



Alice Vail Middle School, 2021-22

Finding Success in Middle School An A-Z Guide for Parents

School Year Theme: Empowered & Engaged Together

This is an A-Z list of helpful hints that has been developed to support parents of our wonderful students. If you need any assistance or support, please do not hesitate to reach out the Principal, Ms. Nicolosi or to any of the Alice Vail staff.

A-Academic Assistance is available to all students that attend Alice Vail. Tutoring and large and small group interventions are here to support each student's success. At the first sign of need for assistance, please reach out to the school for help. The first place to start when you notice your student struggling is your student's teacher. The teacher will be able to provide a clearer picture of how your student is doing. If needed, tutoring and supports are available before and after school and some Saturdays.

B-Building Community is critical in middle school. Students who feel connected have greater attendance at school and achieve academically. We build community through our team approach and through a variety of activities like school-wide assemblies, athletics, arts, clubs, and lunch time events. **Encourage your student to get involved.**

We have built in extra time during our first period to support social emotional learning and as an opportunity for students to have greater community with their first period teachers. Activities and ideas are provided weekly to teachers to guide similar school-wide experiences.

Your student will be a part of a Falcon House this year. The house system is designed to create a sense of belonging for students and staff. The hope is that it will enhance our Alice Vail Falcon sense of community and encourage positive character building and motivation.

C-Conferences are a wonderful way to connect with your student's team of teachers. We view you as an important partner in your student's education. At Alice Vail we meet as a team with parents on conference days. Our fall conference days are September 14-16 and February 9-10. If teachers do not reach out to you to invite you to meet, please don't hesitate to call or email of the teachers to make an appointment.

D-Discipline is about teaching and learning. Students make mistakes, and this is a time of learning and growing for students in all areas of their lives. During the middle school years, there is often no explanation for poor behavior. This age group can often react before they think. Consequences are not thought out ahead of the action, and remorse is typically sincere. Honesty and owning the behavior is what we strive for to help our students learn from their poor choices. We work to give a logical consequence and then we support the student moving on and hopefully learning from the experience. At Alice Vail, we have a reset button to remind us that each day is a new day, and we can move forward with dignity from mistakes.

E-Empowerment is key at this age and by **encouraging independent problem solving** you can empower your child to resolve his/her problem, gain confidence and become more independent. As a parent you need to know what is going on in school and your child's academic progress, but when a problem arises, encourage your child to solve his/her problem. Sometimes simply by helping your child identify whom they need to visit with and then encouraging your child to communicate with the teacher, the counselor or even an administrator will help instill confidence and provides your child with tools for learning to advocate for him/herself which is a lifelong skill.

F-Family-School Partnership is important to us at Alice Vail. There are several ways to be involved and stay connected. There will be events designed to help you learn more about your what your student is learning in class throughout the year. Keep an eye on the weekly newsletter for event announcements and details on how to get involved. We have a Family Engagement Committee if you would like to assist us in better connecting with families. If you are interested, please let the principal know.

Join the PTSA! PTSA is a fantastic way to connect with other parents and find ways to support your student and the school.

Volunteering in middle school looks different, but your help is greatly appreciated. A survey will be available in the first few weeks of school listing volunteer opportunities. Let us know how you may be able to assist.

G-Grades provide you information on how your student is doing in class, but they are not the whole story. You can assist by working with your student to look at where their strengths and areas for improvement are and assisting them in figuring out how to get a little better every day. Proficiency in the class content is what is important.

H- Homework is one key to success. It provides a student with opportunities to practice the skill and it helps to develop good habits for the future. There is a strong correlation between content grades and doing or not doing homework. We try to impress upon students that effort equals achievement, and you can help by reminding your child to check the teacher's website, pay attention to your child's missing assignments on ParentVUE, and by celebrating when you notice they are getting their work done without you reminding them.

I-Internet We work hard to teach your children about digital citizenship, but you can help by keeping any computer with internet access in a common place and reminding your child to never give out personal information, never agree to meet someone they met online and to **ROCK** online which means **Read Over** and **Check for Kindness** before pushing send.

J-Jargon...do not get lost in it. Yes, your children do have a language of their own and LOL or other texting abbreviations help them to think they are pulling something over you. We let them have their own language, their own fads, and we try to stay out of these harmless ways the students try to exert some of their independence with their made-up words, gestures, and slang. Please know that we will step in if it seems like the messaging is inappropriate or hurtful to another person.

K- Kindness is key at Alice Vail. Our students are challenged to be respectful, responsible, safe, and kind in all they do. You can partner with us to support your student in learning these important character-building traits. We have a list of Falcon Essentials that connect to these ideals. We also have a new creed this year:

I am an Alice Vail Falcon! I determine what I become. I matter and treat myself and my community with respect. Yesterday's failures are behind me. Today's successes are now before me. My community learns together to build a strong future. I am respectful, responsible, safe, and kind.

L-Late arrivals and attendance Please do your best to have your student to school on time each day. Consistently missing part of first period can negatively impact your student's learning. First period is your student's homeroom, and there is extra time in this class for a focus on social emotional learning. You do not want your student to miss time to work on these important skills.

If your student needs to miss school for illness or an appointment. Please call the office at 584-5400. Put this number in your contacts on your phone for easy access.

M-Meals, both breakfast and lunch, are free this year at school. Encourage your student to eat. A hungry belly makes it difficult to concentrate on learning in class.

N-Need Assistance and do not know where to turn?

Our counselor, Jessica Kreger, and our social worker, Ethan Van Aller, are here to help. We also have a Family Community Liaison, Sister Mary Jo Sobieck, that can assist in connecting you with resources you may need. Additionally, for a student struggling due to academics, we have tutoring available. You can connect with Ilyssa Whitehead, MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Support) Facilitator, for more information. The nurse assistant and nurse are also great resources if your student is not feeling well. Your teachers and your principal can also support your child. **The first place to start if it is an academic issue is to email the teacher.**

O-Organizational skills or a lack of these skills becomes apparent in middle school because your child has a lot more things to keep track of with a different teacher for every period. It is normal for some students to have everything in its place while other students cannot find anything or even remember where they put the item. Do not stress, we know this is the reality of kids this age and we continue to look at ways to organize them; there is no one way that works for everyone. However, here are some reminders to support your child at home with this skill: Have your child use his/her planner and check it at least once a week. Make sure your child has the supplies needed for each class and help them to label the folders. Keep returned papers, quizzes, and tests until you see the item put in students' grades on StudentVUE. If your child is not good at organization, have him/her clean out his/her backpack each week and put loose papers in the proper folders. For long term assignments, help your child organize for the tasks by writing what can be accomplished over time and help your child pace the project so it is not done the night before it is due. Most importantly, every night place the backpack by the door, have clothes laid out and have things needed to take to school where they are visible. A little time spent in the beginning of a school year, a new quarter and a new semester reorganizing can go a long way in supporting your child. Remember there is more than one way to organize and so if their way does not match your way, but it works for them, let it go. The point is your child has a system.

P-PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) creates schools where all students succeed. Alice Vail has a strong PBIS system that supports positive behavior throughout the school. Your student will have the opportunity to earn Falcon Bucks and purchase items in our PBIS store. They will also compete in house competitions to earn dedicated events for their house. Our staff enjoys supporting great citizenship and behavior and works to put on a field day, teacher play, and a teacher lip sync battle each year. If your student begins to struggle with behavior, we have supports in place to help them in finding a path to success.

Q-Questions When you are in doubt, ask our staff in the Front Office. How to get a lunch to your child, when dates of certain events are, who can help you with your ParentVUE account, and oh so much more can all be supported simply by calling 520-584-5400. If someone in the office cannot answer your questions, they will happily find the answer and get back to you in a reasonable time.

R-Responsibility is the main part of helping our young people become empowered. We build responsibility through club and sport participation, teaching our students to tap their resources, use their StudentVUE, and to seek help from their counselors, teachers or even go to tutoring and receive support from an adult or peer. Our hope is to give students tools to be responsible citizens and learners so that they can contribute to their community.

S-Standardized Testing occurs in the spring. We ask you to be mindful of not taking your child out of school for appointments, to remind your child to eat a good breakfast and to ensure your child gets plenty of sleep. These tests play a part in helping our teachers and staff support your students' progress in learning.

T-Team We are all here for your child and a strong partnership begins with communication. Email us, call us, and know we all want the same things, for your child to become self-directed and confident in maneuvering through middle school and the years beyond.

U-Unsupervised students are an accident waiting to happen. We do not have supervision before 8:00 AM or after school on our campus so please do not drop students off early and please be prompt in picking them up.

V-Visitors are welcome at Alice Vail Middle School. Tucson Unified School District asks that all visitors check in at the school office upon arrival on campus and show a photo id to verify their identity. Classrooms may only be visited with prior arrangement from the school administration. We encourage parents to volunteer. Keep an eye out for our volunteer survey at the beginning of the school year. Student visitors are not permitted at any time during the school day.

W-Weekly Newsletter, the Vail Voice, is sent out every Monday. Make sure your email address is up to date in ParentVUE to receive valuable information about what is happening at our school. The Vail Voice is sent out via email, if you click on the newsletter, it will take you to a site that will allow you to translate it into multiple languages or use text to speech.

X-Extracurricular activities, Middle School is the time to have your child try lots of different sports, join clubs, and volunteer to give back to the community. Help your child figure out what activities and sports they may enjoy.

Y-You are the most important person in your child's life. Believe in them, encourage them, and support them through these sometimes-challenging middle school years.

Z-Zoom will still be a part of our school this year. You are welcome to engage in meetings via Zoom or in person. This includes parent teacher conferences.

We hope you found the A-Zs helpful in figuring out how to maneuver through the middle school years and remember...**we are here to help you!**

Tamara Nicolosi, Principal
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Alice Vail Website: <https://vailms.tusd1.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AliceVailMS/> (New school page)

PTSA: <https://alicevailptsa.wordpress.com/> and on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/AliceVailFalconInformer/>

Sign up to receive text messages for updates and important messages. You can opt out anytime!

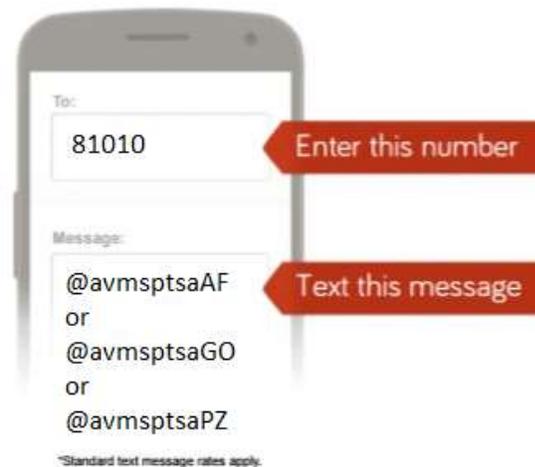
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