



*Student and Parent Handbook*

2021-2022



Aldo Leopold Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Title IX Coordinator  
Cheryl Head, School Counselor  
410 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Silver City, NM 88061  
575-538-2547

Section 504 Coordinator  
Fiona Bailey, Title 1 & assistant principal  
410 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Silver City, NM 88061  
575-538-2547

Special Education Director  
Elisha Melendrez  
410 W. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Silver City, NM 88061  
575-538-2547

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Dear Aldo Leopold Charter School Students and Parents,

We are delighted to welcome you into the 2021/2022 school year! This coming school year is shaping up to be a great one. We are eager to make up for lost time both in and out of the classroom as we look ahead to a year jam-packed with meaningful educational opportunities. As this year's Students Council President, I'm excited to help facilitate an experience for you and your child that is welcoming, inclusive, motivating, and above all *fun*. Aldo students have a history of resilience, whether you see us in the midst of a challenging backpack trip, stuck on a tough math question, or more recently tripping through technical difficulties during an all-school advisory. I'm excited to see students (new and old) learning to thrive, and I am here to do whatever I can to help. Thanks so much for being a part of our community.

Tigerlily Warner  
2021-2022 Student Council President

P.S. If you wish to ask me about the upcoming school year, student council, or anything else my email is tigerlily.warner@aldostudents.org



Aldo Leopold Charter School  
Live. Learn. Lead.

Dear ALCS Families,

Welcome to Aldo Leopold Charter School and our first full year with middle and high school back in the same building. I am very excited to start the new school year in person on WNMU's beautiful campus at Ritch Hall. Being on campus gives us many opportunities, such as the use the grass fields, the gymnasium, auditoriums, and large mature trees to have classes under. The schools' YCC, Youth Conservation Corp has developed a beautiful outdoor play space, called the Rock Garden, just north of the building. This area is also going to be used by students to eat lunch and to have outdoor classes. Eventually it will have an attractive fence around it and will have a basketball court. The school uses property tax money to fund these projects because we are on a public schools' campus. You will get a chance to vote for a mill levy in November that will enable us to maintain those tax dollars with no tax increase.

This past year was emotionally and academically challenging for students and teachers. Learning exclusively online was unheard of for an outdoor education school. But as hard as it was to do, our teachers were awesome in getting the job done. Three long-time Aldo teachers retired this year. Two of the teachers Mark Cantrell and Scott Knight started the middle school program at Aldo, introducing mini-villages and experiential ed. Fridays. Harry Browne the school's business manager and math teacher who helped write the original charter in 2005 for Aldo Leopold Charter School also retired. We will miss them. The school was able to replace all three positions with very qualified individuals. Melissa Frost will be the new business manager, Serena Murillo will be the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, and Jennifer Lamborn will teach high school English. Matt Gruszka is moving from an EA position to teach HS math and co-teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade math, and Erik Weatherby will be moving from co-teaching 6<sup>th</sup> grade to teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and social studies.

The students have had a lot of screen time over the past year and half so the school will be focusing on more outdoor activities that involve socialization and exercise. The school will also be strictly enforcing the cell phone policy. Students will not be allowed to use their cell phone in the building unless they have explicit directions from a teacher allowing them to. Parents should call the school phone or email the secretaries if they need to talk with their child. The school will also be requiring all people in the building to wear a CDC-approved face mask. We will continue to wear masks indoors until all students can become vaccinated or there is changing guidance from New Mexico Public Education department or the CDC.

Thank you for making a choice to send your child to a public charter school. New Mexico is one of very few states that requires all charter schools to be free and public allowing for any student to go through the lottery.

Thank you,  
Wayne Sherwood

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## INTRODUCTION

This Student and Parent Handbook is designed to provide information that is essential to a successful educational experience for our students. It contains important information for each student and parent or legal guardian of a student. The information in this handbook applies to all students.

### *Aldo Leopold Charter School Vision*

Aldo Leopold Charter School graduates will use the skills, perspectives, and information they gain at school to enhance their own lives and to advance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

### *Aldo Leopold Charter School Mission*

At Aldo Leopold Charter School, the human and natural environments serve as text and lab for learning through direct experience, inquiry, and stewardship.

### *Meeting the Student's Individual Needs*

Aldo Leopold Charter School provides several opportunities to meet each student's individual educational needs. For every student, the school promotes a sense of belonging to a small group of peer learners and establishes healthy working relationships with faculty members. Each student will also have his or her own advisor.



## *Aldo Leopold Charter School Culture and Norms*

The culture of ALCS is one of inclusion, inquiry, direct experience, and respect. Faculty, staff, and the Governing Council strive to create a culture that supports the mission and vision of the school and are guided by that goal in decision-making and actions. Students should use the school culture and Norms to guide their behavior at school and performance in school activities, and parents are asked to accept and embrace that culture for their student's successful experience at Aldo Leopold Charter School.

### *School Norms*

The students and staff through a collaborative process determine the Norms for each school year. Though they are guided by the culture of the school, they vary from year to year depending on the collective personality of that year's student body.

The ALCS School Norms as defined by the students and staff most often include or are similar to:

- **Practice Equality**
- **Be Prepared and Proactive**
- **Be Invested; Participate!**
- **Be Sober**
- **Be Confident in Yourself**
- **Respect**
  - **Property**
  - **Environment**
  - **Yourself**
  - **Others**
- **Take Responsibility**
- **Exercise Self Control**
- **Cultivate Maturity**
- **Motivate**
- **Be**
  - **Open Minded**
  - **Focused**
  - **Peaceful**
  - **Aware**
  - **Kind**
- **Celebrate Diversity**
- **Communicate Effectively**
- **Encourage Confidence**
- **Create Mutual Support**
- **Be Mindful of Impact on Community**
- **Practice Integrity**
- **Lead by Example**
- **Learn From Experiences**
- **Speak Up**
- **Cooperate**
- **Encourage Positivity**
- **Practice Active Listening**
- **Strive for Excellence**
- **Have Fun**
- **Pursue Knowledge**
- **Motivate**
- **Practice Forgiveness**
- **Encourage Confidence**
- ***Keep the Aldo Vibe!***

## PARENTS OF ALDO LEOPOLD CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS

### *Enrollment at Aldo Leopold Charter School*

ALCS is chartered for maximum enrollment of 120 students in the high school and 90 in the middle school. Students are selected by lottery prior to enrollment. The full ALCS Enrollment Procedures are available online or upon request.

### *Communication*

Aldo Leopold Charter School strives to examine and improve communication on a regular basis. This is a high priority for three reasons. First, we expect parents to be involved with their children's education, so we had better hold up our end of the bargain and keep you informed about what is happening at school. Second, our school schedule is atypical—so be sure to check out what your student's *week* looks like. Without good communication, minor changes can create major confusion. Third, we try to get out of the classroom as much as we can, and we want you to know well in advance about the itinerary of these school trips and what your student will need to bring. Please be proactive in communicating with the school when you are uncertain about anything involving your student's schooling! And please let us know about communication gaps so we can continue to improve.

ALCS provides many forms of communication with our families. Below is a list and description of the mechanisms that we commonly use in communicating with families and the greater community.

- Website – <http://www.aldocs.org>
- The school website has general information about the school.
- The Aldo Leopold Charter School home page is connected to the school's information system (PowerSchool). Through a secure login, each student's individual information is available. To use this site, please contact the school for an activation code. If you wish for this program to serve other general information, please share this with the Director for consideration. Here is a sample of what is typically available through the website and PowerSchool:
  - Grades and attendance
  - Important documents for both students and parents
  - Contact information
  - The school's newsletters
  - The school's master calendar
  - ALCS's website and Facebook page
  - Guidance Counselor resources

- Facebook Page - <http://www.facebook.com/aldoleopoldhs>  
Used for informal announcements, updates, and posting of photos from school activities. “Like” our page to receive these notices on your Facebook News Feed.
- Newsletter – The school publishes an almost weekly newsletter that is posted on our website with a link sent out to families and community members via text. ***If you wish to receive a hard copy, please call ahead to request a hard copy and pick it up at the school!*** The Newsletter is the most comprehensive and reliable source of information for our school community. It lists expectations, reminders, and calendar events, describes opportunities in and around Silver City, and publishes stories about our school community.
- Email – All ALCS personnel have a school email address. It is constructed as first initial and last name. Wayne Sherwood’s email address, for example, is [wsherwood@aldocs.org](mailto:wsherwood@aldocs.org). Staff bios and email addresses are available through the school’s website: <http://www.aldocs.org>
- Call – Sometimes the most effective means of communication is a phone call. Please don’t hesitate to call when other means of communication simply won’t suffice or are not feasible. Calling in about an absence is a perfect example!
  - Main Number 575-538-2547
  - Fax Number 575-388-4970

### ***Volunteering***

ALCS relies heavily on parent support. Each family is asked to volunteer an average of two hours a month. In the past, our families have donated in excess of 1500 hours per year. This serves two primary purposes: providing services that save the school significant time and money and helping to keep our families integrated into the school community. You may contact the volunteer coordinator, Cathie, by calling the school at 575-538-2547 or by email ([cgomez@aldocs.org](mailto:cgomez@aldocs.org)).

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

At ALCS, students engage in a curriculum that meets New Mexico’s Common Core State Standards in language arts and math and Standards and Benchmarks in the remaining subject areas. In this regard, it is similar to the curriculum offered at traditional schools across the country. In practice, however, a number of differences set Aldo Leopold Charter School apart. A low student-to-teacher ratio increases opportunities for success for all students. Coursework is fast-paced and challenging; students can anticipate one to two hours of homework on school nights. Middle school students will have less homework than this but the goal is to prepare them for the high school’s expectations. Students’ core classes in both middle and high school are closely related to each other, thanks to an integrated curriculum and ongoing collaboration by faculty members. Another difference happens as teachers use experiences in the natural environment and the community to help students engage with the curriculum. Additionally, participation, group work, and hands-on activities are heavily emphasized over lecture-style teaching. ALCS offers several electives each semester and high school students are able to participate in the “Dual Enrollment” program (see “ALCS-WNMU Dual Enrollment Program,” p. 16), in which students take electives at Western New Mexico University and receive both high school and college credit.

### ***Experiential/Outdoor Education***

ALCS is a school located near a wilderness. Our school calendar includes more than 40 days in settings outside of the classroom for most students. Using the outdoors as a learning laboratory, ALCS addresses the health and education of the whole student through direct experience with nature. Outdoor activities develop intellectual, emotional, and physical skills – developing self-confidence, improving fitness, fostering teambuilding, and demonstrating connectedness to the natural world. Participation is required by all students.

### ***Academic Environment***

ALCS strives to create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. We expect our students to help create such an environment by supporting each other, respecting the ideas and values of others, and meeting the staff’s high expectations for academic work both in and out of the classroom. Recognizing that the actions and attitude of each individual affect the entire community, behavior contrary to this objective is considered a violation of school rules and grounds for discipline.

### ***Teachers, Instructional Support Providers, and Director Credentials***

A parent or legal guardian may request information about the professional qualifications of his or her student’s teachers or instructional support providers or the school director at any time.

## *Academic Honesty*

Our program is built upon a community of trust, respect, and responsibility as evidenced in the school's Norms that are adopted by the students and staff each year. Academic honesty is essential in upholding these attributes.

It is expected that all ALCS students practice academic honesty. Students are expected to produce original work and cite sources appropriately when referencing others' work. If a student is found violating this expectation, he or she will face discipline. Discipline may include receiving no credit for a class, detentions, suspensions, or other consequences. Repeated violations will result in more severe consequences that may include expulsion.

## *Attendance*

The new Attendance for Success Act implemented by the state in 2019 recognizes that for students to be successful they must be in school; therefore, absences of any kind reduce student learning. ALCS's overall goal is to prevent student absences by building a school community and academic plan that engages students. For the students' part, they are expected to be present and on time to all classes. It is imperative that our students attend class and their Friday internships and Friday experiential education program regularly. Please be mindful of when you schedule appointments so students are not missing experiential education Fridays and as little class time as possible.

Advisory is a non-credit class; however, attendance in advisory is expected, as this is an opportunity for students to stay informed of school activities and expectations and for teachers to maintain oversight regarding the student's general performance.

Students must maintain attendance at mandatory ALCS events even when participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics or band at other high schools, college classes, or other commitments. Each student is responsible for communicating these expectations to the appropriate coaches, professors, or supervisors to ensure attendance at mandatory ALCS events. When students miss classes for an ALCS for another high school or college extracurricular activity, the student must fill out and have signed by teachers and parents an "Extra-Curricular Activity Participant Form." (These forms are found in the lobby)

Though we will count all absences that lead to learning loss, the following are acceptable reasons for tardiness or absences from ALCS class and events:

- Student illness or injury
- Religious holiday
- Death in the family
- Pre-arranged and unavoidable medical appointments

**For an absence to be "excused", a parent or guardian must contact the school within 24 hours of the absence. Otherwise, the absence will be recorded as "unexcused".**

An excuse for an absence or tardy, for any reason other than the above, must be approved by the school on or before the day of the absence or tardy. If a student has many absences or excessive tardiness, or a parent or legal guardian excuses a student's absence or tardiness after the fact, the parent or legal guardian may be required to supply the school with documentation (when applicable) validating the excuse within three (3) days of the student's return to school.

### ***Parent Notification of Attendance***

ALCS will notify parents or legal guardians the same day as the student's absence. In return, we expect parents or legal guardians to notify the school in advance or on the day when their student is or will be absent or tardy. Parents or legal guardians are encouraged to check on their student's attendance by using PowerSchool. The link is provided on the ALCS website. Call the school for log-in information.

**For an absence to be "excused", a parent or guardian must contact the school within 24 hours of the absence. Otherwise, the absence will be recorded as "unexcused".**

***Two-hour classes will be treated as two separate classes for the purpose of calculating absences or tardies; a student who misses one two-hour class will accumulate two class absences.***

Students absent from school may not be on campus without the school's permission. Nor may they disrupt the educational process in any way. For state reporting purposes and truancy management, a student who is absent 2 or 3 classes within one school day will be reported absent for one-half of a day. A student who has more than 3 class absences within a day is considered absent for the entire day.

### ***ALCS Field Trip Attendance***

Field trips are an integral part of the ALCS curriculum. Absence from a field trip reduces a student's ability to fulfill the expectations that surround our program and individual course curricula. Students must make every effort to attend these field trips. The following are in place to encourage field trip participation:

- If a student expects to be absent from a field trip, the student and a parent or a legal guardian must submit a signed, written request stating the reason no less than one week prior to the field trip. The school may request proof or validation of the stated reason.
- A signed, written request with proof validating the reason will be required for any requests within one week of the field trip or for families excusing an absence after the field trip.
- An alternate assignment may be given to the student to compensate for missed curriculum.
- Any student with an unexcused absence from a field trip will receive a failing field trip grade within each class and may face other consequences including a Behavior Intervention Plan.

### ***Attendance for Success Act***

ALCS is committed to helping students be successful by working with families in regards to attendance. A big part of that is three-way communication between school, parents, and students. When needed ALCS will contact other community resources such as JPPO and CYFD.

## The Attendance for Success Act:

- *Replaces the Compulsory School Attendance Law*
- *Reflects the federal shift from truancy compliance to absenteeism intervention and prevention*
- *Provides a process for prevention of absences, early intervention, specialized supports, and CYFD referrals for students absent, chronically absent, and excessively absent*
- *Requires schools to report absences, chronic and excessive absences data to PED at each reporting period and document intervention efforts made to keep students in school*

*For an absence to be “excused,” a parent or guardian must contact the school within 24 hours of the absence. Otherwise, the absence will be recorded as “unexcused.”*

## **Tardiness**

Unexcused tardiness will not be tolerated. Students who are tardy to class must obtain a pass from the main office in order to be admitted into the classroom. In order for a tardy to be considered excused, a student must have a written excuse from his or her parents, legal guardian, or an ALCS staff member that is approved by the school.

Arriving 25 minutes late to a class or acquiring a total of 25 minutes late time within a class will be considered an absence for that class. ALCS will track the number of tardies that each student has accumulated and enact consequences based on the number of accumulated tardies; the greater the number of tardies, the higher the consequences.

## **Long-term Student Illness**

Should a student's illness cause absence for six weeks or longer, home instruction should be requested.

## **Students who are age 18 and older**

Students who are age eighteen and over are responsible for notifying the school when they are absent by contacting the ALCS front office. Upon return to school, students must provide their written statement to the school secretary concerning the reason for the absence.

## ***Middle School Schedule***

	Monday to Thursday	Friday
8:45 – 10:45	Core Classes	8:45-3:40 Experiential Education Curriculum
10:45 – 11:45	Elective	
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch	
12:15 – 1:15	Elective	
1:15 – 3:15	Core Classes	
3:15 – 3:35	Advisory	
3:40 – 4:40	Student Support	

### ***Course requirements for ALCS Middle School Students (6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade)***

3 years of Language Arts  
 3 years of Social Studies  
 3 years of Math  
 3 years of Science  
 Physical Education and Health  
 Participation in electives

Communication skills, art, and music will be integrated into both electives and core classes. The Experiential Education Curriculum is mandatory through our school Charter; therefore, all ALCS Middle School students are expected to participate in these activities, which include Friday outings, field trips, and overnight camping.

### ***Middle School Grade Promotion***

It is the intent of ALCS to do what is in the best interest of the student with regard to grade promotion. A middle school student who fails any core subject for the entire year or the second semester shall be reviewed for possible grade retention. The following will be considered: Overall academic



performance, the student's ability to integrate socially with his or her peers, teachers' recommendations, unique circumstances that may have hindered academic performance, and the parent's recommendation.

## *ALCS HIGH SCHOOL schedule and academic requirements*

### *Graduation Requirement for ALCS High School students*

4 credits Language Arts

4 credits Social Studies

1 Cultural Geography and Economics

1 World History

1 US History

.5 New Mexico History

.5 Government

4 credits Math (See requirement “A” below for more details)

3 credits Science (to include two lab science courses)

1 credit Physical Education

1 credit Communications/Business (usually met by studying a foreign language)

1 credit Community Orientation\*

3 credits Internships

5.5-6 elective credits

1 credit Health (.5 as freshman & .5 as junior)

27 total credits at a minimum

Additional State Requirements for students entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2009 or later:

- A. Math – One unit shall be the equivalent to or higher than the level of algebra 2, unless the parent submits written, signed permission for the student to complete a lesser mathematics unit. (At ALCS, this means completing at least the third year of the Interactive Math Program.)
- B. At least one of the units required for graduation shall be earned as an advanced placement or honors course, distance learning, or a dual-credit course offered in cooperation with an institution of higher education.
- C. One unit in one of the following: a career cluster course, workplace readiness, or a \*language other than English (\*recommended) This credit is met by the Community Orientation and Internship credits
- D. Must demonstrate competence from a menu of options in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

\* The Experiential Education Curriculum is mandatory through our school Charter; therefore, all ALCS High School students are expected to participate in these activities, which include Community Orientation, Internships, class and grade level field trips, and backpacking.

*Scope & Sequence: Shown here is a sample four-year program for ALCS Students.*

1st Semester

9th grade

Language Arts 9  
Cultural Geography & Economics  
Environmental Science  
Integrated Mathematics (IM) 1  
Community Orientation  
Physical Education  
Health

10th grade

Language Arts 10  
World History/AP  
Biology  
Integrated Math 2  
Internship  
Elective  
Elective

11th grade

Language Arts 11/AP  
US History  
Lab Science  
Integrated Math 3  
Internship  
Electives

12th grade

Language Arts 12 /AP  
Internship  
New Mexico History  
Lab Science  
2 Electives  
Financial Literacy

2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

9th grade

Language Arts 9  
Cultural Geography & Economics  
Environmental Science  
IM 1  
Community Orientation  
Physical Education  
Elective

10th grade

Language Arts 10  
World History/AP  
Biology  
IM 2  
Internship  
Elective  
Elective

11th grade

Language Arts 11/AP  
US History  
Lab Science  
IM 3  
Internship  
Health  
Electives

12th grade

Language Arts 12/AP  
Internship  
Government  
Lab Science  
2 Electives  
Financial Literacy

## *High School Schedule*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 – 10:35	A	B	A	B	9 <sup>th</sup> grade Math/LA
10:40 – 11:00	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Community Orientation 10:40-3:40 and 10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Internships 8:30-3:40
11:05 – 12:00	C	D	C	D	
12:00 – 12:40	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
12:40– 1:35	C	D	C	D	
1:40-3:30	E	F	E	F	
3:35-4:35	G	G	G	G	

### *Weekly Schedule – Friday*

Freshmen – Math and Language Arts 9 will meet each Friday followed by Community Orientation. On some days, these two classes may meet for double periods or Community Orientation may meet for the entire day. A schedule will be given to freshmen, new students and their families early in the year to assist with the unique Friday scheduling.

New 10<sup>th</sup>-, 11<sup>th</sup>-, and 12<sup>th</sup>-Grade Students – Community Orientation will be taken in the first semester. Students who receive a passing grade in Community Orientation will take on an internship in the second semester.

Upperclassmen who are in freshman classes will be expected to attend classes on Friday mornings and will have limited time on Fridays to participate in internships until this coursework is successfully completed.

Students who are participating in the Band program or Sports Lab at Silver High School (SHS) are to report to SHS as directed by their instructor. Students may request transportation from SHS to ALCS via the Corre Caminos bus service.

## ***Grade Acceleration***

ALCS makes every attempt to meet a student where he/she is. If a student needs enrichment, we have avenues to help him/her achieve this in an appropriate school setting. Our teachers are trained to differentiate instruction to accommodate their students.

Who is eligible?

Grade accelerations must be considered PRIOR to entrance into the high school program. High school grades may not be “skipped” as all students must attain the necessary credits to graduate. The decision for acceleration should be based on sufficient data collected on past performance and motivated by a desire to place the student in the school program where the greatest success will result.

Process

A request for acceleration must be submitted in writing to the Director. The request must clearly state the rationale and be signed by the student and a parent or guardian. A teacher’s recommendation is required. A student requesting acceleration upon enrollment into Aldo Leopold Charter School will be required to obtain a written recommendation from his or her previous school’s principal or guidance counselor. A student who is being considered for acceleration may be requested to complete specific testing. The student’s academic achievement level and mental ability are important, but physical and social characteristics are also determining factors. Parental involvement in all steps of the process is vital. The director may convene a committee with parents, student, current and future teachers.

When circumstances indicate that acceleration is in the best interest of the student, close cooperation between the parents and all school personnel is imperative. Any student who is granted acceleration must fulfill all graduation requirements stated by the school and the state. The final decision to accelerate a student rests with the Director.

## ***Testing Out of Classes***

If a student’s parent or guardian or an ALCS teacher feels that a student might qualify for testing out of a course, it will be up to the student’s parent or guardian to submit a written request to ALCS. The request should include a statement clearly indicating the course that the student would like to test out of, the reason for testing out, and information about relevant past curricula. The parent may also be required to submit a sample of the student’s work. A student who has failed a course may not test out of that class.

Only under extraordinary circumstances will the Director grant a request to test out of a class that is a primary component of the ALCS school curriculum and essential to the building of school culture. A student’s performance in a course should extend beyond his or her gaining an understanding of the key concepts. Contributions to the classroom environment and demonstrating healthy performance habits are developmentally important for high school students. These factors will be weighed when considering a request.

The Director, and appropriate staff when necessary, will evaluate the request considering the student's age and proposed grade placement. The Director has the final discretion to honor or deny any requests. If a request is deemed valid, the student will be required to take a test to ensure that he or she has mastery of the content. The testing may include an "End of Course" exam to be taken toward the end of semester. In the event that a request is denied, a reason will be given for the decision. If the student successfully tests out of a course that is offered at ALCS, he or she will gain credit for that course with a letter grade of "P" for passing.

### ***Dropping a Class***

*First month:* Students may drop a class without any penalty within four weeks of the first day of class; the class will not affect the student's GPA and will not show on the transcript.

*4 Weeks to Quarter End:* After the first four weeks of a class and prior to the beginning of the second quarter of a semester, a student may withdraw. The withdrawal shall be documented on the transcript with no effect on the GPA. A passing student may withdraw with a "withdrawal pass" (WP) and a failing student with a "withdrawal fail" (WF). If a student/legal guardian believes there are extenuating circumstances that warrant dropping a class, (s)he may submit a written request to the Director for a possible withdrawal (W).

*Second Quarter:* After the start of the second quarter of a semester, a student who is passing the class may receive a withdrawal pass (WP). A student failing a class may not receive a withdrawal status unless granted an exception at the discretion of the Director.

**On-line and Dual Credit Courses:** Students taking on-line or dual credit courses for core curriculum credits must obtain permission of the school guidance counselor prior to dropping a class. It is inherent on these students to keep the school guidance counselor apprised of the student's progress in said classes, on a monthly basis, in order to ensure graduation requirements are not compromised. In courses taken as elective and not needed for graduation, students must promptly report any grades received of "C" or below and any intent to drop from said course prior to that withdrawal occurring.

### ***Non-Accredited Transcripts***

ALCS reserves the right not to accept coursework from non-accredited institutions, including homeschool programs. Any student entering ALCS with credit awarded from a non-accredited program of study will most likely be expected to test out of individual classes or repeat coursework.

### ***Repeating Electives***

Students may only repeat an elective if he or she has failed the course. The Director reserves the right to waive this policy.

## Grading at ALCS

Percentage	Letter Grade
100-90 %	A
89-80%	B
79-70%	C
69% and below	F

Grade	Points toward GPA
A	4
B	3
C	2
F	0
NC	--

ALCS has four grading periods of approximately nine weeks each in duration. Credits for classes are given at the end of each semester, which consist of two grading periods and a final exam or project. Parents are encouraged to review grades and attendance at any time on PowerSchool.

***Parent communication is very important for student academic success. ALCS encourages all parents to contact teachers with questions or concerns regarding student achievement or grades.***

ALCS expects all students to do their very best in each of their classes. A rigorous curriculum and grading scale have been put in place that requires students to perform at a high academic level. ALCS will post percentage and the corresponding letter grade on report cards using the above percentage-to-letter grade chart. The school will only post the above mentioned letter grades, not the percentage, on transcripts. ALCS does not weight grades based on honors classes.

Middle school students' GPA will be used to keep track of their success before entering high school. Although high school GPA will begin fresh in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers may use their middle school GPA to determine progress or the need for intervention, which may include retention.

A student who has 10 or more absences within a course will receive an NC (No Credit) for that course unless the student is failing the class, in which case s/he will receive a failing grade, not an NC. NC will not be calculated into a student's GPA. The student or the student's parent or legal guardian may request at appeal from the Director within two weeks of receiving the final grades. The Director, in consultation with staff, as needed, will decide whether or not a student will earn credit for the class.

When determining GPA for transcripts, ALCS will utilize the above table. Courses that are on a pass/fail-grading criterion will not be calculated into the GPA. Dual Enrollment classes will be included in the calculation.

If a student fails a class that is required for graduation, then the student must repeat and pass the class in order to graduate. If the failed class is not a requirement for graduation, then the student must still earn enough elective class credits from the elective offerings to acquire the credits necessary for graduation.

## ***Grade Change Policy***

In the event that a student, parent, or guardian is requesting a grade change, the following guidelines are in place:

- The student who is of legal age, parent, or guardian must submit a signed written request to the Director within three months of the issuing of the final grade.
- The school is responsible for responding to the written request within 10 business days.
- If a grade is to be changed, the reasons for the change will be clearly articulated.
- Any students who are similarly situated will have an equal opportunity to request a change.
- The school will attempt to obtain written documentation from the student's classroom teacher.
- The school will adhere to FERPA guidelines.

## ***Homework***

ALCS students may be assigned 1½ to 2 hours of homework per day in high school and less in middle school. Sometimes students will be given time to work on their assignments in class. Students are expected to complete their assignments promptly and hand them in for full credit when they are due.

### **Guidelines for Helping a Student with Homework**

ALCS provides students with challenging and engaging academic experiences. As with so much else about raising a child, it takes a village to allow our students to meet the challenges we give them and to be ready for success after graduation. We would like to thank all of the parents, siblings, alumni, and other community members who give their time to help our students with everything from staying healthy to doing their homework.

We have found over the years that the help students receive can vary widely. In the interest of maintaining a peak learning experience for students, assessing student work fairly, and fostering an ethical approach to academics, the faculty has developed the following guidelines:

- Students are encouraged to request help from faculty members, community members, and parents in the event that they do not understand their assignment.
- Faculty members, parents, and community members are encouraged to do the following to help a student:
  - Clarify the assignment
  - Ask questions to guide student thinking
  - Help develop a pre-write or other organizational tools that develop student thinking
  - Answer questions about spelling, punctuation, format expectations, etc.
  - Provide tools such as computer programs, calculators, project materials, etc. and an explanation/demonstration of how to use those tools



- Make suggestions for revision or other improvement
- Develop math problems similar to one that is stumping a student and demonstrate how to solve those similar problems
- Helpers **may not**:
  - compose the essay
  - do the research
  - do the assigned math problem
  - make the presentation materials (models, PowerPoint, etc.)

In the event that a student receives significant assistance on an assignment, it is recommended that the individual who assisted the student write a note to or contact the teacher. This allows the teacher to better assess the student's understanding. Also, keeping original drafts or tracking changes on Word documents will help provide proof of authentic work.

### **Late Assignment Policy for ALCS**

It is the student's responsibility to obtain missed assignments. In the event that a student has a pre-approved, excused absence, the student is expected to obtain and complete assignments either in advance or on time.

There are three scenarios for late assignments:

1. An excused absence on the day an assignment **is given**.
  - Any student who is excused-absent the day an assignment is given must obtain all assignments on or before the first day back to school. In the event of a one- or two-day absence, the student will be granted a one- or two-day extension of the due date to complete and submit the assignment. In the event that the student has more than two excused absences, the student may request a reassigned due date from the teacher. Note that 'day' means school day, not class meeting day.
2. An excused absence when an assignment **is due**
  - A student who is absent on the day an assignment is due may turn in the assignment without penalty on or before the first day back to school. Even if a student does not have the class in which the assignment is due on the day s/he returns to school, it is his or her responsibility to submit the work to that teacher by this time.
3. **Unexcused** late assignment
  - In the event that a teacher accepts unexcused late assignments, a student has up to 10 school days after the assignment's due date to submit work for partial credit. The 10 days will include school days that the student is present and unexcused absence days; excused absences do not count toward the 10 days that a student has to submit this work. After the 10 days, the

assignment will receive a zero. No late assignment may receive a grade greater than 90% and the later the submission, the lower the grade may be.

***Each teacher has flexibility*** within this policy and may choose to have a more stringent late assignment policy. Each teacher must notify his or her class of the class's late assignment policy. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Director.

### ***ALCS-WNMU Dual Enrollment Program***

ALCS students are eligible to participate in the Dual Enrollment Program with Western New Mexico University (WNMU). Students may enroll in college classes and receive both college and high school credits. WNMU tuition and registration fees are waived and required course materials and books are provided to the student by ALCS. Students will be responsible for non-required course material or course-specific fees (i.e. lab fees). Course material is the property of ALCS and must be returned in reusable condition. Lost or damaged course material will be billed to the student or student's parent.

Freshman and sophomore students will only receive elective credit at ALHS for any dual enrollment class they take at WNMU. Enrollment in core classes is reserved for junior and senior students at ALCS. Approval from the WNMU instructor is required in many cases. Course schedule information is available through the WNMU website at [www.wnmu.edu](http://www.wnmu.edu).

Students begin the registration process by obtaining necessary forms from the ALCS Guidance Counselor. Students who are participating in the dual credit program will be subject to the grading, behavior, and attendance policies of WNMU. Students must provide their own transportation to and from WNMU if they enroll in dual enrollment classes.

### ***Distance Learning***

ALCS offers distance learning courses for course recovery or for other legitimate reasons when an in-house option is not available. ALCS utilizes Edgenuity courses for all distance-learning opportunities since it uses highly qualified instructors and aligns curriculum with New Mexico Common Core State Standards and State Standards and Benchmarks. The ALCS Guidance Counselor serves as the distance learning site coordinator.

The criteria and approval process for students seeking a distance learning opportunity are as follows:

- Student must submit a distance learning course request form to the school counselor.
- Elective courses may not interfere with a student's core curriculum.
- A student may take an Edgenuity elective course only if the student is unable to take an elective due to scheduling conflicts or if ALCS electives are full. The Guidance Counselor, pending final approval by the Director, may grant exceptions.

- All core curriculum delivered by distance learning courses must meet or exceed the state content standards with benchmarks and performance standards.
- Any student taking an Edgenuity course will receive credit and grades based on the state standards for that course and Edgenuity’s grading schema.

### ***Safer Sex Education in high school***

Aldo Leopold Charter School will provide accurate and appropriate information to students regarding safer sex practices. Information about the topic, ranging from abstinence to the potential consequences of sexual activities, may be incorporated into parts of the school curricula. Sexual education in middle school will be age and developmentally appropriate.

It is not the intent of Aldo Leopold Charter School to promote sexual activity, or to supplant a student’s or parents’ values. A parent or legal guardian may revoke his or her student’s participation in this program by completing and submitting the school’s “Safer Sex Opt Out” form.

### **ALCS RULES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Aldo Leopold Charter School strives to create a learning environment free from distractions so that all students may have an opportunity to succeed. Students and parents must understand that disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and that students will receive consequences if their behavior creates problems in school, on the school campus, or during off-campus electives or fieldtrips. It is expected that students follow both the spirit and letter of ALCS rules for student behavior.

### ***Request for Conflict Resolution or Mediation***

In the event that a student is in an unresolved conflict with a staff person or another student, ALCS encourages students and staff alike to use a three-step approach toward resolution.

- Put concern in writing, using the “Request for Mediation” form (See Appendix B). Turn form into school counselor. A mediator will meet with you to offer advice.
- Upon the recommendation of the mediator and the agreement of both parties, mediation will be scheduled. Both parties agree to a set of rules and guidelines, with the goal of achieving a win/win resolution. If a resolution is reached, both parties will sign the “Mediation Agreement” form (See Appendix C).
- The two parties will meet again after a one-month period to evaluate and modify their agreement where necessary.

### ***Restorative Practices***

ALCS utilizes various restorative practices within our academic and non-academic programs. One facet of these practices is a restorative circle that shares common threads with our often-used Socratic seminars. Given these similarities, restorative circles typically come easily to our students.

In addition to utilizing these practices within parts of our academic curricula, we utilize some restorative practices to assist with building school culture. These methods have demonstrated success in resolving conflict and creating a natural process for addressing many behaviors. Restorative practices are not intended to replace discipline; rather, it is the desire of ALCS to use them for prevention and healing, and occasionally as tools to assist with discipline

### ***Drugs and Alcohol Policy***

The following are prohibited at Aldo Leopold Charter School and associated activities:

- Illegal drugs and substances
- Misusing prescription drugs
- Misused non-prescription drugs
- Possessing drugs NOT prescribed to that individual
- Possessing or use of alcohol

Any student who violates this rule will be subject to suspension or expulsion.

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of any of the before mentioned prohibited items, the student will be searched, parents/guardians will be called, and the student may be expected to submit to a drug test.

If any student is under the influence or in possession of the before mentioned items, **the police will most likely be called** and the student may be asked to submit to a drug test. If the test is positive, then the student may be requested to enroll in a drug-counseling program and provide proof of attendance.

**If the student refuses a drug test it will be considered an admission of guilt, and he or she will face discipline** and will be barred from school activities until a negative drug test result is submitted to the Director.

***ALCS reserves the right to use drug dogs to search for drugs and drug paraphernalia.***

Characteristics of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol include but are not limited to:

- Smelling of alcohol or marijuana
- Carrying a suspicious substance or alcohol
- Carrying drug paraphernalia
- Demonstrating distorted balance, impaired coordination, or slurred speech
- Demonstrating lack of impulse control or jitteriness
- Undue paranoia
- Demonstrating inability to focus
- Repeatedly sleeping in class or at the worksite
- Any other signs that could be reasonably interpreted as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol

## ***YCC Drug Policy***

All ALCS students employed for a Youth Conservation Corps work crew will be subject to random drug testing. As such, any YCC crew member may be asked at any time to report to a designated testing site within 12 hours, where testing will be conducted by medical professionals.

If the test is positive, then the student will forfeit his position on the crew and, if applicable, be subject to the ALCS Drugs and Alcohol Policy. If the student is in violation of the ALCS Drugs and Alcohol Policy and is offered the option to remain at ALCS, he will be requested to enroll in a drug-counseling program and to provide proof of attending that program; in addition, the student and his parents will be financially responsible for the cost of the drug testing and subsequent counseling. If the test is negative, no disciplinary action will follow and the school will be financially responsible for the cost of the testing.

## ***Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment Prevention***

All ALCS community members are forbidden from bullying, cyber bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing another ALCS community member of bullying or harassment. Furthermore, all school personnel are required to report any incidents of bullying or harassment to the Director. Any student found bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing someone of bullying or harassment is subject to the bullying and harassment discipline policy. Any school personnel found bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing someone of bullying or harassment is subject to the “Bullying and Other Unlawful Harassment” policy that is printed in the Employee Handbook.

**“Bullying”** is clearly defined by New Mexico Administrative Code [6.12.7.7 Sec. A] as ... “any repeated and pervasive written, verbal or electronic expression, physical act or gesture, or a pattern thereof, that is intended to cause distress upon one or more [ALCS community members] in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at school activities or sanctioned events. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, hazing, harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of an [ALCS community member] which may, but need not be based on the [individual’s] race, color, sex, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.”

**“Cyber bullying”** is **bullying** that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyber bullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

**“Harassment”** is a crime in New Mexico, and its elements are defined in the New Mexico Criminal Code. Conduct meeting that definition of harassment will be reported to the local authorities. Conduct not meeting that definition, but otherwise offensive to ALCS mores, is considered to have occurred when conduct:

- has the intent or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment,
- has the intent or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with a student’s academic performance, or otherwise adversely affects any ALCS community member’s opportunities.

If a member of the ALCS community experiences or witnesses bullying, cyber bullying or harassment at Aldo Leopold Charter School, the event should be reported immediately to the Director. If the Director is unavailable or it is believed that the Director would not be the appropriate person to contact, the report should be made to the Chair of the Governing Council or, if he or she is unavailable, his or her designee. Legitimate concerns and reports can be made without fear of reprisal or retaliation. All allegations of bullying, cyber bullying or harassment will be quickly and discretely investigated. To the extent possible, confidentiality of the reporter, any witnesses, and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, those involved in the bullying, cyber bullying or harassment event will be informed of the outcome of the investigation as deemed pertinent and will be bound by appropriate confidentiality practices outlined in New Mexico Administrative Code and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Any supervisor, faculty member, or other staff member who becomes aware of possible bullying or other harassment must immediately advise the Director or any other designated staff or the Governing Council Chair so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in bullying, cyber bullying or other harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion.

If any party disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, a grievance may be filed according to the ALCS Grievance Policy. Any student who is found bullying, cyber bullying, harassing or falsely accusing another ALCS community member of any bullying or harassment is subject to school discipline. Discipline may result in any one or a combination of the following, as prudent and appropriate based on the severity of the infraction:

- Communication with student’s parents
- Verbal warning to student with possible behavior contract (for minor and non-illegal acts of bullying)
- Restorative Practices
- Suspension or Expulsion from school
- Other in-school consequences deemed appropriate and necessary by school Director

### ***Dress Code***

Aldo Leopold Charter School expects student dress and grooming to support an academic environment for everyone. Student dress may not present a health or safety hazard, violate municipal or state law, or have the potential to disrupt the instructional program.

In partial attainment of these standards, students should:

- Wear appropriate shoes or sandals for class or activity
- Wear appropriate outer attire which is not distracting

The wearing of any type of outer garment determined to be in poor taste will not be allowed in schools, *such as:*

- Gang-related attire
- Attire and accessories, which advertise, display, or promote any drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual activity, violence, disrespect or bigotry.
- Strapless clothing or clothing revealing midriff or undergarments
- Pants that allow underwear or bare skin at the waist or buttocks to show.

A teacher may request a student to remove his or her hat in the classroom. Complying with such a request is considered a form of respect toward that teacher and his or her teaching environment.

### ***Leaving school grounds***

Students may be checked in or out of school during the day by their parent or legal guardian. Parents are urged to send a note to school with their son/daughter in advance to inform teachers and staff of their intent to use the check-in/check-out procedure. Last-minute or unusual check-out requests will be referred to the Director. Students must leave the building and campus immediately once they have been checked out of school.

Any student who has failed a course in the previous quarter or who is in imminent danger of failing for the current quarter may not leave school grounds during the academic day, including lunch. Ninth-graders and middle school students may not leave campus without being checked out by a parent. Any student who is restricted to campus may not leave campus without a parent or legal guardian to get lunch.

Students in the high school who are in good academic standing (any student who passed all courses in the previous quarter and is not in imminent danger of failing any current courses) may leave campus during lunchtime and open periods. If a student has an open period, students must sign out before leaving campus and back in when they arrive back on campus. Students are expected to follow all school rules during this time and ALCS reserves the right to revoke this privilege at any time.

### ***Appropriate Use of Technology***

The use of computing resources outside of class at Aldo Leopold Charter School is a privilege, not a right. Any action by a user specifically prohibited by the Electronic Information Services Agreement or determined by a system administrator to constitute an inappropriate use of technology is subject to disciplinary consequences. The nature of the consequences will depend on the seriousness of the user's offense. In addition, users will also be subject to all applicable laws. Violations of this policy may result in suspension of Internet access.

Publicly posting inappropriate media of school events or school community members is not permissible and any student violating this expectation is subject to discipline.

### ***Electronic Device Policy***

The spirit of this rule is to help students fully connect with their peers and disconnect from their devices. The use of electronic communication devices, including cell phones and smart watches, is only permitted during class time when a teacher has given explicit permission. Middle School students need to keep their phones in their backpacks from the beginning of school until the end of the day. In order for the school to be aware of students' needs, parent/guardian communication should happen through the office—not directly with the child during the school day. If your child calls you, please remind them they need to do that from the office. If a phone is out of the backpack, it will go to the administration for the day. Continued misuse means the phone will be kept by administration until it can be picked up by a parent. If a HS student does not have a class during a class time, he or she may use these devices in the common area or in the lobby, provided the usage is not disruptive to any school business.

### ***Headphone/Music Player Policy***

The spirit of this rule is to improve the academic environment by granting the opportunity to students who are working independently to listen to music. The use of headphones in such a way that a student is disconnected from the school community is contrary to the spirit of this rule. Under no circumstances shall the use of headphones or a personal music player be allowed to disturb or distract other students.

Students are expected to follow the spirit and written expectations of this policy. Only students who are working independently may be granted permission to listen to a music player with headphones. A student must always be explicitly granted permission each time he or she wishes to use a music player and headphones. Any student granted permission to use his or her cell phone to listen to music may not access voice, data, or text services on the phone unless also granted permission for these purposes and may be asked to show call logs and times of text messages. By using a phone as a music source, students are granting permission to view these logs.

A student who uses their music player/phone inappropriately shall lose the privilege of listening to music at school. Access to personal music player/headphones may be revoked at any time and without reason. If a teacher grants permissions differentially within a class, a fair explanation is expected to be given to students. Each teacher has the right to exercise this policy or never to allow personal music player or headphone usage in his/her classroom.

### ***Searches***

Under the Provision of Title 6, Chapter 11, Part 2 of the New Mexico Administrative Code, “Students’ Rights and Responsibilities,” school officials have the right to conduct searches of students and their



possessions, including vehicles, on the school campus when a reasonable suspicion exists that a crime or other breach of school rules has occurred with the individual being searched.

***Behaviors Not Tolerated at ALCS – The following behaviors will not be tolerated:***

***The Use or Possession of Drugs or Alcohol (See Drug Policy for Details on page 20)***

***Violation of State or Federal Law***

Any student who violates state or federal laws is subject to school discipline and such activities will be reported to local authorities.

***Profanity/Belligerence/Pornography***

Students are being prepared for success in the workplace. These types of actions are damaging to the school community.

***Fighting***

There is NEVER an acceptable reason to fight or to threaten a student or staff member. Without exception, offenders will be subject to suspension or expulsion.

***Class disruptions***

No class disruptions will be tolerated. Not only will the disruptive student fail to learn, s/he is very likely to hinder other students' learning as well.

***Bullying or Harassment***

All ALCS community members are forbidden from bullying, harassing, or falsely accusing another ALCS community member of bullying or harassment. Furthermore, all school personnel are required to report any incidents of bullying or harassment to the Director. For more details, see "Bullying and Harassment Prevention" (pages 21 - 22).

***Sexual Harassment***

Students shall not make sexual comments or gestures or inappropriately touch another person. Sexual harassment of any form will not be tolerated.

***Student Behavior of a Sexual Nature***

Students shall not engage in sexual displays or provocative personal displays of affection while on campus or while participating in ALCS activities.

## ***Tobacco & E-cigarettes***

Possession of tobacco, smoking, and the use of smokeless tobacco in any form are prohibited at all Aldo Leopold Charter School facilities and activities. Electronic cigarettes (and the like) are also prohibited.

## ***Misuse of or unauthorized presence in ALCS buildings or on ALCS property***

Appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken if ALCS students are in the building or on the campus without proper permission or if they misuse school property.

## ***Weapons***

Students shall not carry weapons on campus or while attending a school activity.

Any ordinary object can become a weapon when thrown, hurled, pushed, pulled, heated, dropped, or used to induce personal injury or damage to property. Nevertheless, certain items are always prohibited on the ALCS campus. These include:

- Any rifle or pistol, including pellet guns, BB guns, paint ball guns, or any device that hurls projectiles that can cause injury
- All knives or sharp or pointed objects \*(See Camping Knives below for only exception)
- Any explosives or explosive devices
- All chemicals, sprays, or solutions that can cause injury if used inappropriately
- Any item that could be reasonably perceived as a weapon

## **\*Camping Knives**

Knives of any size are NOT to be brought to school or be in the possession of any student at any time *other than for designated activities when prior explicit permission has been granted.*

There are times that ALCS students will need to have a pocket knife with a 2-inch or shorter blade in their possession in order to be properly equipped for various outdoor activities. **Possession of a knife at any other time will be treated as a weapon violation.**

As part of the ALCS enrollment procedure, parents/guardians are asked to give written permission for their student to possess and use a knife during supervised experiential/outdoor activities.

## ***Threats (Implied or Direct)***

No student may threaten, harass, or bully **anyone** while under the jurisdiction of the school. See Bulling and Harassment Policy on pages 21 - 22.

***Dishonesty deteriorates trust and community and is unacceptable behavior.***

***Insubordination & Blatant Disrespect deteriorate trust and creates an unsafe environment.***

### *Damage to property*

Student(s) who cause any damage to ALCS property will repay or repair the damage.

### *Personal injury*

If personal injury occurs during horseplay or disruptive behavior, the responsible parties will make arrangements to pay for all related medical expenses.

### *ALCS Discipline*

Student discipline is handled in a progressive manner. Behavior modification steps typically begin with student-teacher conferences, followed by calls home to parents or guardians, and may escalate to reporting to legal authorities, suspension, and eventually expulsion. The severity of the rule violation largely determines the severity of the school's response to a disciplinary situation.

Common consequences for rule infractions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lunch or after-school detentions
- Work details (may include weekends)
- Written essays or letters of apology
- In- or out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion

Detentions are used to deter unacceptable behavior and minimize academic impact by keeping students in classes compared to suspending a student out of school. Failure to attend a lunch detention may result in receiving a Saturday detention. **Failure to show for a Saturday detention reflects a student who shows little investment in the school or its rules and this behavior may result in expulsion from school.**

The school will follow a discipline matrix to provide structure and more consistency in the consequences that result from disciplinary infractions. The Director has final authority for all disciplinary responses by the school.

### **Disciplinary committees (Non-expulsions)**

The Director or his designee is responsible for rule enforcement. If so decided by the Director, a disciplinary committee may be convened for a discipline hearing in both middle and high school. The student will have his or her advisor, other selected staff member or parent accompany him or her as an advocate. It is the role of the advocate to support the student, ensure that the process is clear to the student, and ask or make clarifying points that may assist the process. It is the role of this committee to make a recommendation directly to the Director, who has final authority over disciplinary decisions.

The committee may consist of a Chair (staff member), two additional staff members, and two students. The committee will attempt to make a unanimous decision and the chair will only vote in the event of a tie.

### ***Detentions***

Sometimes a detention is used as a consequence and commonly used prior to suspension or expulsion for less severe behaviors. Detention times may include lunch, before or after school or on Saturdays. Students are to follow the instructions of the detention proctor. The following expectations are in place:

- Students may not talk to each other, socialize or use electronic equipment.
- For lunch detention, students are responsible for bringing their own food and will be given an opportunity to eat.
- Students must report to the detention room on time: for lunch detention, within 5 minutes after the end of the previous period. If a student does not report on time, the student will most likely be considered absent and receive additional day(s) of detention or a Saturday detention.
- Students may work on homework during detention or tasks assigned by detention supervisor. Cleaning or other services may be enforced during any detention time.

### ***Suspension/Expulsion***

Expulsion is typically a last resort, and quite rare. The most common reasons for expulsion are a major infraction, significant safety threats, and repeated and pervasive causes for disciplinary action.

- The number of suspension days that a student receives will depend on the severity of his or her misconduct and past behavioral record.
- The behavioral record of students who transfer to ALCS from another school will transfer with the student.
- Students who have been suspended or expelled must remain off campus and must stay away from all ALCS activities that are held off campus for the duration of their suspension – or indefinitely for expulsions.
- Students who have been suspended may be prohibited from participation in off campus activities beyond the duration of their suspension.

### ***Expulsion Hearings***

In the event that the Director recommends that a student be expelled, a non-staff member will hear the formal case. The formal hearing is not a trial, it is an administrative hearing designed to ensure a calm, orderly determination by an impartial hearing authority of the facts of a case of alleged serious

misconduct. Technical rules of evidence and procedure do not apply. The student and his or her legal guardians will be provided notification of the expulsion hearing and written procedures for the hearing and decision making process.

### *Establishing a Review Authority for Expulsions*

The Governing Council will appoint a committee of two or three of its members to serve as a review authority in the event that a legal guardian or student of legal age chooses to appeal an expulsion hearing ruling in accordance with procedures of paragraph 4.d of subsection G of section 6.11.2.12 of NMAC.

## **EXPERIENTIAL/OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

### *Risks Inherent in Experiential/Outdoor Education*

All adults associated with our outdoor/experiential program, and especially those who have children in or are responsible for students in the field, need to understand the inherent risks involved with students outside the classroom.

All activities have some degree of associated risk. Because ALCS anticipates that families may have concerns about the emphasis on outdoor education at ALCS within the required curriculum, ALCS shares the following information and encourages parents and students to both question and/or voice concerns prior to an activity to ensure that they are comfortable with the level of supervision and safety provided.

**Students must report any physical injuries, including scrapes, bruises, cuts, minor wounds, etc. to an ALCS faculty or staff member immediately.**

*When planning outings, the following issues of risk management are considered:*

### **Outdoor Activities in General**

Traveling many miles in a day while carrying one-third of one's body weight is demanding work. Backpackers can sometimes stumble and fall or succumb to overuse injuries. While the injuries associated with such activity are usually not life-threatening, even a minor mishap in a remote location can require a complex evacuation involving lengthy travel times.

### **Weather**

ALCS's outdoor education focus requires that students travel at all times of the year. Because ALCS anticipates temporary outdoor-living during these travel times, it is prepared to handle all weather that could reasonably be expected. Wind, snow, and rain can make life uncomfortable at times, but instructors rarely cancel or postpone a trip solely because of the weather. If instructors feel that they

lack sufficient gear to keep students out of danger, they may decide to alter a route, to change an itinerary, or even to return home early. In the summer the greatest concerns are lightning and flash flooding. New Mexico is usually among the top five states for lightning strikes each year, so instructors will typically manage student time so as to be away from mountain peaks and other hazardous areas during times when lightning threatens. Precautions when traveling in areas with the possibility of flash-flooding will be taken and students will be taught to be proactive during flash-flood season.

### **Wildlife**

No trip into the wilderness would be complete without meeting wildlife. Usually those encounters are pleasant and brief. However, in rare situations, meetings with animals can be dangerous. To lessen the chance of more serious encounters, ALCS students receive special safety briefings appropriate to the region and are instructed to view wildlife only from a distance. Special attention is given to campsite selection, conduct around animals, food preparation, food storage, and waste management.

### **Terrain**

Travel in any environment exposes participants to specific hazards. In the mountains, ALCS is concerned about rock fall, avalanches, and high cliffs. Fast currents, rapids, and hypothermia are considered when traveling on or around rivers. While ALCS cannot guarantee the safety of each student, it can provide adequate instruction for traveling as safely as possible in the many different physical environments visited.

### **Equipment**

Students must be prepared for any trip in which they will participate. A list of necessary equipment is provided to students prior to any overnight trip. Students are expected to provide most of their own clothing and a sleeping bag, and alert staff well in advance when they do not have the necessary equipment. Whenever specialized gear is necessary for a trip (climbing harnesses, personal flotation devices, and snowshoes, for example), ALCS provides good quality equipment that is familiar to instructors and whose history and maintenance records are known.

### **Vehicle Travel**

ALCS has its own passenger buses and Suburbans, which can manage large groups for most ALCS trips. Smaller groups will sometimes travel in state-approved vehicles that can carry up to nine passengers. ALCS has staff members with a SCDL (School Commercial Driver's License) who keep their training current. Several other staff members have been trained and are certified to drive the smaller vehicles. Occasionally, parents will be asked to drive students to an activity when a bus or suburban is not available. Parents must give their written permission for another driver to transport their student. Seat belts are required for each person riding in a personal vehicle.

### **Human Factors**

Most outdoor accidents are caused by errors in human judgment. "Attempting to keep a schedule" and "Trying to please other people" are frequently cited reasons that show up on accident report forms. These and other attitudes may impel a group to place speed or success above safety. In light of this,

ALCS tries to take its time and be methodical about each step of a journey, and students are expected to follow safety and behavioral guidelines established by the instructors. While the overall plan for a trip is at the instructors' discretion, many decisions are made with input from students. Nevertheless, sometimes students may return home later than planned or they may be disappointed because weather or some other factor changes a trip's itinerary.

Outdoor travel comes complete with the potential for immense joy and profound failure, just as life in general does. ALCS cannot plan for every contingency, but it is committed to maintaining the health and safety of all ALCS students. ALCS must accept that a defining characteristic of adventure is that outcomes are uncertain. To deny students the opportunity to engage in some well-planned adventure would also deny them the learning that comes from engaging something much bigger than they are.

### ***Foreign Travel***

Prior to any school-sponsored foreign travel, students must have a passport (or, in the case of travel to Canada or Mexico, a passport card), a copy of which will be on file for each student. Parents and students will attend a trip briefing prior to travel, which will include training in foreign culture, norms, currency, bureaucracy, legal system, and border crossing procedures. A medical form and notarized permission slip for Foreign Travel, authorizing minors to travel without parents, must be on record. Contingency plans will be in place for lost travelers or evacuation of an injured or ill group member. The Director will authorize travel only if it has been deemed safe by travel authorities or the U.S. State Department.

### ***Safety Rules for Specific Activities***

#### **Water Safety - Swimming**

No student will enter any body of water above knee-deep without first: having participated in an update on currents, flash-flooding, rip-tides, or other safety concerns; ensuring that a designated adult water-safety observer is present at water's edge and signals readiness with life-saving devices; or obtaining the permission of the designated water-safety observer. Parents must signify in writing their student's swimming skill level. Non-swimmers must stay at or shallower than knee-deep water level. Emerging swimmers must go no deeper than they can stand with head above water. All swimmers must swim with a "buddy."

#### **Water Safety - Sea Kayaking**

Only students whose parents have signed a release may ride or paddle in sea kayaks. Students must have received training from staff and pass a safety test before they may paddle or ride in a sea kayak. A trained staff member or another trained student must accompany students paddling or riding in a sea kayak. Student kayakers must stay within sight of at least one staff member.

#### **Rock-Climbing**

Students must participate in and pass a safety-course taught by a school-sanctioned rock-climbing instructor before climbing at a school activity. All climbing will be done with ropes on belay systems.

All belayers must have passed a safety test offered by a school-sanctioned rock-climbing instructor. Climbers and belayers must wear safety helmets while participating in a climbing event. All observers of the climb must stand back at least ten feet from the base of the climb.

### **Alpine Skiing/Snowboarding**

Students participating in these activities must ensure that they have appropriate outfitting (helmet, hat, gloves, warm jacket, wicking-socks, long underwear, and water repellent pants). Students not properly outfitted will not be allowed to participate.

Prior to school trips, students must commit to a day of lessons if they are a novice skier or snowboarder. Students are expected to ski at their ability level by only entering slopes designated by a symbol (green, blue, black) indicating their ability level. Skiers *must wear helmets* and always ski with a buddy. Students will check in with their team-leaders twice a day at the times designated by their leaders. Team-leaders will carry walkie-talkies.

### ***Leaders of ALCS Experiential/Outdoor Trips***

There is currently a core leadership group of adults who lead outdoor trips for ALCS. At least one classroom teacher will be part of the leadership team of all curricular trips. All core leadership members are experienced outdoor trip leaders in addition to being involved in the day-to-day operations of the school. All are capable backcountry travelers and campers and some are specialists in areas such as kayaking, mountain biking, rock-climbing, backpacking, and skiing. All are medically trained in First Aid and CPR; one staff member is a Registered Nurse and others are certified to the level of Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder, nationally recognized certification programs that include treatment protocols beyond first aid.

Although ALCS will sometimes hire instructors and use approved volunteers from outside ALCS to staff trips, the head instructor for any program is always someone who is deeply familiar with the school. Contracted staff and volunteers must be familiar with the staff handbook, must have a satisfactory driving record if driving, undergo a background check, and must adhere to ALCS guidelines in both letter and spirit.

### ***Crisis Management***

#### **Emergencies occurring during off-campus trips**

Backcountry trips are based on an extensive risk management plan that has been approved by the ALCS Governing Council and is available at the school. It requires in-depth safety training and passing a Safety Test. Backcountry teams are provided with walkie-talkies, GPS receivers, topographic maps, and a communication device that can transmit greater distances.

ALCS realizes that parents/guardians may experience an emergency or a sudden tragedy, and may need to contact a student immediately while the school is away on an extended trip. Because of this



possibility, before each overnight outing ALCS will provide to each family an "On-Call" list of personnel who are prepared to locate the group. These same "On-Call" personnel will act as hubs for any necessary communication when ALCS members are in a field situation.

In the event of an emergency occurring in the field, trip leaders are trained, prepared, and equipped to handle crises independently while in remote areas. A trip could be extended for a period of hours or days if trip leaders determine that additional time is required for scene safety, patient care/transport, or group management. Students' medical forms and contact information will accompany all overnight trips. In the event trip leaders require additional assistance for evacuations, patient treatment, or crisis management, they carry appropriate local emergency numbers, cell phones, and two-way radios. Any significant changes in the trip itinerary will merit a call to "On-Call" personnel, who will subsequently communicate information to parents/guardians.

### **Students with Asthma or Diabetes**

Any student who has asthma, diabetes or other medical conditions that could reasonably jeopardize the safety of the student is expected to have a current medically approved action plan on file with the school. Such a plan must address medication expectations as well as an action plan in the event of a medical emergency or episode.

### **Out-of-Country Emergencies**

Students sometimes travel out-of-country. Parents will be advised of travel plans and protocols well in advance. A separate safety plan for these types of travel has been approved by the ALCS Governing Council and is available at the school. Should a student become ill or injured while out of the country, the specific protocol for making contact with the parents/guardians and providing treatment are specified within that Safety Plan.

### **Safe Schools Plan**

The Aldo Leopold Charter School Safe Schools Plan is available upon request.

## ***OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES***

The following policies are important for each student and parent/guardian to understand and be fully aware of the expectations and culture of Aldo Leopold Charter School. If you have any questions or concerns about these or other policies of the school, please contact the Director.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

Aldo Leopold Charter School does not discriminate in enrollment, employment, or other activities on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic or condition protected by law.

## *Disability*

Aldo Leopold Charter School will make reasonable accommodations for students and employees with known disabilities.

## *Service Animals*

A service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Emotional support animals, comfort animals, and therapy dogs are not service animals under Title II and Title III of the ADA. Other species of animals whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered service animals either. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. It does not matter if a person has a note from a doctor that states that the person has a disability and needs to have the animal for emotional support. A doctor's letter does not turn an animal into a service animal.

## *HIV*

Current medical research indicates that persons with AIDS who are not sexually involved with others and whose blood does not come into contact with others do not pose a health risk. Medically, it appears that the risk of infection can be controlled and largely eliminated in normal school social situations.

Because Aldo Leopold Charter School endeavors to educate the community about the real, and dispel the imaginary threats of this disease, it has adopted the following points of view toward AIDS/HIV:

- Persons with AIDS or HIV infection are legally and morally protected from discrimination. Aldo Leopold Charter School will strive to protect the rights and health of any individual, student, teacher, or other staff who is known to have AIDS, while at the same time ensuring others in the school community are also protected.
- Aldo Leopold Charter School will educate its students, teachers, and community about the disease and the methods of its transmission and help students achieve a rational perspective of its actual risks, and educate students in how to protect themselves from this disease.

## *Condom Availability at the High School*

Upon a direct request from a student, the school will provide condoms to high school students. These will be made available directly to a student by the school Guidance Counselor. The school Guidance Counselor will follow legal expectations surrounding confidentiality. A parent or legal guardian may revoke his or her minor student's participation in this program by completing and submitting the school's "Condom Availability Opt Out" form.

### ***Visitors to ALCS***

All visitors to ALCS campus MUST report to the office first before they are given permission to go anywhere on campus or into any building or classroom. Visitors are expected to be role models while on school grounds. ALCS reserves the right to ask any visitor at any time to leave school grounds or school activities.

### ***ALCS Alumni***

In rare events, alumni of ALCS may be invited to participate in ALCS functions. When this occurs, each participating alumna/alumnus is required to gain the Director's permission in advance and he or she is expected to follow all school rules. Failure to comply with expectations will most likely result in immediate removal from such activities and potentially all future activities.

Alumni may be used in an "Alumni Mentorship" capacity in some cases. As such, these individuals are expected to exceed the expectations of a typical student.

### ***Grievance Procedure***

ALCS has adopted policy and procedures for grievances. A student, parent, or legal guardian may ask the school for the "Grievance Policy and Complaint Procedures" at any time.

### ***Safety***

Students must report any incident or physical injuries, including scrapes, bruises, cuts, minor wounds etc. to an ALCS faculty or staff member immediately.

## APPENDIX A – WHAT IF?

You're late to school?

Report directly to the office.

You become ill during the day?

Obtain permission from the teacher to leave class and report to the office.

You need to see a counselor?

Make an appointment between classes, during lunch, or before or after school.

You lose personal property?

Report loss of the item to the office. Check the lost and found in the office.

You have been suspended?

With your parents/guardians, report to the Director immediately upon your return.

You are being harassed at school, en route to school, or on the way home?

Report this to the Guidance Counselor, Director, or assistant principal immediately.

You've moved, changed phone numbers, etc.?

Report all changes to the office and update your emergency medical form.

You need to leave a classroom?

Always request permission from the teacher.

You are given a directive by a staff member who is not one of your teachers?

Follow all directives from any member of the staff.

You are in disagreement with a policy or a decision handed down by a staff member or administrator?

**Try talking with the Director. If you feel it's unfair, follow the grievance procedure.**

**APPENDIX B – REQUEST FOR MEDIATION**

Name of Grievant \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date this grievance is being filed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date received (mediation team member only. Please initial): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person being grieved: \_\_\_\_\_

A brief summary of the situation being grieved (use the back if necessary):

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List the ways you attempted to resolve the problem:

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Signature of Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

To be completed by Mediator:

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Mediation: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thirty-day follow-up date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date reply received: \_\_\_\_\_ Initial \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C – MEDIATION AGREEMENT**

Date:\_\_\_\_\_ Thirty-day review date:\_\_\_\_\_

(Names of all parties involved in the mediation):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

do agree to the following:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of all parties:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Mediator: \_\_\_\_\_

Thirty-day follow-up: (Please check the appropriate comment, sign, and return to the mediation team:)

- Y / N I feel that I have kept my agreement as stated above
- Y / N I feel that the other party(ies) have kept their agreement
- Y / N I feel that this situation needs further mediation
- Y / N I feel that this situation has been satisfactorily resolved

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

(If this reply has not been received within five (5) days of the follow-up date, it will be assumed that this situation has been satisfactory resolved.)

# ALDO LEOPOLD CHARTER SCHOOL (Approved)

## 2021-2022 School Calendar

July '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

December '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

February '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

March '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

April '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

May '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

June '22						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



School Closed/ Holidays



Teacher in-Service Day (no school for students)



Extended Learning time



First and Last Day of School





