

**Alma d'arte Charter
High School
for the Arts**

**Handbook for
Students and Families**

2017-18 and Beyond



August, 2017

Dear Alma Students and Families,

Welcome to Alma d'arte Charter High School for the Arts!!! We are thrilled to have you as members of our Alma Community. Our school and its success are based upon the partnerships involving our students, their families, and the school's staff. Our relationships are the foundation of the stature and growth of the institution.

This handbook has been prepared for you, to introduce and define the aura and environment of our school. As succinctly stated by Gordon Eadie, ***"If you don't stand for something you will fall for anything."*** At Alma d'arte, we stand for excellence in the arts, academics, and personal development. We achieve this excellence by a commitment to ***Respect, Consideration, and Appreciation***. Our relationships are based on ***Trust*** as we collectively pursue the accomplishment of our Mission – ***"To Graduate Artist-Scholars Prepared to Succeed."***

We are certain you will quickly discern this handbook is written in the positive sense. Expectations are expressed and detailed – always in the measure of ***"Do the Right Thing, at the Right Time, for the Right Reasons, and you will ultimately Get the Right Outcome."*** This is not an "if-then" handbook – "if you don't do this then you get that punishment." We believe in ***Modeling-Expecting-Teaching-Recognizing*** – this is the best process to ensure appropriate student behavior and the greatest student growth.

We hope you find this handbook informative and useful. At any juncture, should you seek clarification of policies or expectations, please contact Mark Hartshorne, CAO/Principal, at 541-0145. The Alma staff is most pleased to join you in creating the finest opportunities for student success. Our doors are always open to you – come in any time!!

Sincerely and on behalf of the entire Alma d'arte Community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark M. Hartshorne".

Mark M. Hartshorne
CAO/Principal

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The Mission and Vision of Alma d'arte Charter High School for the Arts

Mission Statement :

***“To Graduate
Artist-Scholars
Prepared to Succeed”***

This Mission Statement was a salient evolution in the school's history several years ago. Its creation resulted from collaboration by all stakeholders in the Alma community – students, parents, and staff. The Statement intentionally defines the stature of our students upon completion of our program. All decisions in our school reference this mission.

Each portion of the Mission Statement is further defined within ensuing sections of this handbook. Briefly, “To Graduate” involves students completing required and elective credits and achieving passing scores in five Demonstration of Competency areas. An “Artist-Scholar” has learned and displayed abilities to create, perform, and appreciate the arts. Finally, “Prepared to Succeed” relates to the student's capability to pursue any avenue of post-secondary education and employment of their choosing.

***“Character is what you do when no one is watching.
And, strength of character enables excellence of achievement.”***

Vision Statement:

“Our vision is to become the preeminent school for the Arts in the Southwest”

By definition, “**preeminent**” means *outstanding, foremost, and greatest*. We can assess our progress towards preeminence by reviewing the status of achieving our Mission Statement. This does not involve comparing our school to other institutions. Rather, a diligent and purposeful approach to achieving our mission is the superior means of becoming the preeminent school for the Arts in the Southwest.



“Your purpose is bigger than your problems”

General Behavior Expectations

It is perfectly reasonable and correct to ensure Alma students understand expectations of their performance and behavior. This handbook section details these expectations and sets parameters for how relationships function and occur in our school.

This is not a “don’t do this, don’t do that” handbook. Instead, we as a school staff will describe below the actions *we expect you to do* as a member of the Alma community. Though certain rules are itemized, we require that you will act with ***Obedience, Respect, Appreciation, and Consideration***. As you do so, you will achieve your part of the Alma Mission, and assist others in achieving that mission as well.

We don’t have many rules, however, Rule #1 – *follow the reasonable directions* of every Alma staff member. This means teachers, office staff, administrative staff, everyone. If you believe a directive given to you is unreasonable, perform the action, and then you may discuss it with the Principal. You will receive reasonable directions – occasionally, you may not be happy with a given direction. You must, however, follow directions. Know what is right, do what is right.

The next absolute reality is to behave with ***Respect*** towards all others at Alma d’arte. ***Respect*** is defined as:

- Regard and esteem for others
- Deference to adults
- Willingness to show consideration and appreciation

You may not be best friends with or even like all 200+ other people at our school. It is required that all of us show ***Respect*** for everyone, regardless.

Another foundation of our school culture and aura is ***Appreciation***. This concept embodies the following:

- A feeling of being grateful
- An ability to understand the worth, quality, or importance of others
- Expression of admiration, approval, or gratitude

It is crucial to develop ***Appreciation***, for other people, and for achievement of our mission.

Finally, learn and display ***Consideration***. Extend the same consideration to others as is correct to be given to you:

- careful thought, regarding something you will make a decision about
- a desire to avoid doing something that will make another person sad, upset, angry, etc.

“Discipline yourself, so others won’t have to.”

Expectations of Your Contribution to the Environment

Students of Alma d’arte Charter High School for the Arts have a major responsibility to contribute to the environment for teaching and learning. Make this contribution in several ways:

- With a personal commitment to achieving the school’s mission, as it applies to you according to your own circumstances
- By your treatment of others and your example to younger students, including the J. Paul Taylor students when that school moves into the new building to the north of our campus
- Communicate with adults when a situation may be growing that could impact the safety and environment of the school. This isn’t “ratting, narcing, tattling, squealing.” It is simply a contribution so that school officials can “front end load” any situation for the betterment of the entire organization



Success in Achieving Your Personal Mission

Your individual success at our school relies on several major factors. These may seem obvious, however, there is substantial merit in reviewing such aspects with you.

Embrace the mission and aura of the school. Immerse yourself in the Alma culture. Students who do so, ultimately succeed in accomplishing the school’s mission within their own circumstances.

Consistently attend class, on time.

Focus on growing as a student, artist, and person. Be intentional about your learning.

Finish your class work. “When does school end for the day?” “3:40 PM.” “No, that’s when class ends – school ends when you finish your homework.”

Specific Behavior Expectations

The following are specific directions for correct and appropriate student behaviors. These guidelines provide for a somewhat specific parameter, however, school officials reserve the right and authority to assess each individual situation and determine an appropriate decision based on circumstances. It is neither possible nor desirable to create ironclad rules, other than to assure students and their parents that in any situation, all concerned will receive a consistent consideration regarding the events and circumstances.

Thus, on to the list – which is not all encompassing but rather a point of departure.

Student Attire

- Dress appropriately for school. Take care with the amount of skin revealed, and refrain from wearing clothing that displays any aspect of drugs, violence, profanity, gang affiliation, etc. The administration will determine what is and is not acceptable attire. This is difficult to do with consistency, but it will occur.
- Wear dresses and shorts with discretion as to length. A strong point of departure is length within five inches from the knee. Avoid spaghetti strap dresses and tops.
- Ensure underwear is not visible (applies to male and female students alike). If wearing a hat, ensure your eyes are visible.
- Refrain from wearing sunglasses indoors, and from clothing/accoutrements that have dangerous jewelry, spikes, chains, etc.
- Avoid excessive facial/body make up
- You may be required to alter your attire before being allowed to attend class

Student Movement

- When you arrive at school in the morning, proceed to the Theater for relaxation until classes begin. Remain on campus once you arrive.
- Use **only** the front door and the west front door for entrance and travel throughout the first floor.

- Off campus lunch privileges are extended to junior and senior students with a 2.5 GPA from the previous semester, no unexcused tardies, and parent permission. This privilege may be withdrawn at the discretion of the administration.
- Be on time to class. Your teachers are prepared with the lesson; honor and respect them by being in class in timely manner.
- Recognize that Pioneer Park is an area under the jurisdiction of the school. Use good judgment about your behaviors when and if you are present at the park. Simply put, don't make the park a problem and it won't be one. Freshmen students are not to be present at that area.

Communication Devices

- Cell phones and other communication devices are both ubiquitous and potentially disruptive. Acceptable cell phone and device usage is before school, lunch period, and after school. Use of such devices at any other time renders confiscation of the item for one day on first occasion, and for the duration of the semester for additional use. This includes verbal conversations, texting, email, and any other communications.
- Recognize that cell phones and other devices are theft targets. Alma d'arte bears no responsibility for the security of such items including confiscated phones (or other property).

Controlled Substances and Paraphernalia

- Refrain from ingesting or possessing controlled substances, prescription drugs without a prescription, inhalants, and all other controlled substances including the material known as "spice." As well, refrain from possession of any form of drug paraphernalia. Controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia "on you or in you" will result in suspension from school and reference to law enforcement as circumstances dictate.
- For school purposes, tobacco in any form is considered a controlled substance. Possession of tobacco and implements will result in confiscation of said items. Consumption of tobacco in any form on, and at the discretion of the administration, near the campus may result in additional sanctions.
- Selling and/or distribution of controlled substances on or near the campus will result in the long term suspension of the student and a referral to law enforcement.

Bullying

- By definition, bullying is aggressive behavior, be it physical, verbal, or emotional, directed towards a student by another student. Completely refrain from such behaviors at all times. Severe sanctions will be implemented for those who bully up to and including dismissal from the school.

Gossip

- Of all the hurtful and damaging behaviors that may occur in school, gossip may be the most extreme action. Gossip – to talk about the personal lives of other people. In all instances, **refrain from gossip**. Ask these questions of yourself before saying **ANYTHING** about someone else:

Is it true?

Is it kind?

Is it necessary?

- **If it's not all three, it's probably gossip, which has nothing to do with achieving the school's mission.**

***The way people treat you is a statement
about who they are as a human being.***

It is not a statement about you.

Resolving Conflict

- Conflict happens between people. Not everyone agrees on everything all of the time. It's more important how we manage conflict than the fact that it happens. At Alma d'arte, it is expected that students engage the staff in assisting with conflict resolution. Avoid confrontation, verbal or otherwise, with those whom you may have disagreement. Though tempting and an understandable desire, confrontation rarely has the effect

of resolving an issue in a positive way. Should you trend towards conflict of any kind, **talk to an adult** – we will help you!!!

Social Media

- Take care with social media in any and every context. Facebook, Instant Messaging, texting, email, Twitter, Snap Chat, etc can be very useful and positive tools for communication and relationships. Just the same, recognize that everything you put out there via social media is permanent and attached to you. Refer to the handbook portion “Legal Basis for School Operations” and the concept of nexus. Statements, pictures, videos, etc that impact the operation of school are under the jurisdiction of school officials.

Continued Enrollment

- By philosophy and as a matter of law (see Senate Bill 446, New Mexico Legislature,) all students who apply for admission to Alma d’arte Charter High School for the Arts are welcomed with open arms. To ensure continued enrollment on an annual basis, it is expected that students embrace the culture of the school and make appropriate academic, artistic, and personal progress as individuals. As all applications to our school are a matter of choice, the Principal reserves the right, by Governance Council Policy, to determine whether said applications are renewed. This consideration will occur on an annual basis and is the exclusive purview of the Principal.

You have the freedom to choose.

Response to Selected Behaviors

Throughout this handbook, reasonable expectations of student action and decision are presented to ensure the best possible environment for the achievement of the school’s mission. Occasionally, the school’s staff has cause to intervene and counsel students pursuant to the attainment of that mission. We believe with sound justification that those occasions are rare in our school, but events do happen. Therefore, it is reasonable to present how the staff will approach situations of student behavior that merit said intervention.

Most often, staff will engage in conversation with students as a primary means of guiding growth. The concept of restorative justice will frequently be employed as will character building exercises. Students will be given every opportunity to grow, rather than receive punitive punishment.

However, there are five situations where out of school suspension will be automatically enforced. These situations are:

- **Insubordination** whether repeated or a refusal to obey. Follow directions. This is required of students when receiving directions from any staff member.
- **Controlled substances and paraphernalia** “in you or on you.” Out of school suspension will occur and probable referral to law enforcement.
- **Fighting.** We have not had an outright physical confrontation in years. Should students choose physical confrontation, out of school suspension will occur with possible referral to law enforcement.
- **Weapons.** Possession of such is covered by federal law and may result in a long term suspension in addition to out of school suspension.
- **Profanity** to or around a staff member. This will result in an out of school suspension.

Attendance

As previously stated, an essential means of success in school is strong attendance. By state law and Governance Council policy, Students must attend each class a minimum of 90% of the days the class is held in order to receive credit. Every effort will be made on a daily basis to contact parents when students are absent, and attendance review letters will be mailed to the home address on file when students accrue three, five, and seven days of absence.

Students who attend class less than 90% of the time will be referred to an Attendance Review Committee composed of Alma faculty. The Attendance Review Committee will assess all factors to determine if credit will be awarded. Students have the right to appeal to the Principal if the denial of credit results from the committee meetings.

Habitually truant students will be referred to juvenile authorities.

Students are expected to enter class on time. Entering late will result in a tardy being recorded; for attendance policy purposes each tardy is 1/3 of an absence.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage strong attendance and provide a means of positive intervention when necessary. With each individual student, implementation of the policy will occur based on particular circumstances.

Internet Use

Internet access is available to everyone at Alma d'arte. Use of the Internet shall be for educational purposes and consistent with the mission of our school.

Alma students and their parents must sign a technology and Internet Resources Permission Form stating their knowledge of and agreement with usage terms and conditions. Be certain to follow the acceptable use procedures so that you can continue to use the school's network and technology.