



AISF Admissions Policy

Mission

AISF develops students' love of learning in an internationally recognized, safe, student-centered and interactive learning environment. Students develop a global perspective that fosters empathy and prepares them for success in an ever-changing world.

Basic Principles

Every admission decision must be based on whether AISF can offer an age and developmentally appropriate program that will help prepare the student for success in an ever-changing world.

Class Size:

The maximum target class size is 18. At the Director's discretion the school may exceed this class size by 2 (to a maximum of 20) provided that the school can provide both a large enough classroom and appropriate support for the classroom teacher.

The student ratio in the Early Years (EC3 and EC4) should not exceed five children to each adult.

Admission

Admission is non-discriminatory and open to all students without regard to race, sex, religion, physical ability, sexual orientation or national or ethnic origin. We invite applications from students who can benefit from an international, university-preparatory English language education. AISF endeavors to be an inclusive school but will only admit students for whom it can provide adequate support and for whom it provides an appropriate curriculum.

Admission and continued enrollment in AISF is determined by the Director based on the following criteria:

- The potential of the applicant to benefit from AISF's educational program;
- The ability of the school to meet the educational needs of the applicant;
- The ability of the applicant to meet the attendance and behavioral expectations of the school;
- Fulfillment of the school's financial and medical requirements; and
- The effect of the applicant on the class as a whole.



Special Educational Needs

Due to AISF's small size and the very limited professional support available in Freetown, AISF can only accept students with mild learning needs who can be accommodated within the regular classroom without specialist support.

Admission Priorities

Whenever it is not possible to accommodate all qualified applicants, the following admission priorities will apply:

1. Returning students who are currently enrolled and children of U.S. State Department employees;
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students;
3. Other qualified applicants.

A waiting pool of applications will be created if a class is full. AISF will draw from this pool based on these priority guidelines and on a review of all applications to determine those students we feel can best benefit from an AISF education. The final determination lies with the Director.

Documents Required for Admission

1. Copy of details page of children's and parents' passports (preferred) or birth certificate
2. Copy of vaccination record
3. Copies of previous school reports covering at least the past two academic years (less, of course, for younger children who have not been in school for two years)
4. Copies of any Individual Education Plans and/or educational-psychological evaluations (note: failure to provide this information to the school can result in the school revoking admission)

Admissions Testing

1. Admission to AISF will be on the basis of previous school reports and entrance forms through to the end of Grade 4. There will be no entrance testing for these grades.
2. The school will administer basic tests for reading, writing and mathematics as needed in all other grades.
3. Children coming from non-English speaking schools will be tested for English competency from Grade 6 on.

Admissions Requirements

Admission to AISF will be guided primarily by whether the school can meet the child's educational needs.

The following factors will be taken into consideration in the admissions process:



At all levels:

1. Proof of age
2. Previous educational experience
3. Previous school records
4. Confidential references

From Grade 4 to Grade 12:

1. Entrance testing in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics.

Additionally:

From Grade 6 to Grade 12

1. ELL testing if the student has less than three full years in English language education and/or if the student was enrolled in ELL classes at his/her most recent school.

Age Requirements

Students will normally be placed in grades following the age requirement below:

Grade Level	EC3	EC4	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Age Before September 15	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

The Director may make exceptions, within one year, to these requirements based on previous educational experience, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), or Educational Psychological Evaluations showing the student to be in the top 5 percentiles on a variety of measures. Final placement decisions lie with the AISF Director.

The school will not normally accept any student who would be over the age of nineteen at the time of graduation.

Comparison Between Educational Systems

Please note that there is no simple or direct comparison between educational systems and/or student age placement. Also please note that students moving from a southern hemisphere school year will be moved up or down half a year based on where AISF believes the student will be most successful.

Here is a rough equivalency between the American, British, and French educational systems.

American	Pre K		KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	EC3	EC4													
British	EYFS	Reception	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Lower 6th Y12	Upper 6th Y13
French	Maternelle Petite-Moyenne-Grande			CP	CE1	CE2	CM1	CM2	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	Terminale
Age Before September 15	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17



High School Transfers

AISF is accredited by the Middle States Association (MSA/CESS) to provide an education from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8. We offer a supported in-person virtual High School program offering accredited US diplomas through either VHS Learning/Massachusetts Mayflower Academy or the University of Nebraska High School. For students transferring from other American accredited High Schools, VHS/MMA and UNHS easily transfer any credits earned. For students transferring from other educational systems (UK, French, West African, etc.), AISF works with the family and with our US partner schools to make a credit determination. Ultimately the final choice lies with VHS/MMA and UNHS in terms of what credits they will accept.

English Language Learners (ELL) Admissions Policy

At the American International School of Freetown, we believe that, as a school serving an international community, it is our duty to support our English language learners to enable them to have full access to our rich curriculum.

Since most English language learners take between five and seven years to develop native or near-native proficiency in English, it is important that our school determine which students we can serve and at which levels.

Elementary School (EC—Grade 5)

Since students enrolled in Elementary School have considerable time to develop their English skills prior to graduation, AISF—like most international schools—will accept students who are at the beginning level (Council of Europe Level A1).

Assessment

Elementary-aged children will be assessed using a variety of age-appropriate tools including oral interviews and oral reading as well as reading comprehension tests and writing samples where appropriate. The purpose of this testing is to help determine the nature of the support needed rather than entry to the school.

Support

In the Elementary School, pull-out ELL support will be provided for beginning level English language learners (Levels A1 and A2) from Grade 2 and beyond to help them learn the basics of English. Support at the Kindergarten and Grade 1 levels will be decided on a case-by-case basis for absolute beginners only (Level A1).

Intermediate and Advanced level learners (Levels B1 to C2) will receive support in the form of differentiated instruction from their classroom teachers.

Middle and High School (Grades 6 to 12)



Clearly with each year that goes by, learners have less time to acquire a sufficient level of English to graduate in a college-preparatory program. Therefore, AISF has established minimum English levels of increasing rigor for entry into the Middle and High School.

Assessment

Middle and High School students will be assessed in the following areas:

- Reading comprehension
- Oral skills
- Grammar
- Written English

The tools chosen for evaluation will vary over time based on developments in the field of ESL assessment and instruction. Writing samples will be assessed according to the current rubrics of the *Six Traits* program.

Admissions and Support

Grades 6 and 7: Students must test as at least advanced beginners (Level A2). Students at the A2 and B1 levels will be provided with pull-out support. More advanced learners will be supported via differentiation by the subject teachers.

Grades 8 and 9: Students must test as at least lower-intermediate (Level B1). Students testing at the bottom of the B1 level may be denied entry to Grade 9. Students at the B1 and B2 levels will be provided with pull-out support. More advanced learners will be supported via differentiation by the subject teacher.

Grade 10: Students must test as at least upper-intermediate (Level B2). Students at the B2 level will be provided with pull-out support. More advanced learners will be supported via differentiation by the subject teacher.

Grades 11 and 12: To be admitted to Grades 11 or 12, English language learners must be at the advanced level (C1 and C2) in order to cope with curriculum demands. ELL support will not normally be provided in these years.

Note: Students' ELL levels will be determined by the AISF ELL specialist(s).