

**ALBANY MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**1259 Brighton Avenue**  
**Albany, CA 94706**  
**(510) 558-3600**  
**fax 559-6547**

**Peter Parenti**  
**Principal**

**Don Etchegorry**  
**Counselor**

**David Neumann**  
**Assistant Principal**

**Emma Chartrand**  
**Counselor**

Welcome, students and parents, to Albany Middle School. We look forward to working with you and your child during the 2011-2012 school year. The purpose of this planner is to increase communication between school and home, increase student organizational skills, and make available information pertaining to Albany Middle School's policies, programs, and procedures. We urge all parents to carefully review and discuss the written assignments, teacher messages, and printed contents of this planner with your student throughout the year.

#### **Albany Middle School Vision Statement**

In a safe, engaging environment, each member of the AMS community strives toward excellence, acceptance of differences, exploration of ideas, and responsibility to a larger world.

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## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### **Behavior and Conduct Code**

Albany Middle School strives to provide a learning environment in which the needs of each of its members are respected. **Teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn.** AMS has high expectations of its students and every effort will be made to guide students to become responsible members of the school community.

#### **Each student will:**

- Attend school punctually and regularly.
- Obey the rules of each classroom and the school.
- Have respect for the rights and dignity of others.
- Complete assignments promptly and participate in classroom activities.
- Treat all school personnel in a respectful manner.
- Carry a hall pass when out of class.
- Respect public and private property. Take good care of furniture, books, restrooms, equipment and other facilities.
- NOT chew gum while on campus.
- Eat only in assigned eating areas and dispose of all trash appropriately.
- Be intellectually honest. Cheating (providing or copying work) and forgery are unacceptable behaviors.

#### **Some further rules to follow:**

- Students may not borrow money from other students or loan money to others.
- Buying, selling or trading of any item is prohibited.
- Spitting is not permitted. Spitting on another will be grounds for suspension.
- School offices are the center of many activities. Students entering any office shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner.
- When problems cannot be solved in an appropriate way - talking it out - seek assistance from the counselor or other school staff member.
- Show courtesy and awareness of others when walking in the school hallways and on the staircases. Keep to the right side, do not push, shove, or crowd into doorways. Make way for people to pass if you are standing in the way.
- No running in the school building or courtyard. Students may run on the blacktop and Cougar Field.
- Misbehavior by 8<sup>th</sup> grade students during the final quarter may result in the loss of one or more end-of-year activities.

### **Prepared and Ready to Learn**

Students need to come to school ready to learn. They need a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast.

Middle school students still need guidance about eating and bedtimes. Students need to arrive at school with the basic "tools of the trade" which include lined paper, pencils, pens, binder, and calculator. A wristwatch is also helpful. You will find a list of required supplies in the planner.

### **Counseling/Mental Health Services**

The counseling staff at Albany Middle School see themselves as an integral part of the AMS program. They are available to assist students with any school related problem; i.e. academic, social, interpersonal relationships, and crisis management. Services include individual and group counseling (support group, grief group, and conflict-resolution). Referrals are also made to outside agencies.

Teachers may allow students to see counselors during the school day. Counselors are also available to meet with students before and after school and at lunch.

Parents may contact the counselor to talk about problems concerning student adjustment at school, discuss concerns they have about their children, consult about outside agencies or therapists, or make appointments with teachers.

Mental health interns are available on campus during the school day to meet with individuals and groups.

### **Grading**

Albany Middle School students are given a letter grade in each subject area.

Key:

<b>A</b>	Excellent achievement
<b>B</b>	Good or above average achievement
<b>C</b>	Average achievement
<b>D</b>	Poor or barely passing
<b>F</b>	Unsatisfactory effort / failing

The Middle School year is divided into four quarters or grading periods. Report cards are generated after each quarter and posted on Aeries as well as mailed home. Conferences are arranged as needed in the fall and spring. Sixth grade teachers schedule conferences as needed and in response to parent request. Seventh and eighth grade conferences are scheduled through the counseling office for students who are struggling.

### **Homework**

Homework is an important part of the AMS curriculum, which extends and reinforces the learning experience of each student. Each AMS student should expect to complete approximately 30 minutes of homework in each of at least three academic subjects per night. A successful student should expect to spend 1 to 2 hours nightly on homework. Additional time may need to be spent for long term assignments, research, and studying for tests. Failure

to complete homework will affect a student's grade in class.

**Students** are responsible for writing down their daily homework assignments in detail in their Student Planner, for completing all homework assignments, and turning them in on time.

**Parents** should frequently check the Student Planner to ensure that all homework is being completed on a regular basis. **Parents** are responsible for providing students with a quiet place to do homework with as little interruption and distraction as possible. Parents should provide a regular time for student's to do their homework.

### **Cheating Policy**

Cheating includes, but is not limited to the following: Giving or copying work from others, plagiarism (not giving credit for sources, including the internet), looking at restricted materials during a test, getting or giving answers from other students during a test or before taking a test.

Any student involved in cheating in any form will receive a 'zero' for the assignment and a phone call home. A second offense of cheating will result in a disciplinary referral in addition to losing credit and a phone call home.

### **Nuisance Items**

At no time should electronic devices be on or visible during school hours. This includes but is not limited to iPhones, cell phones, and iPods. Any electronic device visible will be confiscated to be picked up at the end of the day. Repeat offenses will result in a parent being asked to pick up the device from school.

Inappropriate use by students of electronic recording devices such as recording any activities or events, classmates or teachers, on campus or in classes, will subject offending student(s) to the full spectrum of disciplinary action available to school personnel.

### **Dress Code**

Students and parents need to be aware of the importance of appropriate dress and its effect upon the learning environment. While each student's mode of dress and grooming is a matter of personal style and individuality, a student's choices may affect the educational environment or the health and safety of others. Attire often influences attitudes and behavior while at school. Therefore, dress must be within the limits of safety, cleanliness, and appropriateness. A student whose attire is not appropriate for school will be asked to change into a t-shirt and/or sweats provided by the school.

- Shorts may be worn, but shorts and skirts that are toolshort, frayed, torn, or too tight are not acceptable. **The length of shorts and skirts must reach the ends of the fingertips when arms are held at your side.**
- Clothing must not have holes that would attract attention or cause distraction.

- Markings or insignia on clothing or the body, or items of clothing must not be obscene, suggestive, show gang affiliation, inappropriate language, or advocate disruptive behavior.
- Clothing must not advertise or promote alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- Sagging is not permitted. The waistband of the pants must be above the hipbones. Underwear may not show.
- Tops worn by boys or girls must not be revealing as judged by school personnel.
- Clothing should cover the midriff with arms raised. Tummies and navels may not show.
- No hats or head coverings (unless for religious purposes) may be worn in class.
- Pajamas and slippers are not to be worn to school.
- Sunglasses (unless for a medical reason), spiked jewelry, costumes, and other such items are not appropriate in class and are considered nuisance items.

Albany Middle School reserves the right to allow or disallow certain apparel and/or accessories deemed inappropriate. The judgment of school staff will be final.

### **P.E. Uniforms**

Albany Middle School students are required to wear an appropriate P.E. uniform as described below. Students who are not dressed in the uniforms described below will receive a "nonsuit", which will negatively affect their grade. To help prevent uniforms from being lost or stolen, first and last names must be printed on all clothing. Students may not loan or give their uniform to another student.

- Shorts: AMS physical education uniform shorts.
- Shirts: AMS physical education uniform shirt.
- Sweatpants/Sweatshirt: AMS physical education uniform sweatshirt or sweatpants.
- Shoes: Laced athletic shoes.
- Socks: Socks are required, white athletic socks are recommended. No nylons or tights.

### **Bikes, Roller Blades, Scooters, and Skateboards**

Bikes, roller blades, scooters and skateboards are not to be ridden or stood upon on school premises at any time, including before and after school, during school time, or on weekends. Students must lock up bikes, roller blades, or skateboards during the school day. Students must not bring items to school that can't be safely stored.

### **Positive Recognition**

Positive recognition programs have been designed to motivate students toward meeting the high academic and behavior expectations held by our school and community. Recognition programs have been instituted in the classroom as well as school wide.

Examples of these programs are:

- **Cobra of the Month** One student per month chosen by each teacher as being a good role model; i.e. good attitude, good effort, and gets along well with others.
- **Cobra Caught Cha Awards** Teachers or staff hand out Cobra Caught Cha's to students that the teacher/staff "catches" being good. Cobra Caught Cha's can be used to recognize any positive behavior teacher or staff observes. The awards are entered in a weekly drawing where students from each grade receive a special prize.

### **BEST - Building Positive Behavior Support in Schools.**

This will be our second year adopting the BEST model which is an integrated system of school wide, classroom management, and individual student supports designed to provide effective tactics and strategies to improve behavioral outcomes for students.

### **Student Planner**

Each student at Albany Middle School has a planner. We ask each family to contribute \$5.00 for the planner to offset our costs. This can be paid at Orientation Day or in the office after school starts. The planner can be used as a communication tool. Students should write assignments and due dates in the planner and parents can check the planner to see that the student is doing assignments. There is a Parent/Teacher comments section, which can be utilized on an as-needed basis. This should be set up during parent-teacher conferences.

### **Substitute Teachers**

A substitute teacher deserves the highest courtesy and cooperation from students at all times. Students will receive a referral to the vice-principal for any misbehavior with a substitute teacher.

## **COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY**

### **Albany Middle School Web site**

AMS maintains a web site where news and other items of interest are posted including the daily newsletter, the weekly Cobra Clarion, our school calendar, a link to the Aeries Parent Portal, a staff directory, and links to other AUSD sites. We encourage you to visit and learn more about our school community. We are continually updating and modifying the web site in hopes of making it an effective and useful tool for our school community. The URL for the web site is <http://ams.ausdk12.org>.

### **Aeries Student / Parent Portal**

Aeries features a parent communication module called the Aeries Parent Portal which is a student reporting tool for AUSD teachers. It hosts teacher reporting features like "Gradebook" which allow teachers to submit grades and progress reports directly online, making a student's grades and assignments viewable for both students and parents. Aeries Parent Portal also allows parents to view student attendance records. To go to the portal, click on the Aeries Portal link on the AMS web site: <http://ams.ausdk12.org>.

### **Back-to-School Night**

In September each year, Albany Middle School has a Back-to-School Night for parents (adults only). During the evening, parents follow their child's class schedule. Teachers review the curriculum and class requirements. This is a great event for finding out about the AMS experience. We hope to see everyone there.

### **Cobra Clarion**

The principal posts a weekly newsletter on our web site which is also sent out through the AMS eTree. To subscribe to our eTree send an email to [AlbanyMiddleSchoolsubscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:AlbanyMiddleSchoolsubscribe@yahogroups.com). Paper copies are available in the office.

### **Open House**

In the spring, Albany Middle School hosts an Open House. Parents, students, and all community members are invited to come see what AMS students have accomplished during the year. Student work is displayed and students also participate in demonstrations of science experiments, physical prowess, and artistic endeavors.

### **PTA (Parent Teacher Association)**

The PTA meets once a month. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend the PTA meetings. The PTA raises money for programs and assists the school with activities. Participation in the PTA provides parents an excellent opportunity to stay current with school activities and actively participate in the process of meeting the varied needs of AMS students, including a number of volunteer activities.

### **Parent Volunteers**

There are a number of opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, around the school, on field trips, and with extracurricular activities. Parent volunteer forms are available in the office.

### **School Site Council**

The Site Council is an elected body made up of parents, students, teachers, and other staff. Their primary

responsibility is to oversee the School Improvement Plan and budget the use of school improvement monies. Meetings are held once a month. All interested parents are encouraged to attend.

### **Telephone/Voicemail**

Individual teachers can be reached by calling 558-3600 and then dialing the teacher's voicemail extension. There is an extension address book that you can access if you do not know the teacher's extension. There is a staff directory on the AMS web site.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Harassment Policy**

Harassment, often referred to as bullying, is defined as repeated, unwanted behavior toward an individual. It can be physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual. Cyberbullying and cyberthreats are also considered harassment. This includes sending offensive or harassing messages, spreading nasty rumors on sites such as Facebook or through text messages, disclosing someone's intimate personal information, excluding someone from an online group, or using the Internet to intimidate. Students have the right to attend school in a safe and non-threatening environment.

If any student feels that he/she is being bothered or harassed, that student should let a trusted adult know about it. Such a report will be taken very seriously and the offending student will be told that the behavior needs to stop immediately. If the behavior does not stop, a harassment contract will be drawn up and signed by the harassing student, his/her parent, and an administrator describing consequences for repeated offenses.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Albany Unified School District's sexual harassment policy in part states: "The Board of Education recognizes that sexual harassment can cause embarrassment, feelings of powerlessness, loss of self-confidence, reduced ability to perform schoolwork, and increased absenteeism or tardiness. The Board shall not tolerate the sexual harassment of any student by any other student or any district employee."

If a student feels sexually harassed, that student should tell a trusted adult, such as their teacher, a counselor, or administrator. School personnel will pursue the situation with the goal of stopping the harassment and punishing the perpetrator as appropriate.

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

To encourage the success of our students, school staff and parents must work together to support appropriate behavior at school. Students need the adults in their lives to set clear guidelines and follow through with fair and consistent consequences for misbehavior.

When a student is involved in some form of misbehavior, a review of the incident will occur. The student's previous behavior record will be taken into consideration when determining appropriate consequences for misbehavior.

Parents may be called depending on the individual circumstances.

**Level 1** The first level of discipline is usually within the classroom. Teachers may assign detention or work detail, call parents, or withdraw classroom privileges, including being excluded from class field trips. (Depending upon severity of misbehavior, a higher-level consequence may be assigned immediately.)

**Level 2** If misbehavior continues or is severe, the teacher will make a disciplinary referral to the administration. Disciplinary referrals become a matter of school record. Depending upon the offense, consequences usually include school work detail, noontime detention, class suspension, or loss of school activity privileges.

**Level 3** Severe or continued misbehavior will result in one or more of the following interventions: In-school suspension; Suspension from school; Student Behavior Contract; Referral to Student Study Team (SST) or School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

State education code also mandates a suspension and expulsion recommendation for specified serious offenses including but not limited to causing physical injury to another person, extortion, theft, possession, use or sale of alcohol or other drugs, bringing a weapon to school, etc.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance**

Please have your student in school unless he/she is ill. Students need to be present consistently in order to benefit from their education. The California Department of Education provides ADA only for those students who attend school. We ask families to please bring students to school before and/or after medical appointments if at all possible.

To excuse your student's absence, you may do one of the following:

- Call before 10 a.m. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day the student is absent or
- When a student returns after an absence he/she should go to the office with a note to obtain a white admit slip to show their teachers or
- Student may come to the office with a medical excuse from the medical office and sign in and get a white admit slip to go to class.

## **Closed Campus**

Albany Middle School is a closed campus. To ensure safety, students must remain on campus at all times, unless specifically excused by a parent. Once students arrive at school, they are to remain until leaving for home at the end of the school day. If a student must leave before the end of the school day, s/he must sign out in the office prior to leaving. The front of the school and the area west of the gym (near the BART tracks) are off-limits to students during lunch and breaks.

## **Emergency Forms**

An emergency form must be completed at the beginning of each school year and kept up-to-date and accurate throughout the school year. Incomplete or inaccurate data could endanger a student if an emergency occurs. **Parents must update address and phone information immediately anytime there is a change in employment or residence.**

## **Extended Trips**

Family trips should be arranged during summer and other school breaks. Extended absences will affect a student's academic progress and grades. Alternative assignments while on trips do not fully take the place of daily attendance and participation in class. If an extended absence is unavoidable, parents must notify the office and the teachers at least two weeks prior to the student's departure. Independent study should be arranged for absences of five days or more. Please notify the office and ask for an Independent Study form.

## **Illness at School**

Students who are ill or have a fever should not be sent to school. If illness or fever develops at school, we will call a parent for pick-up. Students who feel ill may rest in the office for up to ten minutes and then must go back to class or call a parent for pick-up. Students leaving school must have permission and must sign out from the office.

## **Immunizations**

Incoming 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders must provide verification of a whooping cough (Tdap) booster shot. Incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders are required by state law to have all of the Hepatitis B and MMR injections. Incoming 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> graders will not be permitted to start school without verification being provided to the school office that the student has completed these immunizations.

## **Leaving School Early**

If a student needs to leave before the end of the school day, a note must be presented to the office staff. The note must contain the student's name, date, time of dismissal, and parent signature. After turning in the note, the student

must sign out, indicating the exact time of departure. Upon return, the student must check in at the office and sign in.

## **Lost and Found**

Items brought to school should be marked with the student's name. Bringing valuables to school is highly discouraged. If an item is lost, check the Lost and Found across from the library in the atrium. If the item is small and valuable, such as a watch, keys, iPod, cell phone, MP3 player, or jewelry, check with the secretaries in the main office.

## **Medication at School**

Students who need to take prescribed medication during the school day may carry and self-administer medicine if there is a signed medication permission form on file in the office. If the medication is to be taken in the office, medicine(s) must be sent to school in a properly labeled container, detailing the method, amount, and time schedule by which medication is to be taken along with a signed permission slip.

## **Money and Valuables**

Students are responsible for all personal belongings. Expensive electronic devices of all kinds attract thieves and should be left safely at home. The school cannot take responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen articles. You are in danger of losing your item if you bring it to school. Students should bring to school ONLY the amount of money needed for lunch. If a larger amount must be brought, take it to the main office for safekeeping.

## **Requests for Homework When Absent from School**

Parents may contact the school office to request homework assignments for students who are or will be absent from school for three or more days. It is the student's responsibility to obtain missed homework and/or class assignments from his/her teachers for any absences less than three days. It is also advisable for a student to have a friend to call to ask about homework when the absence is short-term. Teachers also post homework online on Aeries.

## **School Premises**

"School premises" encompasses the entire campus, including parking areas, surrounding sidewalks, and all areas normally supervised by school personnel. Cougar Field is included in our school premises.

## **Student Drop-Off/Pick-up**

To avoid congestion in the mornings and afternoons, we suggest that you designate a drop-off and pick-up point a short walk away from the school. San Gabriel and Masonic are two streets that might be good meeting places.

Students should use the crosswalks. DO NOT stop in the middle of the street, and DO NOT let your child jaywalk. We have had many near misses where students almost got hit by passing cars. Due to a mitigation agreement with the neighbors, parents must NOT turn north onto Spokane from Brighton, nor use the parking lot as a meeting place. Please do not use the cul-de-sac as a turn-around. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Tardy Policy

Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Those who arrive at school after classes have begun are tardy. Frequent tardies interfere with a child's learning. Students arriving late to school should report to the office for a pink admittance (tardy) slip. Arriving fifteen minutes late or more constitutes a class cut. The only acceptable reasons for tardies are medical appointments or illness.

During the course of the day, if students are late to class the learning process is disrupted. Students must get to each class on time. The classroom teachers handle tardies to class in the following way:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense Warning and teacher documentation
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense Warning and teacher documentation
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense Phone call home/detention given
- 4<sup>th</sup> offense Referral to vice-principal/student placed on Tardy Alert

Once a child is on Tardy Alert, the vice principal will notify the parent. Lunch detention will be assigned.

### Telephone

If you need to reach your child during school hours, please call the school office. *Do not try to reach them via their cell phone.* Students may use the office phone in an emergency only, to notify parents of an illness, to notify parents of a detention, and to notify parents of a cancelled, school-sponsored activity.

If parents expect their child to carry a cell phone it must be turned off upon entering the campus in the morning and may not be turned on again until school ends. AT NO TIME should a cell phone be on or visible during school hours. Cell phones out and visible during the school day will be confiscated by staff.

### Visitors at School

All visitors, including volunteers, must check in at the main office before proceeding to any part of the campus. Visitors must wear a visitor badge. Visitors who wish to observe classes must sign up in advance for a specified time slot. Visiting day is Thursday. Only adults may visit. Students or friends from other schools are not allowed to visit Albany Middle School while school is in session.

## STUDENT LIFE

### After School Sports

After school sports are offered. They include volleyball for girls, wrestling and basketball for girls and boys, and co-ed cross country and track and field. Information on try-outs and practices is communicated through the Daily Newsletter, which is read to students at the start of the day, is posted on the AMS web site, and sent out via the AMS etree. Teams compete against other middle schools. During the season, practice is 4-5 days per week, approximately 3:15 to 5:00 p.m. Students must maintain good behavior and grades to remain on a team.

### Athletic Eligibility

Academic eligibility is based on grades from the most recent quarter, prior to the beginning of the sport. A student is eligible to participate in athletics if he or she receives a 2.0 G.P.A., ("C" average) or higher and has not received a "F" in any class. If a student is participating in a sport and receives a report card that makes him/her ineligible, the student will be dropped from the team. However, a student may be granted a "one-time-only" probation exemption if they fail to earn eligibility. This probation is valid only if the student has not received an "F" in their most recent quarter. A student who receives an "F" is not eligible for probation.

Once a student has been granted a one-time-only probation, the student may participate in athletics. This probation applies to only one quarter in the student's years at AMS. Probation status is meant to be a second and final chance. No exceptions will be made.

*In order for an athlete to be granted their Academic Probation, the athlete must have a conference with his or her parent (s), the athletic director, and coach if possible, to discuss the terms of the probation.*

### Dances

Evening dances will be held 4 times during the year. Sixth graders may attend the second and third dances. Sixth graders attend a Halloween party which takes the place of the first dance. The 4<sup>th</sup> dance is for 8<sup>th</sup> graders only and is a part of their promotion activities.

Attending a dance is a privilege that students earn through good behavior. Students who have been suspended, have unserved detentions, are on tardy alert, or have had numerous behavior problems will not be allowed to attend the dances. **Note:** Parents are asked to pick up their children at the stated ending time. With the exception of the assigned parent chaperones, parents will not be let in. Students must have a ticket and a current student body card to enter the dance. The administration retains the right to send any student home for inappropriate behavior, suggestive dancing, or dangerous behavior such as running, "moshing", or "freaking".

Any student ineligible for a school dance who shows up at that school dance will be subject to disciplinary action



including but not limited to losing future dance privileges, becoming ineligible for other promotion activities in the case of 8<sup>th</sup> graders at the graduation dance, or school suspension.

### **Noontime Activities**

Albany Middle School offers an excellent noontime program. The sport's leagues and tournaments work in conjunction with the physical education classes. Activities include team sports such as touch football, basketball, volleyball, softball and tug-of-war. For individual students, balls are available for checkout at noon. Cougar Field is available to students at lunch. Students may also use the library at lunchtime.

### **Materials Supply List**

#### **(Required)**

- Binder paper – 8 1/2 x 11 in., 3 hole punched, wide ruled
- Three ring binder with dividers/accordion file system
- Pencils #2
- Colored pens
- Eraser
- Hand-held pencil sharpener
- Black or dark blue pens – not gel
- Fine-tipped colored markers
- Black fine line pen
- Ruler – cm and inch
- Packet of graph paper – standard size
- Glue stick
- Compass
- Protractor
- Calculator
- **NO SHARPIES OR OTHER PERMANENT PENS**

#### **7<sup>th</sup> grade only:**

- Scientific calculator with ability to do exponents, fractions, and roots. No graphing calculators.
- One subject spiral bound notebook.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> grade only:**

- Scientific calculator with ability to do exponents, fractions, and roots. No graphing calculators.
- Three subject spiral bound notebook (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)

#### **(Suggested)**

- Book covers – non-adhesive
- Zipper pouch to hold supplies
- Three-hole punch
- Highlighter
- Small scissors
- Colored ball-point pens
- Flash drive