



alechunteracademy
a Saffron Academy Trust school

**Prospectus
Insert 2023-24**

'Living for Learning, Learning for Life'

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of writing, referring to activities in the academic year 2022/2023 and providing information for prospective students to our school. **Subsequent changes to school policies and procedures may affect the accuracy of the information contained in this document.**

Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve our community by providing opportunities for all our young people to progress, enjoy learning and fulfil their academic potential in a safe, caring environment that prepares them well for a successful future.

Core Principles

- Giving our best, every minute of every lesson, every day
- Promoting high aspirations, confidence and self-belief
- Respecting ourselves, each other and our environment
- Valuing every person as an individual of equal worth
- Celebrating our successes in learning and beyond
- Developing positive, productive partnerships
- Kindness above all else



2023-2024

Alec Hunter Academy
Stubbs Lane
Braintree
Essex
CM7 3NR

T: 01376 321813
E: admin@alechunter.com
W: www.alechunter.com

Headteacher:

Trevor Lawn BA(Hons) First Class, PGCE, NPQH

Chair of Governors:

James Waller BA, BSc

alechunteraca
a Saffron Academy Trust

Admissions

The number of students on roll (September 2023) is 1066. The Local Authority Published Admission Number for the school is 210 per year.

The school has an Admissions Policy, which follows the School Admissions Code and states that, in the event of oversubscription, places will be allocated using specified criteria. A copy of this policy is available from the school on request.

All applications for admission to Alec Hunter Academy must be submitted to Essex County Council, as all applications are processed centrally. Once a place has been allocated and confirmed in writing, school staff will contact the family.

An Open Morning for prospective parents of Year 6 students will be held on Saturday 7th October 2023 from 9:30am until 12:30pm. It is not necessary to reserve a place at the Open Morning, however we kindly request that siblings do not attend and a maximum of two per adults per Year 6 student attend, so that we can manage the event safely.

The school has also scheduled Parent Tours between Monday 9th October and Friday 20th October 2023, which will take place each day at 9:00am, led by the Headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team. Please contact the school office for further details, or to reserve a place.

Prior to joining, new students are invited to the school for two days of induction, on 27th June and 28th June 2024. The programme includes an evening for parents and students to meet staff.

For further information please visit the Essex County Council website.

Transition

Alec Hunter Academy is dedicated to ensuring that Year 6 students enjoy a smooth transition into secondary education. Our staff work with primary students regularly during Key Stage 2 and Year 5 students are invited to sign up for subject taster sessions, held at Alec Hunter throughout the year. The process continues in Year 6 with students and parents being invited to the Open Morning at Alec Hunter or to join one of our Guided Tours to see the school at work. The Headteacher and Student Support Leader will visit the Primary Schools to meet parents and share information between March and May. Each student will then be invited, with their parents, to a meeting with a member of the Year 7 team in May/June prior to their admission, to explore any particular needs and to plan for their arrival in the school. At the end of June, all students will be invited to experience two days of school life where they will attend lessons with their tutor group and meet some of their new teachers.

Parents whose children attend primary schools within the Alec Hunter catchment area will automatically receive this prospectus when their child is in Year 6 at their primary school. The County's common application form should be completed online, indicating preference of School/College, and returned to the Local Authority by 31st October 2023.

Applications submitted after this date will only be considered after the first group of students have been allocated places and, therefore, parents will be less likely to secure a place at their first-choice school. Parents who live outside the catchment area are welcome to visit Alec Hunter and make an application. The Local Authority (LA) operates the Secondary Schools Co-ordinated Admission Scheme, a copy of which is available from Planning and Admissions at Essex County Council. The LA will inform parents of their child's secondary school placement on 1st March 2024.

'Living for Learning, Learning for Life'



Our Curriculum

We believe that if we can offer a carefully planned and thoughtfully prepared diet of learning to our young people, then they will develop healthy attitudes to study, they will embrace the joy of discovering new concepts and experiences, and they will grow to become independent thinkers, ready to progress to the next phase of their lives. Our curriculum aims not only to provide our students with the qualifications they will need to access further education and employment, but also with the skills, qualities and confidence which will enable them to play their part in a rapidly changing world.

We currently operate a curriculum model in which students study the full range of subjects in Years 7, 8 and 9, in line with National Curriculum recommendations. There is an opportunity, at the end of Year 8, for students to select which of the two modern languages they have studied up to that point they wish to continue to learn in Year 9. This arrangement retains curriculum breadth to the end of Key Stage 3 but also supports youngsters to explore their chosen language in greater depth and thus achieve higher levels of success if they opt to pursue it further to GCSE level in Key Stage 4.

Key Stage 3

There are 50 lessons per fortnight. Time allocations per subject are in line with National Curriculum recommendations. The Curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is as follows:

English
Mathematics
Science
Geography
History
Religion, Philosophy and Ethics
Modern Foreign Languages (any two from French,

German or Spanish)
Technology, consisting of Textiles, Food Technology, Graphics and Resistant Materials on a rotation basis
Art
Music
Drama
PE
Computer Science
Learning for Life

To ease the transition from primary to secondary school, students in Year 7 are taught, for the majority of their subjects, in their tutor groups. The learning in each subject is designed to ensure every student has the opportunity to progress at a rate which matches their ability and yet stretches them. Students are placed into ability sets for Science and Mathematics during their first half term, using a combination of information gathered from primary schools and our own baseline testing, and partial setting in English takes place at the end of Key Stage 3.

Key Stage 4

At the end of Year 9, all students choose the 4 option subjects that they will study at Key Stage 4, selecting from both the subjects they have been studying in Year 9, and some additional courses which become available at this point, such as Business, Travel & Tourism, Child Development or other Vocational qualifications. This is a guided process, with students being steered towards the pathway that best suits their skills and attributes.

More able scientists are encouraged to pursue a triple science option, meaning that they will take 3 separate science qualifications (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) in Key Stage 4, while other students will be entered for the Combined Science Dual Award, which equates to two Science GCSEs. The triple scientists are required to attend an additional timetabled lesson, after school once per week, in order to cover the content required to secure good grades in all three subjects.

Modern Foreign Languages

Each Year 7 cohort joining the school will either study French or German for 5 hours per fortnight. We alternate between the two languages to make full use of the specialisms of available teaching staff; the current Year 7 students are learning German so the 2024 intake will start with French. At the beginning of Year 8, the majority of students will begin to learn a second language, with Spanish being offered at this point in addition to whichever of French or German has not been studied in Year 7. A small group of students, who have encountered difficulty with learning a foreign language and/or need support with literacy, do not pursue a second language but receive additional English and Maths lessons at these times.

Students are allocated randomly to each second language to ensure a balance of numbers in line with the staffing available. However, families that have a particular link to one of these languages may express a preference, for example, if they have lived in a country where the language is spoken, have close relatives in such a country, or if they speak the language regularly at home. These preferences will be taken into account when assigning students to language groups.

Careers and Work Related Learning

All students share access to information, advice and guidance as part of their curriculum. The programme is primarily delivered in Learning for Life lessons and through other organised careers events. This allows students to explore individual career options, gain an awareness of the job market and to develop the core skills needed for employment.

In Key Stage 3, students in both Year 7 and Year 8 will participate in a range of activities which will include learning about themselves, their skills and their qualities. They will also work on modules covering economic wellbeing and financial capability. Year 8 students will consider which option subjects might be most suitable for the career paths that interest them.

In Year 9 and Year 10, students will attend dedicated sessions. These will cover CV and job application preparation, mock interviews and skills for work sessions. The focus in Year 11 is post-16 options. Students in Year 11 will also attend a Careers Fair and all students in Years 9, 10 and 11 will be offered an individual and/or group work session with an independent careers advisor.



‘Living for Learning, Learning for Life’



Student Development

We recognise that all students are individuals and have their own needs. Some students require support in addition to that provided for everyone. Their needs may arise from physical or sensory difficulties, specific learning difficulties, their exceptional abilities or because English is their second language. Our Student Development Team and our EAL (English as an Additional Language) Coordinator work with subject leaders, individual teachers, tutors and Heads of Year to find ways to ensure that these students achieve their potential in all subject areas. Support may take place within the classroom or individuals and groups may be withdrawn from lessons for programmes of work. Progress in terms of literacy and numeracy skills is closely monitored to ensure appropriate support is in place.

To enable our students to achieve their challenging targets, lessons are structured so that learning stretches students of all abilities.

Beyond the curriculum, we offer a wide range of opportunities, for learners of all abilities and interests, to challenge themselves, try out new experiences or participate in sporting, musical and cultural events. The range of lunchtime and after-school clubs is broad and caters for a variety of tastes and interests. Our termly Skills Days are a particular focus for exposure to themes and topics which may not be covered in normal lessons, as well as providing a window for trips and visits to take place, although these also occur at many other points throughout the school year. All these extra-curricular activities provide enrichment alongside our taught curriculum and give Alec Hunter students the chance to develop personal characteristics and qualities which will equip them well for adult life.

Homework

As an aid to progress, we expect parents to establish a routine of self-study at home to support the learning that is taking place in school. Students in all year groups will be set homework tasks, which may be short exercises or longer-term projects, the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity to reinforce and extend classroom activities. Long-term projects should have check points at intervals to ensure students are managing their time efficiently.

We have taken the decision not to issue a homework timetable in order to support flexibility and to encourage students to develop their independent learning and time management skills through prioritising their workload. However, parents can play a crucial role in monitoring both the completion of homework tasks and the level of commitment to producing the highest quality outcomes. All homework tasks are shared via a platform called Satchel One, giving parents direct access to the work that has been set for their child, along with additional guidance. This empowers parents to assist with organisation and to support the full engagement of students with work outside the classroom.

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 should expect to receive one homework a week in Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Languages, History, Geography and Technology. English will typically set one written and one reading homework per week and it is expected that learners will spend up to 30 minutes on each subject. Homework will be set on a fortnightly basis in RPE, Art, Drama, Computer Science and Music. Learning for Life and PE will set homework as and when deemed necessary.

Students in Years 10 and 11 will receive homework for all subjects (with the exception of Core PE and Learning for Life) each week, and it is expected that they will spend up to 1 hour on each subject.

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

Collective Worship at Alec Hunter is delivered through our Reflection programme. Reflection is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school, meet together in order to consider common concerns, issues and interests and provides opportunities for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At Alec Hunter, Reflection takes place during tutorial time, either via assemblies, or in classrooms with the tutor or invited speakers. A published schedule of reflection themes is used to stimulate discussion on relevant or important topics. Core Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is taught in all years of the school but students in Years 10 and 11 may choose to pursue the full GCSE course option instead.

Any parent who objects to their child attending an act or acts of Collective Worship may request that their child is withdrawn. Parents are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher.

Behaviour for Learning

At Alec Hunter we have high expectations in terms of student behaviour, both at social times and in the classroom. This enables learning to take place in a calm, respectful and safe environment. Good behaviour and attendance are rewarded and there are clear sanctions where inappropriate behaviour takes place. We have a traffic light system in place in learning time, which gives students an opportunity to modify their behaviour as requested and to learn to make positive behaviour choices for the benefit of all. Should behaviour continue to disturb the learning then a formal warning is given, removal to another classroom may be organised, or a detention or other sanction may be set. Further details can be found in our Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Student Care

We pride ourselves on being a school with a warm, welcoming environment and we work hard to engender good relationships at all levels. The form tutor is the first point of contact for parents with queries or concerns to raise, but we also have a team of five dedicated, non-teaching Student Support Leaders to oversee the wellbeing of students, and each year group has a Head of Year who oversees both the behaviour and progress of students in their particular cohort. Tutors, Heads of Year, Student Support Leaders and subject teachers are always available, by appointment, to talk to parents, as well as at Parents' Evenings.

Students will usually stay with their form tutor and tutor group throughout their five years at Alec Hunter, although we will sometimes make adjustments to suit the needs of the school or the individual child. Tutors, Heads of Year and Student Support Leaders seek to involve each student in the life of the year group, whether it be in charity activities, assemblies or extra-curricular and leadership opportunities.

There are various ways in which we seek to acknowledge students who make a positive contribution to the school community. They may be awarded 'Student of the Lesson' or House Points for high standards of work, helping others, showing good manners, participating in events or making a great effort. Commendation certificates are awarded to students for progress, improvement and regular attendance and these are presented in half yearly Celebration Assemblies that recognise a range of student achievements.

In addition, our annual Awards Evening honours the students who have made outstanding progress in each subject along with those who go the extra mile as members of our school.

'Living for Learning, Learning for Life'



Attendance

Parents are expected to ensure that their child maintains the highest possible standards of attendance. Only the school can authorise or unauthorise an absence, not the parent, and parents are expected to call the dedicated absence number which is **01376 559356** or email **JJackson@alechunter.com** on the first day of absence.

The school registers are scrutinised every six weeks by the Local Authority and periods of unexplained or unauthorised absence are always notified to the CME (Children Missing from Education) team. It is, therefore, in the interest of the parents to supply the school with medical evidence when appropriate.

The Government is taking a keen interest in reducing the number of 'persistent absentee' children who miss more than 10% of school sessions. A student that is persistently absent is defined as having at least 38 sessions (19 days) of absence in a full attendance year, regardless of whether these absences are **authorised** or **unauthorised**. In real terms, this relates to students with attendance below 90%, which also translates to half a day's absence per week.

The school will only consider approving a request for leave of absence in term time if there are exceptional circumstances, in accordance with strict criteria issued by the Local Authority. Examples of such circumstances are listed on our leave of absence application form.

Applications for leave of absence for students during school time need to be made on the appropriate school form **before** formalising any arrangements. Parents need to be aware that, should the request for leave of absence be refused and the parents wilfully remove the child from the school, the Education Access Team at Essex County Council will issue a penalty notice to each parent of each child, details of which also appear on the reverse of our leave of absence application form.

Timings of the Day

PERIOD	TIME
Registration/Tutorial	8:40-8:50
Period 1	8:50-9:50
Period 2	9:50-10:50
Break	10:50-11:10
Period 3	11:10-12:10
Period 4	12:10-13:10
Lunch	13:10-13:50
Period 5	13:50-14:50
Tutorial Time	14:50-15:10

Uniform

Listed below are the uniform requirements of the school. Our uniform is gender-neutral and has been designed to keep cost to a minimum by reducing the number of compulsory branded items. There will be no variations on the uniform stated.

- Black blazer & Alec Hunter badge*
- Plain white shirt - top button of white shirts must fasten in order for clip-on tie to be worn
- Plain black tailored trousers
- Optional knee-length black Alec Hunter school skirt with purple piping*. Please note that no other style of skirt is permitted
- Clip-on Alec Hunter tie*
- Optional plain black 'v' neck jumper
- Black socks or black tights
- Black low-heeled leather or leather-look shoes, no canvas shoes, boots or trainers
- We recommend that students have a warm outdoor coat which fits over their blazer for the cold weather. No hoodies, tracksuit tops, sweat shirts or cardigans are permitted.

*These items are branded and must be purchased via the school office. All other items may be sourced from a wide range of suppliers and high street stores.

PE Kit

Listed below are the school PE kit requirements:

- School rugby shirt (outdoor)*
- School polo shirt (indoor)*
- Optional fleece-lined top*
- Plain black shorts
- Black tracksuit bottoms with no logos (for cold weather)
- Plain grey sweatshirt with no logos
- Black socks
- Trainers
- Optional football boots for students who play rugby/football
- Gum shield (recommended)

*These items are branded and can only be purchased from our uniform supplier. Branded shorts and socks are available but are optional.

All students need to bring their kit and get changed for every lesson, even if they have a note, unless they are physically unable to do so. All clothing should be labelled with the student's name. The school cannot



be held responsible for any loss. No jewellery can be worn for PE lessons, this includes studs. Any valuables need to be handed in at the beginning of the PE lesson.

Uniform Expectations

- Shirts must be tucked in at all times, including at break, lunch, before and after school.
- Blazers should be worn at all times, unless students are given permission to take them off during lessons
- Narrow width, plain black belts are all that is permitted
- Only plain black 'v' neck jumpers can be worn under blazers as an extra layer, but NOT instead of blazers
- Hats, scarves and gloves must not be worn in the building

Footwear

Please note that trainers, boots, plimsolls, canvas shoes or any sports-style footwear must not be worn in school, but trainers can be worn outside to play football at break and lunchtimes. In this case, students should change outside and put shoes back on before re-entering the building.



'Living for Learning, Learning for Life'



Students who have been instructed to wear trainers for medical reasons will be expected to have a doctor's note. It is also anticipated that they will wear black or dark-coloured footwear so that the difference is less noticeable. Students wearing alternative footwear because shoes are broken, or do not fit, are expected to have a note from their parent/carer, which must also be signed and dated by a Student Support Leader, Head of Year or a senior member of staff, and will then be issued with a pair of loan shoes from our central supply. However, this is not a long-term solution and students will be expected to have new shoes by the following week.

Jewellery

Jewellery is not permitted, with the exception of a single, plain, small stud in each ear lobe. All other forms of piercing, including nose studs and rings, are prohibited. Students may also wear a watch, however, please note that 'smart' watches are not permitted and will be dealt with in the same manner as mobile phones if they are worn to school. All jewellery must be removed during PE lessons.

Any students wearing jewellery, apart from that stated above, will have it confiscated and have their responsibility card signed.

Make-Up

Students in Year 7 and 8 are not permitted to wear any make-up including nail varnish or false nails. In Year 9, 10 and 11 moderate make-up is permitted excluding nail varnish or fake nails. The school will determine whether make-up is 'moderate'.

Hair

Whilst it is understood that fashionable hair is important to young people, certain styles will not be permitted in school. This includes the following:

- Severe spiking
- Extreme gelling
- Any colours (or colour combinations) that are not a natural hair colour
- Tramlines or any 'artwork' shaped into hair
- Crops shorter than a 'number 2'
- Hair accessories must be small and unobtrusive

The decision on what constitutes an unacceptable hairstyle is at the discretion of the school and students may be sent home to moderate the style or have it changed so that it is in keeping with the expectations of the working environment of the school. If parents are in any doubt as to whether a certain style/colour is acceptable, we would advise they contact the school **before** getting it done.

Mobile Phones and Other Electrical Devices

Mobile phones are not allowed to be used anywhere on the school premises at any time, with the exception of the designated 'phone room' during breaks and lunchtimes only, where specific rules on usage apply. Phones will be confiscated if seen, and returned at the end of the day. However, if this happens on three occasions in a half-term, the student will then be required to hand in their phone on arrival at school and collect it at the end of every day, for the remainder of that half-term. Other electronic devices and accessories, such as earbuds, Air Pods, speakers or handheld games consoles, will be dealt with in the same way as mobile phones.

The school cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to expensive items such as these. We would discourage students from bringing them in to school and they do so entirely at their own risk. Parents are usually able to insure students' property for a small addition to normal household insurance.

Sport, Health and Wellbeing

At Alec Hunter, our Physical Education team actively supports the whole-school philosophy of encouraging a healthy lifestyle. There are numerous clubs and training sessions at lunchtime and after school. Our sports teams and individual students continue to achieve district, county and national successes.

Our catering team prepare fresh meals daily in the AH Café, which provides a range of healthy choices, and our cashless ParentPay system gives parents and carers access to online information about what their child is buying at break and lunchtime to allow them to monitor their dietary intake.

Health education is essential. Our Learning for Life curriculum covers many aspects of health education including relationships and sexual health. These lessons are supported by workshops on Skills Days which focus on awareness of issues such as gangs and knife crime, drugs and alcohol, child sexual exploitation, E-safety, extremism, PREVENT, FGM, mental health and British Values. We firmly believe that, given clear factual information, students can take responsibility for their own safety, behaviour and wellbeing. The school has a responsibility to ensure that students are adequately prepared for adult life and to promote a healthy lifestyle. It is expected that all such education begins and is supported at home.

Our Student Support Leaders pay particular attention to the wellbeing of students. They, along with our form tutors, attendance staff, Home-School Liaison Worker, and Heads of Year, ensure that additional support is requested or assigned as appropriate. The school recently received the Young Carers in Schools Bronze Award, in recognition of our work to support this particular group of vulnerable young people.

We also encourage students at Alec Hunter to take a keen interest in looking after their environment, in both the local and global sense. Our Eco-Committee members promote environmental issues and were successful in securing the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation for Alec Hunter as a result of the strategies and actions they had put in place to make the school a greener place to work and study.

The Equality Act

In line with the 2011 Public Sector Equality Duty, Alec Hunter works actively to:

- Encourage **good relations** and ensure everyone has equality of opportunity
- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation**
- Ensure everyone has an **equal chance** to make the most of their lives and talents

More information regarding our Equality Policy is available on our website.

Safeguarding

At Alec Hunter, we take the welfare and safety of our students very seriously. Copies of our Safeguarding Policy are available at the school. We have two members of staff who are Designated Safeguarding Leads along with several other members of staff who are Safeguarding trained to Level 3. The school follows the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) safeguarding procedures. Our safeguarding arrangements are reviewed regularly by both the Trust and the Local Authority, with recent audits confirming that they meet all required standards.

All staff within the school, both teaching and non-teaching, undertake annual safeguarding training so that they know the steps to follow if they have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

'Living for Learning, Learning for Life'





alechunteracademy
a Saffron Academy Trust school

Stubbs Lane, Braintree, Essex CM7 3NR.

T: 01376 321813

E: admin@alechunter.com

W: www.alechunter.com