



Frequently Asked Questions

Information for prospective parents, carers and students

2020-21

The following pages contain practical and useful information to answer many of the questions that parents/carers and students ask about Alder Community High School. Please refer to our website www.aldercommunityhighschool.org.uk for more detailed information.

Please note that the information in this section refers to school life not under Covid-19 restrictions. There have been many measures put in places to ensure that our school is as Covid-19 secure as it can be. These measures include staggered start and finish times, separate dedicated year group entrances and staggered break and lunch times.



How is the school day organised?

The school day starts at 8:20am and ends at 2:45pm. Students who arrive earlier can use the breakfast club in the dining room from 8:00am. The main school day is divided up into a 25-minute registration/assembly and 5, one-hour lessons. There is a 20-minute break between period 2 and 3 and a 40-minute lunch break between period 4 and 5.

Students enter and leave school via the side entrance doors, not the main front door.

What is the best way to get to and from school?

We recommend that where possible students should walk to school. They can enter the school grounds through main front drive or the back gate (just off Shaw Avenue), which is open and supervised from 8:00am until 8.25am in the morning and from 2.45pm until 3pm after school.

There are 2 school buses which serve Alder Community High School. The bus service is operated by Transport for Greater Manchester. More information about the school bus can be found on the [School Bus](#) page of our website.

Students may come to school by bike. Bike can be locked up in the bike racks at the front of school. Any students riding their bike to and from school should do so in a safe and respectful manner and should be encouraged to wear a helmet. If students are coming on their bike and arriving at the back gate they must alight and push their bike through the playground to the storage area. Any students who do not ride with due care and attention will not be allowed to bring their bike onto school premises.

For those students coming to school by car there is a turn around and drop off point on the site. Also, there is a drop off point at the back of school, just off Grange Road South.

What will happen if my child is late for school?

At Alder we place great importance on good attendance and punctuality. Regular and punctual school attendance is vital for young people to maximise opportunities and to fulfil their potential.

If students arrive late, they will automatically receive a 15 minute detention at the end of the same school day; parents/carers will be notified of this by text message. Any lateness to lessons will automatically be added to the time. Students who are too late for registration must sign in at reception at the main entrance of school.

Clearly attendance at school is crucial and, as you would expect, performance data shows that there is an absolute link between attendance patterns and achievement; quite simply, those students who have the highest attendance rates do best. It is worth remembering that if, for whatever reason, a



student misses 10 days of school in a term, they will miss 50 teaching periods and, despite everyone's best intentions and efforts, this time can never be made up. More information about attendance is available on the [attendance](#) page of our website.

What uniform will my child have to wear?

The uniform is an essential part of our identity. We expect all students to have the required uniform and to wear it with pride. The full uniform and equipment list can be found on the [Uniform and Equipment page of our website](#). We have a reputation for high standards at Alder in particular with regards to uniform and appearance. If you are in any doubt about any of the detail of the uniform policy please contact school for clarification.

Sanctions will be put in place for students who arrive without, or not wearing items of uniform, correctly. To be consistent across the whole school, 30-minute after school detentions are issued for lack of or incorrect uniform.

Can my child bring their mobile phone to school?

We do not allow mobile phones in school. However, we do understand that as children begin to gain their independence it is reassuring for parents to know that their child has a way of contacting them on their journey to or from school. Therefore, if a mobile phone is brought into school it must be turned off and stored away safely inside a zipped pocket or bag.

Students MUST NOT use their phone during the school day, this includes during break and lunchtime and at the end of school before they have left site. Any student found with their phone out will have it confiscated until it can be collected by a parent or carer.

Will my child go on school trips? How much will they cost me?

Whenever possible we bring the curriculum to life through visits and field trips and by asking guests and groups into school. While we try to provide many of these activities free of charge there may be occasions where parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution to help cover the costs.

In addition to curriculum trips we also try to offer a range of fun and enriching activities which will incur a cost to parents/carers. If there are financial difficulties the school may be able to provide assistance, especially when an activity is linked to the curriculum. Obviously, we would like to ensure that no student is ever disadvantaged because of financial circumstances.

The following trips have run in previous years:

- Year 7 Science day trip to Chester Zoo (£23, 2019)
- Year 8 – 11 activities day trip to Blackpool Pleasure Beach (£27.50, 2019)
- Year 8 Science 3 day trip Disneyland Paris (£430, 2020)
- Year 10 MFL KS4 4 day visit to Barcelona (£450, 2020)
- Year 10 Geography and History KS4 3 day visit to London (£350, 2020)



- Year 11 End of year trip to Kingswood (£90, 2020)

How do you deal with Safeguarding or Child Protection in school?

Alder Community High School is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

All staff complete regular safeguarding training, have a commitment to and an understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2020) and follow the Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium 2019). The school has robust procedures for dealing with safeguarding and child protection concerns as detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, which is available on the [school website](#).

We continually work with our school community to equip our students with the skills and knowledge that will help to keep them safe and able to seek appropriate support if required. Throughout the year, within lessons, via assemblies, group sessions and enrichment, we will cover a range of topics including: sexting, online safety, emotional health and well-being, mental health, relationships, Prevent (radicalisation and terrorism), child sexual exploitation and domestic violence to name just a few.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at Alder is Mrs Rachel Anderson, who can be approached, in confidence, to address any safeguarding issues raised by staff, students or parents.

Measures have been put in place to safeguard our students, staff, the buildings and playgrounds and we insist on all members of staff being security conscious.

How do you communicate with parents?

As a school, we use a variety of methods to communicate with parents but strive to be paper-free as far as possible:

- To inform you of non-attendance, to deliver a short but important message or to deliver a short good news message about your child we will send you an SMS text message or [MyEd](#) message;
- With longer, more detailed information about your child we may write to you, send an e mail, telephone you or invite you in to meet us face to face;
- With general and important information we need to give all parents throughout the year we will update the relevant pages on our [website](#).
- Facebook and Twitter - 'like' and 'follow' our pages using the link on the school website. We use the pages to share good news stories and important information about the school.
- We will welcome you in at least once per year for a Parents' Evening. There will be other events for you to attend at appropriate times in your child's education such as Year 9 Pathways Evening and Year 11 Study Support and Exam Guidance Evening.



It is important that we always have the most up to date contact details for all parents/carers.

Is there any bullying at Alder?

Bullying is a topic of concern to parents and students in all schools. As a responsible school we operate an anti-bullying policy that aims to protect and educate. Students are encouraged to report, in confidence, any instances of bullying towards themselves or others. Where bullying does occur, it is dealt with sensitively but firmly. You can be assured incidents will be investigated fully. There are often cases of one-off incidents of name-calling for example and this is generally resolved through discussion with the students concerned.

How do you support the emotional and mental wellbeing of the children?

At Alder the well-being of our students is at the heart of everything we do. Students will only fulfil their potential if they feel safe and, above all, are happy. We have a highly experienced, qualified and dedicated team of individuals who provide a range of pastoral support and guidance to our students and their families if necessary.

Each class has a form tutor who meets with them most days and gets to know each student well. The Form Tutor is in a key position to monitor your child's progress and should be your first point of contact if you have any worries or concerns.

Each year group has a Progress Leader who has an overall responsibility for all the students in their year group. In addition, we have:

- a Learning Mentor;
- a Student Welfare and Family Liaison Officer;
- a Senior Leader for Safeguarding;
- a visiting School Nurse and Health Mentor;
- A visiting Counsellor.

Each year a small number of Year 11 students are appointed as Peer Mentors. Their role is to support and guide younger students, particularly the vulnerable or those lacking in confidence.

In 2019 we received ACSEED accreditation for the school's commitment to emotional wellbeing. [More information can be found here.](#)

Is food available at breakfast, break and lunch time?

A healthy selection of hot and cold food is available for purchase from the school dining room at breakfast, break time and lunch time. The food provision is operated by Mellor's Catering. Students may bring a packed lunch if they prefer. Students are not allowed off the school site at break or lunchtime. All food and drinks must be consumed in the designated areas and not on the corridors, outside or in the classrooms. Sugary drinks such as Lucozade and unhealthy snacks/sweets are not allowed and should not be brought into school.



Are the children well behaved at Alder?

At Alder, we expect the highest standards of behaviour, in order for everyone to succeed. In general, the students are well behaved and low-level disruption to learning is rare. Our procedure for classroom behaviour is a 3-strike system. Sanctions are set where unacceptable behaviour occurs. We expect students to take responsibility for their own actions and complete any sanctions (detentions or otherwise) without question.

Level	Received for...	Sanctions include...
Strike 1	A first instance of minor poor behaviour or disruption to learning, e.g. talking, work avoidance or minor disruption to learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Move seats and/or · Time out to refocus and/or · Verbal warning
Strike 2	A further instance of poor behaviour or disruption. Failure to heed previous warning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 20 minute detention · As above
Strike 3	<p>A final instance of poor behaviour or disruption. Failure to follow teacher's advice from previous levels</p> <p>Or</p> <p>A serious incident within the classroom warranting immediate dismissal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Non-negotiable 1 hour detention after school · Removal from the classroom and placed with another teacher. · Phone call/text home · Stage 2 isolation (if a serious incident)

Students are expected to move around the building in an orderly, sensible fashion between lessons and, whilst not curbing the need to enjoy their social time at break and lunch times, we do expect students to act sensibly during these times.

How are students rewarded?

Our philosophy here at Alder is to reward progress, achievement and effort but not behaviour. Behaviour is an expectation. We award Alder points to students in class who are making significant progress, who are working to a high standard given their starting point and those who put in a lot of effort regardless of their ability. Badges are given out at the end of each half term during the celebration assemblies. [More information about the badges can be found here.](#)



We celebrate the success of students in a celebration assembly at the end of each half term and then at the end of the academic year we host an Awards Evening and a Sports Awards Evening where parents can attend to celebrate the notable successes from the whole year.

What will be on the curriculum and timetable?

The curriculum is based on a two-week timetable (week 1 is green week and week 2 is yellow week) with 50 one-hour teaching periods per fortnight.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 (KS3) students are taught in mixed ability groups for PE and Design Technology. For the remaining subjects the cohort is divided into teaching sets based on ability. These are reviewed at key points within the academic year

The table below shows *an example* of how many one-hour lessons are allocated to each subject over a two-week cycle in KS3, this will vary slightly year on year and depending on the current curriculum and the set your child is in.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	7	7	7
Mathematics	7	6	7
Science	5	5	5
MFL (French or Spanish)	4	5	5
Technology	3	3	3
History	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	3
Religious Education	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Computing	3	4	3
Physical Education	5	4	4
PHSE and Citizenship	2	2	2

At the end of Year 9, students make their pathway choices ready for starting GCSE courses in Year 10 (KS4). Students in the highest ability sets will take the EBACC pathway which includes a prescribed modern foreign language and a humanities subject.

For more information about our curriculum and what to expect in each curriculum area you can refer to the [curriculum pages](#) on the website.



Will my child be taught Religious Education?

Religious Education at Alder Community High School is taught according to the Tameside Agreed Syllabus. Religious Education is not designed to indoctrinate students to a particular religion or belief. It involves learning about different faiths, beliefs and practices and how this might influence a chosen lifestyle. It allows students to learn how to think and talk about their own beliefs and values and to analyse and evaluate the responses of other people to important moral issues with a religious dimension. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education.

Will my child be taught Sex and Relationships Education?

The Sex and Relationships Education curriculum at Alder Community High School is designed to ensure students are taught the knowledge and life skills they will need to stay safe and develop healthy and supportive relationships, particularly dealing with the challenges of growing up in an online world. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some elements of Sex and Relationships Education.

What extra-curricular activities are on offer?

We offer a range of clubs and sports teams during lunch time and after school. These include art, photography, computer science, netball, football, cricket and many more.

How can I find out about the role of the Governing Body?

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

The governing body has three core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The [governing body at Alder Community High School](#) is made up of a group of dedicated and highly supportive individuals that work together for the good of the school and for the benefit of the students. They have a wide spectrum of skills and experience. In addition to regular Governing Body meetings, the governors also attend specific governor days within school and meet regularly with staff within school. All Governors are members of the National Association of Governors (NGA) and take part in regular training throughout the year.

In addition to the full governing body meetings Alder Community High School also has several sub-committees and panels. Through the committee and panel structure the governors ensure that



there is a systematic and robust review of the effective delivery of all statutory requirements so that the school complies with its statutory responsibilities.

How do I apply for a place?

Alder Community High School is a local authority maintained school and therefore follows the local authority policy for admissions for 11-16 students. For admission in September 2021 applications must be made online before 31st October 2020.

For further information on secondary admissions in Tameside, please visit the TMBC website www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions, where you will find links to the online application form and other useful information, including the appeals process.

Parents/carers should also refer to the Tameside [Moving On 2021 booklet](#). This document details the criteria for over-subscription and how it is applied. In September 2021 the school can admit 210 students into year 7.

If you are not allocated a place at your first choice school, you have the right to appeal this decision with the local authority.

How do I apply for a place in another year group?

All transfers are dealt with by TMBC admissions, details of the process can be found on the [school transfers](#) section of their website.

What does the school do to support transition from Primary to Secondary?

Once we know which students are due to attend there is a series of events and meetings to ease the transfer from primary school.

These include:

- Key staff from school will visit primary schools to discuss transfer information with appropriate teachers.
- Information will be sent to parents/carers by e mail or by post.
- Parents and carers are invited to attend an induction information evening at the end of June/early July.
- Children will attend 2 induction days at the beginning of July. On these 2 days the students will have the chance to meet their form group and form tutor and sample some of the lessons they can expect when they start in September.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to [contact us](#) and we will be happy to help.

