



AHS Parent Newsletter: Friday, Aug. 19

Principal's Message

Welcome Hornet families, to the 2022 – 2023 academic year. It is custom here at Alameda High that I provide you a weekly update. Throughout this year, I will use this update to let you know what is happening at school, upcoming events, and any changes that may affect you and/or your child. As a parent, I want to encourage you to get involved while at Alameda High School. We have a fantastic PTSA that not only does great things to support the school but also is a place for parents to connect and find out about opportunities for students and families from other parents. If your child is involved in sports, music, or drama then I encourage you to get involved in one or more of those booster programs to support your child. I will be looking for a few parents to become members of the School Site Council in the next few weeks. The SSC studies data and looks at trends happening here at AHS and makes recommendations for practices and programs that are intended to better serve our students. The district has number of committees and round tables intended to hear from and empower parents to be active partners in recommending and implementing changes within the district to better serve the families in our community. Attending performances, sports, and other activities are other ways for you to show support for your student and the school. Finally, just helping your child develop as a student and communicating with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other staff is a great way to be involved.

Survey

This year, I will be sending out a one-question survey to see how many parents engaged with the school about every two weeks. This data will help us to determine how successful we are at involving families in the school community. Activities including sports, performances, academic conferences, PTSA meeting, parent/teacher meeting, etc. are examples of interactions that we hope to collect data about. I will send the first survey out right after **Back to School Night**, which is on **Thursday, September 8**. The survey will ask for some basic demographic data like the grade-level and ethnicity of your child.

As the first week of school comes to a close, I would just like to say how impressed I am with the students here at Alameda High School. The students here seem genuinely happy to be back with their peers for another year of learning. They have all been so respectful of one another and very respectful to the staff and the facilities.

Alameda High School welcomed more than 1,800 students on to the campus this past Monday, and school actually started smoothly even with the wrong room numbers listed on schedules, and students madly attempting to drop or add a class. Everyone just took it in stride and by Wednesday, things had greatly quieted down.

Visiting classrooms

The admin team has been walking the campus visiting classes all week. Teachers have been busily teaching their room expectations, reviewing their syllabi for the class, and building community among the students. Many classes have taken the time to do an activity or two allowing students to get to know their classmates a little better. Establishing these class cultures provides a rich environment in which students may learn. Many of the students in the AP classes came to school this week and are already deep into their learning based on the summer assignments they were all asked to complete. Overall, the school is alive with learning. Visiting classes yesterday, I see that most teachers are now pivoting from building community activities to delivery of academic content in their subject areas. This weekend would be a good time to have your child sit for a bit and organize their backpack and create their study schedule that will work for them with any extra-curriculars or part-time jobs they may have.

In addition to all the new students this week, AHS welcomes 16 new teachers on to the staff and hopefully you will be able to meet them at Back to School Night if they teach your child. We are also pleased to welcome our new counselor, Ms. Albor Rueda, who will be supporting students at the end of the alphabet.

AHS presently has about 100 students more enrolled than was projected in the spring and that is after dis-enrolling students who have informed us that they will not be returning. This means that almost all of our classes are at or over capacity. Many students are requesting to drop or change classes from those they chose last year. Unfortunately, such changes just may not be possible. Our attendance staff is busily calling families who have not yet attended this week and so far we have been able to drop students who have moved or are attending elsewhere. We are now starting to balance classes in courses where we had to place 36 students in some sections. As spaces open-up, we will be moving students to balance. We attempt to balance with as few interruptions to schedules as possible but it is unavoidable that some students will have to change the periods that they take some classes. We are hoping that students' schedules will be settled by midweek next week.

Picture Day

Next Friday, August 26 will be school picture day for freshman, independent study students and seniors who need an ID card. All freshmen will take their pictures during their PE class. Then on Monday, August 29, sophomores and juniors will take their picture during their social studies class. These pictures are used for student ID cards and appear in the yearbook for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. Seniors have portraits taken for the yearbook and if they did not do this over the summer with Studio One then Studio One will be here in January to take those portraits.

Back to School Night

Mark your calendars for Thursday, September 8, as that will be our Back to School Night. We are planning to have an in-person Back to School Night (flyer attached). I will start with a very brief 10-minute welcome and then you will have the opportunity to attend all your child's classes for a 12-minute overview of the class from the teacher. If your child has a zero period then you will attend that

class at the end of the evening. Also, we will not be having a SMART period session at Back to School Night.

I want to encourage you to check-in with your child. Find out which is their favorite class and which class is a struggle for them. Discuss strategies that may help them decrease that struggle and make the learning a more enjoyable experience. Find out if they've met any new friends or are discovering any new interests. Developmentally, these young people are striving to develop their own independence but experts and studies say that you are still the biggest influence in their life, even if they may not want to admit it.

Chromebooks

We are now in year two of our 1:1 Chromebook program where every student has been issued and expected to have a Chromebook to be used in class and at home. Personal devices will not suffice due to new district policy not to allow access to school WIFI except for on the Chromebooks. Once a student has their Chromebook they will keep it until they graduate so going forward, we will only need to distribute to freshmen and students new to AHS. *Parents, please make sure your students know that they must keep track of their Chromebook charger, along with their Chromebook. If a student loses a charger, a replacement costs \$30. The newer Chromebooks hold a charge for more than a day, and teachers all have 2 extra chargers in their classrooms. The best practice is for students to keep their chargers at home, and recharge their Chromebooks each night*

Attendance

I want to clarify some information about attendance. Due to COVID and other past practices, attendance expectations have blurred for many over the past few years. First, I want to say that a student stands a far better chance of achieving academic success and being a part of the community when they consistently attend school. The district allows for a maximum of 14 missed periods of a class or more than three consecutive days of missing class before a doctor's note is expected. This means that if your child misses a class more than 14 times then the absence cannot be cleared without a doctor's note and would then be listed as an unexcused absence. A build-up of unexcused absences can result in the loss of eligibility from school activities including sports participation. 14 absences equates to 7.7% of the school year. Unless a student is dealing with a chronic condition, this is an excessive amount of time to miss.

Those 14 absences can be used for illness including mental health breaks, appointments, familial obligations, funerals, religious observations, etc. If a child is absent, we ask that you call attendance or send a note. With those 14 days, we do not question or investigate those notes. Beyond 14 days, any absence requires a note from a doctor detailing the reason for the absence.

In the past, AHS would excuse students who missed school to visit colleges or universities. We can no longer excuse such absences and we encourage that any college visits be scheduled during school non-attendance days. Those days include: Sept. 2, Nov. 21 – 25, Dec. 22 – 30, Jan. 2 – 6, Jan. 27, Feb. 20 – 24, and Apr. 10 – 14. This is 30 days in all and there are other days that school is not in session but those are legal holidays and so I have not listed them here. I trust that there is sufficient time to make

such visits that do not require missing school. Should this not work then I defer back to those 14 days that we do not question or investigate the note asking for an absence to be excused. In summation, I just want to say that 14 days is way more school than I would recommend any student missing, however, this is the total listed in the district's attendance policy. I suspect that this information will not be well received by some but we are working hard to realign with state and district expectations.

Dropping/Picking up students

I have a huge ask: Ingress and Egress of 1800 students in addition to more than 150 staff members daily can make access into the school difficult. I previously asked people to avoid dropping off anywhere on Walnut Street between the Encinal Avenue and Central Avenue unless the students has mobility issues. My second request is that parents and students do not drive into the parking lots on Walnut Street and Oak Street in the mornings between 7:45 am and 8:45 am, and after school any time before 4:00 pm. Many of our staff have young ones of their own and need to drop off or pick-up from day care so there arrival and departures are often times closes to commencement and excusal bells. Thank you for respecting these requests.

Welcome back

Finally, let me express how happy we all are to have students back in classes. Last year was a hard year for almost everyone coming back from Distance Learning and we know that there is still some healing that needs to occur. However, the energy that students bring to this campus and to one another is such a positive thing and I am so grateful that we are again back on campus and most students seem ready to be challenged and learn.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may email me at rithurnburn@alamedaunified.org or you can call the school at (510)337 – 7022 and I will try to address them.

Robert Ithurnburn
Hornet Pride!!

REVISED FLYER



**ALAMEDA HIGH SCHOOL
cordially invites you to...
Our Annual Back to School Night**

Thursday, September 8, 2022 –

**PARENT MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL ROBERT ITHURBURN
6:00 – 6:10 P.M. – KOFMAN AUDITORIUM**

Classroom Visits: 6:17 P.M. – 8:23 P.M.

Please join us for this important event!

You'll get a chance to meet your child's teacher and learn about:

- Our challenging college preparatory curriculum
- Teacher expectations and course overviews
- A "day in the life" of your Alameda Hornet!

PLEASE MEET US AT 6:17 PM IN YOUR STUDENT'S FIRST CLASS TO START THIS VERY SPECIAL EVENING! ALL ALAMEDA HIGH SCHOOL FAMILIES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND THIS EXCITING EVENT!

For more information, please feel free to call (510) 337-7022. We look forward to seeing you!

Please take time to sit down with your student to review their class schedule so you can visit your student's classes when you come to Alameda High School's Back to School Night on September 8, 2022. Please take a picture of the schedule on your cell phone, complete with room numbers, in case you forget to bring a hard copy. Getting a copy at school will result in your missing a class or two and we don't want that to happen.

TIME	PERIOD	CLASS TITLE	TEACHER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
6:17 – 6:29	Period 1			
6:36 – 6:48	Period 2			
6:55 – 7:07	Period 3			
7:14 – 7:26	Period 4			
7:33 – 7:45	Period 5			
7:52 – 8:04	Period 6			
8:11 – 8:23	Period 0			

"Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future!"

John F. Kennedy