentions issued for being late, for incorrect uniform or equipment.

My child has an after school detention but has a private appointment, what can I do?

Although after school detentions are non-negotiable, we understand that sometimes our students (and parents) have other unavoidable commitments such as medical appointments. We work on the premise of certainty, not severity, when it comes to sanctioning students and in some circumstances, after school detentions can be arranged for a mutually agreed time after school on a different day.

How is behaviour monitored during break/lunch times?



We have a duty rota to provide a clear and visible presence to all students at break and lunch times. Where students are not following our behaviour expectations, they will be issued a red card.

My child has mentioned a red card to me, what does this entail?

Students will be issued a red card during social times or outside of lesson times where their behaviour does not meet our high expectations. Red cards can be issued for behaviours including not following instructions, displaying unsafe behaviour on the corridor, running or making unnecessary noise, eating on the corridor or not wearing uniform correctly. When a red card is issued, students receive a break and lunch time detention the following day. They still receive their lunch during the lunch period detention.

Is there bullying at Alder?

Every school has cases of bullying but thankfully at Alder, such cases are low. We pride ourselves on dealing swiftly with any form of bullying. It is essential however that any incidents of bullying, where teasing, name-calling, threats or online incidents are persistent over a period of time, are reported to school in the first instance to be dealt with accordingly. We can only deal with issues and incidents we are aware of.

I've seen Alder students misbehaving in the community, are these students dealt with?

We pride ourselves on being a pinnacle point in the local community and as such, do not tolerate poor behaviour from our students on their way to or from school, or any other time they are wearing their uniform and thus representing school. Students are dealt with through our behaviour policy where this is the case. Where we become aware of poor behaviour in the community, we aim to identify the students, refer to parents and refer to our link Police liaison officers where appropriate.

Attendance

Can I take holidays in term time?

Any holidays taken in term time will not be authorised. The local authority will issue fines to parents who take their children out of school for holidays.

My child is too unwell to attend school, what should I do?

In the event your child is too unwell to attend school, you should contact the main school number to report the absence. Staff in school may ask for details of the nature of the illness. You should contact to school every day your child is absent.

I rang to inform my child is ill but they have an unauthorised absence, why is this?

As parents, you will make a judgement on whether your child is well enough to attend school. As a school, we do not authorise illnesses which may be classed as a minor ailment, for example a cold, cough or short sickness. This is not something to be concerned about as we appreciate that not all students will be well enough to attend school 100% of the time and minimal absences may not impact heavily on academic performance. We will only be concerned when a student reaches five days of



unauthorised absence in a term. However, we would expect that if this was the case, it would be likely that you would seek advice from a medical professional.

Can I get medical absences authorised?

If your child is suffering with a more prolonged illness, it may be necessary to see your GP or a medical professional. Absences can be authorised where medical evidence is provided. This could be a signed doctor's note or letter, an appointment card or prescribed medicine.

I need to arrange a medical appointment for my child, what should I do?

We ask that, where possible, appointments are made outside of school time. However, we appreciate that it's not always possible to do this. If medical appointments are made during the school day, we ask that an appointment card or letter be shown to confirm the appointment.

Who can I discuss my child's attendance with in school?

Mrs Hines is our dedicated Student Attendance and Family Liaison Officer who will offer support for students and families where attendance may be a concern. You can also speak to your child's Progress Leader if you feel any attendance issues are linked to pastoral matters or concerns relating to school.

Uniform

My child has forgotten part of their uniform, what happens now?

Where a student forgets an item of their uniform (typically their blazer, tie or shoes) they will be issued with a 30 minute after school detention with their form tutor. You will be informed via text message. If the missing item is brought into school during the day, the detention will be removed. School has stock uniform which in extreme cases can be borrowed but detentions will be upheld where this is the case. If the situation cannot be rectified, the student may be placed in isolation.

My child's shoes got wet on the way home and can't wear them, can trainers be worn instead?

As part of our no excuse culture, we expect students to wear school shoes when in school at all times. Under no circumstances can shoes be substituted for trainers. We would expect students to bring alternative footwear with them in cases of inclement weather.

We have a family occasion and I would like my child's hair and make-up done, is this allowed?

Our uniform policy states that students should not wear make-up, fake tan, eyelashes, nails or eyebrows. Where students arrive to school with any of these, they are likely to be placed in our isolation unit in Headway unless they can be removed.

School transport

Can my child catch the school bus to school?

We have two school busses serving Alder, the Y93 and Y16. Both bus services are provided externally and as such, school has no control over them. To ride the bus, students must have the correct bus pass



and this is issued by Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM). Any issues with school transport, outside of behaviour of students, should be reported to TFGM. More information about the school bus service can be found on their website: <https://tfgm.com/tickets-and-passes/bus-school-bus-services>

The bus driver has said my child will be kicked off the bus for misbehaving, can they do this?

School bus drivers are employed to ensure our students make the journey home safely. If they deem behaviour to be dangerous or unacceptable, they are within their rights to ban students from their service. Should this occur, school have no control in the matter and alternative transport arrangements will have to be made by parents.

Extra-curricular Activities and After School Clubs

Are there any lunchtime or after school clubs that my child can get involved in?

In the new school year, clubs and activities are collated for students to see what they can get involved in either at lunchtime or after the regular school day. There are usually activities involving sport, arts, drama, music and much more.

