



Parent and Student Handbook

2024 – 2025



The American International School of Freetown

Know | Think | Care

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Hill Station,
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director@ais-freetown.net

Director's Welcome

Dear Parents and Students,



As AISF's Director, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2024-25 school year! We are looking forward to welcoming you all and enjoying a wonderful year of learning, challenge, and excitement.

The American International School of Freetown is built on its American foundation and US Common Core standards form the basis of our English Language Arts and Mathematics curriculum throughout the school. To better embrace the international nature of our community, we have adopted the International Early Years and International Primary curricula from Early Childhood to Grade 4. This inquiry-based program allows our students to learn about both their home countries, wherever those may be, Sierra Leone, and other countries from around the globe.

At AISF, we take our Vision of "Know | Think | Care" seriously. Every child is valued and cherished. To prepare for success on this rapidly changing planet, we must teach our students to be able to think and do for themselves, and to achieve this we must create an environment where every student is challenged but—at least equally important—every child feels cared for and supported. Equally, we want our children—and all members of our community—to be kind, caring people who also care passionately for this small globe that we all share. We look forward to spending this exciting journey together.

This handbook is meant to provide an overview of school routines and guidelines for parents, caregivers, and students. Please review this information carefully.

A close and trusting partnership between family and school is the key to student success and we value your questions, thoughts, and suggestions.

My door is always open, and you may contact me at director@ais-freetown.net or at +232-79-552-345.

Kind Regards,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Minnigin
Director

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I. PHILSOPHY AND MISSION

AISF Vision and Mission

AISF VISION

Know | Think | Care *Inspiring knowledgeable caring thinkers*

AISF 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.

AISF BELIEFS

We believe that:

- Respect for everyone's progress, and care for their safety and wellbeing, are essential for a successful and interactive learning environment.
- The diversity of our community enriches our learning experience and develops global perspectives.
- Each member of our community is both a teacher and a learner, participating in an ongoing process of self-realization.
- Collaboration and teamwork are vital for progress in an ever-changing, interconnected world.

PROFILE OF AISF GRADUATES

Graduates will be literate and proficient in the following academic areas:

- English language including reading, writing, speaking and listening
- Mathematics
- The natural sciences
- The social sciences
- Additionally, graduates will be exposed to and appreciate a variety of the creative arts

Graduates will also be skillful in:

- Effective communication
- Teamwork
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Synthesizing, analyzing, and using information to create unique products and find solutions to problems
- Information and media literacy

Graduates will be:

- Adaptable
- Confident Communicators
- Collaborators
- Empathetic
- Ethical
- Resilient
- Respectful
- Reflective Thinkers

II. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The AISF school community is composed of students, staff, parents, and the school board. We believe that all these elements are vital to making learning happen. It is important to maintain good communication amongst all of them. The Freetown environment is an important curricular resource for our school. We will make frequent use of it by inviting inspiring and knowledgeable visitors to work with our community and by venturing beyond the grounds of the school to engage with Mama Salone. We encourage parental involvement in these activities, as in all aspects of our school life.

ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF FREETOWN

All full-time teachers and all parents with children enrolled in the school are voluntary members of the AISF Association. A General Meeting of the Association (AGM) is held in May to review the annual report, present the school finances and elect any vacant positions on the Board.

School Board

The School Board is composed of seven members: three members are elected by the parent body, three members are appointed by the Board based on the needs of the Board, and the US Ambassador appoints one member. Members serve two-year terms. The school director serves as a non-voting member. This Board structure is known as a hybrid Board and mirrors current best practice in international schools worldwide.

The Board's role is to:

- Set the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the school in partnership with the Director.
- Approve policies and oversee the adherence to those policies.
- Oversee the school's finances and set tuition fees.
- Appoint and, if necessary, dismiss the school Director.

Ultimately, the role of the Board is to hold the school in trust for present and future generations of students.

Parent Participation and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

A student's academic progress is greatly enriched by a family that is well informed and active in school affairs. Parent participation is needed, and parents are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms and to be active in supporting school events. Parents are also encouraged to join our Parent-Teacher Organization and support the school!

Administration

The Director is responsible for the management and administration of the school. The Director interprets and implements Board policies and serves as both educational leader and chief executive officer.

AWOKO (ah-wō-kō)

The AWOKO is our official weekly school newsletter (an "awoko" in Krio is a talkative person who spreads news). AWOKO goes online every Friday. AISF's AWOKO has appeared every year since 1990 and went digital in 2009 to save trees and help the environment. In 2015 it became a regular weekly publication.

AISF Website

The AISF Web site at www.ais-freetown.net provides both overall information on the school and resource links for parents, students, and teachers. All materials needed for admission are available for download.

Accreditation and Memberships:

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA): AISF is the only US accredited school in Sierra Leone. The school has been accredited with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Colleges in the United States (MSA) since April 1994. AISF is presently accredited until 1st January 2027 and will embark on the re-accreditation process in the 2024-25 school year.

U.S. Department of State: AISF is the only official US State Department Assisted School in Sierra Leone. AISF was founded through an agreement between the US Embassy and the Government of Sierra Leone in 1986. AISF operates now in Sierra Leone through a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated and signed between in US Embassy Freetown and the Foreign Ministry of Sierra Leone in 2003.

Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA): The school has full membership status in AISA allowing faculty to attend AISA conferences, participate professional development opportunities and benefit from a range of activities with similar international schools all over Africa.

International Primary Years Curriculum and International Early Years Curriculum: AISF is pleased to offer these two hands-on inquiry-based curricula for students from ECC to Grade 4. These curricula do not replace our American standards-based programs for English Language Arts and Mathematics, but they do add an international flavor to our teaching of Science, Social Studies, and the Creative Arts. We are approved to offer both programs until April 2027.

Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Testing Services: AISF is an approved school for MAP testing. MAP is an external measure of student knowledge and skill in mathematics, reading, and English language. MAP is currently the most widely used and respected external assessment program in international schools, particularly in US Embassy sponsored schools. AISF administers MAP testing twice each year in October and May. Results are always shared with families.

University of Nebraska High School: AISF is connected to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln in the US using their online campus to offer an accredited high school program. Students may complete a semester, a full academic year, or multiple years to earn a US High School Diploma. High school credits are transferred smoothly to any US school either in the US or overseas.

VHS Learning / Massachusetts Mayflower Academy: AISF also offers Virtual High School as an option for our High School students. VHS offers a wider variety of courses and an experience closer to that of the regular classroom. Fortunately, we can match our students with either VHS or the University of Nebraska High School depending on what is the right "fit" for them. Students taking VHS courses may graduate from Massachusetts Mayflower Academy, VHS Learning's diploma granting high school.

The College Board Educational Testing Services (ETS): The College Board, of Princeton, New Jersey is the organization that sponsors both the SAT, the TOEFL exam, and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The current SAT Reasoning Test, which assesses a student's Mathematics, Critical Reading, and Writing skills, is offered multiple times during the year at the AISF Freetown location. As of 2024, AISF is an approved AP testing center.

The Global Perspective at AISF

Our American international school exists in an international setting, and we endeavor to both respect our American roots while recognizing that our students come from the United States, across Africa, and around the world.

AISF is committed to providing an education comparable to high-quality US public schools. AISF is also committed to providing students with a global perspective in all aspects of their education. We are both American and international. The core subjects of English Language Arts and Mathematics are aligned with US standards throughout the school. However, in Early Childhood and Elementary School we offer Science and Social Studies through the International Primary and International Early Years curricula. In Middle School, our Social Studies and English Language Arts curricula are truly international while aligned to US standards. This makes us a truly American and an International school!

III. School Improvement and Planning

AISF is committed to continuing to grow, develop and thrive. To that end, planning is key to school improvement. MSA, our accrediting body, emphasizes the need for planned, thoughtful development.

Here are some basic principles:

- i. The Board is responsible for working with the school community to establish, review, and renew the school's guiding statements and for setting AISF's strategic direction.
- ii. The Board works with the Director and school community to develop and review the school's strategic plan.
- iii. The Director is responsible for working with the community to implement the strategic plan, set goals, and report back to the Board and the school community on progress.
- iv. AISF will maintain a planning committee to ensure the ongoing development of the school and the implementation of the school's plans for growth and improvement.

IV. Finances

AISF is a non-profit American foundation registered in the State of Delaware. We operate in Sierra Leone under a Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of the United States and Sierra Leone.

Tuition fees are set annually by the Board of Directors as part of the budget process. Tuition fee collection policies are approved by the Board.

Tuition Fee Policies and Procedures

Annual Capital Fee: US \$1,500.00 (used for large capital projects such as technology investments, large investments in the library and educational programs.) **When paying by the trimester, the Capital Fee is due in full with the first trimester payment and is non-refundable.**

Note: The Capital Fee is waived for ECC/Pre-K

Development Fee (One Time Only): US\$4,000.00 (used for essential reserve funds, for emergency situations, and for major facilities improvements).

Note: The Development Fee waived for ECC/Pre-K

AISF has no hidden fees. There are no additional fees for books, school supplies, etc. Some of our after-school activities are offered free of charge while others carry a small fee.

Regulations & Information

Tuition and other fees are invoiced in US dollars only. All fees must be paid in US dollars only by electronic transfer to our TD Bank account. Wire or bank charges will be charged to the issuer. TD does not add charges for deposits to our account. **All bank charges that appear originate with the sending bank. AISF will invoice for any shortfalls resulting from such issuer charges.**

Tuition Payments

AISF has two options by which school fees can be paid.

- **Option 1:** School Tuition and fees may be paid in full in one single payment at the beginning of the academic year. **To receive a 5% early payment discount, payment must be received in our accounts prior to September 1, 2024.**
- **Option 2:** School Tuition can be paid in advance for each trimester **before** the beginning of each term. (Note that fees are due with the first payment.) Payment must be received by the school, documented by proof of payment, prior to the child attending class that term.

*Fees are due for an entire term if a student begins the new trimester. Please contact the Director if your children will only attend a small part of any trimester. In cases where a student enrolls partway through the school year, the term payment schedule (above) automatically applies.

* A discount of two hundred and seventy-five US dollars (\$275.00) per term is also offered for the third child and for the fourth and all subsequent children enrolled simultaneously at the school a discount of three hundred and twenty-five dollars (\$325.00) per trimester will be applied. This discount is offered to all eligible families regardless of whether the fees are being paid by the individual or the employer.

Registration Fee

If they choose, parents can reserve a place in the school for their children by paying an annual, per-student, **non-refundable Registration Fee of \$300.00. The fee is deductible from tuition.**

Tuition Refunds for Full Year Payment

In cases where a full year's tuition payment has been made and early withdrawal becomes necessary, a partial tuition refund may be made upon receipt of a written request. In cases where the full year's tuition payment has been made at the beginning of the school year refunds will be as follows:

- Two trimesters attended + one trimester not attended = 20% of annual tuition refunded.
- One trimester attended + two trimesters not attended 40% of annual tuition refunded

Note: Attendance in any part of one trimester shall be construed as attendance of the entire trimester insofar as payment of tuition is concerned unless previously discussed and agreed with the Director in writing and approved by the Board.

Late Fee Payments or Non-Payment

AISF is a non-profit US foundation. We rely on the timely payment of tuition fees to provide your children with a quality American and international education. Tuition fees are set annually by AISF's Board of Directors which is composed primarily of AISF parents; in reality, parents set the fees for parents. **Once tuition payments are 30 days or more in arrears, the Director shall, with considerable regret and with due written notice, exclude children from school until such time as payment has been made.** In any case where a family has exceptional circumstances, the family should meet with the Director **well in advance of the 30-day deadline** to establish a binding payment plan.

Force Majeure

In the event of a force majeure situation, which causes a student or students to be withdrawn from the school, the fees already received in full for the school year will not be refunded.

Miscellaneous Fees and Costs

- Parents are responsible for loss or unreasonable damage to books or other school property.
- The school provides all textbooks and basic stationery in the cost of tuition.
- **All students in Grades 5 and above must provide their own laptop computer to allow them to access the full curriculum. The school does not provide laptops.**
- After-school activities are optional. Some are provided at nominal fees charged by trimester.
 - The school strongly encourages parents with multiple children to sign them each up to an activity on the same day/s. The school does not have enough staff available to supervise students left at school after the end of the school day.
- Families may need to provide specific items such as clothing or racquets as needed for these activities.
- No meals or snacks are included in the cost of tuition.
- AISF does not offer a bus service.

Tuition Fee Collection Policy

Preamble: The timely collection of school fees is essential for the ongoing economic and academic health of the school. The goal of this policy is to set clear guidelines for the collection of fees while assisting families who may find it difficult to meet their obligations to the school. While it may be necessary to exclude a student from school for a period of time, this will be very much a last resort.

- Tuition fees are due either in full before the beginning of the school year or prior to the beginning of each trimester for those families opting for the trimester payment plan.
- When families join the school during the course of the academic year, either the total amount or the first installment should be paid within no more than 30 days.
- Families who have difficulties making their full payments on time, should meet with the Director to establish a payment plan. Families are encouraged to be open and proactive about contacting the school if they have difficulty meeting their financial obligations. The Director shall inform the Finance Committee and the school's Finance Officer of any such arrangements.
- Once tuition fee payments are more than 30 days overdue and in the absence of a payment plan, the Director shall, with written notification, exclude the student(s) from school until payment has been made or a payment plan agreed and signed. The Finance Officer will remind families of their unmet obligations at least a week prior to such exclusions.
- Following any such exclusions, the Director may work with the family to establish a payment plan. Such plans must involve a significant initial payment and readmit the child with a written commitment to settle the overdue account within a specified period. Normally, this should not exceed an additional 30 days. The Director shall inform the Finance Committee and the school's Finance Officer of any such arrangements.

- vi. Where a student has been excluded from school for a period of 30 days (i.e. payment is now 60 days in arrears), the student shall be unenrolled from school for non-payment. The student may be re-enrolled when the financial obligations have been met in full.

V. Facilities

AISF has an elevated, airy, wooded school site overlooking the city and the Atlantic Ocean. It is located in Hill Station, close to the British High Commissioner's and German Ambassador's residences. The original building was the British Deputy High Commissioner's residence, but a purpose-built annex and two purpose-built instructional wings have been added. The school is fully airconditioned and the grounds contain a small playing field and playground equipment. On-site security measures are in place, including a perimeter wall, a contracted 24-hour international guard service, and connection to the US Embassy radio network. AISF's security partners include G4S and the United States Embassy.

Media Center/Library Use

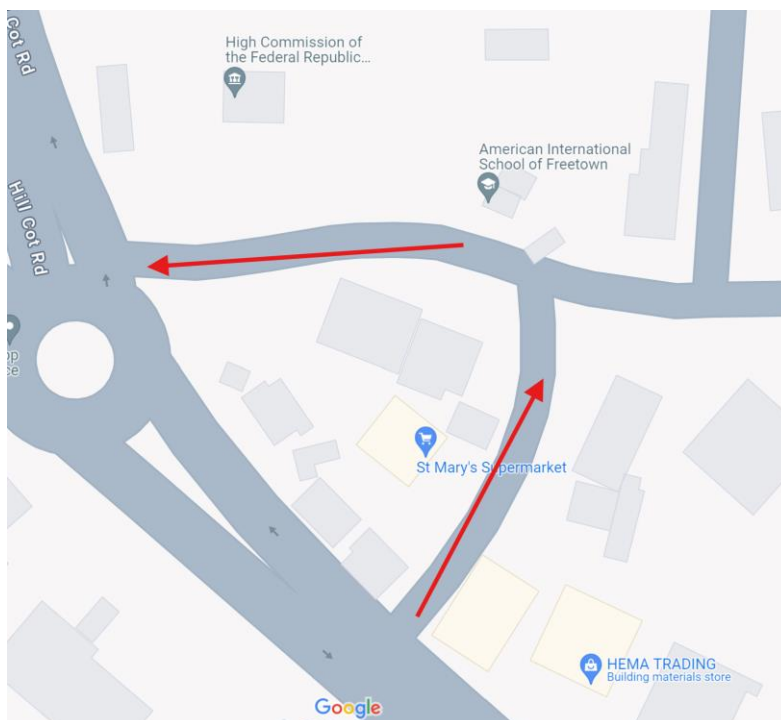
Our Media Center/Library plays a central role in the school curriculum. The book collection for young students is in a separate room from the upper grades section. Students are encouraged to become regular library borrowers. Students may borrow books during their own library classes, or at any other time there is a staff member at the desk. A maximum of two books is allowed out at a time, and anyone with an overdue book must return it before she/he can resume borrowing. Parents will be held financially responsible for loss or unreasonable damage to library items.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students

Students are dropped off and picked up in the circular drive at the top of the hill right off the main road. Please travel slowly when dropping students off and departing in the afternoon. **AISF has a strict ONE-WAY traffic pattern: Enter into the small road between Hema and St. Mary's, continue slowly to AISF entrance. Exit by continuing one way past the Nigerian Embassy.** Students need rain jackets and umbrellas to walk down to the school on rainy days.

At the beginning of the school year, parents must list the drivers who will be coming to pick up their students on our pick-up form. It is important for parents to inform the school in writing if there are any changes in their usual going-home arrangements. A support staff person will inform older students (grade 3 and above) when their ride arrives. Younger students will be escorted to their rides. The pick-up area is always supervised by the Security Guard Force.

Parents are asked to have their students picked up on time. Parents who are more than 30 minutes late picking up their students will receive one warning. Any student who is picked up later than 5:00pm will be billed Le500 for that day.



VI. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

School Contact Information:

Website: www.ais-freetown.net

Administrative Assistant: Joseph Thomas

Email: admin@ais-freetown.net

Phone: +232-76-622-453

Director: Elizabeth Minnigin

Email: director@ais-freetown.net

Finance Officer: Tejan Dumbuya

Email: finance@ais-freetown.net

School Address:

Physical Address	AISF Foundation Mailing Address
24 Hillcot Brow Hill Station Freetown Sierra Leone	2160 Freetown Place Dulles, Virginia 20189-2160 USA

Class Levels and Organization:

Multi-Grade Classes in 2024-2025

The blended age/grade classroom is a strength of AISF education. AISF has created multi-age groupings of students that provide students with developmentally appropriate academics and an authentic social experience at school. Multi-age groups are rich social environments for students, supporting emotional and social growth and developing a greater sense of responsibility in students. Because class sizes are small and faculty are skilled in differentiating (adapting) instruction for each student, academic progress goes well, allowing students the opportunity to accelerate or review as they need. While the classroom has students of diverse ages and grade levels, each student does complete their specific grade level, fully prepared to move to the next grade level.

2024-2025 Classrooms

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten (ECC or Early Childhood Center): Lead Teacher—Joy Kamara: jkamara@ais-freetown.net

Grades 1/2 (Main Building): Teacher—Nachelle Thomas: nthomas@ais-freetown.net

Grades 3/4 (Main Building): Teacher—Becky Ogundele: bogundele@ais-freetown.net

Grades 5/6 (Main Building): Teachers—DeMetria Hopkins (dhopkins@ais-freetown.net) & Nicholas Ingram (ningram@ais-freetown.net)

Grades 7/8 (Main Building): Teachers—DeMetria Hopkins (dhopkins@ais-freetown.net) & Nicholas Ingram (ningram@ais-freetown.net)

High School (Main Building): Site Coordinator—Ludovic Brouilloux: lbrouilloux@ais-freetown.net

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

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 6 th Y12	Upper 6 th Y13
French	Maternelle Petite-Moyenne-Grande		CP	CE1	CE2	CM1	CM2	6 th	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	1 st	Terminale	
Age Before September 15	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17

Admissions Process

The American International School of Freetown uses an open rolling admissions process. This means that we do not have a set admissions season. AISF accepts applications year-round for all grades. All materials necessary to apply for a place at AISF are available in the drop-down menu links. Simply complete the forms and send directly to the school. Admissions forms may be scanned and sent by email to admin@ais-freetown.net and director@ais-freetown.net or they can be delivered to the school by hard copy.

Conditions relevant to student admissions include the following:

- Our school can accept students with specific special learning needs if those needs are diagnosed as mild to moderate and provided that AISF is able to support the child's learning needs. The family must provide full disclosure of the nature of those learning needs and a 504 plan if they have one. Please contact the AISF Special needs Coordinator Ms Michelle Tarawalli if you need further information. mtarawalli@ais-freetown.net
- Classrooms at AISF include two grade levels per classroom: PreK/KG, Grade 1/2, Grade 3/4, Grade 5/6, Grade 7/8.
- AISF offers US high school education for grades 9 through 12, blending online academics with on-site enrichment. AISF high school students can earn a US High School Diploma. AISF is an approved AP (Advanced Placement) testing center.
- AISF reserves the option to administer a standardized assessment to new students as part of the admissions process. We use admissions testing to ensure that our school plans wisely for every student. Parents always receive the testing results. Test results are not used to deny admission unless results clearly indicate that the student cannot be served adequately in our program. The testing may, however, guide grade level placement.

AISF 2024—25 Calendar

The current school calendar is always available on the website: www.ais-freetown.net

AISF 2025-2026 Calendar

Next year's calendar will be posted on the AISF website by or before the end of September 2024

Family Practical Information

Student Withdrawal from AISF

At the end of your stay at AISF, or when the school term ends for the summer, all families are given an official copy of their student's report card and school information for the current year. Parents assume responsibility for arrangements and cost of sending records should they not pick up hard copies of the documents from the office prior to leaving.

For families leaving AISF permanently, the school will supply (on request) a leaving packet containing an official school leaving document and previous report cards. If a family departs without the Leaving Packet, the family may request that materials be sent electronically.

AISF maintains electronic student records. Electronic records can be sent to a receiving school after the student's departure (if that is acceptable to the receiving school).

Please note that school records will not be released until all fees and charges are cleared.

Procedure for Misunderstandings or Disputes with School Personnel

AISF Board Approved Procedures

Definitions: "Staff" includes faculty, administration, maintenance, and security guards. "Parent" includes guardians.

- a. Any parent or staff of AISF who has a difference of opinion regarding a school or administrative decision shall first attempt to resolve this problem directly with the person responsible and at the lowest possible level. Most concerns or misunderstandings can be resolved at this level.
- b. At all times, complaints and concerns should be addressed and responded to with the utmost respect. Reasoned dialogue is the best way to address and respond to concerns.
- c. If the petitioner feels that this cannot be done because of privacy or other concerns or has unsuccessfully attempted a direct resolution of the dispute, he/she may confer with the Director.
- d. Steps a) and b) shall be attempted prior to any further steps. The process of attempting to settle the issue should be clearly understood by both parties.
- e. If conferring with the Director is unsatisfactory, the parent or staff member may appeal directly and only to the Chair of the AISF Board, in writing, cc'ing the Director.
- f. Within ten days the Chair of the Board will respond to the parent or staff member's concern.

IMPORTANT NOTES AND REMINDERS

- Our school day begins at 8:00. At 8:05, students are considered late.
- Our school day ends at 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- Starting this year Pick up time for ECC will also be at 3pm. If a parent wishes to pick their child up earlier please do not hesitate to contact Ms Kamara, the class teacher at ECC to arrange it. jkamara@ais-freetown.net
- Our school day ends at 1:00 on Wednesdays to allow for meetings, curriculum work and teacher professional development. Please collect your children on time.
- After school activities (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday) end at 4:00.
- Parents of students picked up 30 minutes late or more from school or activity dismissal may be charged a late fee to offset costs of extra supervision. Please collect your children on time.
- Students should bring a full water bottle to school every day.
- Tuition payments must be made on time. If the family fails to submit fees on the due date, the student must remain at home until the debt is settled. Students with unpaid fees outstanding for 30 days will be unable to attend school until all fees are paid.
- This handbook is updated each year. In some cases, the procedures and operating policies stated herein could be subject to change. All efforts will be made to communicate any changes.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness

Students showing signs of illness should not be sent to school. Any student who runs a fever above 37.6 degrees MUST be kept at home until the fever is gone for at least 24 hours. **Any student who demonstrates a fever, verified by the Nurse above 37.6 degrees will be sent home.** The student will remain in the Nurse's Office until transport arrives. Please notify the school immediately if your student has chicken pox, lice, conjunctivitis (Apollo) or other easily transmitted diseases.

AISF has a full-time school nurse to assist with any student who is injured during the school day. In those cases, the school will try to contact the parents or designated person authorized to make decisions for the parent. In cases where a parent or designated person cannot be reached, the school may take the student to Choithram's Hospital or AMI Clinic if deemed necessary. **Parents should always have a second contact person (never a paid employee such as a nanny) who can be contacted in an emergency, and make sure contact information is updated.**

Medicine

Medications for chronic conditions cannot be administered by the AISF nurse or staff unless otherwise approved by the Director. Medications should be administered by a parent or a designated guardian. Medication must be given by a responsible adult to the school nurse. Students are not permitted to carry medication in their bags.

Emergency Procedures

Medical Emergency

In the event of an emergency that obviously requires immediate hospitalization, the school will transport the student to Choithram's Memorial Hospital or AMI Clinic, while simultaneously attempting to contact the parents at the phone numbers provided. In the case of U.S. Embassy dependents, the Embassy Medical Officer will also be contacted. If parents cannot be reached, the school will contact the individuals that parents have authorized to make emergency medical decisions on their behalf. After being contacted, parents (or authorized decision makers) should proceed immediately to the appropriate hospital.

In situations that do not require immediate treatment, the school will make the utmost effort to contact parents so that they can pick up the student from school. If parents are unavailable, the individuals authorized to make medical decisions will be contacted.

Civil Disturbance

In case of civil unrest during school hours, it is school policy that all students are to remain at school until a parent or authorized driver arrives to pick up their student. For this reason, parents are required to supply the school with the names of at least **two persons** who are authorized to pick up the student(s) in case of such an emergency. No student will be released to anyone not explicitly authorized by the parents. **NOTE: UPDATED EMERGENCY CONTACTS ARE VITAL. EMERGENCY CONTACTS SHOULD NOT BE PAID EMPLOYEES.**

For contacting the school community quickly, the school relies on e-mail, WhatsApp, and text messaging. Parents and staff alike are asked to keep the e-mail addresses, WhatsApp numbers, and cell phone numbers they supply the school updated, and check them regularly both to stay in touch with their students' teachers, and to receive emergency alerts. **UPDATES ARE VITAL.**

School Closure

Should AISF need to close due to civil unrest, an epidemic, or any other reason, parents will be notified as far in advance as possible via WhatsApp, email, and emergency SMS. Whenever possible, AISF will move to online instruction during any school closure.

VIII. TEACHING AND LEARNING

AISF Curriculum

AISF offers an accredited US curriculum Pre-Kindergarten through grade 8 to students aged 3 to age 14. Our English Language Arts and Mathematics programs are aligned to US standards as are Science and Social Studies from Middle School up. Science, Social Studies, and the Creative Arts are offered through the International Early Years Curriculum (PreK) and the International Primary Years Curriculum (Grades 1-4). The program of studies at AISF is adapted to take advantage of and serve the needs of our culturally diverse school community. American accredited high school education is provided primarily through the VHS Learning online program of studies and can lead to a US High School Diploma. We also offer virtual opportunities through the University of Nebraska High School program. Both VHS and UNHS offer academically rigorous AP (Advanced Placement) courses and AISF is an approved AP examination center.

Critical thinking and problem solving are integral to teaching and learning at AISF. What distinguishes an AISF education is the specific and expert focus on each individual student. Our faculty work with your children as individuals, making certain that each one has just the right amount of academic push and challenge. The aim is authentic student learning. The professional term in the US for this learning is “teaching and learning for mastery”.

Learning for mastery means that your child has **mastered** a skill or an understanding of a concept. Mastery takes focus, practice, and active feedback between student and teacher. The teacher/student relationship is extremely important. In an active-learning environment, students and their teachers are alert, involved, and accountable for participation. No one is “just sitting there.” The learning is meant to last with each child, not just for a few days until a test, but to last until it becomes part of each child’s permanent development.

External assessment through MAP testing (Measures of Academic Progress) serves a dual purpose: measuring how well all students have mastered skills and knowledge and comparing AISF student performance with the performance of students in other international schools and US schools.

Student understanding of concepts and learning of skills are measured by having students perform meaningful tasks in which they apply what they have learned. Assessments are learning activities in themselves not simply unit tests. Students work on real problems using real materials, they record and describe their thinking and methodology, and outcomes go beyond the simple recall of facts or one right answer.

Assessment of Student Learning

Report Cards and Conferences

Report cards are distributed three times a year. In the middle of Trimester One and Trimester Two, we hold parent-teacher conferences which act as two additional reporting periods. So, you receive five reports per year on your children’s learning—three written reports and two in-person reports.

Report cards are designed to match exactly with our standards referenced curriculum. The report cards indicate the extent to which each child has met every learning standard on a one to four scale from kindergarten to Grade 4. Within Elementary School, you will not see A—F grades or percentages on AISF report cards. Within Middle School, report cards are designed to gauge student performance in the major subject areas (Science, Math, ELA, Social Studies, French, Art and Physical Education).

Each report will indicate a student’s performance with a percentage and a letter grade. Percentages and letter grades will equate to the following:

Letter Grade	Percent
A+	97-100%
A	94-96%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%

B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	60-63%
F	< 60%

Each percentage and letter grade will be accompanied by an assessment of a student's Work Habits and Behavior. This grade is to give parents an idea of their child's in-school work habits and conduct regarding their capacity to foster a learning environment that respects their own learning and the learning of other students. Work habits and behavior will be graded using the following scale:

Grade	Meaning
E	Exemplary
P	Proficient
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory
N	Not acceptable

Personalized comments will also be added using a number system (1-17), where each number corresponds to a short description. For example, 1=Works for academic excellence; 2=Shows academic improvement etc.

Each subject will measure a student's performance within the following three categories: Summative Assessments (40%), Formative Assessments (30%), Homework/Preparedness (30%). Summative and Formative Assessments are designed to measure a student's ability in regards to specific American Common Core Standards within a given subject area. Homework/Preparedness is designed to measure a student's growing capacity in the areas of time management, personal responsibility, and self-directed learning.

Our High School program which uses either VHS Learning or the University of Nebraska High School, follows the grading practices of those schools.

Parents and guardians will be notified as soon as possible if there are any changes in the reporting procedures.

Standardized, External Assessment

AISF is an approved school for MAP testing. MAP is an external measure of student knowledge and skill in mathematics, reading, and English language. MAP is currently the most widely used and respected external assessment program in international schools, particularly in US Embassy sponsored schools. AISF administers MAP testing twice each year in October and May. Results are always shared. MAP testing at AISF begins at grade 2.

School Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary to achieve maximum academic growth. For each absence, please send an email to the school (admin@ais-freetown.net) explaining the reason for the absence. **Students who leave early for travel will not be given work to take with them.** The student may need to come in at lunch, recess and after school to make up work missed. We strongly urge parents to avoid taking students out of school for travel unless absolutely necessary.

Please note that students who miss more than 10% of school days in one school year are at risk. A student absent for more than 10% of the total school days might not be promoted to the next grade level. Extraordinary needs for an absence must be documented in a letter to the Director in advance of the absence.

It is important that all children arrive on time for school. Children who arrive late miss important instruction and disrupt the learning of others.

Length of the School Day

- Children should be at school in time for them to enter class at 8:00 AM. **Please do not drop students off before 7:30 AM.**
- The school day for full time PreK-High School grades ends at 3:00 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.
- Optional after-school activities on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays extend the school day to 4:00 PM.
- Wednesdays are early release days for staff development. **School ends at 1:00 PM on Wednesdays for all students.** There are no after-school activities on Wednesday.

Field Trips

Field trips are a valuable learning resource for students and are regarded as regular school learning taking place in alternate venues. Follow-up classroom activities can be graded. Parental help with planning, driving, and chaperoning is always greatly appreciated. Permission slips will be sent home prior to each trip and must be signed by a parent and returned to the school. In no case will a student be allowed on a field trip without written parental permission.

Technology Responsible Use Policy

The primary purpose of technology at the American International School of Freetown (AISF) is to support and enhance student learning. The use of technology at AISF is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of those privileges. This policy applies to all AISF staff as well as to students using AISF internet and other ITC resources. All students in grades 5 and above sign an Acceptable Use Agreement at the start of each school year.

Mobile Phones: Students may not use mobile phones in class except on very rare occasions and with explicit teacher permission. Middle School students (and any younger students with phones) must keep their phones in their school bags throughout the school day. If students use their phones during the school day without permission, the teacher will confiscate the phone for the duration of the school day. In the case of repeated misuse, the Director will contact the family and forbid the student to bring a phone to campus. If necessary, students may use their phones after school hours to contact their families regarding transport. High School students will sometimes need to use their phones during class time to photograph work in progress. This must be done with explicit teacher permission. High School students may use their phones at lunch and break times as long as they abide by the AUP.

IX. STUDENT LIFE

AISF Code of Conduct / Behavior Policy

AISF has one overarching school rule:

The AISF Rule: Respect everyone's learning, safety, and well-being.

This rule is intended for all members of the school community: students, faculty, staff, and families.

At AISF, student learning is our prime focus. We believe that students need to feel safe, both emotionally and physically, to be able to learn to the best of their abilities. For this reason, we have high expectations of student behavior and require that all students demonstrate respect for the learning environment, all members of the school community, and for the school's building, facilities, and property.

In our school where we believe that all members of the school community should be knowledgeable, caring thinkers, we respect honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, and personal responsibility.

To that end, we have the following behavioral expectations:

- The AISF Academic Honesty Policy and Responsible Use Policy must be understood, respected and followed.
- Bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Discriminatory language or gestures (based on race, gender or sexual orientation, for example) are not acceptable.
- Any kind of physical altercation (for example, fighting) is not acceptable.
- Theft is unacceptable; this includes borrowing belongings of others without their explicit permission.
- Bringing cigarettes, alcohol, or illicit drugs on campus is strictly forbidden.
- Students are expected to be on time for school and class.
- Students must abide by the dress code.
- Elementary school students may not bring mobile phones to school. Middle School students must keep their phones in their bags and may only use their phones after school to call their families. High School students may use their phones in class for necessary schoolwork with the explicit permission of the teacher.

Behavior Expectations and Response

When students fail to live up to our behavioral expectations, the school will employ—where possible—the practices of “Love and Logic” and restorative justice. We recognize that young people are learning and that our focus should be on teaching our students appropriate values and behavior. Consequences, when needed, should be logical and, where possible, should be focused on righting the wrong.

While we expect to teach appropriate behaviors in our school continuously, we recognize that more serious behaviors need more intervention. We judge the seriousness of a behavior by the degree of risk it presents to the student and community. The range of behaviors that fall into this category include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Repeated disrespect of supervising adult(s)
2. Repeatedly failing to follow instructions of supervising adult(s)
3. Repeated inappropriate use of devices
4. Repeated or threatening issues of personal integrity
5. More serious issues of academic dishonesty - cheating on assessments, intentional plagiarism, etc.
6. Repeated or threatening issues of diversity
7. Threatening aggression

In cases where a student demonstrates these or any similar behaviors, the supervising adult(s) will address the issue in the

moment to ensure the safety of the student and community and then follow up by reporting the incident to the administration. In-the-moment interventions are much the same as those for minor offenses; however, the administration will follow up for these more serious behaviors.

The school Director or designate will ensure the following in these cases:

1. Parents are notified of the incident,
2. Consider if the incident needs to be documented in the student's record.
3. Administrative interventions are communicated to the supervising adult(s).

Administrative interventions might include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Meeting with parents, teachers, and/or student
2. Parent/School agreements & plans
3. Written reflection and restorative justice plan
4. Written warning that outlines future possible consequences
5. Ongoing student check-ins with the Director or class teacher
6. Required, coordinated outside support with specialists
7. Temporary suspension, either on or off campus.
8. Potential conditional enrollment

STOP! Behaviors & Immediate Action

To maintain a safe learning environment where our community can actualize our mission and definition of learning, some behaviors demand immediate and extreme action. We call these behaviors STOP Behaviors because, quite simply, they must cease immediately to ensure the safety of the students and/or community. These behaviors include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Bringing weapons and/or dangerous objects, including toys that look like or mimic dangerous objects, to school
2. Bringing alcohol and/or drugs to campus
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or mood-altering substances at school
4. Acts of violence against anyone in our community
5. Bullying and/or harassment
6. Cyberbullying and/or egregious use of social media
7. Vandalism or damaging of school property
8. Stealing/Theft

In such cases, supervising adults should determine the best course of action in the moment, being certain to accomplish the following:

1. Address the behavior to establish a safe learning environment
2. Notify the Director or designate and, when appropriate, Campus Security

Students exhibiting these kinds of behaviors will experience immediate and appropriate consequences. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Immediate removal of the student(s) from campus
2. Meeting with parents, teachers, and/or student
3. Parent/School agreements & plans
4. Ongoing student check-ins with the Director or designate
5. Written reflection and restorative justice plan
6. Written warning that outlines future possible consequences
7. Required psychoeducational evaluation to determine mental suitability to attend school
8. Required, coordinated outside support with specialists
9. Temporary suspension, either on or off campus
10. Potential conditional enrollment or expulsion

BULLYING & HARASSMENT

All students have a right to learn in an environment in which they feel safe to be themselves. Bullying and harassment threaten the core values of the school, pose a threat to a student's safety, and interfere with the learning environment AISF is committed to fulfilling.

What is Bullying?

According to the American Psychological Association, "Bullying among school-age youth is a pervasive problem that challenges the teaching and learning environment, increases mental health and behavior problems, diminishes school connectedness and violates the right of students to receive equal educational opportunities in a safe environment."

AISF defines bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another student or group of students who are not siblings" that involves an "observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated" (APA.org). Bullying may involve "physical, psychological, social or educational harm" and is targeted, meaning that the victim of bullying is intentional and attacks on this target are repeated (or likely to be repeated). Bullying can occur in-person and/or through technology (cyber-bullying) using email, chat rooms, instant message, a website, text message or social media, etc. AISF treats any and all bullying with a serious, appropriate and active response.

What is Harassment?

According to the American Psychological Association, "harassment, unlike bullying, does not have to include intent by the perpetrator to harm, be directed at a specific person or involve repeated incidents" (APA.org). AISF defines harassment as threatening, harmful or humiliating conduct based on race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability and other actual or perceived characteristics that place a student at risk in a school community.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The independence and integrity of each student's individual academic work is a fundamental principle of school life throughout all sections at the American International School of Freetown. For this reason, understanding the value and the importance of academic integrity is an ideal that is taught throughout the grade levels, starting in the Elementary School and counting through High School.

We teach all members of the school community to take pride in their own thoughts and opinions and model for our students how to articulate and defend their thoughts with confidence and assurance.

In turn, we also teach all members of the school community to value the thoughts of others, and when using information to support their ideas, to do so with respect and integrity.

Because academic dishonesty is an abstract concept, students are taught important study habits and build upon research skills each year. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at any age but is seen as a critical, teachable moment for younger students in the Elementary School as they develop into independent thinkers and emerge into the High School section.

Students who abide by these values in their daily work and interactions are positively reinforced. We want our students to experience the rewards of a life of integrity, and for them to be well prepared for college expectations for academic honesty world-wide. As our graduates complete their AISF experience, they will have been taught the values, skills, and information necessary to respect and abide by the highest standards of academic integrity.

Demonstrations of academic integrity include the following:

1. Avoiding any and all kinds of plagiarism, defined as copying and presenting as one's original work any published materials (or parts thereof) which includes, but is not limited to, books, magazines, pamphlets, digital media, and A.I. generated text (such as ChatGPT).
2. Proper citation of quoted text, and/or ideas other than those of the student.
3. Properly referencing the use of translation devices, platforms, etc.
4. Relying on one's own efforts in accordance with stated guidelines by not using or being in possession of notes or any type of unauthorized materials before or during an exam.

5. Presenting one's efforts without copying or using another student's work or test.
6. Supporting one's peers in their learning by not providing help on any task (not allowed by the teacher) before or during an exam, not allowing another student to copy one's work or exam paper, not offering to sell, selling, purchasing work and/or submitting another's work as one's own.
7. Submitting one's own work that was not completed by anyone other than the student, including other students, parents, tutors, etc.

While the school teaches academic integrity at every level in our program, we also understand that academic dishonesty is a serious matter. As students mature, the consequences for failing to demonstrate academic integrity naturally increase.

In the Elementary School, students who struggle to understand academic integrity engage in reflection and are given opportunities to re-do their work. In Middle and High School, students who have been academically dishonest engage in a variety of opportunities to learn from their mistakes. These include but are not limited to the following: re-do of task, reflection meeting and tasks, deduction of task grade, meeting with teacher, meeting with parents, suspension, and possibly jeopardizing re-enrollment. In each case, decisions made by the administration are guided by past incidents, the severity of the incident in question, and the developmental stage of the student.

Reporting of failures to maintain academic integrity

In the Middle and High Schools, incidents of academic dishonesty are reported in our school management system. In the High School, these incidents must also be reported to universities, per the university's requirements to report.

Student Supervision

Faculty/Support Staff Responsibilities for Student Supervision

1. **Supervision and vigilance:** The staff person on duty must never be out of immediate sight of all students under their supervision.
2. **Correction:** The staff person on duty is responsible for students' safety outside of the classroom and is, therefore, the ultimate authority during breaks. Failure to follow and agree to the rules and expectations, and/or incidents of verbal or physical abuse may cause a student to have playground or break privileges suspended.
3. **Documentation:** All serious instances of negative student behavior must be documented in writing by staff and reported to the director immediately after the incident. Serious issues of negative behavior will be reported immediately to parents with a written notice sent no later than 24 hours after the incident.

Clothing for School

AISF does not have a school uniform, but students are expected to dress in a manner that supports a respectful and inclusive learning environment. The dress code is designed to ensure that all students can learn comfortably without unnecessary distractions while being mindful of the cultural diversity of our school community.

General Guidelines:

1. **Clothing should be:**
 - Neat, clean, and comfortable.
 - Appropriate for a learning environment.
 - Respectful of the diverse cultural values within the AISF community.
2. **For Physical Education (PE) days,** students must wear sport-appropriate footwear and bring an extra t-shirt for PE activities.
3. **Reasonable accommodations** will be made for attire related to religious, cultural, or medical requirements, provided it aligns with the principles of respect and safety.

Specific Expectations:

- Clothing should ensure sufficient coverage to maintain comfort and appropriateness for all school activities.
- All attire should meet the general standards of the learning environment, avoiding distractions or safety concerns.
- Clothing with offensive language, symbols, or references to drugs, alcohol, or violence is not permitted.

Prohibited Attire:

- Attire that does not align with the general expectations of comfort, appropriateness, and safety for school activities.
- Transparent or see-through materials without proper layering.

- Items that could pose a safety risk, such as cleats in classrooms.
- Clothing or accessories with inappropriate slogans, offensive imagery, or language.

Enforcement:

Students who do not meet the dress code will receive a polite reminder and may be asked to modify their attire if necessary. Repeated violations will prompt a discussion with parents to ensure understanding of the policy. In rare cases, students may be sent home to change, but this will be handled with discretion and respect. Staff members will receive training to ensure consistent and unbiased enforcement of the policy.

Philosophy:

This policy supports AISF’s mission of fostering an inclusive, respectful, and global-minded learning community. It reflects our commitment to equity and inclusion, free from gender bias or stereotypes, and aims to balance individual expression with a focus on respect for oneself and the school community.

Development and Review:

This policy was developed with input from students, parents, and staff to reflect the needs and values of the entire AISF community. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to align with the school’s vision and values.

Child Protection at AISF

We are a US accredited school in an international setting. AISF holds itself to US and international child protection standards. All AISF employees are required to report immediately any concern regarding child abuse or neglect to the Director. This includes concerns regarding neglect or abuse by AISF staff or students. The Director is required to act on all concerns.

American International School of Freetown
Child Protection Policy

Inspiring knowledgeable caring thinkers

The American International School of Freetown is committed to child protection and the safeguarding of AISF students. AISF expects all members of the AISF community to share this commitment and responsibility to protect children. AISF seeks to be a haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives.

Child abuse and neglect persist as global concerns, violating the fundamental rights of children and obstructing their educational, physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School of Freetown aligns itself with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child principles, a commitment upheld by our host country, The Republic of Sierra Leone.

Recognizing Child Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental physical injury including but not limited to female genital mutilation (FGM), burns, human bites, bruises, lacerations, bone fractures, missing teeth, and any internal or head injuries, any of which have been intentionally inflicted.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Mental anguish and/or chronic emotional pain caused by such things as rejection, isolation, severe humiliation, excessive teasing and verbal assault.
- **Domestic Violence:** Allowing a child to witness violence within his/her immediate environment.
- **Neglect:** Neglect entails the continual abandonment of a child, characterized by the failure to provide essential elements like food, water, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Additionally, it involves neglecting a child's emotional and psychological needs and failing to shield them from potential dangers that could impact their health or developmental well-being.

Reporting

It is a requirement for all staff members at the American International School of Freetown to immediately report any instances of child abuse or neglect if they have a reasonable belief that a child has encountered or is at substantial risk of experiencing abuse or neglect. The reporting and subsequent actions regarding suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will adhere to the administrative regulations associated with this policy. Additionally, suspicions of child abuse or neglect may be

communicated to the relevant employer, the respective consulate in Freetown, the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or local authorities.

Background Checks and Education

The American International School of Freetown will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy to students, will provide training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children. AISF requires appropriate background checks for all employees.

<https://www.icmec.org/aisa-child-protection-handbook/> <https://www.unicef.org/about-unicef>

Approved by the Board of Directors on 27 March 2024

Child Protection Handbook

AISF's Child Protection Policy is intended to work together with the school's Child Protection handbook, the latest version of which can be found on the school's website.

Practical Daily Information

School Supplies

AISF supplies the students with most of the items needed for school. Occasionally parents may be required to supply some items for a special purpose. Younger students enjoy having their own pencil cases, pencils etc. All students must have backpacks and water bottles. All students need sport shoes.

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Program:

All students in grades 5 through high school are required to have their own laptop computer with them every day. The laptop specifications are simple:

- Laptop must be no older than 3 years
- Laptop must have internet capacity with Google Chrome as the preferred browser
- Laptop must have installed Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Laptop must have windows or Mac operating installed
- Laptop must have antivirus software installed.
- Laptop must have PDF reader installed

Lunch and Water

The school provides two breaks a day: a morning recess and a thirty-minute lunch break. During these times the students are permitted to eat and drink. Parents are to provide their students with **healthy snacks and lunches**.

Parents are asked to send in food that is prepared properly and able to be kept warm or cold (thermos or ice packs) until it is consumed. Parents are encouraged to send in foods that can stay warm or do not need to be heated, as there is limited facility to heat food, which means students frequently have to wait if their food needs to be heated up to eat.

The water at school for our toilets and hand washing is not safe to drink/potable. Potable water is widely available on campus in water dispensing machines. Students need a non-breakable water bottle. AISF does not provide drinking cups.

Parties

Families are welcome to send cupcakes or cake for their children's birthday. The time for a short celebration is at the discretion of the teacher. We ask that no invitations to private parties be distributed at school unless **all** the students from the classroom are invited. It is best to use other means of distribution for any outside party.

Hats, Sunscreen, Insect Repellent

All students are encouraged to wear hats on the playground due to the intensity of the African sun. We also encourage parents to put sunscreen on their students every morning. Mosquito repellent is strongly advised. Because of allergy concerns, AISF does not keep insect repellent and cannot apply it to students.

Homework

Homework given at the elementary level is meant to reinforce daily classroom work done under teachers' direction. It may also be unfinished class work, or work on an ongoing project. Homework is expected to be completed precisely when it is due. In the PreK/ KG/Grade 1/ Grade 2 all students are expected to read with parents every day after school. Students in grade 3/4 can expect reading plus about 15 minutes of IXL work in math. Students in grades 5/6 should expect 45 minutes of homework each day. Students in grades 7 and 8 can expect about one hour to one and a half hours of homework each night. All students in grades 2 through 8 are expected to complete regular work in IXL Math and IXL English.

Students need a quiet, well-lit study area at home. Parents should encourage students to complete homework as part of a daily routine. Students must complete homework on their own.

X. STUDENT SERVICES

Special Educational Needs

AISF is presently able to support a limited number of children with mild to moderate special educational needs. Children may be supported with specialist pull-out support, virtual therapy, or the hiring of a one-to-one aide. Please note that AISF's ability to support children with special needs is determined by the school's ability to provide appropriate support and the impact on the class as a whole. Each case will be determined individually by the Director in consultation with the family, the teacher, and AISF's Special Education Coordinator. Families need to bear the cost of any virtual therapy or of a one-to-one aide (if the latter is required). Please see the Special Education Funding Policy below.

American International School of Freetown

Special Education Funding Policy

Inspiring knowledgeable caring thinkers!

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how the American International School of Freetown will allocate resources for special education services. We aim to provide equitable and effective support for students with diverse learning needs to truly inspire our students to be successful, thoughtful, and caring thinkers.

Principles

1. **Inclusion:** At AISF, we believe in an inclusive education system that values diversity and ensures that all students have access to quality education.
2. **Collaboration:** Collaboration among teachers, parents, and specialists is essential for effective special education.
3. **Differentiated Support:** We recognize that students have varying needs, and our support services should be tailored accordingly.

Funding Allocation

1. **Basic Learning Support:**
 - The school will cover the costs associated with basic learning support services. These may include:
 - **Inclusive Classroom Strategies:** Training for teachers to create inclusive learning environments.
 - **Learning Support Teachers:** Support for students within regular classrooms and in small pull-out groups.
 - **Assistive Technology:** Providing necessary tools for students with learning differences.
 - **Curriculum Adaptations:** Modifying curriculum materials as needed.

- Funding for basic learning support will be allocated from the general school budget.

2. One-to-One Specialized Therapy:

- Parents will be responsible for funding one-to-one specialized therapy services. These services may include:
 - **Speech and Language Therapy**
 - **Occupational Therapy**
 - **Behavioral Therapy**
 - **Physical Therapy**
 - **Counseling**
- The school will collaborate with external providers, including virtual providers, to ensure high-quality services.
- Parents can choose their preferred providers, and costs will be directly borne by them.
- In some cases, the providers may work only with the school, in which case the school will levy a special education fee to cover the cost of the therapy.
- In the case where a student requires a full-time one-to-one special education aide, the school will work with the family to select an appropriate aide. The aide will work as a contractor for the school and AISF will charge a special education fee.

Transparency and Communication

1. Cost Transparency:

- The school will clearly communicate the costs associated with specialized therapy services.
- Parents will receive detailed information about fees, payment schedules, and available options.

2. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):

- For students receiving specialized therapy, the school will develop individualized education plans (IEPs) in collaboration with parents, teachers, and therapists.
- IEPs will outline specific goals, accommodations, and the roles of all stakeholders.

3. Regular Updates:

- The school will provide regular updates to parents regarding their child's progress and any adjustments to services.

Review and Evaluation

1. Annual Review:

- The funding policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness.
- Feedback from parents, teachers, and specialists will inform any necessary adjustments.

2. Equity Assessment:

- The school will assess whether the funding allocation supports equitable access to services for all students.

Please note that this policy was partially drafted by ChatGPT4.

XI. ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

- Appropriate Use Policy (Technology)
- Admissions Policy
- English Language Learners Admissions Policy

Please see documents on the following pages.

Appropriate Use Policy



Know | Think | Care

Inspiring Knowledgeable Caring Thinkers

Preamble

At AISF, we endeavor to inspire knowledgeable, caring thinkers who ponder deeply and critically about the world around them and care passionately about this planet and the others around them. To this end, technology is a powerful tool for learning.

Technology can be used in a positive manner to support learning and inquiry by providing students with access to diverse and engaging resources, tools, and experiences that enhance their understanding, curiosity, and creativity. Some ways to use technology positively are:

- Using digital learning solutions that are evidence-based, effective, and aligned with the curriculum and learning objectives.
- Using inquiry-based learning approaches that encourage students to explore, investigate, and solve real-world problems using technology.
- Using technology to facilitate collaboration and communication among students, teachers, and experts from different fields and backgrounds.
- Using technology to support personalized learning that meets the needs, interests, and goals of each student.
- Using technology to develop students' digital literacy and critical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate, use, and create information ethically and responsibly.

Given the profound effect of technology on teaching and learning, it is important that all members of the community use technology in a safe, ethical, and appropriate manner. That is the purpose of the following policy.

1. Hardware and Software Usage

- 1.1. All hardware and software provided by AISF are to be used solely for educational purposes and assignments under the guidance of teachers.
- 1.2. Unauthorized installation, copying, or distribution of software on AISF-owned devices is strictly prohibited.
- 1.3. Students must promptly report any hardware or software issues to their teachers or the IT officer.
- 1.4. Personal devices used on the AISF network should comply with AISF policies and security standards.

2. Internet Use

- 2.1. Internet access provided by AISF is to be used for educational research and assignments.
- 2.2. Accessing or sharing explicit, inappropriate, or offensive content is strictly prohibited.
- 2.3. Students should not attempt to bypass or disable content filtering or security measures.
- 2.4. Downloading or sharing copyrighted material without proper authorization is not allowed.

3. Social Media and Online Communication

- 3.1. Students must exercise responsible and respectful behavior when using social media, both during and outside school hours.
- 3.2. Cyberbullying, harassment, or posting harmful or inappropriate content about other students of the AISF community is strictly prohibited.
- 3.3. Students must not post pictures or any personally identifiable information of other students or teachers on any social media platforms without their explicit consent.
- 3.4. Personal information, such as home address, phone numbers, or any other personal identification, should not be shared on public platforms.

4. School Email

- 4.1. School email accounts are to be used for official school-related communication and assignments.
- 4.2. Students must not share login credentials, use another person's email account, or attempt to gain unauthorized access to email accounts.
- 4.3. Sending or forwarding chain emails, spam, or unsolicited mass emails is prohibited.
- 4.4. Be mindful of the content and language used in emails to maintain a respectful and professional tone.

5. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use

- 5.1. When using AI applications or tools, students must do so responsibly and within the guidelines provided by their teachers.
- 5.2. Respect the privacy and ethical considerations related to AI technology and refrain from using AI for harmful or malicious purposes.
- 5.3. Do not use AI to create, share, or promote false or misleading information, including deceptive content.
- 5.4. Always cite the sources when using AI-generated content in academic work and make a clear distinction between AI-generated content and original work.
- 5.5. Seek guidance from teachers or school authorities if uncertain about the ethical implications or potential consequences of using AI in a specific context.

6. Data Security and Privacy

- 6.1. Students are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of their accounts and passwords.
- 6.2. Students must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to others' accounts, files, or data.
- 6.3. Sharing or publishing personally identifiable information of oneself or others is discouraged.

7. Consequences for Violations

- 7.1. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, including but not limited to loss of technology privileges, academic penalties, or other consequences deemed appropriate by the school.
- 7.2. Students are encouraged to report any violations of this policy to their teachers or school authorities.

8. Review and Amendments

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.
- 8.2. AISF reserves the right to make amendments to this policy to address emerging technology trends or changing security needs.

By using AISF's technology resources, students acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of this Student Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Students are encouraged to seek clarification or guidance from their teachers or school authorities if they have any questions about the policy.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Print Name: _____ Grade: _____

Parent Name: _____ Date: _____

Date Adopted: _____



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 to moderate learning needs who can be accommodated within the regular classroom with limited 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 6 th Y12	Upper 6 th Y13
French	Maternelle Petite-Moyenne-Grande			CP	CE1	CE2	CM1	CM2	6 th	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	1 st	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).