

Policy for Education of English Language Learners

An English Language Learner (“ELL”) is a student who does not speak English, or whose native language is not English, and who is not able to do ordinary classroom work in English. Alma del Mar Charter School shall strive to ensure that all ELL students receive full and equal access to Alma del Mar Charter School’s educational programs and services

To effectuate this goal, the ESL Specialist shall have the responsibility for ensuring that a comprehensive, systemwide plan for the education of ELL students is designed and implemented consistent with this policy and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Such plan shall address, without limitation, the recruitment of students; student identification and assessment and program placement; family and community involvement; curriculum and instruction; student support services; faculty, staff and administration; facility, resources and materials; program plan and evaluation; and monitoring and recordkeeping.

A. Recruiting English Language Learners

In accordance with its charter and mission statement, Alma del Mar Charter School shall attempt to attract, enroll, and retain a student population that is demographically comparable to similar schools in the traditional districts from which Alma del Mar Charter School enrolls its students, including the recruitment of ELL students. Alma del Mar Charter School shall not discriminate in its recruitment and enrollment processes with respect to a student’s proficiency in English.

Alma del Mar Charter School shall accept all ELL students who are selected to, and elect to enroll at the school through the lottery process.

B. Identification and Assessment of Students

The ESL Specialist, or designee, will establish criteria, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to identify ELL students and such identification shall be based upon an individual determination and assessment. All families will complete a home language survey prior to enrolling their children at Alma del Mar. This survey will be provided in multiple languages and can be completed orally at home visits.

Alma del Mar Charter School

7.o. Policy for Education of English Language Learners

Effective December 4, 2019

Any child who is exposed to another language at home will be considered a potential English Language Learner. During summer screenings, a Kinder Screener will be used to determine whether an incoming kindergartener is an English Language Learner. For incoming students in older grades, an online screener will be administered if a home language survey indicates that another language is spoken at home and the student is not already identified as an English Language Learner.

The parents/guardians of any Alma del Mar Charter School student may request, in writing, that the school assess the student's level of English proficiency. Alma del Mar Charter School shall then perform such an assessment and notify the parents/guardians in writing of the results and the scope and nature an ELL placement, if any.

Alma del Mar Charter School shall review the progress of each ELL student on a regular basis to assess whether ELL services continue to be necessary. A student must meet the minimum passing scores (both Overall and Literacy) on their ACCESS test to be considered for exiting the ELL program. Upon achieving the passing scores, the ESL Specialist and General Education teachers will determine if sufficient progress has been demonstrated to exit the student from the ELL program.

C. ELL Programming

Unless a waiver is granted or as otherwise provided by law, ELL students shall be placed in an English language classroom and shall be provided with English instruction in a sheltered English immersion program. Students who receive parental waivers may also be placed in bilingual education programs.

The ESL Specialist(s) will provide direct English language instruction through guided reading groups, individual conferences, and small group instruction. Specialist(s) will work closely with General Education teachers to provide scaffolding for ELL students to engage in grade level content, beyond the General Educator's use of Sheltered English Immersion strategies in all content areas.

All ELL teachers shall be literate in English, which shall be substantiated by the teacher's possession of a Massachusetts teaching license; or a vocational teacher approval or vocational technical educator license; or earning a passing score on the Communication and Literacy portion of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure; or the possession of a bachelor's degree from a college or university where the language of instruction was English.

Alma del Mar Charter School

7.o. Policy for Education of English Language Learners

Effective December 4, 2019

All ELL teachers shall be fluent in English shall be determined through one or more of the following: a classroom observation and assessment by the teacher's supervisor, principal or ESL Specialist; or an interview and assessment by the teacher's supervisor, principal, or ESL Specialist; or the teacher's demonstration of fluency in English through a test accepted by the Commissioner of Education.

Alma del Mar Charter School shall provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with an annual report confirming that all teachers of ELL classrooms are literate and fluent in English.

Early childhood and elementary teachers, teachers of students with moderate and severe disabilities, and teachers of English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, civics and government, economics, history, and geography, who provide sheltered English instruction to an ELL student shall hold an SEI Teacher Endorsement. Further, any person who evaluates or supervises a teacher providing sheltered English instruction shall possess an SEI Teacher Endorsement or SEI Administrator Endorsement, or will earn either within one year of the commencement of such evaluation or supervision.

D. Parental Waivers

The ESL Specialist or designee, shall ensure criteria and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and regulations promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, are in place for parental waivers. Such waivers shall be granted only where the parent or legal guardian annually applies for the waiver by visiting the school and providing written informed consent.

For students age 10 and older, waivers may be granted where it is the informed belief of the school ESL Specialist and the educational staff that an alternate course of educational study would be better for the student's overall educational progress.

For students under 10, waivers may be granted only where (i) the student has been placed in an English language classroom for at least thirty (30) days in a given school year; (ii) the school principal and educational staff document in no less than two hundred fifty (250) words that the student has such special and individual physical or psychological needs, separate from the lack of English proficiency, that an alternative course of educational study would be better for the child's overall educational development; and (iii) authorizing signatures on the waiver application of both the Superintendent and the school principal.

Alma del Mar Charter School

7.o. Policy for Education of English Language Learners

Effective December 4, 2019

Waiver decisions are subject to examination and approval by the ESL Specialist. The ESL Specialist may approve or reject a waiver decision, and the ESL Specialist's approval or rejection shall issue within five (5) days of receipt of the waiver application and any supporting documentation provided to, or requested by, the ESL Specialist

Students receiving waivers may be transferred to bilingual programs or other programs employing generally recognized educational methodologies permitted by law for the education of ELL students.

If at any given time, Alma del Mar Charter School enrolls 20 or more ELL students in a given grade level who have received a waiver, Alma del Mar Charter School shall be required to offer such students classes in bilingual education or other generally recognized educational methodologies permitted by law. In all other cases, such students must be permitted to transfer to a public school in which such a class is offered.

Alma del Mar Charter School shall classify students who have opted out of ELL programs as English language learners on reports to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Further, Alma del Mar Charter School shall assess the language proficiency of students who have opted out of ELL programs on an annual basis using the state-mandated proficiency test (ACCESS). Alma del Mar Charter School shall notify parent(s) / guardian(s) of these students, in writing, of the student's participation in these annual assessments, as well as the results of such assessments.

E. Monitoring of Education Progress

To ensure the proper monitoring of educational progress of ELL students in learning English and other academic subjects, the ESL Specialist, or designee, shall ensure the appropriate tests of English learners are administered at least annually as follows: (i) a standardized nationally-normed written test of academic subject matter given in English, which shall be administered to English learners in grades 2 and higher; and, (ii) a nationally-normed test of English proficiency in grades Kindergarten and higher, with such nationally-normed tests to be selected by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

In addition, the ESL Specialist shall assess ELL students' mastery of academic standards and curriculum framework on a regular basis.

F. Communications with Parents and Legal Guardians

Alma del Mar Charter School

7.o. Policy for Education of English Language Learners

Effective December 4, 2019

Report cards and other school information shall be sent to parents and guardians of ELL students in the same manner and frequency as is sent to parents and guardians of students who are not ELL students. All communications shall be provided to parents/guardians in a language understandable to those parents/guardians.

G. Census

Alma del Mar Charter School shall annually report (on the last day of the school year) to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the following concerning each ELL student:

- The school in which the ELL student is enrolled;
- The student's grade level;
- The student's English proficiency level;
- The language in which the student possesses a primary speaking ability; and
- The type of English learner program in which Alma del Mar Charter School enrolled the student, specifying whether the program is a sheltered English immersion program or a bilingual education program

H. English Learner Advisory Councils

In accordance with Massachusetts law, Alma del Mar Charter School has established and supports an English Learner Parent Advisory Council. Membership in the Council is open to all parents and legal guardians of ELL students enrolled at Alma del Mar Charter School. The Council shall perform the following functions:

- Create its own by-laws regarding governance and operational procedures;
- Advise Alma del Mar Charter School and its Board of Trustees on matters related to ELL students and families
- Participate with Alma del Mar Charter School in the planning and development of programs to improve educational opportunities for ELL students;
- Advise Alma del Mar Charter School on new proposed language acquisition programs;

Alma del Mar Charter School

7.o. Policy for Education of English Language Learners

Effective December 4, 2019

- Review Alma del Mar Charter School school improvement plans and relevant policies as they relate to ELL students

The Council will be subject to Massachusetts Open Meetings and Public Records laws.

At the beginning of each school year, Alma del Mar Charter School shall notify parent(s) and guardian(s) of all of its students of this Council and invite family members to volunteer to participate. Notification of the invitation to participate shall be sent to each family in the primary language known to Alma del Mar Charter School. Upon receipt and review of requests to participate in the council, [insert title], in consultation with the Board of Trustees, shall appoint volunteers to the Council.

I. Grievances

Alma del Mar Charter School shall comply with and implement all grievance procedures as set forth in applicable Massachusetts laws and regulations, including but not limited to 603 CMR 14.06

J. ELL Records

Alma del Mar Charter School shall maintain records of each student enrolled in an ELL program, to include (but not limited to), entry / exit information; ACCESS and MCAS scores; screening test results; report cards and progress reports; documentation of monitoring for former English learners and opt-out students; and documentation of conferences and written communications with the parent(s) / guardian(s).