



**Alma Fuerte Public School**

**2021-2022 Student/Family Handbook**

almafuerteps.org

(626) 204 - 5265

119 West Palm Street Altadena, CA 91001

This handbook is intended as a general overview of policies and procedures - be advised that the AFPS charter petition supersedes this and all other documents in the event of a discrepancy in described policy or procedure.

almafuerteps.org

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Welcome to Alma Fuerte Public School (“AFPS” or “Charter School”). On November 15, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Education approved Alma Fuerte Public School’s TK-8 charter petition. Our school opened its doors in the fall of 2017 children with grades TK-2, and will grow by one grade each year.

AFPS is a tuition-free and non-sectarian public school. It offers a project-based, personalized, entrepreneurship- focused curriculum to serve the culturally rich and diverse populations in Pasadena and Altadena. By law, admission will be determined by lottery, which is open to all children in California with priority given to students of founding parents and staff, students whose families qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program, and students residing within Pasadena Unified School District boundaries.

## **Mission Statement**

*The mission of Alma Fuerte Public School is to develop TK-8 students into passionate, self-motivated learners, entrepreneurs, academic achievers, innovative creators, and leaders with character, prepared for success in secondary school, college and 21st century careers. Our school – whose name means “strong soul” in Spanish - leverages best practices in 21st century learning and technology to provide a holistic, individualized education with real world connections to help our students create positive change in our community and world at large.*

## **Alma Fuerte Public School Vision**

Our vision is to establish a top tier public TK-8 school that will strive to help each one of our students become independent, intellectual and compassionate leaders, creators and innovators with a comprehensive and critical understanding of the greater world.

**Our Beliefs—Preparing for the 21st Century** Embedded throughout our educational program are our learning expectations, which embody what we believe are necessary skills for student success in school and beyond. We believe educated persons in the 21st century can:

- Demonstrate persistence in meeting high expectations through a strong work ethic and self-motivation;
- Work collaboratively with others both as a leader and a thoughtful participant, respecting diversity and demonstrating a desire to effect positive change in the community;
- Listen and actively engage, express themselves effectively in writing and orally;
- Be able to use technology to access, produce, distribute and revise information and digital content;
- Can apply logic as well as creative thinking to solve problems by asking questions, forming hypotheses, engaging in trial and error and reflecting;
- Exhibit entrepreneurial skills when pursuing projects and a curiosity to discover and take innovative and inventive risks.

## **Glossary - Helpful Educational and Charter Terms**

**Charter School:** A publicly funded independent school established by teachers, parents, or community groups under the terms of a charter with a local or national authority.

**Collaboration:** Educators work actively together to achieve shared goals in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and professional strategies.

**Personalized learning:** Students moving at their own pace to master content and standards, with support from teachers, specialists and technology as needed.

**Project-based learning:** Is a large curricular unit that is guided by an overarching theme and integrated throughout many disciplines. The classroom environment is an important “second teacher” as are environments and resources from outside the classroom. The focus of project-based learning is on the process of learning, not an “end product,” although artifacts may be created through the process of learning.

**Stakeholder:** A stakeholder is an individual or group that is invested in the success of the school and mission, each functioning within their role. At AFPS, our stakeholders include:

- **Parents and Community:** Parents and community members support AFPS students and the school’s mission through volunteering, learning about educational issues, providing a home environment that contributes to students’ academic success, and voicing concerns or questions in productive ways according to Board-established protocol.
- **Board of Directors:** The BOD is the body responsible for the fiscal security of the school to assure its longevity and quality and oversight to make sure the mission of the school drives decision-making. The BOD hires and oversees the key school administrators who run the day-to-day operations of the school.
- **Faculty and Staff:** The school faculty and staff are responsible for making educational decisions at the school. Staff works closely with parents to create support for student achievement and social/emotional development of all children.

**Standards-based:** The given set of standards (from a school district, state or national academic agency) that form the basis for curriculum development. Standards-based instruction is compatible with many teaching methodologies. AFPS is held accountable to the California Common Core State Standards.

**Whole child/holistic approach:** An “educated person” encompasses many skill sets and children need the means to express learning in a variety of ways. AFPS believes in educating the “whole child” by providing a range of interesting activities so that students can become passionate and skilled learners in many different disciplines (social, emotional, academic, artistic, and physical.)

## **Our Community**

AFPS was built with the energy of parents, educators and the community – bringing together local businesses, city leaders, community groups, long-time residents and parents with experienced educators to create a school that has both a grass-roots spirit and the education establishment’s knowledge and experience. The participation of families and the surrounding community is critical in meeting the needs of the whole child.

## **Parent Volunteering and Community Events**

Our staff will reach out to the school community to elicit family participation and support for a variety of school events and volunteer opportunities. Information on how to participate can be found on our school newsletter and facebook page.

## Alma Fuerte Public School Board Members

Contact: board@almafuerterps.org

**Board Chair** - Myra Salinas, Director of Student Support Services, Larchmont Charter School

**Vice Chair** - Amy Dresser Held, Executive Director, Larchmont Charter School

**Secretary** - Hazim Rabadi, Principal Architect, TSK Architects

**Treasurer** - Melanie Sauer, Former Chief Operating Officer, Pacific Oaks College

**Member** - Anne Lee, Founder of Alma Fuerte, Director of Development, B&G Club Pasadena

### STAFF ROSTER

| Title                      | First Name | Last Name | Email                              |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Executive Director         | Laurilie   | Keay      | laurilie.keay@almafuerterps.org    |
| Director of Operations     | Adriani    | Leon      | adriani.leon@almafuerterps.org     |
| Special Ed. Specialist     | Elaine     | Rodriguez | Elaine@almafuerterps.org           |
| Counselor                  | Carlos     | Perales   | carlos.perales@almafuerterps.org   |
| Community Liaison          | Kamerin    | Harrel    | kamerin@almafuerterps.org          |
| Teacher, TK and Kinder     | Adriane    | Vivirito  | adriane.vivirito@almafuerterps.org |
| Teacher, 1st Grade         | Danielle   | Hammond   | hammond@almafuerterps.org          |
| Teacher, 2nd Grade         | Amanda     | Hensley   | amanda.hensley@almafuerterps.org   |
| Teacher, 3rd Grade         | Roger      | Yee       | roger.yee@almafuerterps.org        |
| Teacher, 4th Grade         | Grant      | Youn      | grant.youn@almafuerterps.org       |
| Teacher, 5th and 6th Grade | Latoya     | Dawson    | dawson@almafuerterps.org           |

### Associate Teachers

Noemi Pacheco  
Kimberly Lopez  
Eva Tawfik  
Kameron Williams  
Dani Valdez  
Matthew Padilla  
Brenton Andrews

## Bell Schedule

# ALMA FUERTE 2021-2022 BELL SCHEDULE

| GRADES TK - K      |                | GRADES 1 - 3       |                | GRADES 4 - 6       |                |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| DROPOFF: 7:45-8:10 |                | DROPOFF: 7:45-8:10 |                | DROPOFF: 7:45-8:10 |                |
| 8:17-8:42          | PERIOD 1       | 8:17-8:42          | PERIOD 1       |                    |                |
| 8:42-9:22          | PERIOD 2       | 8:42-9:22          | PERIOD 2       | 8:17-8:57          | PERIOD 1       |
| 9:22-9:37          | RECESS         | 9:22-9:37          | RECESS         | 8:57-9:37          | PERIOD 2       |
| 9:38-10:23         | PERIOD 3       | 9:38-10:23         | PERIOD 3       | 9:38-9:53          | RECESS         |
| 10:23-10:58        | PERIOD 4       | 10:23-10:58        | PERIOD 4       | 9:55-10:35         | PERIOD 3       |
| 11:00-11:40        | LUNCH / RECESS | 11:00-11:40        | LUNCH / RECESS | 10:35-11:15        | PERIOD 4       |
| 11:41-12:24        | PERIOD 5       | 11:41-12:24        | PERIOD 5       | 11:15-11:55        | LUNCH / RECESS |
| 12:24-1:00         | PERIOD 6       | 12:24-1:00         | PERIOD 6       | 11:56-12:36        | PERIOD 5       |
| 1:00-1:35          | PERIOD 7       | 1:00-1:35          | PERIOD 7       | 12:36-1:16         | PERIOD 6       |
| 1:35-1:55          | RECESS         | 1:35-1:50          | RECESS         | 1:16-1:56          | PERIOD 7       |
| 1:57-2:36          | PERIOD 8       | 1:50-2:36          | PERIOD 8       | 1:56-2:36          | PERIOD 8       |

## Use of School Technology at Home

Alma Fuerte can only ensure the safety of your child's digital footprint and identity if he/she is using the district-approved applications. The use of any other websites/applications or social media platforms is at the discretion of the parent. We strongly encourage you to read the privacy policies of any non-district approved applications to ensure that your child's identity is properly protected. If you are unsure whether a resource is approved by the district, please contact your school. As a community, we must all remain especially vigilant about cyber-security in the weeks and months ahead.

## Educational Program

Alma Fuerte has adopted four educational philosophies which ultimately inform our programmatic approaches, curricular selection, assessment, and student relationship. These philosophies are:

- (1) Personalization
- (2) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
- (3) Increased Time on Task
- (4) Data-Driven Instruction

## ***A. Personalization***

Our belief that every student learns in a unique way inspires our philosophy that every opportunity will be taken to personalize a student's learning experience at Alma Fuerte. While not every experience at Alma Fuerte can be completely individualized to the student, personalization will act as a lens through which teachers and school leadership will make decisions.

For example, students will experience our personalized approach during their Math rotation as they interact with mathematics software that moves at their pace and diagnoses learning deficits and alters their content to address the students' individual needs.

Another example of personalization occurs during a student's Capstone Entrepreneurship project. During this culminating assignment students are given agency to choose to start a business or organization that interests them. Throughout the project, teachers will then work individually with students to help the student progress. This will give students personalized guidance on core subjects, SEL, and entrepreneurship.

We also believe that personalization means providing enough learning modalities for all students to connect with the subject matter. For example, some students may generally favor a visual presentation style, while others favor a kinesthetic style. Some students may prefer a guided style of instruction and some may prefer an exploratory style. Personalization in this context means creating enough different ways of presenting and engaging with content such that students can feel comfortable acquiring the knowledge, getting exposure to alternative learning modalities, and deepening their understanding of the information.

## ***B. Culturally Responsive Teaching***

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is an extension of our personalized approach. Culturally Responsive Teaching requires that teachers teach to and through their students' culture. As such, it is imperative that the curriculum is made relevant through reference to their cultural understanding. At Alma Fuerte, a student's culture, beliefs, and values will be integral to how students are taught.

At Alma Fuerte, teachers will capitalize on students' cultures, beliefs, and values and reflect the following values and approaches:

- Positive relationships with parents and families
- High expectations for student achievement
- Student centered learning, with the teacher as facilitator.
- Caring
- Recognize diversity
- Foster warmth and safety
- Cultivate community
- Help develop critical consciousness
- Build confidence
- Treat everyone with equal human worth



- Acknowledge differences
- Promote solidarity
- Deal with racism and power dynamics
- Teach identity and pride

Students will directly experience our Culturally Relevant Teaching philosophy in every area of education. For example, readings will be selected to more accurately represent the culture of the student and Social Studies assignments will allow students research and study the history of their culture.

### ***C. Increased Time on Task***

Our beliefs require students to have the time to explore and experience our curriculum at a pace that reflects their individual need to process the information. This is our philosophy of providing the maximum amount of time possible for students to learn and progress.

Students will experience this philosophy through our extended school day, which allows for more time for students to engage in an in-depth and fully engaged way. Backed by research, our educational model reflects our belief that extending learning time for students in need of support can bridge the academic gap by providing students with the time they need to master subject content (Dodd, 2002). As a result, we are extending our school day. Alma Fuerte students will have access to more time for learning – arriving at 8:15 a.m. for intervention – and continuing to be engaged in active learning until the day ends at 3:15 p.m. The school day will typically extend to 4:15 p.m. while students engage in tutoring sessions that, similar to the rest of their school day, are tailored to meet students' individual needs.

To accommodate this we have increased the length of our school day and increased the length of our school year, as reflected in our daily schedule and yearly calendar.

### ***D. Data-Driven Instruction***

At Alma Fuerte, our instructional staff will regularly gather and analyze student achievement data to drive instruction. Our approach employs “backwards design” to establish and assess student progress toward learning expectations, and frequent assessment and analysis of student achievement data will help to develop and refine instructional strategies and provide targeted support to ensure that each and every student is meeting the defined criteria for academic success.

Alma Fuerte's online learning tools will not only provide personalized and targeted learning for all students, but will provide critical real-time data for teachers. Lexia, Study Island and Achieve 3000 will be utilized at selected grade levels to provide teachers and school leaders – and parents -- with frequent measures of student performance. As students use these programs, data is automatically generated for teachers to see which skills students have mastered and which skills require more instruction. These reports are tied directly to state content standards so that summative data show student mastery of specific standards as well as diagnostic data about areas in need of further development. Teachers and school leaders can easily aggregate individual, sub-group, grade level and school wide achievement data in an efficient way, so that lessons and professional development can all be tailored directly to student needs.

Frequent and varied assessments, including pre- and post-assessments of student achievement, will provide valuable information to teachers when planning instruction. These assessments will serve as relevant data for use by school leadership when making decisions leading to program evaluation and improvement. Regular assessment and reporting of student outcomes will also allow interested parties outside of the school to evaluate the academic success of Alma Fuerte.

Furthermore, teachers will have the opportunity to observe their peers' teaching to provide feedback to and learn from one another. During teacher collaboration time, they will share observation feedback and reflect on their practices, led by the Director. Based on this inquiry and discussion, teachers will calibrate, refine curriculum, and identify best practices.

### **Instructional Framework**

Our Educational Philosophy informs how we have designed our Educational Program. As mentioned above, we believe that instruction should be personalized, culturally responsive, data-driven, and expanded to allow for more time on task. We believe that these best address the needs of the diverse students we will serve. These beliefs guide our standards-aligned educational program

Instruction at Alma Fuerte is first based on state standards, including the Common Core and the frameworks for instructional design, all of which drive the creation of lesson plans and the assessment of both student and teacher achievement. Alma Fuerte's integrated and balanced instructional approach will provide a standards-based curriculum that is both skills-based and hands-on, in order to ensure each and every student meets our high expectations for success: mastery of content – authentic understanding and the ability to apply learning, in context, across subject domains.

Alma Fuerte's core programmatic approaches are based in "best practices" and leading innovations on public education:

#### **(1) Project-Based Learning (2) Blended Learning for Targeted Instruction**

In the real world, concepts from math, science, English Language Arts, history, technology and the arts often intersect. Through PBL, students will participate in cross-disciplinary projects that integrate core subjects mirroring what they will find in the real world. This will give students opportunities to lead teams and create artifacts of social value. Diverse projects will enable students to learn via active engagement and "doing." Through PBL, our students will engage in complex and challenging tasks and problem-solving, both independently and in small groups, engaging in a depth of learning that creates true understanding beyond rote memorization of facts. We will infuse PBL into all of our core subject matters, including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science Instruction.

For example, students who are studying physical science may have a project to develop a school garden, learn the life cycle of plants, and write an essay about their experience. Skills students need to learn through a standards based curriculum will be taught explicitly and monitored through student application in PBL units of study.

Because PBL integrates knowledge from multiple subjects, it requires a certain level of content and skill proficiency. That is why our instructional program uses blended learning strategies. We believe that moving beyond books through online curriculum is a critical support/intervention for our students. Each of our students will work on objectives that are appropriate to their level. Moreover, the ability of software and online learning tools to frequently assess student progress gives teachers real-time information about whether a student is mastering a concept or requires additional teacher attention and instruction.

Our use of blended learning is designed to increase fluency with core subject matter concepts for all students. After various levels of direct instruction, students will rotate among one-on-one digital instruction, guided small group instruction, and peer-based small group assignments. This approach provides many points of access to concepts for students with diverse learning styles, opportunities for reflection, and deepening understanding while teaching staff intervene or enrich in real time.

Through interactive, Common Core-aligned, technology-based learning programs such as ST Math, Lexia and Achieve 3000, students will proceed at their own pace to master skills and concepts. Students rotate within a fixed schedule or at the teacher's discretion between learning modalities, at least one of which is online learning. Other modalities will include:

- Small-group instruction
- Full-class instruction
- Group projects
- Individual conferencing
- Pencil-and-paper assignments
- Individual practice

Each of these components plays an important role in helping students apply and contextualize what they learn. The rotational model affords Alma Fuerte teachers and students with targeted teaching and learning opportunities, while simultaneously providing multiple data points from both teacher and online assessments to help inform instructional practice.

## **Homework Policy**

We believe that the purpose of homework is to:

- 1) build bridges between home and school that help children make meaningful mental connections between their own life experiences and the learning taking place at school.
- 2) keep parents involved in the daily learning of their children and clarify the content of schoolwork throughout the year.
- 3) to review and reinforce skills and concepts being studied at school through meaningful practice and activity.

At the K-1 levels, children may spend approximately 10 minutes per night working on homework. In Kindergarten, homework time will include parent participation. In first grade, children will be growing toward increasing independence in the homework process.

In grades 2-5, children may spend about 15 minutes per night working on homework.

In addition to daily homework, we ask that every family engage in 15 minutes per night of reading activities. This might include allowing your child to read independently/silently, reading aloud to your child, helping your child to read at his/her appropriate level, listening to your child read, or even playing a game with a reading component.

### **Late Work Policy**

Our goal is to see all student work turned in on time. If a child is absent, arrangements should be made directly with the teacher. We encourage students to advocate for themselves and talk to their teacher about this. Teachers maintain the discretion to offer an opportunity for students to redo any assignment if they feel that it would be beneficial. This option is entirely the prerogative of the teacher.

### **Students With Disabilities And Special Education**

Students learn in a variety of ways with most students learning effectively in a traditional school setting. To facilitate these varying learning styles, Alma Fuerte Public School will comply with all aspects of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"). Students with disabilities may be eligible to receive special education instruction and related services. These services are based on assessment and determined by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the student's parent(s) as equal participants. Special education services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities and are provided at no cost to parents. To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with their nondisabled peers in the general education environment at the school they would attend if they were not disabled.

Parents of students at AFPS who suspect their child may have a disability and may need special education services and who have questions about the AFPS Special Education Program, should contact the Director, 119 W. Palm St., Altadena, CA 91001, (626) 204-5265.

**Students With Disabilities Under Section 504** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Discrimination, harassment, and intimidation in any form toward individuals on the basis of their actual or perceived disability is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. AFPS will promptly investigate any complaints of disability-based discrimination/harassment and take reasonable actions to stop future incidents of such discrimination/harassment.

AFPS has specific responsibilities related to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to school age individuals with disabilities under Section 504. AFPS is required to provide a program designed to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the educational needs of students without disabilities. For students who are not eligible for special education services, but meet the federal definition of persons with disabilities under Section 504, a Section 504 Plan may be developed which indicates the accommodations, supplementary aids and/or services that will be provided to assist the student in accessing the general education program. Section 504 must provide nonacademic and extracurricular services

and activities in a manner that ensures that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate. Parents or guardians must be notified in writing of any AFPS decisions regarding the evaluation, identification, and/or educational placement of their student and their right to participate in and/or appeal these decisions under Section 504.

For more information, contact the Director of Academics, 119 W. Palm St., Altadena, CA 91001, (626) 204- 5265.

### **Gifted and Talented Students and Students Achieving Above Grade Level**

Students who are high achievers and/or previously identified as gifted by another school benefit from differentiation and instruction that is flexible enough to meet their specific needs. AFPS identifies all students high achieving regardless of content area or duration and we differentiate accordingly but we do not explicitly test or label students as gifted. Because our academic model focuses on individualized instruction, all students within our community have access to extended, enriching and critical thinking activities that have appropriate complexity, depth and pace. Students achieving above grade level collaborate and work with one another, and teachers use a variety of assessments to identify ways to challenge these students.

These in class opportunities include providing higher-level assignments and class placements for students who are high achieving, allowing students to delve into subjects more deeply. Many projects have open-ended components and give gifted and high achieving students a chance to adapt their assignments to suit their abilities, interests, and learning modalities. Students often work together to discuss ideas and concepts, and brainstorm solutions to math problems, predict scientific outcomes and evaluate scientific variables, and ponder causes and effects of historical events. Teachers use questioning techniques to promote in-depth analysis of topics and introduce various viewpoints, solution models, and opportunities for hypotheses into classroom discussions and activities.

### **English Learners**

**ELPAC:** The California English Language Proficiency Assessments for California or “ELPAC” Test will be administered every fall to all students who are classified as English Learners, in TK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. This test includes a Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking sections, which are administered either in group or individual settings. Because this is a proficiency test instead of a norm-referenced test, the administration of the test is un-timed.

The results from this test will be examined alongside other assessments by AFPS teachers, since the school will be focused on providing quality English Language Development instruction to all English Learners at the school at their proficiency level. The ELPAC is one of the measures used to determine whether students re-designate from English Learners to Fluent English Proficient students. Re-designation will be one of the school’s primary goals and measures of success.

### **English Language Development (ELD)**

AFPS provides support incorporating English Language Development (ELD) to help students learn English and utilizes Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) to help students master the state academic content standards. EL Students will receive both

“Designated ELD” instruction and “Integrated ELD” instruction at Alma Fuerte.

Designated ED Instruction: Targeted interventions for EL students will be provided during the ELA time block. During this time, EL students will participate in small group instruction utilizing the ELD Standards- aligned Lexia curriculum which will be provided by credentialed teachers.

Integrated ED Instruction: Additional ELD instruction will occur in the general classroom environment throughout the school day. Integrated ELD instruction will occur in every subject area by every Alma Fuerte teacher who has an EL student in the classroom. The CA ELD Standards will be used in tandem with the Common Core Standards for ELA/Literacy and other content standards to ensure students strengthen their abilities to use academic English as they learn content through English.

## **Enrichments/Electives**

At Alma Fuerte, our approach focuses on children’s natural and varied approaches to learning and understanding. We recognize that students “construct their own understanding” through various activities and experiences. Thus, a rich assortment of learning experiences not only exposes children to new skills and opportunities, but supports learning in the core academic areas as well. All of our students take part in a variety of enrichment classes; every student participates in art, physical education, and Spanish.

## **Assessments**

Why do we assess learning? At Alma Fuerte Public School, assessments are used to help identify individual student’s needs and used as a tool to enhance both the student’s learning and the teacher’s understanding of the student’s progress. Types of assessments include paper tests, essays, rubric scored projects, oral assessments, and artistic rendering.

*How do we inform families?* We approach assessment through a variety of formats and opportunities for students to share their learning and personal styles. We will share information with families through individualized student conferences, discussions, and progress reports.

*Parents may excuse their child from any or all parts of any assessment by submitting an exemption request, in writing, to the school.*

### *Standardized Testing*

The assessments that comprise the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) administration include computer-based and paper-pencil assessments. The computer-based assessments are the Smarter Balanced English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics tests, which are administered to 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. The paper-pencil assessments include the science assessments—the California Standards Tests (CSTs) for Science, the California Modified Assessment (CMA) for Science, and California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) for Science, which are administered to 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> graders.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent’s or guardian’s written request to the Director of Operations to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of this state assessment

shall be granted.

## **After School**

Alma Fuerte will be offering after-care in the 2021-2022 school year starting on August 16th. Alma Fuerte will charge \$10/per week/ per child to families wishing to attend. The cost will be the same regardless of how many days a child stays after school. As the year goes on, our staff will introduce clubs and activities for students to participate in. More information and updates about the afterschool program will be shared on the school newsletter.

## **Technology Use Policy**

Computers will be available to students throughout the campus. The Internet provides an excellent means for learning, researching, and communicating. Using the Internet is for educational purposes only and will be closely monitored by adults. No student will use the Internet at school until the Acceptable Usage Policy has been signed by his/her parent/guardian and returned to the school.

## **Lunch and Nutrition**

In partnership with Revolution Foods, Alma Fuerte offers hot lunch and cold breakfast. Lunch is normally \$3.25 per meal and breakfast costs \$2 per meal, for those that are not eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. Families pre-pay for lunch orders at [mymealtime.com](http://mymealtime.com), however due to COVID meals will be free to all students regardless of income eligibility during the 2021-2022 School Year. Students are encouraged to pack healthy snacks and a refillable water bottle. Drinks and snacks that are high in sugar are not encouraged.

For health reasons, such as allergic conditions, children should never share food at school.

## **Free and Reduced Price Meals**

Alma Fuerte participates in the National School Lunch Program. Applications for free or reduced price meals are available in the main office and offered to all families. All families are encouraged to complete the application form in order to include as many eligible students as possible. More information and the application can be found at: [www.almafuerteps.org/post/public-media-release-free-and-reduced-price-meals-at-alma-fuerte](http://www.almafuerteps.org/post/public-media-release-free-and-reduced-price-meals-at-alma-fuerte)

## **Field Trips**

For each field trip scheduled, the teacher will send home a note requesting your permission and providing specific information pertaining to the trip.

## **Title IX and Students**

Federal law, Title IX, State law and School policy prohibit anyone from discriminating against any student on the basis of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, and gender (including gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition). Male and female students have the right to equal learning opportunities in their schools and must be treated the same in all activities and programs, including:

- Athletics
- The classes they can take
- The way they are treated in the classroom
- The kind of counseling they are given
- The extracurricular activities in which they can participate
- The honors, special awards, scholarships and graduation activities in which they can participate

Students who feel that their rights are being violated have the right to take action and should not be afraid of trying to correct a situation by speaking to a school administrator, psychologist, counselor, or trusted adult at school, or filing a complaint (see Uniform Complaint Procedures). Students are encouraged whenever possible to try to resolve their complaints directly at the school site. Any student who believes he or she is being discriminated against in violation of Title IX has the right to file a complaint. For further information or assistance, contact the Director of Operations, 119 W. Palm St., Altadena, CA 91001, (858) 472-2245.

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is defined as any form of plagiarism, fabrication of sources or information, cheating, and /or deception. Consequences:

- Parents will be informed of the suspicion.
- If as the result of investigation by the teacher or administration, the student has intentionally plagiarized any work, it will result in a zero for the assignment.
- The discretion to assign alternative work, for partial or no credit, belongs to the teacher and/or the School Leaders.
- Depending on the severity of the plagiarism/ cheating, the administration may impose further disciplinary actions.

## **AFPS Campus Life : Visitors to School Campus**

Because of the pandemic, the Alma Fuerte campus will be limiting access to the campus. All school visitors including school volunteers must have the consent and approval of the Director or a designee. Parents wishing to speak with teachers must make appointments via email or telephone. Permission to visit must be given at the time requested if at all possible or within a reasonable period of time following the request. Visitors may not interfere, disrupt or cause substantial disorder in any classroom or school activity.

Visitors are expected to:



- Remain in their vehicle unless instructed to enter the building
- Answer the COVID-19 screening questions
- Sanitize hands upon arrival
- Wear a mask when speaking with our staff or entering the building
- SIGN-IN and SIGN-OUT at the main office at the front desk.
- Visitors, volunteers, and outside guests will not be allowed into the building during the duration of the pandemic. Once allowed, these types of guests must stop by the front desk to pick up Visitor's badge to wear.
- If you are picking up a student early, please notify the front office and the student will be brought to meet you at the office.
- Wait in the car line or at the main doors until students are dismissed and school doors are opened to pick up a child.
- Not converse with the students, teacher and/or instructional aides during your visit.
- Not interfere with any school activity.
- Keep the length and frequency of classroom visits reasonable.
- Follow the school's established procedures for meeting with the teacher and/or Director after the visit, if needed.
- Return the visitor's badge to the point of origin before leaving the campus.

Any individual who disrupts a school site or fails to follow school rules and/or procedures is subject to removal from the school site and may further be restricted from visiting the school.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

**Community Awareness** The campus is located in a residential zone. We must be respectful of our neighbors. In order to accommodate all of the students and keep the drop-off and pick-up lines moving as quickly as possible, we will utilize the following plan for the school year:



**Walking** If you walk to drop off your child, please enter through the main doors on Palm Street.

Entering and exiting the campus during car line hours – 7:45-8:15am, and 2:30-2:45.

- You may enter from the west side of Palm Street only. FOR YOUR SAFETY, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MAKE A RIGHT TURN INTO THE PARKING LOT DURING CAR LINE.
- When exiting the parking lot, YOU MAY ONLY TURN LEFT and head east on Palm Street.
- When entering the lot, no cars may block the sidewalk or driveways. Please wait until there is sufficient room for your entire vehicle to come inside the lot.
- If there is already a line of cars waiting to turn into the driveway, you will need to circle around the block until the traffic has cleared. It is imperative that the line of cars does not cause a back-up Palm Street.
- Have students prepared to exit the car when you approach the unloading zone in the morning. They should have their backpacks and other materials ready to exit.
- Wait for a staff person, do not drop-off your child and direct them to walk over by themselves when school staff is not visible.
- If you choose to not enter the carpool line, please park your vehicle in a legal parking space that does not block the driveway and walk your student(s) to the entry door at the front of the school.
- Please adhere to the correct pick-up times.
- Only one line of cars is allowed in the car line.

**Leaving Campus** No child is permitted to leave the AFPS campus at any time during the school day unless they are signed out at the office and are accompanied by an authorized adult. Children will only be released to parents and others who have been designated as an emergency contact.

**Going Home with Friends After School** Permission will be granted to go home with another parent or caretaker provided the office has received a signed and dated email or text from the custodial parent.

## **Dress Code**

Students should come to school clothed for exploration and activity. Although every effort will be made to shield clothing from messy media, please send your child to school in clothes that can get dirty or wet.

- Children need to wear closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes. "Crocs", flip-flops and other summer wear are dangerous at school for children and adults alike. No sandals.
- Students are responsible for maintaining a schedule of when they participate in physical education. If they are not wearing athletic shoes with proper support when they arrive at school then they must have an appropriate pair of shoes with them to change into.
- Any skirt, dress, or shorts worn to school should be no shorter than your child's fingertips with their arms extended at their sides.
- Clothing should fit properly and not be excessively tight or loose. Under garments should never be viewed by the general public.

- Clothing with offensive language and inappropriate graphics or content is not acceptable. This includes: curse words, references to alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes, material that is sexual in nature or that promotes a gang affiliation.
- Tops are to cover the entire torso of a student at all times. No midriffs should be visible. This includes during active exploration, when stretching, reaching, and raising one's hand.
- Make-up may not be worn or brought to school. Students are permitted to bring lip balm or lip gloss (lip stick is not permitted), however, its use or application cannot be disruptive in nature. Staff reserve the right to confiscate these items.
- Head Coverings may only be worn outdoors, except if a head covering is worn for religious purposes.
- **All children should bring a complete change of clothes and underwear labeled with their name and a zip lock bag in case of accidents.**

### **Personal Belongings**

Students may not bring cell phones or any other electronic devices to school. If found they will be kept in the office and returned only to parents. Parents may check items into the office in the morning should students need to take them with them after school.

**Toys should not be brought to school unless requested by the teacher.**

**Students should not bring money to school.**

**Lost and Found** Please label *ALL* of your child's belongings. Lost and found areas are kept in each classroom as well as on the first floor by the restrooms. Unmarked articles will be donated to charity at the end of each month. Please check the lost and found areas regularly.

### **Birthday Celebration Policy**

As a community, we care about each other. We also want to teach healthy and respectful lifelong habits. At AFPS, we will celebrate birthdays together as a community by singing to each child during assembly on the week of their birthday.

We ask that personal invitations to birthday parties not be passed out at school, unless the entire class is invited.

### **Commitment to Wellness**

Due to children's need to access healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive; Alma Fuerte Public School faculty and staff are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, our agreement to support a healthy respect for one's self is as follows:

- AFPS is instituting a strict no candy, no soda policy. Any of these items brought in a personal lunch or snack may be confiscated and not returned. Students will have the opportunity to snack

swap with faculty or staff for a healthier option.

- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis through community time in the garden and on the yard.
- All foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to students' diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

## **Enrollment and Attendance**

**Please note the following: This handbook is intended as a general overview of policies and procedures - be advised that the AFPS charter petition supersedes this and all other documents in the event of a discrepancy in described policy or procedure.**

**Non-Discriminatory Practices** Alma Fuerte Public School pledges to use nondiscriminatory practices in the recruitment and enrollment of students and will not discriminate on any protected classification of students including but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, religion, and sexual orientation. Alma Fuerte Public School will actively recruit a diverse student population reflective of the communities being served.

**Enrollment Process** By law, admission at AFPS is open to all students wishing to attend the school. In the event that there are more students wishing to attend the school than there are seats available, admission will be determined via a public, random lottery. Once a student is enrolled, they remain enrolled through 8<sup>th</sup> grade unless a parent/guardian releases their seat or is otherwise removed through the expulsion process.

## **Attendance Policy**

***Please note, state funds are based on attendance. The school loses funding if a student is absent from school for any reason.***

At Alma Fuerte Public School, we view every day as an essential learning opportunity. Therefore, we expect excellent attendance from all of our students. Student attendance becomes a pattern and missing school regularly is not only detrimental to a student's learning, but can create poor learning habits. Students who develop patterns of good attendance are much more likely to be successful both academically and socially. Every student is expected to attend school on a daily basis [*Education Code 48200*], unless there is valid justification for the absence. A student is considered absent when he/she is not in school.

Absences lead to missed academic instruction and loss of funding. While absences must be reported to the State as "excused" or "unexcused," *Alma Fuerte Public School loses funds from the State* if you plan a vacation or other time away (even one day) when school is in session.

When a student has a fever or symptoms of illness or has a communicable illness, it is best for

the student to stay at home to rest and recover. The student may utilize independent study for this time, if appropriate, and upon parent/guardian request and approval by Alma Fuerte Public School.

**California Compulsory Full-Time Education Law** *Education Code section 48200* states that each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years, and not exempted, is subject to compulsory full-time education. Each Alma Fuerte Public School student shall attend school or classes for the full time designated as the length of the school day by the Board of Directors of Alma Fuerte Public School.

## **Tardy Policy**

A student is considered tardy if he or she is late to school (that is, arriving after the established start time of the Alma Fuerte Public School's instructional day (8:15am)). A student must report to the office if he or she is late for school in order to be admitted to her/his classroom. After school begins, drivers must park and accompany the student to the office.

Tardiness may be excused only for the reasons listed below. Traffic congestion and oversleeping will not be considered a valid excuse. Plan for extra time if you are driving.

Procedures for tardiness and consequences for repeated tardiness are outlined in this Handbook.

## **Excused Absences/Tardies**

Documentation is required for all absences/Tardies to help Alma Fuerte Public School understand why a student is not in school. Absences must be reported to the State as "excused" or "unexcused."

A student is excused from school when the absence is due to:

- Illness
- Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
- Having medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic services rendered to him or her.
- Attending the funeral of an immediate family member (one day within the state, three days outside the state)
- For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.
- Justifiable Personal Reasons. Absences that fall into this category may include, but are not limited to:
  - Appearance in court
  - Attendance at a funeral service
  - Observance of religious holiday or ceremony
  - Attendance at religious retreats (with prior approval)
  - Attendance at an employment conference

- Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization (when the student's absence has been requested in writing by the parent and approved by the School Leader or designee)

All absences require appropriate documentation, e.g. note from home, a note from a doctor or medical facility, court documents, etc. If appropriate documentation is not provided as indicated below, the absence will be considered unexcused.

A parent or caregiver adult must notify Alma Fuerte Public School the **same day** of an absence by telephone, letter, fax, e-mail, or in person by 8:15 am. If the Alma Fuerte Public School is not notified in advance and the student does not report to school the next day with a note, the absence will be considered unexcused.

A student with an excused absence will be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can reasonably be provided and, upon satisfactory completion, will be given full credit. The teacher of any class from which a student is absent will determine what assignments the student shall make up and in what period of time the student shall complete such assignments. Any assessments and assignments will be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assessments and assignments that the student missed during the absence.

**Absences for Religious Purposes** Students, with the written consent of their parents or guardians, may be excused from school in order to participate in religious exercises with prior approval by the School Leader for no more than four days per month. Additionally, students may be absent to attend a religious retreat, not to exceed four hours per semester. Such absences are considered excused absences, and pupils are responsible for making up missed work.

**Independent Study** Independent Study allows an opportunity for a student to stay abreast of instruction during a planned absence, as well as allow our school to maintain the desired level of service by receiving funding for properly executed Independent Study agreements. This opportunity is available for **unavoidable circumstances**, but it does not replace the learning experience derived from attendance at school.

Due to COVID-19, there have been significant changes to how Independent Study is conducted. Please view our Independent Study Policy for more information.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence for reasons other than those listed as EXCUSED ABSENCES are unexcused. Alma Fuerte Public School is required by law to seek an explanation from the parent/guardian (a written note or verbal justification) regarding all absences. The student may be classified as a truant after the third unexcused absence or tardy for more than any 30-minute period from school in a school year.

In addition, students shall be classified as a chronic truant if the student is absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school, from the date of enrollment to the current date.

The School Leader or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy, including

working with the family in an attempt to resolve the attendance problem. A student's progress and learning may be affected by excessive unexcused absences. In addition, Alma Fuerte Public School is fiscally dependent on student attendance and is negatively impacted by excessive unexcused absences. If all attempts to resolve the student's attendance problem are unsuccessful, Alma Fuerte Public School will implement the processes described below.

## **PROCESS FOR UPHOLDING THE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**First Day of School Process** When students are not in attendance on the first five (5) days of school, Alma Fuerte Public School will attempt to reach the parent/guardian on a daily basis for each of the first five days to determine whether the student has an excused absence, consistent with the process outlined in this policy. If the student has a basis for an excused absence, parents must notify the school of the absence and provide documentation consistent with this policy. However, students who are not in attendance due to an unexcused absence by the fifth day of school will be disenrolled from the school roster, as it will be assumed that the student has chosen another school option.

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first day of school will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll.
2. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the third day will receive a letter indicating the student will be disenrolled after the fifth day of school if the student has not attended school without a valid excuse.
3. Students who have indicated their intent to enroll, but have not attended by the fifth day will receive a phone call reiterating the content of the letter.
4. Students who have not attended by the sixth day, and do not have an excused absence as defined above for not being in attendance will be disenrolled from the roster.
5. The School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian.
6. The District of Residence will be notified of the student's failure to attend Alma Fuerte Public School and the disenrollment.

### **Truancy Process**

1. Each of the first two (2) unexcused absences will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Site Leader or designee. The student's classroom teacher may also call home.
2. Each of the third (3rd) and fourth (4th) unexcused absences will result in a call home to the parent/guardian by the Director of Operations or designee. In addition, the student's classroom teacher may also call home and/or the School may send the parent an e-mail notification. In addition, upon reaching three (3) unexcused absences in a school year, the parent/guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #1" from the School. This letter must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the School. This letter shall also be accompanied by a copy of this Attendance Policy. This letter, and all subsequent letter(s) sent home, shall be sent by Certified Mail, return receipt requested, or some other form of mail that can be tracked.
3. Upon reaching seven (7) unexcused absences, the parent/guardian will receive "Truancy Letter #2 – Conference Request," and a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to review the student's records and develop an intervention plan/contract.
4. Upon reaching ten (10) unexcused absences, the student will be referred to a Student



Success Team (SST), composed of individuals references in the AFPS charter petition. In addition, the parent/guardian will receive a “Habitual Truancy Re-classification Letter #3,” and will be asked/invited to attend an evening assembly for parents/guardians of chronically absent students.

5. The SST will discuss the absence problem with the parent/guardian to work on solutions, develop strategies, discuss appropriate support services for the student and his/her family, and establish a plan to resolve the attendance issue.

a. The SST shall direct the parent/guardian that no further unexcused absences or tardies can be tolerated. b. The parent shall be required to sign a contract formalizing the agreement by the parents to improve the child’s attendance or face additional administrative action. The contract will identify the corrective actions required in the future, and indicate that the SST shall have the authority to order one or more of the following consequences for non-compliance with the terms of the contract:

i. Parent/guardian to attend school with the child for one day ii. Student retention iii. After school detention program iv. Required school counseling v. Loss of field trip privileges vi. Loss of school store privileges vii. Loss of school event privileges viii. Required remediation plan as set by the SST ix. Notification to the District Attorney

b. The SST panel may discuss other school placement options. d. Notice of action recommended by the SST will be provided in writing to the parent/guardian.

6. If the conditions of the SST contract are not met, the student may incur additional administrative action up to and including disenrollment from the school and notification of disenrollment sent to the student’s district of residence.

7. For all communications set forth in this process, Alma Fuerte Public School will use the contact information provided by the parent/guardian. It is the parent’s or guardian’s responsibility to update Alma Fuerte Public School with any new contact information.

8. If student is absent ten (10) or more consecutive school days without valid excuse and parent/guardian cannot be reached at the number or address provided in the registration packet and does not otherwise respond to Alma Fuerte Public School’s communication attempts, as set forth above, the student will be in violation of the SST contract, and the SST will recommend that the student be deemed to have voluntarily disenrolled and notification of the disenrollment be sent to the student’s district of residence.

**Removal from Charter School** If, after the above procedures have been followed except for #8, the student continues to have unexcused absences, the parent/guardian may receive notice that the student is in violation of the SST contract. The student will then be required to appear before the SST again to discuss the unexcused absences. After such meeting, or after reasonable attempts by the SST panel to schedule the meeting if the parent/guardian is nonresponsive, the SST panel may recommend that the student be deemed to have voluntarily disenrolled from Alma Fuerte Public School. The parent will receive written notice of the SST panel’s recommendation.

The SST panel shall then forward its recommendation to the Governing Board for review of the

matter and final decision. The parent/guardian will receive written notice of the date and time of the Governing Board review. Such notice shall be sent at least five (5) days prior to the Board review. The Board's decision shall be final as to that recommendation.

If there is a Board decision to disenroll, notice will be sent to the student's district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A Board decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the SART panel from making a similar recommendation in the future.

**Referral to Appropriate Agencies or County District Attorney** It is Alma Fuerte Public School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, Alma Fuerte may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

If a child's attendance does not improve after a SST contract has been developed according to the procedures above, or if the parents fail to attend a required SST meeting, Alma Fuerte Public School shall notify the District's Attorney's office, which then may refer the matter for prosecution through the court system. Students 12 years of age and older may be referred to the juvenile court for adjudication.

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code Section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

**Reports** The Director of Operations, or designee, shall gather and report to the Board the number of absences both excused and unexcused as well as students who are truant, and the steps taken to remedy the problem.

## **Education Foster Youth Policy**

Alma Fuerte Public School recognizes that foster youth may face significant barriers to achieving academic success due to their family circumstances, disruption to their educational program, and their emotional, social, and other health needs. To enable such students to achieve state and charter school academic standards, we shall provide them with full access to Alma Fuertes's educational program and implement strategies identified as necessary for the improvement of the academic achievement of foster youth in Alma Fuerte's local control and accountability plan (LCAP).

**Definitions** *Foster youth* means a child who has been removed from his/her home pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code section 309, is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code sections 300 or 602, or has been removed from his/her home and is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 or 602.

*Person holding the right to make educational decisions* means a parent, guardian, or

responsible person appointed by a court to make educational decisions pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 361 or 726, or Education Code 56055.

*School of origin* means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, Alma Fuerte liaison for foster youth, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, shall determine, and in the best interests of the foster youth, the school is the school of origin.

*Best interests* means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational program and the foster youth's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all Charter School students.

**Charter School Liaison** In order to help facilitate the enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth to Alma Fuerte, the Governing Board shall designate a Charter School foster youth liaison. The Governing Board designates the following position as Alma Fuerte's liaison for foster youth:

Adriani Leon, Operations Manager, Alma Fuerte Public School 119 W. Palm St. Altadena, CA 91001 (626) 204-5265

## **Homeless Students**

The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who (42 USC 11434(a)):

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of "homeless."
5. Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the Homeless Liaison.

## **Homeless Student Liaison**

The Director of Operations or designee designates the following staff person as the School/Program Homeless Liaison for homeless students attending the school (42 USC 11432(g)(1)(J) & (e)(3)(C).):

Adriani Leon, Operations Manager Alma Fuerte Public School 119 W. Palm Street Altadena, CA 91001

The Homeless Liaison shall ensure that (42 USC 11432(g)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs.
4. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters, and soup kitchens.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, the Alma Fuerte charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. The Homeless Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

For any homeless student who enrolls at the AFPS, a copy of Alma Fuertes's complete policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment and at the guardian's request. A complete copy of this Policy is available at the main office of AFPS.

## **Health and Safety Policy**

### **Illness Policy**

We wish to keep all children healthy. Please keep your child at home if he/she shows any signs of illness. The school will send a student home at any time during the day when it appears necessary. Children who have a fever should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

### **Immunizations**

All students who enroll for the first time must show a written report for a Mantoux (PPD) test screening, to show that they are free of tuberculosis. Children must also have the following immunizations: polio (four shots), DPT (five shots), MMR (two shots), hepatitis B (three shots), and TDAP (1 shot before entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade). The office will review all immunization, and children

who do not meet state requirements will be excluded from school until these requirements are met. Beginning January 2016, SB277 requires all students entering TK/K and 7<sup>th</sup> grade to be fully vaccinated and that new Personal Beliefs exemptions will no longer be accepted. For more information, visit [www.shotsforschool.org](http://www.shotsforschool.org). Exemptions to the immunization requirement shall be granted only for medical reasons, religious objection, or other reasons allowed by law. Exceptions are allowed under the following conditions:

- The parent provides a signed doctor's statement verifying that the child is to be exempted from immunizations for medical reasons. This statement must contain a statement identifying the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition.
- Pupils who fail to complete the series of required immunizations within the specified time allowed under the law will be denied enrollment until the series has been completed.

**Oral Health Assessment** Students enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, or while enrolled in first grade if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional.

**Injuries** If your child sustains any type of major injury (e.g., a broken bone), a note from your doctor is required before your child may return to school. Students needing any supportive appliances (crutches, cast, wheelchair, etc.) must also have a written order from the prescribing physician. Call the office for details. Children with cast and splints are not allowed to participate in physical education activities, but alternative activities are arranged until the cast or splint is removed.

**Head Lice** Children with live head louse/lice are excluded from school until all live louse/lice are removed and clearance is given by the AFPS school health specialist for the child to return to class. If a child is found to ONLY have nits/eggs, parents will be notified so their child can receive appropriate treatment. Readmission occurs after the child has received the proper treatment. If you suspect your child of having head lice or you detect lice, please inform the main office right away so all other children can be checked.

**Type 2 Diabetes** Description Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in adults. Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes was rare in children, but it is becoming more common, especially for overweight teens. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime.

Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.
- Over time, glucose reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

**It is recommended that students displaying or possibly experiencing the risk factors and**

## **warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes be screened (tested) for the disease.**

### Risk Factors

Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:

- **Being overweight.** The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
- **Family history of diabetes.** Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
- **Inactivity.** Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.
- **Specific racial/ethnic groups.** Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
- **Puberty.** Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children, probably because of normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance during this stage of rapid growth and physical development.

### Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- Increased hunger, even after eating
- Unexplained weight loss
- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

## Type 2 Diabetes Prevention Methods and Treatments

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels.

- **Eat healthy foods.** Make wise food choices. Eat foods low in fat and calories.
- **Get more physical activity.** Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- **Take medication.** If diet and exercise are not enough to control the disease, it may be necessary to treat type 2 diabetes with medication.

The first step in treating type 2 diabetes is to visit a doctor. A doctor can determine if a child is overweight based on the child's age, weight, and height. A doctor can also request tests of a child's blood glucose to see if the child has diabetes or pre-diabetes (a condition which may lead to type 2 diabetes).

### Types of Diabetes Screening Tests That Are Available

- **Glycated hemoglobin (A1C) test.** A blood test measures the average blood sugar level over two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Random (non-fasting) blood sugar test.** A blood sample is taken at a random time. A random blood sugar level of 200 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL) or higher suggests diabetes. This test must be confirmed with a fasting blood glucose test.
- **Fasting blood sugar test.** A blood sample is taken after an overnight fast. A fasting blood sugar level less than 100 mg/dL is normal. A level of 100 to 125 mg/dL is considered pre-diabetes. A level of 126 mg/dL or higher on two separate tests indicates diabetes.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test.** A test measuring the fasting blood sugar level after an overnight fast with periodic testing for the next several hours after drinking a sugary liquid. A reading of more than 200 mg/dL after two hours indicates diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes in children is a preventable/treatable disease and the guidance provided in this information sheet is intended to raise awareness about this disease. Contact your student's school nurse, school administrator, or health care provider if you have questions.

**Student Medication** Children may only receive prescribed medication during school hours with written permission from the parent/guardian **and** from the physician who is responsible for the medical management of the child. Parents are urged, however, to request that the physician develop a schedule in which taking medication in school is minimized or eliminated. Request should be processed through the office.

Children may only receive over-the-counter medication during school hours with written permission from the parent/guardian who is responsible for the medical management of the child. Parents are urged, however, to minimize or eliminate taking medication in school. Requests should be processed through the office.

All medications must be stored at school in the original prescription bottle or packaging, labeled

with dosage instructions, and be administered in the office. No student may carry his or her own medication or take medication unsupervised except in the case of inhaler and Epi-Pen where the doctor has given permission.

If your child takes medication regularly during non-school hours, you should leave a short-term supply in the office to be used in case of an emergency, such as an earthquake. Please fill out the **Medication Authorization Form** (copies of which can be found in your campus main office) and label it in red "For Emergency Use Only."

## **Ensuring Safety**

**Background Checks** Each new employee, vendor or volunteer who will work in contact with students must submit to a fingerprint scan for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. This requirement is a condition of employment/engagement/volunteering. The Network office retrieves the results of the fingerprint scans, and completes the appropriate paperwork/Affidavits and retains this as part of the file for the individual or vendor. AFPS adheres to California laws, including fingerprinting, and prohibitions regarding the employment of any person who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony.

**Child Abuse and Neglect** The Comprehensive School Safety Plan includes training and procedures for child abuse and neglect reporting. All certificated and classified employees of the school are made aware of their role as mandated child abuse reporters and that California Penal Code section 11166 requires any child care custodian who has knowledge of, or observes, a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately, or as soon as practicably possible, by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within thirty-six (36) hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

**Positive Behavior Support** AFPS utilizes various tools on a school-wide level to teach, recognize, and reward (1) positive social skill development, (2) conflict resolution, and (3) a shared vision of appropriate behavior at school.

Alma Fuerte teachers and staff will utilize the acronym SOAR to convey the desired characteristics of our scholars. Alma Fuerte staff develop scholar lessons both inside and outside of the classroom to reinforce these characteristics:

1. Self-motivation 2. Ownership 3. Acceptance 4. Respect

Teachers will be trained during professional development meetings to use effective classroom management strategies to maximize instruction and minimize student misbehavior, and there will be school-wide systems for assigning both positive and negative consequences. Students who do not adhere to stated expectations for behavior and who violate the school's rules may expect consequences for their behavior. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Warning, verbal and/or written
- Individual conference with the teacher
- Loss of privileges



- Individual behavior contract
- Referral to the Director or other school staff member
- Notices to parents by telephone or letter
- Parent conference, at school or during a home visit
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently among all students. This policy and its procedures will clearly describe discipline expectations, and it will be printed and distributed as part of the Family-Student Handbook which is sent to each student at the beginning of the school year. The school leaders shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The School shall maintain disciplinary records and make them available to the School's charter authorizer upon request. The Director will review the School's disciplinary policy and its procedures in the Family-Student Handbook annually and recommend to the Board any suggested changes to ensure consistent and fair treatment of all students. The Board will also review data on disciplinary actions taken annually to ensure the same.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of or willfully causing the infliction of physical pain on a student. For purposes of the policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

In the area of willful defiance, students will be first redirected by the teacher followed by a conference with either the Director or another adult to correct the misbehavior. Parents will be notified of the conference and will be included in further conferences if the behavior persists.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Alma Fuerte has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ("IDEIA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. Alma Fuerte will follow all applicable federal and state laws when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom Alma Fuerte has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in accordance with due process to such students.

Any student who engages in repeated violations of the school's behavioral expectations, or a single severe infraction, will be required to attend a meeting with the school's staff and the student's parents. The school will prepare a specific, written agreement outlining future student conduct expectations, timelines, and consequences for failure to meet the expectations which may include, but are not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

A student may be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in Education Code §

48900 related to school activity or school attendance that occurs at any time including, but not limited to:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or leaving from school
- During, or traveling to or from, a school-sponsored activity

### **Cause for Suspension and Expulsion – Enumerated Offenses**

After reviewing the lists of disciplinary offenses that apply to students attending non-charter public schools, the School has determined that the following lists of offenses, as well as the following disciplinary procedures, align with the School's mission and vision and provide for the safety of the School community:

Discretionary Suspension Offenses: A student may be recommended for suspension for any of the following reasons:

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person
- Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind (exception made for use or possession by a student of his or her own prescription products)
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property (includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases)
- Stolen or attempted to steal school property or private property (includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases)
- Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property (includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases)
- Possessed an imitation firearm as defined in Education Code Section 49800(m)
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289 of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Section 243.4 of the Penal Code
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or a witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of either preventing that student from being a

witness or retaliating against that student for being a witness, or both

- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing as defined in Education Code Section 49800(q)
- Aided or abetted, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person (suspension only)
- Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5 (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in the act of hate violence (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school personnel or students, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of either school personnel or students by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Made terrorist threats against school officials, school property, or both
- Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261, directed specifically toward a pupil

For a pupil subject to discipline under this section, Director or designee may use his or her discretion to provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the pupil's specific misbehavior as specified in Section 48900.5. Alternatives to suspension or expulsion shall be imposed against a pupil who is truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities. The School does not impose mandatory suspension. Rather, suspensions are discretionary. Suspension shall be imposed only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct.

Depending on the severity and seriousness of the offense and past conduct of the pupil, the Director may recommend an expulsion instead of a suspension. That determination is within the professional discretion of the Director for the following list of discretionary expellable offenses, as well as suspension offenses.

Discretionary Expulsion Offenses: A student may be recommended for expulsion for any of the following reasons:

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person
- Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or been under the influence of, any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind (exception made for use or possession by a student of his or her own prescription products)
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and either sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented the liquid, substance, or material as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property (includes, but is

not limited to, electronic files and databases)

- Stolen or attempted to steal school property or private property (includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases)
- Possessed or used tobacco, or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel. This section does not prohibit the use of his or her own prescription products by a pupil.
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property (includes, but is not limited to, electronic files and databases)
- Possessed an imitation firearm as defined in Education Code Section 49800(m)
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Section 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a, or 289 of the Penal Code or committed a sexual battery as defined in Section 243.4 of the Penal Code
- Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or a witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of either preventing that student from being a witness or retaliating against that student for being a witness, or both
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing as defined in Education Code Section 49800(q)
- Aided or abetted, as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person (suspension only)
- Committed sexual harassment, as defined in Education Code Section 212.5 (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in the act of hate violence (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Intentionally engaged in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school personnel or students, that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of either school personnel or students by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment (not applicable to students in grades TK-3)
- Made terrorist threats against school officials, school property, or both
- Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261, directed specifically toward a pupil  
Non-Discretionary Suspension Offenses: Students must be suspended and will receive a mandatory recommendation for expulsion if it is determined that the pupil:
- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by either Director
- Brandished a knife at another person.
- Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in subdivision (n) of Education Code Section 48900 or committed a sexual battery as defined in subdivision (n) of Section

48900

- Possessed an explosive

Non-Discretionary Expulsion Offenses: Students must be suspended and will receive a mandatory recommendation for expulsion if it is determined that the pupil:

- Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by either Director
- Brandished a knife at another person.
- Unlawfully sold a controlled substance listed in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11053) of Division 10 of the Health and Safety Code.
- Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in subdivision (n) of Education Code Section 48900 or committed a sexual battery as defined in subdivision (n) of Section 48900
- Possessed an explosive

Students are subject to mandatory recommendation for expulsion from Alma Fuerte Public School for any of the reasons as specified in the Education Code § 48915(c) and the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. It is a federal mandate that a school expel, for a period of not less than one year (except on a case-by-case basis), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school. Alma Fuerte will refer to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school.

## **Process for Suspension and Expulsion**

*Step 1: Informal Conference* Suspension shall be preceded by an informal conference conducted by the Director, with the student and the student's parents. The conference may be omitted if the Director determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If the student is suspended without a conference, the parents will be notified of the suspension and a conference will be conducted as soon as practicable. At the conference, the student shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense. This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the student waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason including, but not limited to, incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the student's parent or guardian to attend a conference with Charter School officials. Reinstatement of the suspended student shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student's parent or guardian at the conference.

*Step 2: Notice to Parents* Parents and students will have due process rights with regards to suspensions and expulsions. At the time of a student's suspension, a school employee shall immediately make a reasonable effort to contact the parents by telephone or in person. Initial contact will be followed by a written notice within 24 hours of the suspension. This notice will state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the

date and time the student may return to school. If the school officials wish to confer with the parents regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may note that the parents are required to respond without delay, and that violation of school rules can result in expulsion from the school.

*Step 3: Determination of Length of Suspension* The length of the suspension will be determined by the Co-Director, Academics based on the severity of the offense(s), as evidenced by witness statements, physical evidence, and other relevant factors. Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Director or designee, the pupil and the pupil's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing.

This determination will be made by the Director or designee upon either of the following determinations: 1) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education process; or 2) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing. In such instances when Alma Fuerte has determined a suspension period shall be extended, such extension shall be made only after a conference is held with the pupil or the pupil's parents, unless the pupil and the pupil's parents fail to attend the conference.. A student may be suspended from school for not more than 20 school days in any school year; this restriction on the number of days of suspension does not apply, however, when the suspension is extended pending an expulsion.

Arrangements shall be made to provide the student with classroom material and current assignments to be completed at home during the length of the suspension.

*Step 4: Recommendations for Expulsion* If the Director recommends expulsion, the student and the student's parents will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the student should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Director upon either of the following findings:

- The student's presence will likely be disruptive to the educational process
- The student poses a threat or danger to others

Upon this determination, the student's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

Students will be recommended for expulsion if the Director finds that at least one of the following findings may be substantiated:

- Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct
- Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the student causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the student or others

*Step 5: Expulsion Hearing* Students recommended for expulsion will be entitled to a hearing to determine whether or not the student should be expelled.

Written notice of the hearing will be forwarded to the student and the student's parents at least 10 calendar days before the date of the hearing. This notice will include:

- The date and place of the hearing
- A statement of the specific facts, charges and offense upon which the proposed expulsion is based
- A copy of the disciplinary rules that relate to the alleged violation
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parents to appear in person at the hearing
- The opportunity for the student to be represented by counsel at the student's and student's parents' discretion and expense
- The right to examine and acquire copies of all documents to be used at the hearing
- The opportunity to cross-examine all witnesses that testify at the hearing
- The opportunity to present evidence and witnesses on behalf of the student

The hearing will be held within 30 days after the Director determines that an act subject to expulsion has occurred. The hearing will be conducted by an ad hoc committee of the Board. A Facts and Findings document will be prepared to summarize the evidence adduced at the hearing to substantiate the expulsion decision. The hearing will be held in closed session unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing at least three (3) days' prior to the hearing. A transcript of the hearing shall be prepared and maintained by Alma Fuerte, including a statement of specific facts supporting the expulsion and documentation that Charter School's policies and procedures were followed.

Upon expulsion, written notice will be sent within 24 hours by the Director to the parents of any student who is expelled. This notice will include the following:

- The specific offense committed by the student for any of the acts listed in "Reasons for Suspension and/or Expulsion."
- Notice of the student or parent obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with Alma Fuerte Public School.

In the event of a decision to expel a student, the school will work cooperatively with the district of residence, county and/or private schools to assist with the appropriate educational placement of the student who has been expelled. Alma Fuerte will also notify its charter authorizer of the expelled student's name and the specific expellable offense committed. Any incident of violent and/or serious student behavior shall also be communicated to the district/school to which the student matriculates. If the decision is not to expel, the student will return to classes at Alma Fuerte Public School.

The School's Board shall recommend a plan of rehabilitation for the student at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but not be limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The plan may also include recommendations for improved academic performance, tutoring, special education assessments, counseling or other rehabilitative programs. Upon completion of the readmission process, Charter School's governing board shall readmit the pupil, unless School's Board makes a finding that the student has not met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan or continues to pose a danger to campus safety or to other students or employees of the School. A description of the readmission plan shall promptly be made available to the student and the student's parent or guardian at the time the expulsion order is entered, including any related findings.

## **Appeal of Suspension or Expulsion**

Parents will be notified in advance of the enactment of the suspension or expulsion and the reasons therefore and can appeal a student's suspension or expulsion.

The suspension of a student will be at the discretion of the Director. A suspension appeal may be made to the Director within the term of the suspension (within three days of the suspension). Following due consideration, a decision by the Director regarding student suspension will be considered final.

An expulsion may be appealed within ten working days and must be submitted in writing to the Co- Director, Academics and/or the Director of Operations. The student will be considered expelled until a meeting is convened to consider the appeal (within 10 working days). The appeal will be considered by members of the Alma Fuerte Public School Board, not including any of the same individuals or panel who suspended the student and recommended the expulsion. For a student who is not reinstated upon appeal, the family will be sent written notification of such, including specific reasons why reinstatement was denied, and will be given a new eligibility review date.

The decision of the panel of representatives selected by the Board will be final.

## **Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities**

In the case of a student who has an IEP, or a student who has a 504 Plan, Alma Fuerte Public School will ensure that it follows the correct disciplinary procedures to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973. As set forth in the MOU regarding special education between the District and Alma Fuerte, an IEP team - including a district representative - will meet to conduct a manifestation determination review and to discuss alternative placement utilizing the District's Policies and Procedures Manual. The purpose of the manifestation determination review is to determine whether or not the child's behavior that led to the disciplinary infraction is linked to his or her disability. Prior to recommending expulsion for a student with a 504 Plan, the Director will convene a "Manifestation Determination" meeting to ask the following two questions: A) Was the misconduct caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability? B) Was the misconduct a direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP or 504 Plan?

**Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination** Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, Alma Fuerte, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP.



If the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If either of these circumstances exist, Alma Fuerte shall not suspend the student beyond five consecutive (5) days, unless one of the "Special Circumstances" applies, as described below.

If the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team shall:

- a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment or a functional analysis assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the school had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement; b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the school agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP, then the school may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

**Services During Suspension** Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment or functional analysis, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

**Due Process Appeals** The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or Alma Fuerte believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the school, the Alma Fuerte IEP team shall decide on the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting, pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of forty-five (45) days, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

**Special Circumstances** School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a

disability who violates a code of student conduct.

The Director remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a. Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 USC 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c. Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 USC 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

**Notification of District** Alma Fuerte shall immediately notify the District and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the District of the discipline of any student with a disability or student who Alma Fuerte or District would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability.

**Interim Alternative Educational Setting** The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP team.

**Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services** A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the school's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the school had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The school shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a. The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.
- b. The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
- c. The child's teacher, or other school personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the special education case manager or to other school supervisory personnel.

If the school knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3)

circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the school had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline. The school shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by Alma Fuerte pending the results of the evaluation.

Alma Fuerte shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

## **ANTI-HARASSMENT STATEMENT AND POLICIES**

AFPS is committed to providing a work and educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX (sex), Title VI (race, color, or national origin), and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. Alma Fuerte prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. Alma Fuerte does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including bullying, discrimination, or intimidation, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which Alma Fuerte does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of position or gender. Alma Fuerte will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

AFPS has adopted a Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy, a complete of which is available at the main office of AFPS.

The following procedures apply:

All staff are expected to provide appropriate supervision to enforce standards of conduct and, if they observe or become aware of discrimination, intimidation, harassment, or bullying, to intervene as soon as it is safe to do so, call for assistance, and report such incidents. The Board requires staff to follow the procedures in AFPS's policy for reporting alleged acts of bullying.

All other members of the school community, including students, parents/guardians, volunteers, and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy to the Executive Director or designee. While submission of a written report is not required, the reporting party is encouraged to use the report form available in the main office. However, oral reports shall also be considered official reports. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action cannot be based solely on an anonymous report.

Students are expected to report all incidents of discrimination, intimidation, harassment, bullying, teasing, or other verbal or physical abuse. Any student who feels she/he is a target of such behavior should immediately contact a teacher, counselor, Director of Operations, or staff person so that she/he can get assistance in resolving the issue consistent with this policy.

Upon receipt of a report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying from a student, staff member,

parent, volunteer, visitor or affiliate of AFPS, the Director of Operations or designee will promptly initiate an investigation. In most cases, a thorough investigation will take no more than five (5) school days. If the Executive Director or designee determines that an investigation will take longer than five (5) school days, he or she will inform the complainant and any other relevant parties and provide an approximate date when the investigation will be complete. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Executive Director or designee will meet with the complainant and, to the extent possible with respect to student confidentiality laws, provide the complainant with information about the investigation, including any actions necessary to resolve the incident/situation which lead to the report. However, in no case may the Executive Director or designee reveal confidential student information related to other students, including the type and extent of discipline issued against such students.

All records related to any investigation of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying will remain in a secure location in the main office of AFPS.

Should the reporting individual find the Director's resolution unsatisfactory, he/she may follow the Dispute Resolution Process found in the AFPS Parent/Student Handbook. In addition, when harassment or bullying is based upon one of the protected characteristics set forth in this policy, a complainant may also file a Uniform Complaint at any time during the process, consistent with the procedures found in the AFPS Parent/Student Handbook.

Consequences Students who engage in discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion, as outlined in the Student Discipline Policy of the AFPS.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The school maintains an up-to-date School Health and Safety Plan. Plans are kept on file for review. All school employees are trained annually on the safety procedures outlined in the plan. The School Emergency Response Plan assigns staff members to roles and responsibilities that must be performed in the event of an emergency. This plan is compliant with all local, state, and federal regulations, including the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

Alma Fuerte Public School conducts, and keeps records of, regular safety drills, including: Fire, Earthquake and Lockdown.

**All classrooms have an "emergency kit" stocked with first-aid equipment. There will be a designated safe place in case of a disaster emergency where parents may pick up their children. If this were to occur, it may be necessary for parents to show proof of identification.**

**Earthquake, Fire and Disaster Preparedness** Regular safety drills are a part of a school's activities. Drills including fire, earthquake, and lockdown will be held once a month. Procedures to be followed during these drills are updated on a regular basis to reflect "best practice" procedures as defined by first response agencies to ensure that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses. In addition to conducting regular drills, each school stocks emergency supplies to sustain students and staff. An emergency shed stocked with first-aid equipment, water, food and emergency supplies is housed at each campus.

**What Can Parents Do During an Emergency?** In the event of an emergency, school

administration will remain at the school until every child has been picked up. Parents are asked to come to their child's campus as soon as is feasible and safe. You should not wait for a call or email from the school as communication systems may be compromised in disaster situations. Only those people who are listed on the Registration/Emergency Forms may pick up your child from school, so it is very important that the information on these forms is accurate and up to date.

**Parent Notification in the Event of an Emergency** In the event of an emergency the Incident Commander/School Leader or a designee will act as the emergency spokesperson and will determine the most feasible way to disseminate information (i.e. email updates to our families and phone calls will be made to families that don't have email, when possible). Alma Fuerte Public School and the local emergency agency will work together to relay any information as quickly as possible.

**Reunification** The location for parent reunification will be dependent on the location of the threat. In general, in the event of an emergency, parents picking up their children will be met at the main entrance of school. This location will remain in effect unless the police or other emergency management officials notify the school otherwise.

## **Parent Participation and Volunteer Policy**

Parent volunteerism is key to the success of any school, but especially important at AFPS. We rely on the volunteer support of our families to help us accomplish many important tasks.

Volunteering:

- Develops community involvement and interaction, which is essential to the quality of our school program;
- Keeps our operational costs down;
- Enables our school to function well in day-to-day routines;
- Enables us to successfully plan events that raise money to support our school and build school and community involvement; and
- Enables us to apply for grants, as parent participation is a key element in most grant applications.

At Alma Fuerte Public School, we strongly encourage each family to volunteer by participating in one—or many—of the various committees supporting our school. Extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles) are welcome to volunteer, too! Volunteering is not required and is not a criterion for continued enrollment, graduation, class placement or any other school-based decision.

If you haven't done so already, complete the volunteer committee opportunities sign-up in the school office. Also, if it is determined by AFPS staff that a particular volunteer position is not a good fit, it is at the discretion of AFPS to assist the volunteer in finding a position for which they are better suited.

**Does everyone need to register as a volunteer?** Yes! Everyone who volunteers at Alma Fuerte Public School needs to complete the Volunteer Application. Depending on what kind of volunteering you want to do, you may be required to submit proof of TB test results (current

within the last 4 years) and background check as well. These tests help us keep all our students safe AND healthy.

**What are the volunteer requirements?** Anyone volunteering at Alma Fuerte Public School, from helping with lunch to helping in the office, must complete the following:

1. Volunteer Application 2. Proof of negative TB Test, unless working off campus (must be current within the last 4 years) 3. DOJ (Department of Justice)/Livescan clearance only if you will be unsupervised by staff member with students.

**There are two types of on-campus volunteers:**

**Tier 1: Supervised Volunteers** who have completed the application and submitted TB test results. Volunteers are able to offer support with on-campus activities while being supervised by an Alma Fuerte staff member.

*Supervised volunteers* refers to those that remain in the same room as a teacher and or staff member at all times- do NOT need to be fingerprinted. Examples include: working in the office with a staff member, supporting with school events with staff members present.

**Tier 2: Unsupervised Volunteers** who have completed the application, submitted TB test results and have DOJ/Livescan clearance.

*Unsupervised volunteer* refers to situations and/or volunteer roles in which the volunteer will be alone with one or more students. Examples include one-to-one tutoring in a private space and facilitating yard supervision without a staff member nearby.

**Does every volunteer require fingerprint clearance?** No! Only volunteers whose responsibilities may result in unsupervised work with students also require DOJ fingerprint/Livescan clearance. Volunteers who are supervised by a staff member do not need fingerprint clearance.

Background checks conducted with other companies/schools are not accepted. Agencies are not allowed to share confidential information. All background clearance information is completely confidential and solely for use by Alma Fuerte Public School.

## **Classroom Visits and Involvement**

Teachers and parents must schedule this time together, after parents have obtained the necessary documentation and clearance for volunteering. When volunteering in the classroom, teachers will provide guidelines for how parents can support student learning. Distractions and interruptions should be minimized/avoided. In addition, personal and specific information regarding students' academic performance and/or social and emotional learning should not be discussed with other parents after visiting/volunteering.

Teachers need time to teach and to plan. Parents may not drop in unannounced. Each teacher will communicate to families the best way to contact them to schedule an appointment, an observation, or volunteering.

**Right to Ask for Teacher Qualifications** As a recipient of federal Title 1 funds, parents have

the right to ask for teacher qualifications. This means that parents may ask if a teacher has met California qualification and licensing criteria, is teaching under an emergency or other provisional status, is teaching in their certified field, and if the child's services are provided by paraprofessionals and the paraprofessionals qualifications as well.

## **Communication Policy**

**School Communication** AFPS maintains a database of current information such as home address, telephone numbers and emergency contacts for each student. It is essential that this information be kept up-to-date so that the school can contact parents when there is a need. Each year, upon re-enrollment, parents receive a student data sheet for each child with the current information listed in the database. It is the parents' responsibility to update this form and to keep the school informed of any changes as they occur. Please contact the office with updates or changes of address, phone number, email, emergency contacts or medical information.

Important information about the school is communicated through:

- Public Board Meetings
- Parent Education Nights
- Periodic Parent Meetings
- Back-to-School Night
- Classroom Teacher Communications
- Emailed Weekly Updates
- Parent Conferences and Progress Reports
- Specific Event Flyers and Emails
- School Website and facebook

**Telephone Messages** If you wish to contact your child's teacher or your child during the school day, please call your school office and we will assist you. Please note that any changes to carpool arrangements must be in writing and submitted to the office at the beginning of the school day.

**Class Lists and Directory** The directory is prepared for AFPS families at the beginning of each year and distributed as soon as possible.

## **Rights and Protection**

**Complaint Policy/Resolving Conflict** It is our goal to assist all parents and family members in solving problems, understanding all school situations, and having a positive school experience. If you have a concern, complaint, or experience a conflict within the AFPS community, please use the following process to find resolution.

First, collect your thoughts by talking to a family member or friend outside of AFPS. Always begin at the source if you have a problem. Do not talk to uninvolved people at school.

- If it involves a teacher, or other staff member, begin there.
- If the two of you cannot resolve the problem, go to the Director of Academics.

- If the problem is with one of the Directors, begin there.
- If the problem is with the Director of Operations or the Director of Academics and you have discussed it with him/her, you may take the issue to the other Director.
- If a serious grievance with a Director occurs, please fill out a grievance form to the Board President. Forms are available in the main office.

## Uniform Complaint Policy & Procedures (UCP)

### Scope

Alma Fuerte Public School (“Charter School”) policy is to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Alma Fuerte is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be knowledgeable about the laws and programs, which they are assigned to investigate. This complaint procedure is adopted to provide a uniform system of complaint processing for the following types of complaints:

(1) Complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying against any protected group, including actual or perceived discrimination, on the basis of the actual or perceived characteristics of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnic group identification, gender expression, gender identity, gender, genetic information, nationality, national origin, race or ethnicity, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity; and

(2) Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing the following programs

including but not limited to: Foster and homeless youth services, No Child Left Behind Act (2001) Programs (Titles I-VII), Tobacco Use Prevention Education, American Indian Education Centers, After School Education and Safety Programs, Agricultural Vocational Education Programs, Migrant Education Programs, Adult Education Programs, Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs, Migrant Education, Career Technical and Technical Education and Career Technical and Technical Training Programs, Child Care and Development Programs, Child Nutrition Programs, and Special Education Programs.

(3) A complaint may also be filed alleging that a pupil enrolled in a public school was required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity as those terms are defined below.

a. “Educational activity” means an activity offered by a school, school district, charter school or county office of education that constitutes an integral fundamental part of elementary and secondary education, including, but not limited to, curricular and extracurricular activities.

b. “Pupil fee” means a fee, deposit or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil’s parents or guardians, in violation of Section 49011 of the Education Code and Section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution, which require educational activities to be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families’ ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers, as provided for in *Hartzell v. Connell* (1984) 35 Cal.3d 899. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

i. A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a



condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.

ii. A security deposit, or other payment, that a pupil is required to make to obtain a lock, locker, book, class apparatus, musical instrument, uniform or other materials or equipment.

iii. A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment or uniforms associated with an educational activity.

c. A pupil fees complaint may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees.

d. If Alma Fuerte finds merit in a pupil fees complaint Alma Fuerte shall provide a remedy to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians that, where applicable, includes reasonable efforts by Alma Fuerte to ensure full reimbursement to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians, subject to procedures established through regulations adopted by the state board.

e. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit solicitation of voluntary donations of funds or property, voluntary participation in fundraising activities, or school districts, school, and other entities from providing pupils prizes or other recognition for voluntarily participating in fundraising activities.

(4) Complaints of noncompliance with the requirements governing the Local Control Funding Formula or Sections 47606.5 and 47607.3 of the Education Code, as applicable. (5) Complaints of noncompliance with the requirements of Education Code Section 222 regarding the rights of lactating pupils on a school campus. If Alma Fuerte finds merit in a complaint, or if the Superintendent finds merit in an appeal, Alma Fuerte shall provide a remedy to the affected pupil.

Alma Fuerte acknowledges and respects every individual's rights to privacy. Unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects [to the greatest extent reasonably possible] the confidentiality of the parties and the integrity of the process. Alma Fuerte cannot guarantee anonymity of the complainant. This includes keeping the identity of the complainant confidential. However, Alma Fuerte will attempt to do so as appropriate. Alma Fuerte may find it necessary to disclose information regarding the complaint/complainant to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation or proceedings, as determined by the Director of Student Support Services or designee on a case- by-case basis.

Alma Fuerte prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process, including but not limited to a complainant's filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

#### Compliance Officers

The Board of Directors designates the following compliance officer(s) to receive and investigate complaints and to ensure Alma Fuerte's compliance with law:

Adriani Leon Director of Operations Alma Fuerte Public School 119 W. Palm St. Altadena, CA 91001

The Director of Operations or designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Director of Operations or designee.

Should a complaint be filed against the Director of Operations, the compliance officer for that case shall be the Chair of Alma Fuerte Board of Directors.

#### Notifications

The Director of Operations or designee shall annually provide written notification of Alma Fuerte's uniform complaint procedures to employees, students, parents and/or guardians, advisory committees, private school officials and other interested parties (e.g., Adult Education).

The annual notice shall be in English, and when necessary, in the primary language, pursuant to section 48985 of the Education Code if fifteen (15) percent or more of the pupils enrolled in Alma Fuerte speak a single primary language other than English.

The Director of Operations or designee shall make available copies of Alma Fuerte's uniform complaint procedures free of charge.

The annual notice shall include the following:

(a) A statement that Alma Fuerte is primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

(b) A statement that a pupil enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.

(c) A statement identifying the responsible staff member, position, or unit designated to receive complaints.

(d) A statement that the complainant has a right to appeal Alma Fuerte's decision to the CDE by filing a written appeal within 15 days of receiving Alma Fuerte's decision.

(e) A statement advising the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, if applicable, and of the appeal pursuant to Education Code § 262.3.

(f) A statement that copies of the local educational agency complaint procedures shall be available free of charge.

#### Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints, which allege that Alma Fuerte has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. Compliance officers shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

- Step 1: Filing of Complaint

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance by Alma Fuerte.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be initiated no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or six (6) months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying. A complaint may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Pupil fee complaints shall be filed not later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred.

The complaint shall be presented to the compliance officer who shall maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and date stamp.

If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, Alma Fuerte staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint.

- Step 2: Mediation

Within three (3) days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the compliance officer shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of an unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint, the compliance officer shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the compliance officer shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend Alma Fuerte's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

- Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

The compliance officer is encouraged to hold an investigative meeting within five (5) days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the complaint. This meeting shall provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his/her representative to repeat the complaint orally.

The complainant and/or his/her representative shall have an opportunity to present the complaint and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

A complainant's refusal to provide Alma Fuerte's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

Alma Fuerte's refusal to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or its failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or its engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

- Step 4: Response

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of Alma Fuerte's investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below, within sixty (60) days of Alma Fuerte's receipt of the complaint.

- Step 5: Final Written Decision

Alma Fuerte's decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant. Alma Fuerte's decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or as required by law.

The decision shall include:

1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered.
2. The conclusion(s) of law.
3. Disposition of the complaint.
4. Rationale for such disposition.
5. Corrective actions, if any are warranted.
6. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal Alma Fuerte's decision within fifteen (15) days to

the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal.

7. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under state law, notice that the complainant must wait until sixty (60) days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies.

8. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under federal law such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

If an employee is disciplined as a result of the complaint, the decision shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the employee was informed of Alma Fuerte's expectations. The report shall not give any further information as to the nature of the disciplinary action.

#### Appeals to the California Department of Education

If dissatisfied with Alma Fuerte's decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the CDE within fifteen (15) days of receiving Alma Fuerte's decision. When appealing to the CDE, the complainant must specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of Alma Fuerte's decision.

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed Alma Fuerte's decision, the Director of Student Support Services or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE:

1. A copy of the original complaint.
2. A copy of the decision.
3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by Alma Fuerte, if not covered by the decision.
4. A copy of the investigation file, including but not limited to all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by all parties and gathered by the investigator.
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint.
6. A copy of Alma Fuerte's complaint procedures.
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE.

The CDE may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by Alma Fuerte when one of the conditions listed in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 4650 exists, including cases in which Alma Fuerte has not taken action within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed with Alma Fuerte.

## Civil Law Remedies

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of Alma Fuerte's complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if Alma Fuerte has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 CCR 4622. Pupil Records, including Challenges and Directory Information

"The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 5 days after the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the Director of Operations or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to provide written consent before the School discloses personally identifiable information ("PII") from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to School officials with legitimate educational interests. A School official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the School board. A School official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the School who performs an institutional service of function for which the School would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another School official in

performing his or her tasks. A School official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from a student's education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to School officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the School to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A School may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student —

1. To other School officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the School has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in §99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(2) are met. (§99.31(a)(1)).

2. To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of §99.34. (§99.31(a)(2)).

3. To authorize representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency in the parent or eligible student's State (SEA). Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of §99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf. (§§99.31(a)(3) and 99.35).

4. In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§99.31(a)(4)).

5. To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§99.31(a)(7)).
6. To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§99.31(a)(8)).
7. To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. (§99.31(a)(9)).
8. To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to §99.36. (§99.31(a)(10)).
9. Information the School has designated as “directory information” under §99.37. (§99.31(a)(11)).

‘Directory Information’ is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information can be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish year books. The School has designated the following information as directory information:

1. Student’s name
2. Photograph
3. Grade level
4. Weight and height of members of athletic teams
5. Degrees, honors, and awards received

If you do not want the School to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the School in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment. Please notify the Director of Operations at:

Alma Fuerte Public School 119 W. Palm St. Altadena, CA 91001

**Legal Disclaimers** *The information contained in the Alma Fuerte Public School Handbook (AFPS) is provided for informational purposes only. Information may be changed or updated without notice. AFPS expressly disclaims all liability with respect to actions taken based on any content in this handbook or in any newsletter articles. AFPS assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions in this handbook or other documents which are referenced in this handbook. AFPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.*

## **APPENDIX A: Charter School Complaint Notice and Form**

California Education Code Requirements

California Education Code (EC) Section 47605(d)(4) ([https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=47605&lawCode=EDC](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=47605&lawCode=EDC)) states the following:



A charter school shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in a charter school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the following characteristics:

- Academically low-achieving
- Economically disadvantaged (determined by eligibility for any free or reduced price meal program)
- English learner
- Ethnicity
- Foster youth
- Homeless
- Nationality
- Neglected or delinquent
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Pupils with disabilities
- A charter school shall not request a pupil's records or require the parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil's records to the charter school before enrollment.
- A charter school shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the charter school to disenroll from the charter school or transfer to another school for any reason (except for suspension or expulsion).
- This notice shall be posted on a charter school's Internet website and a charter school will provide copies of this notice (1) when a parent, guardian, or pupil inquires about enrollment; (2) before conducting an enrollment lottery, and (3) before disenrollment of a pupil.

### **Complaint Procedures**

In order to submit a complaint, complete the Charter School Complaint Form and submit the form to the charter school authorizer, electronically or in hard copy, to the following location:

Los Angeles County of Education  
9300 Imperial Hwy  
Downey, CA 90242  
nye\_michelle@lacoed.edu  
(562) 922-8806

## Charter School Complaint Form

Name:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

Date of Problem:

Phone Number:

Charter School (include address):

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 47605(d)(4) allows a parent or guardian to submit a complaint to the charter school authorizer when a charter school discourages a pupil's enrollment, requires records before enrollment, or encourages a pupil to disenroll. Please identify the basis for this complaint below, with specific facts, which support your complaint.

**Basis of complaint** (check all that apply):

- Pupil was discouraged from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the charter school.
- Records were requested to be submitted to the charter school before enrollment
- Pupil was encouraged to disenroll from the charter school or transfer to another school.

Please provide further details:

Please file this complaint with the authorizer of the charter school listed on the preceding page electronically or in hard copy.

## APPENDIX B: HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

### ALMA FUERTE PUBLIC SCHOOL 2020-2021

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the Alma Fuerte Public School 2020-2021 Student/Family Handbook and is provided via email and in hard copy in the school offices.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that the handbook is to use for my reference to answer my questions and understand AFPS processes and procedures. I will refer to the handbook before contacting the school.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed and understand the safety information regarding entry to campus and traffic on campus during pick-up and drop-off.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student(s) Printed Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature