

## **General Questions**

### **How can I get involved?**

AMS has a wide variety of ways for parents to get involved. One of the best ways to get “plugged in” to what is going on and coming up is by joining the PTSA. Other opportunities include the School Improvement Council (SIC), fundraisers, test monitoring, clubs and sports, and helping in the office.

### **Does AMS have lockers?**

Yes, all students are assigned a locker on their grade level’s hallway.

### **What courses are available at AMS for students to earn a high school credit?**

AMS offers Algebra I, English I Honors, Geometry, Spanish I, and Keyboarding/Business Computer Applications. AMS also offers high school credit in fine arts classes such as vocal, piano, art, orchestra, band, theater, and dance.

### **What do “teams” mean in middle school?**

Each team is made up of a teacher for the content areas: math, science, social studies, ACE (Academic Core Enrichment) and English language arts. Students are assigned a team of teachers that they are on for the school year. By using teams, teachers get to know their students better and are able to collaborate on strategies to help them.

### **What is Tiger Pride?**

Tiger Pride is how we demonstrate following school expectations and teach our students to be responsible citizens. Pride stands for Practicing Respect, Responsibility, and Safety In Different Environments. When students demonstrate Tiger Pride, they can earn Tiger Pride cards that can be used to “purchase” entrance into special events such as a student vs. faculty basketball game. We also have the Snack Store that students can use their Tiger Pride cards for at lunch. Another incentive that students can earn at AMS is to become a member of the Gold Club.

### **How do I make a parent/teacher conference?**

Please call the front office to schedule a parent/teacher conference.

### **Can I pick up course work for my child when he/she will be out sick?**

Yes, but there is a 24 hour turnaround time to allow for teachers to gather the materials.

### **Why can’t my child miss more than 10 days?**

Students are expected to attend school on time each of the school year’s 180 days. Students may not miss more than five (5) days in a ninety (90) day course or ten (10) days in an one-hundred-eighty (180) day course regardless of whether or not the absences are excused or unexcused. After 10 days, an appeal must be made. Within three days after returning to school, students must submit a written excuse to the attendance office explaining the absence, signed by parent(s) or guardian, and accompanied, if applicable, by a doctor’s statement. If students do not do so, the absence will be considered unlawful. If a student has 5 or more unlawful absences,

he/she and the parent(s) must attend a PCIC (Pre-Court Intervention Conference). The excuse should contain the following information: date excuse was written, reason for the absence, date of the absence, telephone number where parent or guardian can be reached, signature of parent, guardian, and/or doctor.

### **What is GATE? How do students qualify for GATE?**

GATE stands for Gifted and Talented Education. According to the SCDE, Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades 1-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas. These students require an educational program beyond that normally provided by the general school program in order to achieve their potential. Identification is a multistep process, which consists of screening and referral, assessment of eligibility, and placement. Please call the Gifted and Fine Arts Center at 821-3960 for information on the process.

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## **Sports and Arts**

### **Does AMS offer middle school sports?**

Yes, we offer football, basketball, volleyball, baseball, wrestling, and softball. All sports are only available to students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades as per the South Carolina High School League rules.

### **What is an “art core” and how long does it last?**

At AMS, each student selects an art core that they stay in for the three years they attend Alston. The cores that are provided at AMS are dance, band, vocal music, piano, visual arts, classic guitar, orchestra, and theater arts. High school credit is also available to 8th graders in dance, band, vocal, piano, visual arts, orchestra, and theater.

### **Can my child take Spanish in 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade and earn high school credit?**

Only students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish I course are eligible for high school credit. The grade will transfer to their high school transcript.

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## **Technology**

### **How do I get into parent portal?**

Parents are given confidential access ID and password at fact and fees in the beginning of the school year or when your child is enrolled at AMS. If you have misplaced your ID and password, parents are asked to come to the school with identification to pick up a new copy since the ID is confidential. Parents are then able to create an account using the confidential ID and password using the parent portal website <https://ps.ddtwo.org/public/>. If you have questions, please Lara Hayes at [lhayes@dorchester2.k12.sc.us](mailto:lhayes@dorchester2.k12.sc.us).

### **What is the cell phone policy at AMS?**

AMS follows the DD2 board policy for cell phones which states that no student may possess a paging device/cell phone while on school property during the instructional day.

**Elementary/Middle School:**

First offense - The device will be returned to parent/legal guardian.

All other offenses - There will be a fine of \$25.00 or the device will be retained for the remainder of the school year.