

District 622
High School Alternative Program

HARMONY

Area
Learning
Center



HARMONY LEARNING CENTER

1961 County Road C
Maplewood, MN 55109
651-748-6200

Dear Student,

Welcome to Harmony Area Learning Center. Harmony ALC is District 622's High School Alternative Learning Program. We look forward to working with you as you continue your education and learning. You come to this program having experienced significant academic, behavior and/or social difficulties in the traditional high school setting. The challenges of successfully completing high school can be many, and it requires four years of hard work on your part.

Your decision to enroll in this program is a positive sign that you want to continue to learn while making progress toward earning your high school diploma. Although it will be difficult and challenging, requiring self-discipline and perseverance, we are prepared to help you be successful in achieving your goals.

In order to achieve your goals, you will need to work at presenting a positive attitude as you begin this program. You must be accountable for your own behavior and respect the rights of others. We encourage you to meet any challenges facing you and celebrate each success as a stepping-stone to greater success and a happier life. We need you to attend this school each and every day. There can be no "sleeping in" when you attend this school. In order for you to accomplish your goal and ours—for you to graduate from high school—we need you to make the commitment to come to school here EVERY day.

The information in this handbook has been prepared to help you understand what is expected of every individual who is part of this learning community. We are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment where all members feel welcome and respected. The policies, rules, and expectations are intended to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to develop and apply academic, personal, and career skills while making progress toward earning a high school diploma. It is your responsibility to know and understand what is expected of you while enrolled in this program. If you have any questions or concerns, you are advised to speak with a staff member. Again, we look forward to working with you and helping you succeed.

*Sincerely,
Peter E. Haapala, Coordinator Alternative Learning Programs*

INTRODUCTION

The District 622 High School Alternative Learning Program is an extension of the district's secondary schools. It is designed to serve students who have not had their educational needs met within the traditional education system. This may be for a variety of reasons.

The program is intended to provide an alternate option for students who have experienced or are experiencing difficulty in the traditional education system. A student who attends the program should meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Performs substantially below performance level of same age students
- Is at least one year behind in meeting graduation course work requirements
- Has withdrawn from school or has been chronically truant
- Has been excluded or expelled
- Is pregnant or is a parent
- Has been assessed as chemically dependent
- Has experienced mental health problems
- Has been homeless sometime in the last six months
- Is a victim of physical or sexual abuse

DISMISSAL FOR THE DAY

Students may be asked to leave a class or the program for various reasons including: off-task behaviors, inattentiveness, sleeping, lack of cooperation or for other disciplinary reasons. If you are asked to leave it is very important that you leave without incident. Don't allow what may be a small thing turn into a much larger issue. Most "problems" can be dealt with more effectively "after the fact" when things calm down. HARMONY ALC does not consider dismissal from the program for the day to be a suspension. Parents will be notified whenever a student is not in school.

CELL PHONE & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We will not tolerate the use of cell phones, electronic games, or other personal electronic devices during class time. The staff at the ALC has found cell phones and personal electronic games to be an extreme nuisance that is very disruptive to the learning environment. Cell phones should be turned off while in class. Any use of these devices during class time will result in an office referral and possible confiscation until a parent/guardian comes in to pick it up.

** Teacher discretion is given to students' use of personal music devices.*

TARDIES AND LEAVING EARLY

Being to school on time is very important to your success. We believe that being on time is a career skill and represents personal responsibility. It is also a respect issue. Our expectation is that students come to school on time. Failure to meet this expectation demonstrates a lack of respect towards meeting your program goals. There are no legitimate reasons for consistently being late to school. If there are real circumstances that prevent a student from being on time, we are more than happy to discuss the issues. Repeatedly leaving early from school will not be tolerated. Continued failure to meet our attendance expectations will result in an intervention plan which may include being dropped from the program. We want to serve students in a respectful and supportive environment. To accomplish this, we need students to take seriously their commitment to all of our program's expectations.

Important District and ALC Policies

SEXUAL HARASSMENT/VIOLENCE

If a student feels he or she has been a victim of sexual harassment or sexual violence by another student or employee of District 622, or if a student has knowledge of sexual harassment or sexual violence in the District, they should immediately report it to the principal or other school staff. Individuals may also directly report the harassment to the Director of Personnel, 2520 East 12th Avenue, North St. Paul, Minnesota 55109 or by telephone at (651) 748-7422. A copy of the Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence is available from the office. This Policy is also available from the Personnel Office at the District Education Center.

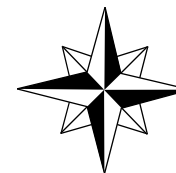
CHEMICAL USE/ABUSE

The school board recognizes that chemical use and abuse constitutes a grave threat to the physical and mental well being of students and employees and significantly impedes the learning process and maintenance of an effective and safe work environment. Tobacco, alcohol, and other unauthorized and illegal drug use by students and employees is wrong and harmful. The school board believes that the public schools have a role in education, intervention, and prevention of chemical use and abuse. This includes the importance of adult role modeling for students during formative years. The staff of HARMONY ALC will address chemical health issues with students and/or their parents if we become concerned about a child's academic, social, or emotional well-being.

CONTRACT SEARCH AGREEMENT

Metro Canine Detection Services will visit the Harmony Learning Center periodically during the school year. These searches will be done on a random basis. A school representative will accompany the search team as it searches all designated areas which may include: lockers, unoccupied classrooms, restrooms, common use areas, and vehicles parked on school property that could be a hiding place for illegal narcotics. The dogs will not search students. These searches are a part of the Safe Schools money appropriated to keep the students of our school in ISD 622 safe.

OUR GUIDING VALUES



❖ **PHILOSOPHY**

Create a learning environment that connects with students' needs and challenges learners to take personal responsibility for their education.

❖ **MISSION**

Serve students in a respectful and supportive environment where each student has the opportunity to develop and apply academic, personal and career skills.

❖ **GOAL**

Assist students in making progress toward earning a high school diploma in an alternative setting.

❖ **BELIEFS**

Although most students' needs are often met in the traditional high school setting, some students require an alternative setting, special support, flexible scheduling, and/or unique learning opportunities.

WHAT IS THE ALC?

There are many ideas that float around as to what an ALC actually is. It is really a *second chance* at completing high school in an alternative setting. Alternative setting meaning different, substitute, or option; not less than or inferior. Like any school, your learning experience will be what you make of it. Our teachers are committed to helping students who have not been successful at the regular high school for many different reasons. While there may be some negative perceptions about an ALC, there are far more positive thoughts and impressions from the students who have been enrolled. The following statements from current and former students represent just some of the reasons many students feel they have been successful at HARMONY ALC.



THIS COULD BE YOU!

TRIPLE “AAA” EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

The program is designed to reduce the mandatory number of hours a student is physically at school. This allows for students to have more flexibility, options, and control of their day.

Students are expected to get to school on time and attend school every hour of every day of the mandatory schedule.

ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that a student will earn a minimum of 1 credit in each of their scheduled classes and additional ½ credit through extra activities. A student should earn 4.5 credits each term. **4.5 credits per term is the minimum expectation.** Students/Parents will get a mid-term evaluation report every 3 weeks.

ATTITUDE EXPECTATIONS

It is absolutely expected that students will show respect for themselves and others, be responsible for their own behaviors, and demonstrate a commitment to the program and its rules and expectations.

Failure to meet expectations of the program will bring about an intervention plan for the student. Continued failure to meet expectations could result in being dropped from the program.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The staff of HARMONY ALC believes it is important that students understand our commitment to fulfill the philosophy, mission, goals, and beliefs of this learning program. It is equally important for students to understand our expectations of them as valuable members of this learning community.

Therefore YOU as a student are expected to:

- Read, understand and follow all District 622 rules and policies as outlined in the STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY POLICY (yellow handbook).
- Attend school EVERY Day and BE ON TIME.
- Stay on task, work hard, and make satisfactory progress on class work.
- Be mentally prepared and willing to participate in all learning activities. (NO SLEEPING)
- Participate in scheduled learning activities; i.e. guest speakers, field trips, testing, etc.
- Conduct yourself as a responsible person and be accountable for your behavior.
- Do not use cell phones or other electronics during class time.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Have appropriate conversations at all times.
- Never smoke or use tobacco products on or near school property
- Never verbally or physically provoke another student.
- Demonstrate responsible use of school building and grounds.
- Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Have a positive attitude.

HARMONY ALC... THE STUDENTS' VIEW

"Everyone of the staff I would gladly call family. I thought the only people that could care so much was family, but all of you helped me along my way and I can't thank you all enough."

"When I went to the ALC I was told by everyone at my high school that I would have very limited options and that I would have little interactions with other students. Instead, I found the opposite. My options expanded so far that when I could not find a teacher for something I wanted to learn, the teachers at the school would set me up with someone who could. When I wanted to learn about horticulture for example, I was set up with an expert at the Cowern Orchard in North St. Paul. The interaction between me and my teachers and other students was unlike any schooling experience I have ever had. I am thankful I got to attend the ALC."

"I felt the ALC staff were more understanding. They gave you the kind of individual attention that normal high schools don't. It was more like a family there."

"When I started HARMONY ALC every teacher knew who I was and they let me figure out the assignments we had to learn, instead of lecturing for an hour. I learned more at HARMONY ALC than I did at any other school I have ever been to."

"HARMONY ALC is better than any regular school or other ALC for that matter. Here the teachers care about you and your success."

"This is the first time in my educational life that I have felt like a student and not a statistic."

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

8:20 AM – 1:05 PM
Monday-Friday



Period 1:	8:20-9:20	(1 credit)
Breakfast:	9:20-9:40	
Period 2:	9:40-10:40	(1 credit)
Period 3:	10:40-11:40	(1 credit)
Lunch:	11:40-12:05	
Period 4:	12:05-1:05	(1 credit)

$$4 \text{ credits} \times 4 \text{ terms} = 16 \text{ CREDITS} + ?$$

We have 4 terms lasting approximately 9 weeks. We consider students to be making satisfactory progress if they earn 4 credits each term. The schedule, structure of classes, and policies of the program have been created in order for students to meet the 4 credits per term expectation. A student should earn 16 credits per year allowing most students to *"keep up"* with the "traditional" pace of earning credits. However, we assume that most students need to do more than *"keep up."* They need to *"CATCH UP."* To accomplish *"catching up"* students will need to take advantage of additional credit earning opportunities within our program. This could be accomplished by:

- ❖ Earn credits through our work -based learning program. (Get a Job!)
- ❖ Participate in our after school "field trip" opportunities. (minimum of 2 per month offered)
- ❖ Take advantage of any additional educational opportunities we offer periodically throughout the year.
- ❖ Attend the after-school credit make-up program at Tartan or North (night school).