

Elementary School Student/Parent Handbook 2009 - 2010



<http://www.amschool.org>

**The American School
Tegucigalpa, Honduras**



Mission

The American School provides a students–centered enriching college preparatory education that emphasizes social responsibility in a safe bicultural disciplined learning environment.

Philosophy

We believe that our school must be student-centered with teachers who stimulate the desire to learn and to accommodate individual learning styles and developmental rates. Our graduates are prepared to be lifelong learners and successful citizens and have the moral values to lead in an increasingly interconnected and complex world. As a multicultural school we respect the ethnicity, culture, and talents of each individual, thus contributing to the growth and understanding of everyone in the community. We encourage the appreciation of and respect for different cultures in our school community.

The staff and parents work together to model and instill in our students passion, compassion, integrity, commitment to quality, teamwork, and dedication to community. Members of the school community collaborate in decision making processes that build ownership for the total education of our students. We are dedicated to the idea that for all students the timing and coordination of their academic experience are a critical part of their future successes. We recognize our daily responsibility to build strong, independent learners who will be ready to analyze and react to the challenging situations that life promises them.



Acceptance of Diversity

In keeping with our mission and philosophy, the American School strives to be a haven of safety and acceptance for all members of our school community. As an institution of learning, our school endeavors to be a stalwart model of progressive values that welcomes diversity. Being devoted to the noble cause of educating young people, the American School is an institution intent on seeing the unique and individual potential and talents of all our students fulfilled without prejudging or making distinctions between individuals. It is of vital importance that all members of our school community feel not only safe and welcome but fully accepted as well, and, therefore, all of us, to include students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, etc., are expected at all times to model values of acceptance and courtesy.

Acceptance of diversity goes beyond simple tolerance. Simple tolerance requires only that we not mistreat others because of their individual characteristics. Acceptance, though, occurs when we not only put up with the individual differences of others but willingly admit people different from ourselves into our group or community without insisting on treating them in any way differently. Acceptance occurs when we look beyond our individual differences and welcome each other. While the traditional motto of simple tolerance is “live, and let live,” the traditional motto of acceptance is “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Failing to be accepting of diversity can be committed both with malicious and non-malicious intents. While at times it is committed understanding the harm being caused, at other times it is done without meaning to offend or mistreat others. Examples of malicious un-acceptance of diversity include marginalizing or ostracizing someone because of such characteristics as their physical appearance, socio-economic level, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, etc. Non-malicious un-acceptance of diversity occurs when, without intending to offend, we treat others differently based on their differences from us that, in reality, are superficial and insignificant. Anything less than full acceptance of everyone in our community is simply wrong and should not occur at the American School at any time by any members of our school community.

Introduction

The American School is a private, non-denominational, non-profit, experimental-type college-preparatory school sponsored by The Interamerican Educational Society of Tegucigalpa (S.E.I.T.) . The School is fully accredited by the Honduran Ministry of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools–Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and the International Baccalaureate Organization (I.B.O.). The School is a member of the College Board, the Association of American Schools in Central America (A.A.S.C.A.), and the Association of Bilingual Schools of Honduras (A.B.S.H.). Instruction is primarily in English, except in such courses as Spanish language and Honduran social studies.

S.E.I.T. is an organization formed by parents who have children at the American School. The governing body is the Parents' General Assembly, which elects a Board of Directors from the parents. The Board of Directors sets policies and the philosophical framework within which the school operates. Each member is elected for two years in his/her position. The Board of Directors names a superintendent to serve as head of school.

S.A.C.S. C.A.S.I. is an association located in Decatur, Georgia, U.S.A., which accredits public and private schools in eleven southern states and several Latin American countries. The American School follows the S.A.C.S. C.A.S.I. American-International School Standards required for an overseas American education.

Notice

This Handbook does not in itself include all pertinent rules and regulations. The superintendent and principals of the school will use discretion in the handling of every individual case.

The American School is affiliated with the following associations:

- The Southern Assn. of Colleges and Schools - Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (S.A.C.S. C.A.S.I.)
- The Honduran Ministry of Education
- The International Baccalaureate Organization (I.B.O.)
- The Association of American Schools of Central America (A.A.S.C.A.)
- The Association of Bilingual Schools of Honduras (A.B.S.H.)
- The Inter-Regional Center for Curriculum and Materials Development (I.R.C.)
- The Association for the Advancement of International Education (A.A.I.E.)

ACTIVITIES

The American School offers a wide variety of co- and extracurricular activities, as well as a strong and varied athletic program. These various activities offer students venues for meeting friends, involving themselves more in the life of the school and its community, and in general enriching their school experience.

Although students are encouraged to take advantage of these various opportunities, they are also urged to make careful choices and serious commitments regarding activities and athletics. Many require time commitments, and some at times may even require students to miss class to attend special events. Careful consideration should be made as to what effects this will have on one's overall attendance and academic performance, as participation does not excuse students from fulfilling their academic obligations. Additionally, once having joined an activity, students are expected to honor their commitment to the organization and its members and regularly attend and contribute to meetings, practices, events, etc.

Some of the activities that could be offered in the Elementary School:

Art Club
Basketball
Cheerleading
Catequism
Crafts Club
Eagle League
Math Club
Reading Club
Science Club
Soccer
Volleyball
Etiquette Club
Games Club

Progress Reports & Report

The school year is divided into four grading periods or quarters for all homeroom classes. Special teachers (Art, Computer Science, Music, Library Science, and P.E.) give grades or report cards on a semester basis. Progress reports are issued four times per year at the mid-point of each quarter and whenever the teacher feels it necessary to inform the parents of academic deficiencies or improvements. **Students are issued these reports directly and are asked to return them signed by a parent the next day.** Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action such as being sent to Principal's office and parents be contacted immediately by phone. Furthermore, anytime a student receives an Approaching Standard with Minimal Progress or Below Standard grade on any assignment, project, quiz, test, etc., the student is expected to return document signed by a parent the following day after it goes home. Students with outstanding debts, overdue library books or other incomplete or unfinished school matters will not receive their report cards, or take recuperation exams until they secure clearance.

Progress Reports and Report Cards will be issued on the following dates.

Quarter	Progress Reports	Quarter Ends	Report Cards
1	September. 11st	October. 16th	November 2nd
2	November. 16th	December. 18th	January 15th
3	February. 15th	March. 12th	March. 26th
4	April 23rd	May. 28th	May. 28th

Parent-Teacher conferences may be held any time during the school year, whenever needed by parents or by school officials. Requests for an appointment should be made in writing **directly with the child's teacher.**

Citizenship Description

The following description pertains to the criteria used to assess citizenship and behavior in Elementary School report cards:

Needs Improvement (N)	Satisfactory (S)	Excellent (E)
<p>Repeated incidence of any of the following behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive in class. • Failure to come prepared for class (includes materials and homework). • Failure to follow class and school rules. • Impolite to teachers and/or peers. • Failure to take responsibility for own actions. • Side conversations. • Asking questions unrelated to class material. • Offering excessive excuses for inappropriate behavior. • Inappropriate use of second language (English or Spanish). • Cheating or copying on tests and homework. • Tardiness and/or absenteeism. • Inattentive or self-absorbed behavior. • In school or home suspension. 	<p>Occasional incidence of unsatisfactory behaviors and consistent display of ALL the following behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politeness to other students and teachers. • Punctuality • Prepared for class • Seeks out and does make-up work. 	<p>Consistent display of the following behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and positive contribution to class activities. • Encourages peers to their best performance and behavior. • Shows extra effort in class work. • Displays self-discipline in academic and personal responsibilities. • Consistent use of English as means of oral communication.

Grades

Elementary grading system is based on standards:

Grades 1-5

Meeting Standards (M)

Exhibits proficiency at grade level standards

Approaching Standards

Proficiency is close to grade level standards

Approaching Standards with Great Progress (A+)

Approaching Standards (A)

Approaching Standards with Minimal Progress (A-)

Below Standards (B)

Needs significant improvement

Exceeds Standards (E)

Exhibits proficiency exceeding grade level standards

A special comment will be made in report cards for special education classes or students obtaining grades with lots of teacher help.

Each quarter, students could receive awards depending on their academic improvement for the quarter. These will be given out in class and/or be included in the report card which is sent home with the student.

Parents will be notified if special meetings are held for this purpose.

Criteria For Promotion

Decision regarding promotion for those students whose academic performance is not satisfactory will be made by the administration taking into consideration the following:

- A) No grade Below Standards
- B) Scores on standardized test.
- C) Teachers' recommendation
- D) Counselor's recommendation.
- E) Parental support and involvement.

Recuperation Exams

As required by Honduran law, a student who fails a subject for the year, in the case of year-long courses, or for the semester, in the case of semester-long courses, has the right to take a recuperation exam to demonstrate a minimum degree of mastery of the objectives of the entire course, even though the student may have passed certain quarters. Recuperation exams are normally administered in late July or early August. A grade of Approaching Standards is considered a passing grade on recuperation exams.

ELEMENTARY DISCIPLINE CODE

Good student discipline is essential for the everyday running of a school. We expect our students to respect the rights and beliefs of other people. The following things are not allowed and are considered infractions (Major or Minor).

This succeeds only if carried out clearly, consistently, fairly and expediently.

I. Major Offenses

MAJOR (OFFENSES) = AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION (Missed work no credit and a Below Standard)	
1	Fighting (physical).
2	Insubordination (direct disobedience)
3	Stealing.
4	Cheating, Plagiarism
5	Forgery
6	Possession of dangerous objects or substances; throwing rocks and/or sticks.
7	Damaging school or others' property.
8	Smoking
9	Verbal or written use of inappropriate language towards a teacher.
10	Continued use of inappropriate language in general.
11	Threatening others
12	Skipping class
13	Answering back to teachers
14	Continued bullying behavior/harassment

First Major offense:	Parents notified and one day suspension.
Second Major offense:	Two (2) days suspension and conference with parents and counselor.
Third Major offense:	Three (3) days suspension and conference with parents, Principal, teacher and Counselor

After 3rd Major offense: Teacher, Principal, and Director meet to determine action to be taken. One alternative is expulsion. **Another alternative is placing student on social probation for the rest of the year or for the following school year. This is applicable especially for students who demonstrate the behavior item #14 (Continued bullying behavior /harassment of the students.)**

II. Minor Infractions

1	Chewing gum.
2	Failure to return letters, notes, quizzes, tests, etc. with grades Below Standard signed the next day.
3	Not doing homework on time
4	Not wearing the complete uniform; Writing/tearing uniform; Inappropriate hair length for boys; excessive jewelry for girls.
5	Disobeying classroom rules (Disrupting, etc.)
6	Disobeying cafeteria or playground rules
7	Disobeying hallway or bus rules. (eating, running, etc.)
8	Inappropriate language. (verbal or written)
9	Dishonesty, lying
10	Bullying others: such as, but not limited to: a: Social ridiculing of peers b: Name calling c: Teasing d: Rumor spreading e: Pushing, shoving f: Excluding or isolating from groups

An infraction must be signed by a parent and returned to the office **the next day**. Students who do not comply will be issued a second infraction. Students who *consistently* do not bring this second infraction signed will be sent to the Assistant Principal before being admitted to class.

The accumulation of three (3) infractions or five (5) tardies within a marking period results in an automatic detention, and parent verbal/written contact.

The accumulation of three (3) detentions in the school year will result automatically in a 1 day suspension with no credit on all missed work. Next suspension –2 day suspension.

Detention

Detentions will be held and supervised on Thursday from 2:30 – 4:30 P.M. Gr. 3-5 and 2:30 – 3:30 Gr. 1-2. A detention notice will be sent home by the Assistant Principal notifying the parents. Students need to be on time for detention. If a student is late or does not show up for the detention, it will be doubled (two Thursdays), unless he/she presents a medical excuse. **Any other reason, is unacceptable.**

Automatic detention will also be given at the Principal’s discretion.

Bullying

Is any type of verbal, emotional or physical abuse against a person associated to AST, which is a conscious, repeated, willful and deliberate hostile activity, intended to harm and/or induce fear through the threat of further aggression. Bullying underlying purpose is to humiliate or hurt another person. A bullied person is one who repeatedly is exposed to negative actions or one or more persons. Bullying may include, but it is not limited to:

Verbal Bullying

1. Name calling, teasing.
2. Making fun of or being disrespectful of another person's physical characteristics, nationality, creed or beliefs, color, size, physical challenge or disability, family problems, ability to learn, or athletic ability.
3. Using inappropriate language (i.e., swearing).
4. Spreading lies or rumors about a person.
5. Laughing at another's misfortune.
6. Inciting others to fight or bully someone in any way.
7. Putting someone down.

Threatening

1. Threatening to physically hurt a person if she/he does not comply with the bully's requests.
2. Using antagonistic language toward someone – e.g., "I don't like the way you are looking at me."

Social Exclusion

1. Not allowing a person to play with or to participate in group activities.
2. Forming a circle of friends or group on the playground or in the hallways so that another person can not join in.
3. Speaking with a group so that one person is excluded either because of language or slang used by only a group.
4. Ignoring a person.
5. Refusing to be someone's friend, or participating in a group's efforts to isolate or exclude someone.
6. Refusing to allow someone his or her place in a line or on the bus.

Physical Bullying

1. Pushing or shoving someone, hitting someone, poking or jabbing someone with hands, fingers or objects such as pencils, sticks, etc.
2. Grabbing someone's clothes (e.g., taking off someone's hat and throwing it down or to someone else, grabbing a person's clothes with the intent to tear).
3. Fighting.
4. Making threatening gestures

Vandalism, Extortion/Theft

1. Damaging someone's property or locker.
2. Breaking someone's pencils, pens, or art supplies.
3. Writing on someone's notebook or binder without their consent or permission.
4. Taking someone's lunch money against their will.
5. Taking someone else's lunch.
6. Taking/hiding somebody else's property.
7. Graffiti

Sexual Bullying

1. Unwanted or deliberate touching or cornering.
2. Unwanted letters or pictures of a sexual nature.
3. Making kissing sounds, howling smacking lips.
4. Staring in an inappropriate manner
5. Marking sexual gestures or sexually-suggestive facial expressions or body movements
6. Marking unwanted, sexually-suggestive sounds
7. Speaking either to or about someone in any way that is sexually suggestive.

Academic Probation Policy (Grades 4—12)

Conforming to Board policy 8.502, the policy of the American School concerning students who are academically deficient states that students who fail one or more courses for the year or the semester, in the case of semester-long courses, are placed on academic probation for the following school year. After spending a school year on academic probation, students who again fail one or more courses are subject to being denied re-enrollment to the school for the following school year, regardless of the results of their recuperation exams. Whether on academic probation or not, students who earn grade point averages of below 70 or Below Standard for the school year are likewise subject to being denied re-enrollment for the following school year. Decisions concerning the denial of re-enrollment of a student are made in the best interest of the student and the school by the administration in consultation with the faculty and counseling staff.

Students who have two or more failing grades for the school year that have not been remediated through recuperation exams are subject to being denied promotion to the succeeding grade. Such students must either repeat the grade with approval from the administration or be denied re-enrollment for the following school year. Students who need to repeat a school year may do so only with the approval of the administration, and those who need to repeat more than one school year are subject to being denied re-enrollment for the following school year.

Student Discipline-Social Probation

The disciplinary code states that certain behaviors constitute mayor and minor offenses (American School handbook pgs. 8 and 9) which are sanctioned with infractions, detentions, suspensions, and school transfers.

The American School policy states that:

“The students that consistently violate the rules or are involved in major infractions can be **placed on discipline-social probation**. The disciplinary stature will be determined on a semestral basis.

The students and parents will be informed in writing and through conferences of the terms and reasons for this probation.

The students who do not follow these rules can be expelled and the admission can be denied for the next school year in the American School.”

In the Elementary, this is especially applicable to students with continued bullying/harassment behavior.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Attendance

1. Students present in class when an assignment, quiz or test is announced but absent on the day that the assignment is due or test/quiz given **must turn in the assignment or take the test/quiz on the day of their return to school.**
2. Students who anticipate a prolonged absence from school should notify the appropriate school office and **make arrangements with their teachers in advance** in order to receive assignments and agree to when work will be due and missed tests, etc. will be taken. **In the case of any absences, whether anticipated or not, it is the responsibility of students and/or their parents to seek out their teachers to arrange to make up missed work.**
3. Students returning after excused absences will be given sufficient time to complete missed assignments and tests. Make-up time is usually equivalent to two days for every day absent.
4. Students arriving late to school must contact those teachers whose classes the student missed to receive assignments. Such students will normally be required to take that same day any tests or quizzes given earlier on the same day and turn in any significant assignments due that day. **Likewise, students who anticipate leaving school early are required to notify those teachers whose classes the student will miss.** Such students will normally be required that same day to turn in any significant assignments due that day but will receive no credit for any tests or quizzes given that same day in classes that they will miss.
5. **Students and parents must request permission from the Elementary Principal's office if an extended absence from school is anticipated.** Elementary Principal will in turn discuss with the student's teachers as to whether or not permission should be granted.
6. Following an absence from school, it is the responsibility of students to copy missed notes from classmates. **Anytime a student is absent, a written excuse must be presented to the homeroom teacher who in turn will send it to the Elementary Principal. Any absence will be considered unexcused, unless a written note is presented from parents or medical doctor within 2 days of absence.**
7. Teachers will receive notification whether a student's prolonged absence was excused. The difference between an excused and an unexcused absence is that work may be made up only in the case of excused absences. **Students do not get credit for work missed due to unexcused absences.** This includes suspended students. This policy is not subject to teachers' discretion and is absolutely required in all cases of suspension and unexcused absence.
8. Excessive tardiness to school and to class is not permitted. Work missed in class due to unexcused tardiness cannot be made up. Parents of the students continuously late will be required to have a conference with the principal.
9. Students who arrive tardy to school more than five times during each quarter of the school year are subject to detentions after school and/or suspensions there after.
10. Students will be admitted to the classroom after the morning pledge. Before 7:30 a.m. students should go to the playground. They are not to be in the halls. A student misbehaving during this unsupervised time will be issued an infraction.
11. Because classroom attendance is of utmost importance, it is assumed that **unless absolutely necessary** medical appointments **will not be scheduled during school hours.**
12. Students may be permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day only with prior permission in writing from parents to child's teacher and the approval of the **Principal. Verbal messages from students are not accepted. Students are expected to check out with the Elementary School secretary before departing.** An adult must pick-up student from office, infirmary or classroom. **Asking students to go down to parking lot by themselves is not allowed.**
13. Students arriving to school once pledge has started, will line up on the sides, next to Principal to listen to announcements and wait to be given a late pass before being admitted to class.

14. In the event that your child needs an early dismissal you must secure a dismissal slip from the Elementary Principal's Office. **The request must be in writing.** Verbal messages from the students are not acceptable. Homeroom teacher must be notified by parent or adult picking up child, that the student is leaving the school before the student leaves campus.
15. The American School will not assume responsibility or liability for students on campus in unsupervised activities after school.
16. Family trips should be scheduled during school holidays. **Absence from school due to extension of holidays or absence due to trips during school days is unexcused.**
If a family trip is absolutely unavoidable, parents must present a written request to the principal and notify all of student's teachers in advance. Only special circumstances allow for excused absences due to a trip. Meeting with the principal is not an automatic permission or excuse to miss school.
If the absence is excused, parents will assume responsibility for helping the student make up the work within 2 days for each day missed. Students will also be responsible for taking any tests scheduled on the day they are back, therefore the importance of notifying teachers prior to absence, to arrange for missed work.
17. **If the trip is considered an unexcused absence, no make-up work is given.** A Below Standard will be assigned for any homework, classwork, and/or test missed.
18. Absence due to extended holidays or vacation automatically may eliminate student from participating in

Student Uniforms

American School students are expected to come to school appropriately dressed and groomed. **Students arriving to school inappropriately dressed will not be permitted to attend class until appropriate clothing is obtained. Absences from class for failing to adhere to the dress code or expectations of appearance are considered unexcused absences.**

Boys Uniform:

- a) Blue pinstriped slacks or bermuda length (Gr. 1-3 only) pants with polo shirt with embroidered school emblem.
- b) White ankle length (or longer) socks are to be worn with the slacks.

Girls Uniform:

- a) Blue pinstriped knee-length jumper with a tucked-in white blouse.
White **ankle-length (or longer)** socks are to be worn with the jumper.
- b) Blue pinstriped slacks or bermuda length pants (Gr. 1–3 only) with polo shirt with embroidered school emblem.

With the exception of the P.E. t-shirt, only **solid white** undershirts are allowed to be worn under the polo shirt or blouse and are required to be tucked in at all times.

Students may choose to wear leather dress shoes, which must be either black or navy blue; or sneakers, which must be solid navy blue, white, black, grey, or a combination of these colors.

It is highly recommended students wear tennis shoes with high ankle and heel support on P.E. days.

Please refrain from buying fashion type tennis shoes (especially for girls). Students should wear proper physical education foot wear on P.E. days.

Student Uniforms (Continued from previous page)

The P.E. uniform consists of navy-blue school shorts, white school t-shirt, and tennis shoes that conform to the description in the previous page. During cold weather, students may wear the school's sweatpants and sweat-shirt instead of the regular pant and polo shirt. Nevertheless, **P.E. shorts must be worn under the sweatpants on these days, as well.**

Official school jackets or school sweatshirts may be worn. All jackets and sweaters should be navy blue, white, black, grey, or a combination of these colors. Inappropriate or excessively large wording, emblems, etc. on jackets or sweatshirts is not permitted, nor are jean jackets. These will be taken away by teacher and either reclaimed at the end of the day or kept until parents come to claim them personally.

Uniforms may be purchased at the school store. Students new to the American School will be given two weeks from the date of enrollment to be in proper uniform.

Baseball caps or other forms of headwear (wrap around bandanas, head kerchiefs) are not to be worn on campus during school hours.

The uniform should be worn only at school or when representing the school. It is considered inappropriate to wear the uniform in other public places. Inappropriate behavior while **wearing the school uniform off campus may result in disciplinary consequences.**

The uniform must be in proper presentable condition at all times. Examples of improper conditions of the uniform include missing pockets, torn or excessively frayed shirts or pants, writing on uniforms, un-hemmed pants, pants that touch the floor.

Expectations of Appearance

Aside from the proper wearing of the uniform, the following are guidelines regarding expectations of personal appearance. Adherence to these expectations is required at any time while representing the American School on or off campus, to include field trips, trips for co- or extra-curricular activities, athletic competitions, and school ceremonies, including the graduation ceremony.

Students may wear jewelry, however no jewelry representing anything inappropriate is permitted. Long rows of colored bracelets are not permitted, nor colored or long earrings or necklaces.

Boys may not wear earrings, nose-rings, nor any other rings or studs that pierce the skin.

Girls may wear conservative earrings only. Big earrings or hanging earring not allowed.

Girls may not wear nail polish or head kerchiefs to school.

Students may not dye their hair colors that appear unnatural, or use color spray paint on any given day.

Hair length for boys: hair should not touch eyebrows, neck or ears.

Gum chewing is not allowed.

The administration reserves the authority to make all judgments concerning the appropriateness of all aspects of the appearance of each student, to include his/her wearing of the uniform.

Expectations of Student Conduct

Our conduct and behavior reflects upon the entire American School community. Our respect for rules, regulations, and procedures greatly enhances the educational atmosphere at school and reflects positively on the entire American School community. Respect for one another, cultural sensitivity, and understanding are essential elements in an international community and school.

The conduct of American School students *on and off campus* shall reflect standards of citizenship desired by members of the community and the people of Honduras. The ultimate goals for students are self-discipline and responsibility for one's actions.

American School rules and regulations are applicable and in effect at all times on the campus, including weekends, during school-sponsored events off campus, and in the immediate vicinity of the school. School officials are authorized to question any student concerning their behavior while the student is under school supervision. All property in school, including desks, cubbies or items brought onto the school's campus by students or others, is subject to search by school officials at their discretion.

Students are encouraged to contribute to the appearance of their school. Discarding of trash anywhere except in the appropriate receptacles is absolutely forbidden.

While in the cafeteria, students are expected to conduct themselves civilly and politely. It is the responsibility of each student after eating to clear away anything brought to a table and to throw away one's trash.

Graffiti, vandalism, and any other form of intentional damage to property will normally result in significant disciplinary consequences. **Students will be charged for any damage to school property.**

Food and beverages are allowed in classrooms, only on special celebrations. No food deliveries are allowed without prior authorization from the administration. Delivery of home lunches or commercial lunches (like Burger King, Wendy's, Pizza Hut, etc.) will not be allowed in the classrooms or brought to school during extracurricular activities without prior authorization. Students must bring lunch with them or buy lunch in the cafeteria.

Electronic devices, to include walkmans, I-pods, etc. are not permitted on campus. Any electronic device used or even exposed is subject to being confiscated and held by the administration. The confiscated device will be returned only to child's parent.

Elementary students do not have permission to bring cellular phones to school.

All elementary school students must know and be able to give home telephone number and home address.

In all interactions with other students and adults, students are expected to be courteous and civil. In all dealings with adult staff members, to include cafeteria staff, secretaries, security guards, maintenance workers, cleaning staff, etc., students are expected to display courtesy and respect and follow reasonable instructions. To fail to do so may result in serious disciplinary consequences.

Assembly Behavior

1. Students will proceed to assemblies quietly and in an orderly fashion.
2. Students are not to get up to leave during a performance, unless they are encountering some emergency.
3. Whistling, screaming and other types of noises are not appropriate in the assembly setting.
4. Upon entering and exiting, students are to observe polite and considerate behavior.
5. Students are expected to direct their attention to the events on stage and show proper respect for performers.
6. Students will not leave the assembly until dismissed by the adult in charge. They will stay as a group at pre assigned areas.

Cafeteria Rules

Each student will:

1. Enter the cafeteria quietly
2. Use common courtesy when buying/paying for food.
3. Remain quietly in line while buying food.
4. Talk quietly with students at his table only.
5. Sit on benches, not tables.
6. Dispose of all uneaten food, straws, empty cups, milk cartons, etc. before leaving cafeteria.

7. Walk, not run, in the cafeteria.

A student breaking the rules will:

1. Lose time from his recess.
2. Be placed on detention.
3. Lose cafeteria privileges for repeated infractions.

Bus Passes

Students may not use the school bus as means of transportation to a friend's house for party or play purposes. We recognize that certain special events require the need of your child/children to ride a different bus. For example: if parents will be away on a trip and students are staying with a friend or relative and no one will be home at arrival time. If this is the case, please notify the Principal and homeroom teacher in writing beforehand. Without written permission from the elementary office based on a written request from the parent, the child/children **will not be allowed** to board a bus he is not assigned to. **We do not accept verbal messages from students.**

To avoid any problems and/or misunderstanding with school transportation, please take note of the following:

- If your child uses the school bus on a regular basis and for a special reasons will not use the bus for any number of days you must notify the teacher in writing. Include the name of the person who will be picking up the child at school.
- If your child does not use the bus on a regular basis but because of a special circumstance will need to, please send note to your child's teacher. At this time you must **also notify the Elementary School in writing**. He/She will be given a note allowing him/her to board the bus.
- Any child needing a bus pass for the day, must make arrangements in the Elementary Office during lunch recess or early in the day, **not at dismissal time (2:30 p.m.)**.

Bus Regulations

Transportation to and from school is available to all American School students. It is expected that students maintain appropriate behavior at all times. Students may be prohibited from riding the school bus should they be involved in the following infractions:

1. Eating food or drinking beverages on the bus.
2. Putting arms, hands or head out of the bus window.
3. Loud talking, getting out of one's seat, rough play or fighting.
4. Throwing objects out of the bus window.
5. Getting on or off of the bus at a point other than the designated drop-off point unless with a bus pass.
6. Disrespect towards the bus monitors or drivers.
7. Any behavior that jeopardizes the safety of the bus passengers.
8. Vandalism.
9. Any behavior that is distracting to the driver.
10. Continual misbehavior or violation of other American School rules as applied to bus behavior.
11. In order to ride a bus different from one's regular bus, a written note from home must be presented to the Elementary School Office to obtain the required bus pass.
12. **Any changes to bus use must be done in writing. Verbal messages from students, phone call from parent text recorded or messages on cell phone are not acceptable.**

Rules For Private Transportation

Each student will:

1. Walk quietly to the car loading area.
2. Place lunchboxes and bags away from steps and walk area.
3. Be ready to board immediately when his car arrives.
4. Refrain from crossing traffic lanes. Wait only at designated areas. *Waiting along the curb or near the parking lots entrance is forbidden.* Autos that enter the lower (bus) loading area endanger children getting on buses. You may not use this area at dismissal times. There is no parking in the lower bus lot for dropping off or picking up students.
5. Refrain from playing ball outside the elementary library or car loading areas.

Consequences:

A student breaking the rules will:

1. Be given an infraction
2. Be reported to the child's teacher
3. Be put on detention after repeated infractions.

Children who use the bottom parking, and are not picked up by 3:20pm, will return to the Elementary Office to wait for a ride (unless supervision be provided by an older sibling/relative at the car loading area.)

6. **Changes to private transportation schedules must be done in writing. Verbal messages from students, parents or drivers are not acceptable.**

MISCELLANEOUS

Guidance and Counseling

The Counseling Department of the American School is designed to help all students develop their educational and social strengths and to become responsible and productive citizens. This program takes into special consideration the needs of the international and transitory student, specifically addressing the issues of cultural and language differences. These needs are addressed through large and small group counseling, individual counseling, consultation and coordination with other resources.

School Nurse

The responsibility of the school nurse is to give first aid for emergencies and to treat minor injuries and illness occurring at school. Any student required to take medication during school hours is to take the medicine to the Nurse's Office, with specific written instructions from the doctor or parent. Any special health conditions (ex. asthma, allergies) should be reported to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the school year. A note is required from the parent or guardian, if a student is to be excused from P.E.. A note is required from a doctor if a student is to be excused from P. E. for a week or longer. It is especially important that school nurse and teachers are notified if condition warrants special supervision during P.E. or recess. All medicines must be kept in the infirmary.

Textbook Loan

Teachers distribute textbooks for their courses, which are to be returned at the end of the course. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged textbooks. Replacement costs will be assessed if books are damaged, stolen, or lost. Students losing a textbook during the school year will pay for its replacement before being issued a second text. Should the lost book be found, the replacement cost will be reimbursed to the student. Students who fail either to turn in their textbook in good condition or pay for its replacement are subject to being barred from receiving final report card.*

- Same consequence applies to students losing or not returning library books each quarter.
- Lost classroom library book cost will be divided amongst all students in the class.

Parent-Teacher Organization (P.T.O.)

The Parent-Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) actively assists the school in various ways. One of the main purposes of the P.T.O. is to bring together parents and school personnel in support of school programs. The P.T.O. and the school administration provide leases for cafeteria and bookstore services.

Parties

The following celebrations are observed at school: Día del Niño, Fiesta Catracha, 100th Day of School, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, International Fair, Family Day, Earth Day, Mother and Father's Day and Field Day. Some are big parties, others call for small celebrations. Parties will be discussed during Open House.

Parents are asked to assist the teachers by volunteering as room mothers/fathers for the entire year. Room moms/dads are expected to manage the class fund for expenditures and reimbursements. They are also expected to send a final expense report with each child at the end of the school year.

Parents are allowed to serve refreshments and cake to their child's class to recognize a birthday during lunch or recess time. **This should be planned through the classroom teacher well in advance of the birthday.** Such an event will not involve birthday gifts or other activities and a parent must be present at such celebration. Party invitations for **any celebrations at home** may **not** be distributed at school unless **every child** in the class is receiving an invitation.

Fund-Raising and School Representation

All activities involving fundraising by student or class groups must be authorized by the school administration. All monies collected from any activity or by any student organization must be deposited in accounts managed by the School's activities coordinator.

No individual student or student group may represent the American School without prior school authorization. The school's name may not be used to advertise groups or activities, without the school's expressed consent.

Field Trips

Fieldtrips serve to support the written curriculum and the mission of the school. While it is hoped that the students find them a fun alternative to the classroom, their principal purpose is never simply to entertain. Field trips are planned by teachers as an extension of the classroom experience. When attending field trips, students are provided with a variety of instructional activities and participate in evaluation and review after the trip.

Parents are requested to take turns to assist the teachers as chaperones. Rule of thumb is five students per adult. All parents will be informed about the fieldtrip and a permission slip must be signed and returned. Failure to return the permission slip will result in your child not being allowed to accompany his/her class. There will be no field trips the last two weeks of school.

Chaperones accompanying students to a fieldtrip will be given an informative sheet with regards to chaperone responsibilities during the fieldtrip.

Lost and Found

Students are requested not to bring any valuables to school such as jewelry, large amounts of money, skateboards, toys, or other items of valuable nature.

Teachers are not responsible for these items nor is the second responsible for loss or theft of personal belongings on campus.

All personal belongings and school books found are taken to the main office where they can be claimed by the owner. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Students are expected to pay the full cost of lost textbooks and/or library books. The payment arrangements for textbooks and library books are made through the Principal. Possession of materials not assigned by the school to a student is a major infraction.

Telephone

The office telephone is for student use **only for emergencies**. This **does not** include homework left at home, projects, and other school related assignments. Students may not use the office phone to ask permission to go to a friend's house. Students may not bring cellular phones to school. **All students must know their home phone number by heart. Knowing cell phone number only is not acceptable or safe.**

Tutoring

The school recognizes that some students need additional help during the school year and the elementary office has a list of persons willing to tutor. In some situations, tutoring may be required by the school to ensure success.

The school is not responsible for any arrangements made between parents and tutor. Tutoring will be held off campus only, and teachers **may not** tutor their own students.

Communication with Parents

The American School considers communication between the school and parents to be vitally important. The School communicates with parents through the use of school notices, newsletters, student progress reports, report cards and scheduled conferences between school personnel and parents. The school's webpage is another source of upcoming events, school calendar, and other important school information. The webpage of the school is www.amschool.org.

Channels of Communication

The Board of Directors recognizes the need for proper communications between and among students, parents, teachers, administration and the Board. To assist in achieving this objective, the following general procedures are recommended for all concerned parties:

1. When the problem concerns your son or daughter and their work in school, the best person to see is the classroom teacher. An appointment to see an Elementary teacher may be made by sending a note directly to the teacher. Problems of a personal nature or questions regarding a student's program of study, overall potential, and progress may also be discussed with the counselor.
2. Problems which cannot be resolved through a conference with the teacher or counselor and questions of a more general nature concerning the operation of the school may be discussed with the appropriate principal. Appointments may be made by calling the Elementary School Office.
3. Problems which have not been resolved after conferences with the teacher and principal may be taken to the Superintendent, who will discuss any questions related to the general operation of the school or to school policies and will answer any such questions addressed to him/her by mail. An appointment may be made through her secretary.
4. The Superintendent is the Executive Officer of the Board of Directors and is responsible for the organization, operation and administration of the total school program. Therefore, she is the normal channel of communication between the Board and the public. Questions about school policy should be directed to the Superintendent. Normally, communications directed to the Board will be referred to the Superintendent for reply or action. Individual Board members do not directly involve themselves in administrative matters involving students, teachers and administrators.
5. Requests for changes in school policy and appeals of decisions made by the Superintendent may be addressed to the Board. All communications to the Board should be in writing and should be addressed to the President, Board of Directors. Decisions about school policy will be made only by the Board acting as a whole in a regular or special meeting.

Emergency / Evacuation Procedures

The signal for an emergency evacuation is communicated using the P.A. system and/or the bell system. In the case of such a signal, students are expected to pay close attention to their teachers, who will lead the students to their designated evacuation area following the evacuation maps found in each classroom. All students in the Elementary School will evacuate to the athletic field next to the gymnasium.

All classroom doors should remain unlocked in order to facilitate searching the buildings.

Students outside of class at the time an emergency signal sounds should report directly to the athletic field and either report to their teacher of that period or ask the nearest faculty member where their homeroom teacher is.

It is imperative that all emergency drills be treated seriously. All students, faculty, staff, and administration must report to the athletic field, as well as any visitors to campus. While evacuating the building and while waiting on the athletic field, it is vital that students remain quiet and attentive.

Plagiarism

The following definition has been accepted by the American School in regards to plagiarism. All departments requiring term papers will actively instruct students citing examples to insure originality of work. The following definition of plagiarism is taken from the **MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Thesis, and Dissertations** (Student edition, Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert, Modern Language Association, 1977):

Derived from the Latin word *plagium* ("kidnapper" and also "plagiarist" in the modern sense), plagiarism is defined by Alexander Lindley as "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own" (*Plagiarism and Originality*, New York: Harper, 1952, p.2). Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another's sentences as your own, adapting a particularly apt phrase as your own, paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own, or even presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were your own. Plagiarism applies to ideas in written, verbal, or electronic form. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from another. Although a writer may use another person's words and thoughts, they must be acknowledged as such.

According to the American School Disciplinary Code, plagiarism is considered a serious infraction and will be sanctioned as such.

How To Avoid Plagiarism A Student's Guide

What is plagiarism?

"Plagiarism is pretending that an idea is yours when in fact you found it in a source. You can therefore be guilty of plagiarism even if you thoroughly rewrite the sources words. One of the goals of education is to help you work with and credit ideas of others. *When you use another's idea, whether from a book, a lecture, a Web page, a friend's paper, or any other source, and whether you quote the words or restate the idea in your own words, you must give that person credit with a citation... you may have cited your source, but if you do an improper or inadequate job of it, you can still be guilty of plagiarism... No source may elect not to be cited*" (Harris 133)

When should you cite?

The first thing you should question of the material being used is "Did you think of it?" or "Is it yours?" Your opinions, observations, ideas, commentaries, arguments or analysis do not need to be cited. (154) "Whatever does not originate with you does need to be cited" (154). The only exception to this rule is that Common Knowledge does not need to be cited. Common Knowledge includes whatever can be located in an ordinary encyclopedia or is expected to be known by an educated person such as: Easily Observable information, commonly reported facts, and common sayings. (154) **CAUTION!** Even with common knowledge "The specific expression of common knowledge must be identified" (154). If you use someone else words you must **CITE THEM**. Follow this simple: "**IF IN DOUBT, CITE IT**" (156)

How To Avoid Plagiarism

A Student's Guide

(Continued from previous page)

What are your responsibilities?

Protect your writing – “Do not lend your papers to another for “reference” (137). If your paper ends up being copied you may be implicated as an accessory to plagiarism.

You bear the ultimate responsibility for your projects – Proofread your final paper or presentation material carefully to ensure the content matches your intention. (136) Avoid collusion – collaboration with fellow students or tutors should be clearly identified as acceptable by the instructor or the written instructions for the project. If there is no clear permission to collaborate you are expected to work individually.

When using sources, “mark the boundaries” – the ideas or words you are borrowing must have a beginning and an ending marked in some way. (159)

What are some improper use of sources?

Not using quotation marks because it is “just a couple of words”

When paraphrasing copying some “word for word” from the original without putting quotation marks.

When summarizing still retaining exact phrases without properly quoting them. (166)

Source: Harris, Robert, The Plagiarism Handbook. Pycszak Publishing; Los Angeles, California 2001 “Copyright 2001 by Pycszak Publishing. All rights reserved. Reproduced with permission.”

American School Standards for the Mechanics of Writing

Introductory Note: The standards and expectations for formal writing below are largely taken from the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, and what follows builds upon and compliments previous standards for all written works in both English and Spanish at The American School.

Some Basics

Fonts

- 1) Font size for the main body of all text should be 12 point.
- 2) Though students often like to play with different fonts, for formal writing, especially writing to be sent to the **IB**, the fonts must be appropriate to the task. Roman times and courier are two fonts appropriate for formal writing.

American School Standards **for the Mechanics of Writing**

(Continued from previous page)

Length of Work

Student writing is measured in words, not in pages. Four-thousand words is about ten pages typed and double spaced in 12 font; 1500 words is about two and half such pages.

Line Spacing

Formal writing, especially writing that needs to be graded by teachers or IB examiners, should be double spaced. This makes it easier to read and provides white-space for teacher/examiners to make comments within the text.

Underlining (Including online sources)

- 1) Titles of plays, books, poems published as books, magazines, newspapers, films, television programs, ballets, long musical compositions, compact discs, cassettes, records, operas, paintings, sculptures, and pamphlets, must all be underlined.
- 2) When citing or referring to works from online, the writer should underline the scholarly project or database name. Professional or personal site names should also be underlined.
- 3) Exceptions to the above rules are: The Bible, Old Testament, Genesis, Gospels, Talmud, Koran, and the Upanishads. These works should be treated like any other book, however, in the works-cited list and bibliography.
- 4) Additional exceptions are: Laws, Acts, and Similar Political Documents. Some examples are: Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Treaty of Trianon.

Quoting and Use of Quotation Marks (Including Online Sources)

1. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the beginning and end of a character's speech in prose fiction.
2. Quotation marks should be used in formal writing to indicate when words, phrases or passages are taken from another person or source.
3. Quotation marks are to be used to indicate the titles of short works of poetry, titles of magazines or journal articles, short plays (one act), short stories, articles found online, and titles of songs.
4. Quotations of passages of three or more lines should not be put in quotation marks, but a line should be skipped before and after the quotation and it should be indented to separate it from the rest of the text. Parenthetical notation should also be used to indicate the page on which the quotation can be found. The following example comes from the opening two sentences of an essay.

Joyce's startling opening to A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow that was coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo (3)

American School Standards **for the Mechanics of Writing**

(Continued from previous page)

often jars the readers senses as it places the reader in the mind set of a child. Faulkner found this technique so startling that he imitated when he decided to portray the thought processes of a mentally disabled person in his book The Sound and the Fury.

Contractions and Formal Writing

A contraction is when two words are joined by an apostrophe. Examples are: haven't, you're, and I'll. Contractions should not be used in formal writing. The only exception to this is when quoting another source that uses contractions.

Sources Cited in the Body of the Paper

Parenthetical Notation

The form of source citation currently accepted at the American School is the parenthetical citation in the body of the paper. This form has taken the place of endnotes (used for larger works that contain many chapters so as to prevent any interruption of the flow of the text) and footnotes (which are used for explanatory notes that are not part of the main body of a paper). The parenthetical citation provides a simplified yet effective method of crediting sources properly. Below are examples of parenthetical citation and the different ways it changes to accommodate the more complex issues of citation.

Citation for Papers with One Source

According to Madge Poulson, "the most important factor involved in determining the correct amount of water to give a Venus Flytrap is the amount of flies eaten by the plant in one-week" (958).

Citation for Papers with more than One Source

When citing more than one work in a paper it is necessary to include the authors name in the citation to make clear which work you are referring to:

There is a sharp contrast between the Kurtz's statement, "The horror! The horror!" (Conrad 153) and Hamlet's statement, "The readiness is all!" (Shakespeare 67).

Citations for Internet Sources

Use the same practice as above, however, what is more important is to be sure the Works Cited and or Bibliography pages include the complete internet address of the site from which the source was obtained. To be sure this done properly, a basic guide is given explaining the steps that need to be taken for this under the heading Sources Cited at the end of the paper that appears hereafter. A more thorough and authoritative source can be found in the school library, and that is the 1999 Publication of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Because of the various types of sources that can be found on the internet, we do not provide a generic example here. Neither do we wish to provide more than we have in that section because of the rapidly changing practices for what is accepted as a conventional approach to these citations.

American School Standards for the Mechanics of Writing

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The Difference Between Bibliography and Sources Cited Pages

A sources cited page serves as a limited Bibliography. It is a list of only those sources which are directly quoted or cited in paper, and very often it is also used as key to how each work will be cited. The Bibliography, by contrast includes works that have informed the thinking of the paper, but that may not be quoted from or directly cited in the paper itself.

More on Mechanics and Style in Formal Writing

Foreign Words

- 1) Foreign words in quotations must be reproduced with all accents and other marks as they would appear in the original language. If the writer does not have a keyboard or typewriter that includes these accents and symbols, the writer should add these markings by hand.
- 2) Foreign words included outside of quotations must also be reproduced faithfully to the original language, and should be italicized to indicate that they are from another language.
- 3) If the paper or essay in which foreign words appear is handwritten, it is acceptable to substitute underlining for italics.

Numbers

- 1) In non-scientific or mathematical papers, use of numerals should be avoided. It is okay to use numerals for fractions, decimals, and large numbers. But other numbers should be written in letters. Numerals should not appear at the beginning of sentences.
- 2) Other instances that numerals are acceptable in non-scientific or mathematical papers are in reference to weight, height, time, percentages, money, dates, and page numbers.
- 3) For large numbers it is acceptable to use a combination of numerals and words:
6.5 million.
- 4) Related numbers must be expressed in the same style:

8 of the 120 board members between 1 million and 2.5 billion approximately 50 motorcycles and 25 cars

**The American School
c/o The United States Embassy
Tegucigalpa, M. D. C., Honduras
Central America**