

NORFOLK SENIOR HIGH
ALTERNATIVES FOR SUCCESS

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AFS Remind Account

Send a text to 41010

Send the message @dg2kke2

MISSION STATEMENT:

THE MISSION OF *ALTERNATIVES FOR SUCCESS* IS TO PREPARE AT-RISK STUDENTS TO PURSUE THEIR GOALS BY ENGAGING THEM AND PROVIDING THEM WITH ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS NEEDED TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

Position Statement:

Alternative education cannot simply address the academic needs of students. Students who are referred to and work within the *Alternatives for Success (AFS)* program typically have difficulties that extend beyond the classroom walls. In order to help these students find success at school, they need support and development of skills to manage their diverse needs.

The primary goals of *Alternatives for Success* are:

- To provide student's alternatives to the regular high school that will enable them to work toward completion of their high school education and life goals.
- To provide students the skills and/or support to be integrated into the regular high school curriculum and routine; or to provide them support to achieve their personal, educational and life goals. It is recognized that for some students this will require short term alternatives and for some it will require extensive and ongoing adjustments.
- To provide students a "climate of responsibility" that encourages the student to take responsibility for their learning and behavior that impacts their success.
- To reestablish a sense of belonging for the youth who participate in *AFS*.

The Philosophy:

Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve VanBockern from Augustana University (Reclaiming Youth) have developed a model that identifies four critical need areas that impact an individual's ability to function effectively in the world: (1) Mastery, (2) Belonging, (3) Independence, and (4) Generosity. Brendtro et al. suggest that in order to function effectively and productively in life, these four areas must be fulfilled and balanced. Students that are experiencing difficulties in and out of school will have one or more of these areas unfulfilled or in some way distorted. Therefore, to become a balanced and successful individual the critical needs areas must be systematically addressed.

For most students, the issue is one of mastery. Academic failure for a variety of reasons make accommodations in the classroom, organizational/study skills, mastery learning, (e.g. OdysseyWare and ALEKS Online Curriculums) and helping students identify and pursue other areas of mastery a critical component. *AFS* provides more flexibility for students in order for them to achieve mastery.

Some of the students that will be involved with *AFS* struggle with, or have a distorted sense of belonging due to life circumstances beyond their control. Peer alienation, difficulty with adults and authority figures, and out of home placements all contribute to difficulties with belonging. As such, *AFS* will provide opportunities to learn and acquire new social skills, anger management, and opportunities to connect positively with adults and peers.

Community service projects can systematically be developed (for credit) to promote a sense of:

Generosity. Opportunities that allow students to go beyond themselves for a greater purpose can help students excel and will be a component of *AFS*.

Independence is the goal of adolescence. For many of our youth and certainly for young adults, this equates to the self-sufficiency that can be attained by getting and sustaining a job. Thus, vocational education and the teaching of specific work readiness skills are crucial for some of the students involved in *AFS*. The coordination of job shadowing, unpaid and paid work placements for credit is another *AFS* component.

The Structure:

AFS will be structured into morning and afternoon sessions. Students will be enrolled in either the morning or the afternoon session and in rare instances both sessions depending upon their need and situation. Students are required to stay for their entire instructional block.

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, Friday

AFS Daily Schedule		
Block 1 (morning)	8:00	9:30
Block 2 (morning)	9:30	11:00
Block 3 (afternoon)	12:00	1:30
Block 4 (afternoon)	1:30	3:00

*****Wednesday’s are reserved for special activities, student meetings, make-up time and testing. Time schedule will be posted weekly for morning and afternoon sessions. ***See Covid Guidelines On District Website for changes in schedule based on Covid Threat Levels**

AFS will follow the Senior High school calendar as much as possible. Transcripts are updated whenever a student completes a class and at the end of each semester. Students may earn credits in each *AFS* class they are enrolled in for successfully completing work in that class and meeting the minimum standards of attendance (no more than 5 absences per 9-week period). The number of credits earned in any given period of time is entirely based upon the amount of work completed in a course. For example, a student that successfully completes a course in 9 weeks time will receive 5 credits at that time. **As a general guideline – the average student that takes advantage of the time and resources in *AFS* can expect to earn 12 to 15 credits per semester for each instructional block they are enrolled in.** Coursework not completed in one semester is continued to the next semester until the course is successfully completed. Grades and credit progress will be recorded and reported every nine weeks. General progress reports are available upon request.

Classes offered through *AFS* will consist of a combination of individualized instruction, OdysseyWare Online, ALEKS on-line, Edgenuity Online, traditional book work, internet classes and community & research projects. Depending on the amount of time a student is enrolled in *AFS*, the student may earn as many credits as possible in order to graduate with their class, if possible. Any student planning on earning more than 45 credits in a semester must develop a documented plan for how credits in excess of 45 will be earned. Any student attempting to graduate early must fill out the proper paperwork and

meet with the principal in order to be considered for early graduation.

Students that are participating in *AFS* will be expected to arrive at school no earlier than 10 minutes prior to their scheduled Individualized Instruction block. Students will be expected to leave the building within 5 minutes of dismissal time from their Individualized Instruction block.

AFS respects a student's need to work through the curriculum and meet high school graduation demands at their own pace. However, each student must make a consistent and concerted effort with the teaching staff to make sufficient academic progress to attain the goal of graduation in a reasonable period of time. Students who do not make a minimum level of academic progress may be subject to Academic Probation.

The average student will earn approximately 20 academic credits for each instructional block they are enrolled in for a semester. If a student earns significantly less than that (fewer than 15 academic credits per block per quarter) they may be placed on "Academic Probation." If a student is making slow progress, *AFS* staff will first meet with the student to problem solve the lack of academic progress. If after this informal intervention progress is slow, an Academic Education Plan meeting will be required with *AFS* staff, the student, student's parent/guardian, and others identified that may have knowledge of the student's needs and/or serve as a resource to the student. If a student does not complete 15 academic credits in one full quarter, an Academic Probation Plan to improve the student's academic progress will be developed as part of his/her Alternative Education Plan. Continued lack of academic progress as defined during the period of Academic Probation may lead to termination from the program and the student will return to the high school or be referred to other educational opportunities (GED, Job Corps, Voc. Rehab etc). Students may not drop out of high school until their eighteenth birthday with parent signature according to the Nebraska State Law or upon their nineteenth birthday.

Additional credits that may be earned through *AFS* include:

Vocational and Work Study - A student may earn up to 5 credits per semester for each 180 hours of successful employment as determined by satisfactory employer evaluations and documentation of hours. Students who are terminated from employment for performance issues will not receive work study credit. **Work study will be credited only at the end of the semester** for employment during the semester. There may be additional requirements to receive credit that include projects related to the student's work experience or vocational coursework.

Community Service Projects- Students that are involved in regularly scheduled community service projects within and outside of the school may receive credit at the rate of one credit per 6 service hours. Court-ordered community service is not counted for credit. Students will be required to log their experience. Community service projects include but are not limited to Mercy Meals, Orphan Grain Train, and Meals on Wheels.

N'Ployability- Students wanting to participate in practicing NHS N'ployability skills in a practical application may earn up to 2.5 Credits per semester or 5 Credits for the school year. In order to earn these elective credits students must demonstrate the four R's: Responsible, Respectful, Resourceful and Resilient. In order to earn credit the following criteria must be met: Students will fulfill a role, job, or chore at *AFS*. Students will meet attendance requirements with an added emphasis on punctuality. Students will keep a record of duties performed. Students will adhere to all *AFS* policies and procedures.

Career Development – Students wanting to earn additional elective credit and wanting to explore possible vocations may enroll in Career Development. This course is worth 5 credits. Students must first display a sense of responsibility, resourceful, respectful, and resilient before being placed in career development. Students who enroll in this course will participate in the Workforce Club where students will utilize self-reflection, develop job preparedness skills, and explore careers and labor market trends. Additionally, students will participate in job shadows, apprenticeships, industry tours with the Norfolk community, and professional networking. They will be required to explore six possible career paths through research and on the job experience.

Norfolk High School Classes - Students wanting to attend classes at the High School may do so by meeting certain criteria. Students may enroll in high school classes if they have earned **20 academic credits** the previous semester. No more than three days of school may have been missed from the previous nine-weeks. They must request enrollment at least nine-weeks before the class is scheduled to begin as classes fill up fast. Students applying to take classes at the High School must obtain approval from the High School instructor and the AFS staff. AFS students attending classes at the High School are subject to all NHS rules and regulations.

Referral and Application:

A referral to *AFS* for a student may come from a student’s counselor, teacher, parent, administrator, community source, or the student. Once a student has been referred and has applied to *AFS*, a meeting between the student, parent, and the *AFS* staff will be scheduled. Since *AFS* is intended to be a positive and non-punitive alternative for students, the student’s involvement and commitment to the program is essential. The initial interview with the student is critical for determining the student’s commitment to follow through with the Alternative Education Plan that will be developed upon acceptance into *AFS*.

Students who have been referred to *AFS* will be required to complete the following steps:

1. Complete an application to *AFS*, including signatures of an administrator, counselor and parent or guardian.
2. Participate in an interview with *AFS* staff. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule an interview with *AFS* staff prior to acceptance into the program. A student taking this step demonstrates their commitment.
3. After the student has interviewed with *AFS* staff, the student’s application will be reviewed by a Referral Review team composed of *AFS* staff, High School administrators, and counselors. Acceptance into the program will be based upon availability of openings, the student’s expressed commitment, and level of need for alternative programming.
4. If a student’s application is accepted, the student and their parent/guardian **must participate in an orientation meeting prior to entering the program.** The purpose of this meeting is to ensure student and parent/guardian understanding of the program and to develop an Alternative Education Plan.

The Referral Review Team will meet on the following dates to review applications. Alternative Education Plans (AEPs) for new students will be scheduled for the dates immediately following the referral review.

2nd Term

Deadline for Interview: Monday, October 2, 2023 at 4pm
Referral Review Team: Wednesday, October 4, 2023
2nd Term Begins: Monday, October 16, 2023

3rd Term

Deadline for Interview: Monday, December 11, 2023 at 4pm
Referral Review Team: Wednesday, December 13, 2023
3rd Term Begins: Thursday, January 4, 2024

4th Term

Deadline for Interview: Monday, March 4, 2024 at 4pm
Referral Review Team: Wednesday, March 6, 2024
4th Term Begins: Wednesday, March 18, 2024

Summer Term

Deadline for Interview: Monday, May 13, 2024 at 4pm
Referral Review Team: Wednesday, May 15, 2024
Summer Term Begins: Tuesday May 28, 2024

Acceptance Criteria:

The primary consideration for a student's acceptance into *AFS* is the student's commitment to making this educational alternative work. Without the student's commitment it is unlikely that the student will meet with success regardless of the desires of concerned adults. Beyond the student's commitment, other considerations for acceptance into *AFS* are:

1. The student must be in grades 10 – 12. (9th graders may be considered with the approval of Senior High Principal)
2. The student must be 16 years of age or older. (Under 16 years of age must be placed by approval of Senior High Principal)
3. The student must be able to meet graduation requirements prior to their 21st birthday.
4. The student must have a documented history of struggling in regular school with attendance and/or academic performance. Overwhelming social issues are considered.
5. The student must be off the pace for acquiring credits to graduate on time, or be at risk for being behind in credits. (*AFS* is not intended to help students attain credits for early graduation.)
6. Being in Special Education does not preclude a student's involvement in *AFS*. However, there must be factors beyond the student's disability that necessitates *AFS* involvement. If a student's disability is

the primary cause for lack of success in school, the student's IEP should be the first consideration for addressing the student's needs. Special Education students involved in *AFS* will continue to have an IEP managed by the home school.

7. Students must have been enrolled and attempted classes at a Norfolk Public School for one semester prior to consideration for *AFS*.

8. Students must have completed a Transition Form from the Senior High indicating all books and materials have been turned in and all obligations at the Senior High have been taken care of. A student will not be allowed to attend *AFS* without the Transition Form.

Alternative Education Plan (AEP):

All students that are enrolled in *AFS* will have an Alternative Education Plan that documents their strengths, needs areas, and the student's educational goals. In addition, the AEP will describe the activities and coursework that will enable the student to meet their educational goals along with any accommodations necessary for the student's success. At the minimum, the student and parent/guardian must agree to the content of the plan and at best are active participants in the development of the plan.

Attendance is a priority. If a student should miss five days of school in a nine-week period for any reason the student, parent, AFS staff and administration will discuss a plan of action to improve attendance. Continued attendance issues will mean removal from AFS and back to the main High School building.

Grading:

Grades will reflect a student's achievement and progress through the curriculum as assessed by projects, Edgenuity Online Curriculum, OdysseyWare Online Curriculum, ALEKS Online, daily assignments, and testing. Students will progress through the curriculum at different rates and credit will be given only when the student has completed a prescribed number of activities and learning objectives for each class. *AFS* subscribes to the philosophy of mastery learning. The student's Alternative Education Plan (AEP) will specify the general course of study and the general requirements for completion of the course. Students that acquire credits through *AFS* and meet graduation requirements as set forth by Norfolk Senior High will receive a diploma from Norfolk Senior High. Grade reports will be provided every nine-weeks, general progress reports will be **available upon request**.

Attendance:

Many of the students who are involved in *AFS* have a history of school attendance problems. Frequently students will near the end of the semester and exceed the number of absences dictated by school policy and end up losing all credit for the semester. It is the belief of *AFS* that attendance is critical for academic success, but is also a crucial life skill that impacts employability and vocational success. Many of the students that have had difficulty with attendance will benefit from shorter attendance periods with less discouraging penalties for absenteeism. **Thus, students will be allowed to miss up to 5 days per 9-weeks.** Attendance is a priority if a student should miss five days of school for any reason the student, parent, AFS staff and administration will discuss a plan of action to improve attendance. Upon the 6th absence per nine-week term, a meeting with the student, parent/guardian, AFS staff and administration will meet to discuss continued placement at AFS or return to the high school. **Please see Excessive Absences in the Norfolk High student handbook.** Student's never lose credit for successfully completed coursework.

There will be no distinction made between excused or unexcused absences. Any absence for any reason will count toward the five-day limit per nine-week term. Students are asked to plan appointments and other obligations accordingly.

Tardies:

Students that are more than 10 minutes late at the beginning of their day will be counted as absent for the period. Two Tardies will equal one absence.

Discipline:

The staff of *AFS* believe that crisis, problems, and behaviors present each individual an opportunity for learning and growth. Misbehavior within the classroom will be dealt with from that mindset. Every action has a consequence and it is the *AFS* staff' purpose to help students recognize the consequences of their behavior and actions so they may make informed choices. Consequences thus become individualized and unique to each learner. There is, however, a bottom line. In most instances, the *AFS* staff will deal with behavior. However, behavior that consistently disrupts the learning of others, endangers other students, is a violation of the law, or potentially could result in a long-term suspension or expulsion; will result in immediate removal of the student until a conference can be held with the student, parent/guardian, *AFS* staff, and high school or Central Office administrator.

While *AFS* may be different in many respects from the traditional high school setting, it remains under the Norfolk Public Schools Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy. Thus students and parents must be aware that students in violation of the disciplinary code while on school grounds are subject to the consequences set forth by Norfolk Public School Policy.

For students attending *AFS*, school grounds will be defined as the building 601 West Cedar Avenue, the entire parking lot east of the building, north to Cedar Avenue and all of the Norfolk Senior High property including the NHS Track Field.

Friday Early Out Incentive Policy

In an attempt to incentivize our students to continue to meet their academic goals we are offering an early out option for Fridays. Early out Fridays will only be an option during a full week of school. This incentive will not be offered during a partial week. In order to qualify for an early out Friday students must meet the following criteria: Students must be in school every day that week and on time. Including Wednesdays. Students must meet their daily academic goal during school hours. Students must adhere to all *AFS* policies. If a student meets all the criteria, when they hit their daily (and weekly) academic goal, the student will be allowed to leave. Reminder this policy is a privilege and can be rescinded at the discretion of *AFS* staff or administration.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell Phone usage is becoming an ever increasing distraction to the mission of NPS and Alternatives for Success. As such, *AFS* will be implementing a Cell phone policy to curb distraction and further enable our students to reach their goals. We will ask students to turn over their phones to us at the beginning of their scheduled block. They may retrieve them at the end of their instructional block. Should a parent/guardian need to reach their child, please call *AFS* at 402-379-7565. If a student does not adhere

to these guidelines, we will reach out to the parent/guardian. If a student is unwilling to turn in their phone the consequences of that decision may lead to AFS asking the student to leave for the day. If the problem persists, removal from the AFS program may be warranted.

Recording of Others

Board Policy 1102 states:

“To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of student information, no person is authorized to record or transmit any sound or image of any person (including themselves) without the prior consent or authorization of either (1) the person or persons being recorded or whose image or sound is being transmitted or (2) the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee. This prohibition applies to all persons, including staff, students and community members, regardless of the content or context of the image or sound; however, this provision shall not apply to District-sponsored athletic or activity events where the focus of the recording or transmission is on the students performance or activity. Nothing in this provision shall prohibit the recording of an individualized Education Program meeting if the recording is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the IEP or the IEP process or to implement other parental rights guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.”

The Superintendent authorizes the recording and transmission of others in the following instances:

- School-based video and audio surveillance
- Video and audio recordings made for professional development purposes
- Teacher-created instructional tools
- Teacher-assigned class projects
- Video and audio recordings made by the school personnel for promotional purposes, such as, but not limited to: press releases, website articles, and social media posts (Please note that this permission does not supersede a parent’s directive not to include their child in social media posts.)

Internet Policy:

Parents and students must read and sign the Norfolk Public Schools applicable computer/network/Internet use policy. A copy is available online.

Covid 19 Policy:

We may see several changes to our schedule here at AFS depending on the Covid Threat Level. Please refer to the NPS district policy at NPS.org regarding changes due to threat levels.

Rights and Responsibilities:

All students and Parents will be required to read and sign a copy of the *AFS* Rights and Responsibilities along with the Norfolk Public Schools Rights & Responsibilities before attending school at AFS. Copies will be available at the Alternative Education Plan meeting before attending *AFS*.