



**FAMILY HANDBOOK** 

**AMERICAN ACADEMY FOR GIRLS** 

### **School Information**

## The AAG Way:

Be Ready Be Responsible Be Ready to Learn

# Empowering Every Girl, Every Day



Dr Lisa Johnson Principal

Ashleigh Thompson Ashley Huffmon Secondary Principal Principal

Louise Lynton

Maili Espedilla Head of Primary Head of Secondary Inclusion Inclusion



Hind Alzarouni Dean of Students



Sarah Ross Accreditation SS & ELA



Zeinab Rammal Data and Assessment Sci. & Math



Innovation & Engagement



Eman Hamshary Maha Al Halawani Head of MOE Subjects

### School Timings

PreK: 8am to 1:00pm KG1: 8am to 2.00pm 8am to 2.00pm KG2:

Grades 1- 12: 8am to 2:40pm Sunday to Thursday The school is open to all students from 7:30am

Learning begins promptly at 8am. Students must be in class before this time, ready to learn. Students arriving after 8am will be marked late

### School office hours

AAG Offices -including Admissions & Accounts - are open Sundays to Thursdays, 7:30am to 4:00pm. During Ramadan these hours are reduced to 7:30am to 1:30pm. If you have any queries, please call us on:

### Reception:

+971 (0)4 288 7250 Halsabha@americanacademy.ae Accounts

+971 (0)4 2887250, ext 205

E: accounts@americanacademy.ae

### Security Arrangements

With the exception of morning drop off, parents and visitors are to only enter the school through the main entrance. Visitors to the school are required to wear an AAG visitor badge during their time in the school. If you are arriving during the school day, please check in at the security gate and then the reception desk. Parents are not permitted to enter school buildings, hallways or instructional areas during the school day. Should you need to drop off an item for a student or need to communicate with your child please always do so through our Receptionist staff.

For security reasons no student is permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day unless physically collected by a family member or caregiver.

To enhance security and prepare students for learning all members of the AAG student body are required to wear full school uniform at all times.

### Uniform

The school uniform includes flat, plain black shoes for all students.

## **School Community Expectations**

To work together in harmony we require all members of the AAG community to follow the standards of the AAG Way. This includes staff, students, families and visitors and is used as the expected standards of the school behaviour policy. If a student has any infractions, parents will be notified, documentation will be recorded on ISAMS and/or further action will be taken as needed.

## The AAG Way

### Be kind and courteous to all members of the school community Listen to others and

- Listen to others and communicate to a respectful manner
- Understand and respect that others may have different beliefs and opinions than you
- · Be polite and use manners
- Cooperate with others
- Avoid disrupting the learning of others
- Think before you speak, making sure your comments and opinions are expressed in a suitable volume and manner
- Be humble and considerate
- · Help and support others
- Be willing to change
- Refuse to discriminate
- Meet school expectations of behavior

#### Make informed decisions

- Take time to think about your choices and the impact they will have on yourself and others
- Be honest

Responsible

- Admit mistakes, reflect and identify changes or action you need to make
- Only submit work that is your own
- Take care of yourself
- · Follow school rules and guidance
- Take care of the school building and environment
- Clean up after yourself
- Be organised wearing school uniform, have correct equipment, completed all tasks
- Plan your time
- Take positive action without being asked
- Consider the needs of others and help where required
- Find solutions to problems or conflict
- Be an upstander
- Stay safe both off and online

#### Arrive at school and class / appointments on time

- Have all equipment / resources with you
- Prepare for the session by completing all set tasks, including homework
- Set up and prepare as soon as you arrive in class
- Approach learning with a positive, "I can" attitude
- Always strive to produce your very best work
- · Follow directions

Ready to Learn

- Focus on learning and all tasks set
- Contribute to class discussions in a positive manner
- Ask for help

The school aims to support students to meet the AAG standards and empower them to be responsible, successful learners and members of the community. We ask that parents work in collaboration with the school for their child to meet the high standards set and act as a positive role model.

### Parent Responsibilities

Parents play an important role at AAG in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfil their responsibilities when they:

- Show an active interest in their child's schoolwork and progress.
- Communicate regularly with the school.
- Read and respond to school communication
- Access and use Schoology and or Seesaw to stay informed of learning and grades
- Keep your contacts details up to date by informing school of all changes
- Help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school in the correct school uniform.
- Promptly report their child's absence or late arrival via telephone or absence@americanacademy.ae
- Become familiar with school policies
- Encourage and assist their child in meeting the expectations of policies and school rules
- Support their child to take responsibility for their learning and behavior choices
- Treat all school employees with respect and respect school rules.
- Assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues.

### Kindergarten Toileting Policy

All students entering Kindergarten (Pre-K to KG2) must be fully toilet trained when admitted to AAG. Support will be offered to parents to ensure this process is complete before beginning school.

## Communication

At AAG, we strongly believe that parents are integral members of the education process. For this reason, we encourage parents to be involved in monitoring and assisting in their child's progress. Ongoing communication between teachers and parents is essential. Parents are responsible to check all forms of communication, including the Schoology site (MS, HS) and Seesaw for (KG, ES), as well as emails. Parents should actively monitor school progress and attendance. Ongoing communication between teachers and parents is essential.

The school will communicate with parents in the following ways:

## Information, Celebration and Guidance:

Social Media Weekly Newsletters Emails Coffee Mornings (Dardasha) Student Planners

### Academic Performance:

Schoology Reports Parent conferences Personal emails ISAMS

### **Academic Information**

Curriculum Events
Curriculum overviews shared
Resources on schoology
Weekly curriculum information on
newsletter

It is very important that parents can log on a monitor information in our three main communication portals:

iSAMS: used to track attendance, punctuality and behaviour as well as formal reports to parents. Parents should monitor.

SCHOOLOGY: All learning resources are shared on here for grades 6-12.

All Middle and High School assessment results are posted on schoology. Parents should monitor their daughter's attainment results.

SEESAW: used to share learning, resources, updates and announcements for KG and Elementary.

The school requires all families to follow the schools hierarchy of communication and allow the staff member the time to support you before moving to the next level. Staff are required to respond to email communication within 48 hours.

### **KG** and Elementary

Homeroom Teacher Dean of Students Hind Alzarouni

Head of Elementary Ashleigh Thompson Principal Ms Lisa Johnson

## Middle + High School

Homeroom Teacher Pastoral Leader MS Sharon Burden HS Lisa Hayhoe

Subject Teacher Head of Department for Subject

Dean of Students Hind Alzarouni Head of Middle & High School Ashley Huffmon Principal Ms Lisa Johnson

Parents are strongly encouraged to contact our team should you have any questions, suggestions or would like support with any aspect your child's school life. All meetings need to be scheduled to ensure the availability of the member of staffs involved. It will not always be possible to meet with visitors who turn up without an appointment.

## **Entrances and Exits**

Students who use the buses will enter and arrive through the black star.

Elementary students will enter and exit through the yellow star, please utilize this side carpark.

Secondary students will enter and exit through the blue star (main entrance).

KG will enter and exit through the purple star.

\*Siblings will enter and exit together, through the same way as the youngest child in the family



# Carparks

Procedures for our front carpark have been updated to ensure the ongoing safety of our students. Please adhere to the drop-off procedure. The side carpark will remain in use and will be most useful for parents with their youngest child in Elementary.



# **Health & Wellbeing**

### **School Counselor**

Our School Counselor, Ms Risti Meyer, works with students to ensure their social and emotional well-being. This may take place in group or individual sessions. Should parents have any issues relating to the social or emotional well-being of their child, please speak first to the homeroom teacher. Should further support be required, a meeting will be set up with the school counsellor.

### Clinic

The school clinic is open every school day, with the school doctor available twice per week and the school nurse available Sunday to Thursday.

If your child requires first aid or develops an illness during school hours, the child will be taken to the School clinic. Students wanting to go to the clinic must receive a pass from their class teacher. Students may not visit the nurse without a pass. Parents are contacted in cases of serious illness, injury or to request your permission for administration of medication. There are limited resting facilities at the school, so we ask that if you need to pick up your child that this is done at your earliest possible convenience. On most occasions a medical slip will be written and given to the child to exit from the front gate with an adult. The child will usually wait in front reception for their parents unless unable to do so.

Students with any type of communicable illness, including but not limited to; COVID, the flu, impetigo, pink eye, strep throat, fifths disease, chicken pox, hand-foot-and mouth disease, ringworm, and others, are not permitted to attend school. The school will notify parents immediately for pick up. The students should remain home until all symptoms have been cleared.

The school health service is not expected to check on injuries that happen outside of school hours.

We stress the importance of up-to-date contact and medical information in your child's medical forms. It is required that we have current telephone numbers and an alternative contact number for a care giver who is available, in the case of emergency. In the event of a medical emergency, if we are unable to contact the parent, the child may be taken to hospital in the care of a school staff member.

### **Medication and other treatments**

It is vital that medical condition of any type, i.e. allergies, asthma, epilepsy, or diabetes, are indicated on the medial health form. The Health Centre welcomes opportunities to discuss/ consult with you or your child's doctor.

If your child is prescribed a medication that needs to be given during the school day, or in an emergency, it should be brought to the Health Centre by a parent or caregiver, accompanied by a dated and signed note, with clear instructions. The container for the medication should be properly labelled with the student's name, the name of the medication contained, the dosage, the prescriber's name and the schedule for its administration. It is the parents responsibility to replace expired medication.

### **UV** Protection

To prevent the dangers of excess ultraviolet radiation from the sun, we ask that all parents support students to wear appropriate hats or head cover and/or sunscreen in the sun.

### **Female Considerations**

Females are required to supply their own sanitary supplies and should use these independently. In cases of emergency, the clinic will provide sanitary pads.

#### **Immunizations**

Immunizations are to be conducted by the student's general practitioner or pediatrician. Please keep your child's immunization record in their Medical file up to date.

### **Participation in lessons**

Students who are well enough to come to school are expected to participate in normal class activities. If a student has an illness or is recovering from an illness, and/or is unable to participate in physical education or swimming activities the parents need to provide a medical certificate or note indicating the period of time that the child should be excluded from certain activities. The school health service is not expected to check on injuries that happen outside of school hours.

### **Lice Policy**

Parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, however we work collaboratively to manage head lice effectively. If a case of suspected head lice is reported to the school nurse completes a head inspection. It is important that should children have lice or nits, the full treatment with a medicated shampoo to remove the nits and lice is used. Treatment is to be repeated one week after the first shampoo to ensure that any bugs that hatch from the eggs. The child can return to school once a medical note is provided from a doctor stating that the child is now clear of live head lice (as per the Dubai Health Authority).

# **Child Safeguarding**

The American Academy for Girls takes its responsibility for the wellbeing and safeguarding of our students seriously. Under Wadeema's Law (2012) and The Child's Rights La, all children in the UAE have the right to protection.

### AAG does this in three ways:

Prevention – promoting the AAG way and a positive school culture where wellbeing is central.

Protection – ensuring all staff are trained to deal with child protection concerns.

Support – making support available to students who may be at risk or who have been harmed.

Students and families may reach out for support in the following ways:

- 1. Contact the classroom or homeroom teacher. (All day-to-day academic and social concerns.) If needed, they will pass it to our School leaders, Counsellor or Safeguarding Team.
- 2. Reach out to our anonymous Helpline.
- 3. Reach out to our Safeguarding Officers directly when a child is at risk or in danger Risti Meyer, AAG Counselor rmeyer@americanacademy.ae



Risti Meyer



AAG HELP LINE

# **Attendance and Punctuality**



This year, we are rolling out Arrive School as our tool for Pick Up, Attendance and Punctuality. Further information will be sent to parents with a demonstration video and instructions. School requires an explanation for all days and times of absence, preferably in advance. Please use the reporting absence feature within Arrive School for all absence communication.

#### Absence Due to Health

If your child is unable to come to school, we require the family to notify us through Arrive School before 8:00am. If this requirement is not met, the school reception staff will attempt to contact families and update the attendance records. Absences of more than two days or on the day of a planned assessment require a doctor's certificate that is uploaded directly to Arrive School. If the student has had a transferable illness, they are to see the nurse before returning to classes.

It is really important that parents communicate both physical or mental health concerns with the school. If your child has a prolonged health issue, please set up a meeting with the school to support the creation of a health plan to meet the needs of your child and allow them to access as much learning as possible.

### Planned Absence

Parents must inform us through Arrive School at least 7 days before the planned absence. The school will notify parents of the outcome of the request. Due to the impact on learning, the school can not authorize absence that is not of an emergency nature. All travel and appointments should be organized outside of the school day/term.

Ministry guidelines state that a child's school place can be withdrawn following 20 consecutive or 21 nonconsecutive days of unauthorized absences.

### **Punctuality**

Students are expected to arrive on time for all lessons. Late arrival to class is not acceptable as it not only results in missed learning but also has a negative impact on both the teacher and the other students. Learning in AAG begins at 8:00am for all students. The UAE National Anthem is played at 07:55am in respect to the UAE and to remind students that the day is about to begin. Students arriving at school after 8:00 am are LATE, and it will be recorded on their attendance records. The school attendance and punctuality policy and behavior policy outline the consequences that will be applied should a student be late to class as a result of their own actions.

## **Academic Support in AAG**

Students needs are identified in a variety of ways in AAG, including standardized and prognostic assessments, internal assessments, teacher referral, parent referral. Professional assessments may be required to fully identify the needs of the students and advise intervention strategies. Student eligibility and need for support is s reviewed annually.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

The goal of EAL is to support students who require additional language support from Grade 1 while studying in English. Students will be given the LAS Links test in order to determine their eligibility for this special program. EAL support will occur mainly within the mainstream classroom. The EAL team will assist classroom and subject teachers in developing strategies within the mainstream class to help the students access the curriculum and perform to their fullest potential

### Student Support (LS)

The Student Support Department consists of qualified teachers and learning assistants. The team works closely with class teachers and parents to address individual student needs. In order for their child to be successful, student passports are created collaboratively with student, parents and teachers. In order to be eligible for Student Support, a student must have an Educational and Psychological evaluation, completed by a licensed psychologist within the past two years. It is the parent's responsibility to provide this report. Students may not receive any special accommodations, such as additional time on assessments or testing in a special location without having been formally admitted into the student Support Program. Families have to meet the financial costs should their child require an individual learning support assistant the familes

## **Technology**

### **Bring Your Own Device (B.Y.O.D)**

From Grade 1 onwards students are required to bring a tablet or laptop, with headphones, to school every day. It is also useful if they can have access to a stylus pen. AAG uses instructional technology as one way of enhancing our mission to teach the skills, knowledge and behaviors students will need as responsible citizens in the global community. Students learn collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking in a variety of ways throughout the school day. In an effort to increase access to those 21st Century skills, AAG will allow personal devices on our guest network and school grounds for students who follow the responsibilities stated in the Acceptable Use Policy and the guidelines regarding B.Y.O.D. To support the use of technology in school students should keep a pair of headphones in school at all times.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

We understand the importance of mobile phones for communication and to ensure the safety of students who travel to and from the school. However, secondary students and parents should understand that in a school environment, the use of cell phones can be distracting and can be disrespectful to others. Therefore, cellphones are only permitted for use during passing times and during lunch times in the canteen. The phone should not be used for social media purposes or calls throughout the school day. Failure to comply with this rule will result in confiscation.

School telephones are for school business but can be used by a student in an emergency situation.

Click on Icon to view the AAG Cell Phone Policy



### **Social Media Violations**

AAG actively monitors and blocks social media sites; recent developments in UAE law have become more stringent in regard to postings. AAG does not take responsibility for any social media violations incurred by a student within or outside of the building of AAG. AAG retains the right to confiscate any electronic device that is perceived as being misused and retain it until parents collect it. Student choices with regards to social media or digital device actions will be measured against the school behaviour policy and aligned action taken.

### **Photography**

AAG requires that parents sign a photograph release form that is active for the duration of a student's enrollment. A parent may update this status at any time through the admissions office. Any student who poses for a school group photo gives their consent for the photograph to be viewed by others, and to be published.

### **Food**

The school catering service Leela's Lunches will be available in the school canteen for students to purchase food and beverages at lunch.

Students may bring food from their homes, but no other outside food or deliveries are permitted.

Parents are asked to provide a healthy lunch/snacks and should not to provide junk food for their daughters such as candy, sweets, fizzy drinks, and potato chips. The school may contact parents to discuss the contents of their child's lunch.

For the safety of our students, nuts or nut products (including Nutella) and energy drinks are not allowed at any time and will be confiscated.

Parents wishing to recognize their child's birthday in school should communicate with the class homeroom teachers. Party items, party bags, birthday presents, balloons, etc. are reserved for home parties only. Please do not bring these items to school.

If parents wish to share a small gift with the students in the class we encourage educational items or healthy snacks.

### Lockers

Students in KG-Gd 2 have a cubbyhole situated directly outside their classroom to place school bags and lunches. Gd 3-5 students are allocated a locker outside of their classroom that they can store their lunch and personal belongings. These lockers do not lock, so no valuables should not be used to store valuables.

Gd 6-12 will be allocated a locker near their homeroom class. They can accessed this before school, at break, lunch and after school.

### **Class Placement**

AAG has a process in place for allocating students into classes each academic year. The procedures ensure that the professional judgement of both the teaching staff and leadership team is informed, and that all available information is analysed and applied to the placement process.

- Classes are to be homogenous with respect to academic performance, social development and classroom behaviour
- · Special educational needs of students
- Gender balance (in KG)
- Religion and native language to support timetabling of specialist teaching
- Friendships requests
- Class placements in previous years

Students and families in KG to Grade 7 will have the opportunity to make friendship requests for the following academic year. After the creation of the classes, it is not possible to request a change a class for friendship purposes. Parents with a genuine concern should contact the head of section to discuss their concern.

Students in grades 9-12 will be placed in mixed classes that aligns with their personal course selection.

## **Opportunities in AAG**

AAG aims to provide a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their personal qualities and add value to their achievements. We encourage our students to get involved in school live and to develop their one personal interests both inside and outside of school.

Examples' of opportunities in AAG include:

Student Council Senior Committee Leadership Courses Enrichment Lessons Taaleem Competitions

Design Thinking Challenges Enterprise Challenges Sports Teams House Competitions

Volunteering Programs Model United Nations Club After School Activities Qur'an Club

Assembly Presentations Fundraising Events Event Celebrations Trips and Excursions

Student Committees Recycling Career Events and Support World Scholars Cup Literacy Festival

We welcome new ideas from students to enhance the life of the school and build our community.

We aim to support our students to become the

Leaders of tomorrow

We also have opportunities for parents and families to get involved in the school community. We encourage all families to attend school events and support the students in all their amazing efforts.

Look out for opportunities to join our "AAG Parent Teacher association" group.

We always welcome new ideas, so please do not hesitate to contact us should you have a suggestion to help us continue on our journey to excellence.



## **Academics**

## Curriculum



The AAG American International Curriculum brings together the standards and outcomes from the New York State Standards, MOE, International Benchmarking and External Assessments. It aims to prepare students to meet and exceed grade level curriculum standards and prepare students for success in all internal and external assessments.

Students in KG and Elementary School will be taught English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Moral Education by their homeroom teacher and specialist teachers will lead Arabic, Islamic, PE, UAE Social Studies A, Art and Music.

Middle School Students follow a broad and balanced curriculum taught by subject specialists. In grade 8, students have the opportunity to begin their personalized pathway through their elective choices.

High School Students follow a personalized curriculum that allows them to meet the AAG Graduation Requirements and follow subjects that they enjoy and are successful in. Our school Guidance Counsellor, Ms Carmen Page, supports students in preparation for education beyond school and securing the destination of their choice.

All resources will be shared with students on Seesaw (KG-G5) and Schoology (G6-12)



### **External Assessments**

### International Benchmarking Assessments

(compulsory for all)

- o CAT4
- MAP
- IBT Arabic
- PISA
- TIMSS
- PIRLS
   All completed in school

# University Required Assessments

- PSAT Exam Grade 10
- o SAT Exams Grades 11-12

## Emirati Required Assessments

• EMSAT

# College Board Subject Assessments (Electives)

- AP English Language
- AP English Literature
- AP Statistics
- AP Biology
- AP Chemistry
- AP Physics
- AP Geography (every 2 yrs)
- AP World History (every 2 yrs)
   Exam takes place in a College

## Internal Assessments



In AAG, we believe that students should be able to showcase their learning through a variety of methods and try to give expose them to different assessment techniques and choices. Examples are:

Extended Literacy Writing Verbal Recording Video Presentation Project Experiments

Knowledge Based Assessment Application of Knowledge Problems Practical Performance Reading Tasks

Critical Thinking and Inference Problems Group Collaboration Tasks Innovation Activities Creative Activities

Student academic performance is measured against the curriculum standards and expressed as:

- KG and Elementary as: Below Expectations, Meeting Expectations and Above Expectations.
- Middle and High School as a percentage result.

## **Academics**

The academic year is divided into two semesters and students will receive a formal report card at the end of each semester. The judgements and grades included in reports will be based on displayed understanding and application of knowledge, summitted work and internal assessment results. Students will complete weekly task assignments, a minimum of four summative assessment each semester and end of semester assessments (HS only) in each subject. Parents and students in Middle and High school should regularly check Schoology to monitor academic progress.

School Grading Scale:

Attainment Levels		Grading Scale		
		Percentage	Letter Grade	GPA
Far Above Expectation	The student consistently demonstrates extensive knowledge, skills, and understanding and applies these confidently to any given situation.	97-100 93-96 90-92	A+ A A-	4.0 4.0 3.7
Above Expectation	The student demonstrates a thorough understanding and is starting to apply their knowledge, skills, and understanding to given situations.	87-89 83-86 80-82	B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7
Meeting Expectation	The student demonstrates knowledge, skills, and understanding appropriate for this time of the year.	77-79 73-76 70-72	C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7
Below Expectation	The student is working towards meeting the set expectations.	67-69 65-66 60-64	D+ D D-	1.3 1.0 0.5
Far Below Expectation	The student is working below the set expectations with support.	Below 60	E/F	0

Recognition of Academic Attainment and Progress - Students throughout the school will be recognized for their attainment and progress through homeroom certificates for internal performance and MAP results.

**High School Academic Honor and High Honor Roll:** Students who do outstanding work in a semester will have their names placed on the Academic Honor or High Honor Roll. Students with a semester GPA 3.50 to 3.79 will receive HONORS distinction. Students with a semester above GPA 3. will receive HIGH HONORS distinction. Seniors students that maintain outstanding work throughout their high school career will be recognized at their graduation by being awarded honor medals to be worn during the ceremony.

**Valedictorian**: The valedictorian is the senior student who has obtained the highest grade point average from at least 3 yeas in AAG, has above 90% attendance and demonstrated outstanding behaviour and attitude. The salutatorian shall be the student who has obtained the second highest grade rating in the same

## Graduation Requirements

Students in grades 9-12 select their own personalized curriculum based on the schools graduation requirements, university and career requirements, as well as personal interest. Support is given to students to make informed decisions and courses can not be changed after the first two weeks of the academic year, or dropped at any point. Any changes within the first two weeks require approval.

To maintain integrity the school will not be able to change student grades or remove subjects from transcripts.

Class of 2022 and beyond			
Subject Area	Required		
English	4		
Mathematics	4		
Science	4		
Social Studies	3		
Arabic Language (Arab Nationals)	4**		
Arabic Language (Non-Arab Nationals;	1*		
World Languages	2*		
Fine and Performing Arts ***	1		
Information Technology ***	1		
Physical Education/Health ***	2		
Other electives	5 or 7 (Non-Arab)		
Islamic A/ Islamic B	2 (½ credit for each year)		
Total Credits	30		