

AISB

American International School of Bamako

**Elementary School
Parent and Student Handbook
2010 - 2011**



MALI

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Introduction

AISB Elementary Faculty and Staff

Administration

David Henry - Director
dhenry@aisbmali.org

Sally Anderson – Admin. Assistant
nesarey@aisbmali.org

Oumou Drame – Receptionist
odrame@aisbmali.org

Sushma Singh - Part-time Registrar
ssingh@aisbmali.org

Kadia Kamano – Business Mgr.
kkamano@aisbmali.org

Assetou Konipo - Accountant
akonipo@aisbmali.org

Mahamane Ciess –
Facilities Coordinator
mcisse@aisbmali.org

Elementary Faculty

Ayo Wilson – Pre-Kindergarten 3 & Physical Education
Angela Reich– Pre-Kindergarten 4
Rebecca Bowman– Kindergarten – ELC Lead Teacher
Debee Chiodi – Grade One – Elementary Lead Teacher
Abram Bear – Grade Two
Ross Connelly – Grade Three
Maria Ramilo – Grade Four
Kristin Pepper – Grade Five
Angela Reich & Paul Chandler – Music
Paula Fury & Babette Porter – ESOL
Zane Dickey – Learning Support & Physical Education
Freya Manning – Visual Arts
Yaa Obeng & Nat Erickson – Technology
Abdel Yattara – Standard French
Barbara Alonso – Intermediate French
Ousmane Barry – Advanced French
Jenny Rose - Librarian

Teacher Aides

Charity Iorlamen – PK-3 Aide
Tenin Traore – PK-4 Aide
Diata Berthe – Kindergarten Aide
Ben Amegatsey, Sirandou Guisse, Geraldine Acramone, Marie-Eve Tremblay –
Elementary Aides
Youssouff Traore – PE Assistant
Souleymane Kone – Library Assistant/After-School Activities Coordinator

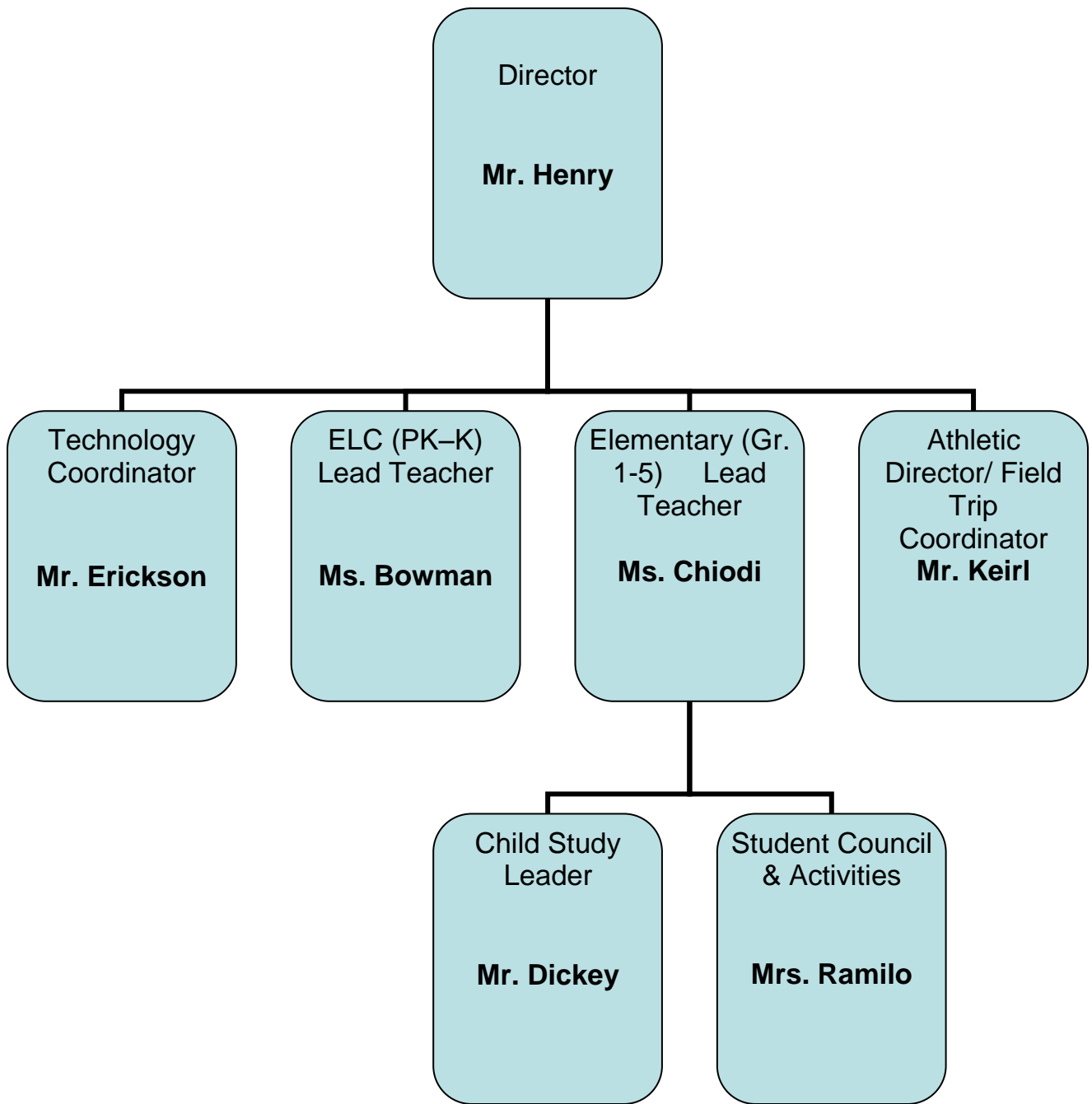
AISB

Mission Statement

The American International School of Bamako is committed to providing a challenging, enriching, English-language American-based educational program which encompasses holistic student development in a nurturing, student-centered, multi-cultural environment.

The American International School of Bamako (AISB) is a non-sectarian, non-profit, privately-funded, tuition-based, Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade School operating under the sponsorship of the American Embassy. Accordingly, the school is based upon the American Educational System, is organized in a manner consistent with comparable schools, and the basic school program is taught in English. However, the school has inherent international qualities due to its setting in the Republic of Mali, in French-speaking Africa, and due to the diverse international backgrounds of the school population. Modifications to the basic American program have been made to complement the school's international setting and population. These modifications may include but are not limited to, French Language instruction, English as a Second Language instruction, and inclusion of Malian culture, history and geography in the curriculum.

**Elementary Organization for AISB
2008-09**



Description of the School

Established in 1977, the **American International School of Bamako (AISB)** is an independent, coeducational, private school which offers a full U.S. educational program for students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, with English as the medium of instruction. Serving both the American and International communities, AISB's student body represents more than 25 nations. The school year is divided into 2 semesters.

A 9-member Board of Directors governs the school, with seven members elected by the AISB Association. There is one appointed representative of the U.S. Embassy, and the School Director serves on the Board as a non-voting member. Membership in the Association is automatically conferred on the parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school and to all professional staff. Parents and members of the school's professional staff are encouraged to attend the regular monthly meetings. AISB is fully accredited by the **Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges**.

AISB's Philosophical Approach

All students at AISB will have an equal opportunity for education consistent with their individual capabilities and within the scope of the school's resources. A child's development should be progressive with emphasis on socialization skills in the early years, concrete operations in the primary school years, and advancement toward abstract thinking as the child grows older. AISB provides an education with a strong foundation in basic skills including receptive and expressive communication skills and problem solving. Effective communication skills must be demonstrated on all school levels and in all areas of study. AISB strives to empower students to be contributing members of the international community, show respect for different genders, races, creeds and cultures and enable students to envision new possibilities in an ever-changing world.

Beliefs Statement

At AISB we hold certain beliefs to be true. These beliefs guide teachers in the presentation of curriculum content, are integral in creating the learning environment of the school, and are the driving force for the Board in establishing and implementing policies and practices.

At AISB:

We are a community of learners in which education is a cooperative endeavor involving students, parents, staff and teachers.

We believe in encouraging resourcefulness, creativity and self-expression.

We will give our students the tools necessary to become life-long learners.

We believe each person is a unique individual with dignity and worth.

We believe in providing a supportive and safe learning environment.

We believe our students should develop an awareness of and a respect for different cultures, locally and globally.

Expected Personal Growth Outcomes

AISB recognizes that the education of students is much broader than the academic content that is determined by the curriculum. The classroom and campus atmosphere, the style of teacher interaction with the students, and the expectations placed on the students produce a long-term impact which will be reflected in the character traits that our students will hold as adults in the larger world. With these Expected Personal Growth Outcomes, AISB strives to create students who will in the future be:

- Responsible and involved global citizens able to adapt in a rapidly changing world
- Respectful of self, others and diverse cultures.
- Physically, mentally and emotionally healthy
- Able to express themselves clearly and logically
- Independent thinkers
- Logical problem solvers
- Self-directed and self-confident learners
- Compassionate
- Inquisitive explorers
- Appreciative of the arts

How we achieve these outcomes

Social growth:

In all aspects of the school community we provide opportunities to introduce, re-enforce, and clarify values. School activities are designed to foster responsible social interaction in an atmosphere of mutual respect, friendship, and understanding. The school encourages development of, respect for, and involvement in one's community. Exposure to cultural pluralism enhances the students' international awareness.

Cultural growth:

Through the daily experience of its cultural diversity, AISB encourages students to think of themselves as citizens of the world. They are helped to understand and appreciate the cultural, social, economic, and political ideas and practices of their home countries. They are encouraged to appreciate and participate in the arts and literature of all cultures, particularly those of Africa and more specifically those of their host country, Mali.

Physical growth:

Students are instilled with a high regard for physical and mental health in order to lead energetic wholesome and productive lives. AISB provides support as each child is constantly adjusting to his/her own developmental changes. AISB promotes an understanding and acceptance of one's body, as gained through study and various experiences in the areas of health, physical education, and the life sciences.

Intellectual growth:

Emphasis is given to the development of personal values and thought processes which allow students to think and express themselves clearly and logically. Problem-solving, independent thinking, exploration, self-expression, and experimentation are facilitated with the use of contemporary materials and current technological tools.

Educational theories are constantly being explored by the students, staff, and community in order to determine those which are best for AISB.

Personal growth:

Each child is encouraged to develop his/her own personality in a positive way. The school acknowledges that the emotional development of a child depends on self-respect and respect for others. AISB strives to create an atmosphere of respect in order to prepare each student for his/her personal experimentation and challenges. The school recognizes each student as a unique individual with dignity and worth.

AISB presents a unique learning experience. Education is a cooperative endeavor involving children, professional educators, parents, and the community. Children need to be challenged in the classroom and then assisted and encouraged to meet the challenges in a creative way. Each child will be helped to meet his/her full potential with the support of the school community.

Elementary Facilities

AISB has 3 sections of its campus: The Early Learning Center, the Secondary School campus, and the main campus where the elementary classes, the office, the Multi-purpose Room and playing field are located. The Secondary Campus has several classrooms, including a science lab, a computer lab, a kitchen and 2 screened, covered student-lounge areas. At the main campus there is a small gymnasium with a stage, a library, a music/drama room, art room, an ESOL classroom, a computer lab with 18 I-Mac computers, a half basketball court and a soccer field.

Communication at AISB

Strong communication links between home and school are a vital aspect of an effective school. At AISB, we strive to maintain open channels of communication regarding students and issues of importance to the school and to parents. Effective communication is the responsibility of every member of the school community.

The Director and the faculty want parents to feel they are welcome at any time to share a concern or comment. We practice an “Open Door Policy” at AISB, however, for your convenience, we encourage parents to make an appointment through the school secretary.

AISB Communication Protocol – For Parents

We want parents to seek our understanding of concerns about any aspect of our school. Please contact the relevant teacher(s) directly to express your thoughts or suggestions. If you remain concerned and wish to discuss the matter further, you may get in touch with the Director, Mr. David Henry. You may also contact Mr. Henry if the matter concerns our student services, our curriculum, discipline issues, classroom instruction, financial matters, facilities, planning, and community relations.

Finally, in the unlikely event that none of us is able to resolve the issue at hand after working through the communication protocol, an appeal can be made to the School Board as per Board Policy.

At AISB we are committed to keeping the faculty, parents, and students communicating and working together, enabling the best learning experiences possible for each student.

Communication from AISB

Our communication vehicles include:

Open House: Early in the fall, the Elementary School hosts Open House - an opportunity for parents to tour the school, meet our faculty, and hear classroom presentations. This is the time to receive insights into your child’s curriculum, school day, and school procedures information.

Email - AISB Communication notices will be sent to parents via email to provide updates and information. Please ensure that your current email address is on file at the office.

The School Newsletter: The focal point of the AISB communication system is the school newsletter. This bi-monthly publication features upcoming events, special accomplishments, and ongoing school-wide activities. To comment or make a contribution, please contact Yaa Obeng at: yobeng@aisbmali.org

Progress Reports: Elementary school teachers may send home progress reports throughout the year, generally mid-quarter, but possibly at other times in response to student needs. These reports are meant to keep parents aware of any concerns about progress, or any exciting positive change in the progress students are making between major reporting periods. At the mid-quarter point, progress reports will be sent home for all students whose progress level is of concern to the teacher. That way, parents have a chance to help support their child at home, prior to the actual report card.

Parent Teacher Conferences: Twice per year, parents are invited to attend individual conferences with their child's teachers. The conference experience is the best opportunity for collaborative efforts between parents and teachers in support of student learning. These conferences occur immediately following the first and third reporting periods, this year on November 12th and April 8th.

Notes, Emails and Telephone Calls: Teachers will contact the parents through these methods, as needed. Parents are welcome to use the same methods to contact the teacher. If necessary, a meeting can be scheduled either through the teacher or school secretary. Please be sure to keep your contact information current at the office.

Report Cards: Report cards are sent home at the end of each quarter, 4 times a year. Report card issue dates this year are:

Term 1: Nov 11 Term 2: Feb 11 Term 3: Apr 7 Term 4: Jun 17

The Elementary School Program

Introduction

The AISB Elementary School program includes the Early Childhood Program (Pre-K) through Grade 5. The Pre-Kindergarten program is a separate program for three (PK-3) and four-year-olds (PK-4). This is a readiness program focusing on developing young children's social and pre-academic skills. Pre-Kindergarten 3 offers youngsters a wonderful introduction to the world of school and Pre-K4 builds on that introduction.

Kindergarten continues the readiness preparation with five-year-olds. Although more academic concepts and skills are introduced at this level, the focus is very purposefully placed on providing children with developmentally appropriate experiences that lay the groundwork for first grade and beyond. In many respects, our Kindergarten program is fully integrated into the elementary school program, with specialists in art, music, computer, library and physical education enriching the whole experience. Kindergarten students attend French four times a week.

Grades 1-5 are structured around self-contained classrooms, where the classroom teacher is responsible for instruction in language arts, math, social studies and science. The specialty classes of music, physical education, computers, art, library, and daily French language are taught by specialists in each subject. Many of the topics taught in these “specials” link to the core curriculum, providing children with meaningful connections from subject to subject.

The school day begins at 7:30am and ends at 2:25pm (Monday-Thursday) and 1:30pm on Friday. Many students stay on campus after dismissal to participate in one of the many after school activities. More specific information about each of the Elementary School programs is listed below.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs (half day and three-fifths day program)

The Pre-Kindergarten program at AISB includes 3 (PK3) and 4 (PK4) year old students (students must have turned 3 by Sept. 1) and is designed to meet the particular developmental needs of these children. Three year old students attend from 7:30 to 11:25, while Pre-K 4 students attend from 7:30 to 12:40. An early childhood teacher teaches the program with the help of two full-time teacher aides. Children learn through a variety of learning center activities and through group work and play activities with other children. This program provides the basic foundation for future learning and socialization skills using developmentally appropriate activities in a fun, safe and stimulating environment. Language development and pre-reading skills are emphasized. Please note: Children must be reliably toilet trained for acceptance into the program.

Kindergarten (full day program)

The AISB Kindergarten Program encourages children to develop social, emotional, physical and academic skills and concepts through meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities. Our program considers individual needs and promotes independence, cooperation, creative thinking, self-management and problem-solving abilities.

Reading readiness and language arts instruction are theme based and integrated with math, science, art, music and social studies. Students experience meaningful involvement in the reading/writing process through phonics instruction, journal writing, storytelling, computer activities, shared reading and writing experiences, and other language development activities.

The math program provides active involvement in developmental, hands-on experiences with a variety of manipulative materials. The understanding of concepts like sorting, classifying, counting, patterning, measuring, and estimating are emphasized. In Kindergarten, English language development is encouraged in a stimulating and supportive environment. The Kindergarten teacher is assisted by a full-time aide.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

As appropriate, non-native English speakers in Grade Two through Grade Five (in Grade One, beginning English learners may be considered for the ESOL program) are assessed using the IDEA English proficiency tests upon admission to AISB or when later identified with need. Based on the test results and/or teacher or possibly family recommendations, the student may be placed in the ESOL program. The object of the ESOL program is acquiring, understanding and applying English. Therefore, reporting of progress will be done in the following manner:

The ESOL program at AISB consists of both a push-in and pull-out program depending on the student's needs. The ESOL curriculum usually shadows parts of the class curriculum and supports language objectives of the program. The ESOL teacher works closely with the grade level teacher to support the acquisition of the English language.

The ESOL program is intended to raise the level of English language proficiency in the students so that they are able to participate successfully in the classroom. Once such a proficiency level has been obtained, it will be recommended that the student be exited from the ESOL program, but student will still be supported. Classroom teachers continue to monitor the student to ensure that he or she is functioning well as an English Language Learner.

Parent Note: Research has shown that developing academic skills in one's mother tongue is vital to optimal cognitive growth. Please assist your child to continue building their reading and writing skills in their native tongue, while they are acquiring English.

Also, parents can support their child's acquisition of English by encouraging friendships with English speakers, reading English stories together at home, having discussions during meal times in English, and keeping books and children's magazines in English around for the child to read at their leisure.

A special services fee is charged for ESOL support. Please refer to the school fee schedule for the exact amount.

French

French language is offered daily at the elementary level to students in Grade One through Grade Five. Kindergarteners are offered French four days a week. Specific areas this program will target include: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural studies. The Grade One through Five students are assessed to determine whether they will be placed in our "standard" class for beginners or near-beginners, or the "advanced" class for students who are already quite fluent or are native speakers of French. In the standard class, lessons tend to be experiential in order to teach oral/aural skills in conversational French, whereas the advanced class will also develop reading and writing skills.

Art

Grades PK-4 - G5 attend regularly scheduled art classes. Art lessons and activities are based on creative art production, art history, critical analysis and aesthetics. Children are encouraged to think and work creatively. Pre-Kindergarten-3 integrates art throughout the regular classroom curriculum.

Computers

There are two computers lab on campus, one on the main campus and one at the secondary school. The lab on the main campus currently has 18 I-Macs and is open to all elementary students. Each class visits the computer lab every week to process classroom assignments, work on drill and practice programs, and reinforce core curriculum areas with integrated computer applications. There are also computers located in the Library for research and project production. High speed internet access is available campus wide.

Music

The Elementary School music program provides instruction in basic elements of music and emphasizes auditory perception, expression, creativity, and appreciation of music. Singing, listening, playing and movement provide children with an avenue for expression. All students have the opportunity to perform in the areas of singing, dancing, drama, and playing a variety of classroom percussion instruments, including xylophones, African drums, hand bells and auxiliary percussion instruments. Musical works from a variety of cultures and in a variety of forms and styles are learned, analyzed, performed and enjoyed.

Physical Education

The Elementary Physical Education program is designed to develop each student's physical and emotional skills through physical activity. The program includes fitness education, motor skill development, skill development as it relates to individual and team sports, teamwork, and sportsmanship education. Running shoes and comfortable clothes (sport shorts or sweatpants and a sport shirt, no dresses or jeans) are required on P.E. days.

Note: A student can be excused from PE class for a day if his/her parent sends a note indicating that the child is suffering from a minor illness. If the absence is for a prolonged period, an explanatory note from a recognized medical practitioner is necessary. A parent's note is appreciated when a student is able to resume participation in PE

Library

The basic purpose of the Elementary School Library program is to help children become life-long readers and skilled users and seekers of information. AISB has an extensive book collection with over 9,000 volumes and a variety of magazines and video materials available to be loaned to students, teachers and family members on a sign-out basis. All students make weekly visits to the library for

library lessons that introduce readers to authors, genres and information sources, for help with book selection/check out and Library skill development.

The library is open from 7:30 – 3:45 pm. (closed during lunch) Monday – Thursday. Friday the library closes at 3:30 pm. Children are encouraged to come and visit the library outside of their weekly class visit. A librarian and a full time assistant are employed to assist students in their use of the library. Books may be checked out for two weeks at a time.

Lost Books: Students who lose or damage materials are required to pay the replacement/shipping costs of the book or materials that are lost or damaged.

Academic Expectations and Progress

Quality education at AISB means providing a safe and secure learning environment where children:

- take educational risks and take responsibility for their own actions
- are inquisitive, enthusiastic, and independent learners
- explore and try out new ideas and ways of thinking
- consider and respect different viewpoints from their own
- have the courage to express their own thoughts and feelings
- develop positive attitudes and strong work habits
- grow with a healthy sense of self-esteem
- value learning from and about others who come from a diversity of cultures, races and languages
- learn to interact positively with others, at work and at play
- are expected to give their very best effort in order to learn.

Reading

Reading is a major focus of education in the elementary grades. Parents often ask, “How can I help my child become a better reader?” Patterns established at home directly influence a child’s ability to succeed in school. What can parents do to help?

Read with your child. The best way for parents to help children become better readers is to read to them, or with them, often – starting when they are very young. The more children read, or are read to, the better. When possible, take turns (parent and child) reading aloud to each other, page by page. The conversation that goes along with reading is just as important as the reading itself. Ask your child questions about what has been read, stopping at appropriate times to discuss what has happened or has been learned, make predictions, and/or respond to events in a story. Relate stories to events your child may know about or may have experienced. Encourage them to identify with

characters, pointing out similarities to people they know, or qualities they may have themselves. For younger children, parents can also help by pointing out letters and words on signs, food containers and magazines, and helping their child to associate sounds with letters they see.

Encourage writing. Children also learn to read better by learning to write, or by writing often when they know how. Keep writing instruments and paper handy so your child can learn how to form letters and words. Writing gives young children a chance to practice letter-sound relationships. Young children can dictate their stories to older children or adults. Encourage older children to write stories using their imagination or relating everyday events. Have children write letters to friends or relatives. Writing notes back and forth within the family is another great way to encourage written expression. Keeping a diary or journal of thoughts, dreams, feelings and experiences can also be an enriching and meaningful avenue for writing. Creativity and fluency with writing require regular practice.

Promote independent reading and writing. Limit the time children watch TV or play video games and replace some of it with reading and writing! A good time to read is before bedtime. Help your child find books to read for pleasure. Our library is a good place to start. Visit our library often with your child. Make books and magazines a part of your home. Statistics have shown us that homes with plenty of interesting, appropriate books produce children who are stronger in academic achievement. The Internet is no substitute for reading good books!

Homework

All students, in Kindergarten through Grade 5, may be assigned homework on a developmentally appropriate basis. Expectations regarding homework are communicated to students in class and to parents during orientation sessions, through the student handbook and parent-teacher interviews. In the Elementary School, homework reinforces and/or extends what has been taught in the classroom and helps to develop independent study skills. Parents can help by building routines for students at home with a specified time and a suitable, well-lit place to do their homework.

Guidelines for the amount of time a child should be spending on homework (of course, this may differ slightly from one child to another, depending on many factors), are: kindergarten: 10 minutes; grade 1: 10 – 20 minutes; grade 2: 20 – 30 minutes; grade 3: 30 – 40 minutes; grade 4: 40 – 50 minutes; and grade 5: 50 – 60 minutes per day, except weekends. Sometimes, on Sunday evenings, academic preparations for the week ahead may be required. Long-term projects in the upper grades should be undertaken with regular attention given over the time allotted.

The amount of homework time suggested would not normally include pleasure reading time, which is highly recommended, ranging from 10 to 30 minutes per evening, increasing slightly with each subsequent year of school.

Placement of Students

The AISB administration evaluates new students' records and makes the most appropriate placement of grade level. The Director is responsible for making all placement decisions. Entrance testing in language skills and mathematics and a writing sample may be included in the admissions process, depending on the child's grade level, language skills, and academic history.

At the end of each school year, classroom teachers decide the grade placement of their students for the upcoming year. Most often an elementary student is placed in the next grade. If retention or advancement is suggested, a particular set of criteria will be considered.

Should a rare request be made for a child to be placed one grade higher than normal, strong reasons must exist: superior academic performance alone (usually meaning the student is working at least a grade level ahead in all subjects) is not enough. Superior physical, emotional and social maturity must also exist, and consideration must be given to the child's chronological age in relation to his peer group. In most cases, the child will be placed at the appropriate age/grade level, and the individual student's program, as needed, will be enriched.

Grading System/Assessment Process

Monitoring learning and assessing student progress is an important part of the educational program. Teachers utilize a variety of methods to evaluate student learning. Age appropriate testing, projects, participation in discussions and group activities, presentations, and completion of daily assignments and homework are examples of ways that teachers assess student progress. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year. Report cards are sent home four times a year, at the end of each quarter.

Standardized Testing

Twice a year the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), an adaptive computer-based achievement test, or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), an achievement test, is administered to students in grades three through eight. Student results, along with a brief explanation on how to interpret the scores, are sent to parents when the school receives them. The MAP has been adopted for students in grade nine and ten.

If there is a request or the need to do so, the school may also offer the PSAT, SAT and/or the ACT test for students in grades 11 and 12, at another time.

Teachers use grades to better understand students' strengths and to more adequately identify and provide support for students' learning challenges. The administration and School Board may utilize the results of standardized tests to compare how our students achieved in relation to similar schools.

Appointments

Appointments to talk with teachers may be made to discuss a student's progress at any time. To make an appointment, call the office or contact the teacher.

Activities

Assemblies

On the first day of each week, (usually Mondays) school begins at 7:30 with an assembly for all students from Grade One through Grade Five. Students gather at the paillote in the center of the classrooms under the straw roof. For PK/K students, this assembly takes place at the ELC on Friday mornings. Parents are always welcome to join this event. At the assemblies, students learn about upcoming activities, celebrate birthdays and successes, enjoy entertaining presentations by classmates, review important rules, and develop their community awareness. It is a time of celebrating together joyfully, while enriching of our lives at AISB. It is also a time to gather and share, as members of our AISB community. Please join us!

After-School Activities

AISB offers an After-School Activities Program for a reasonable fee. Activities are offered on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:35 – 3:30. Our After-School Coordinator presents a variety of activities in which students from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Twelve may choose to participate. These classes are scheduled for one hour each week. New sessions are offered four times a year and usually last for six weeks. Activities vary from session to session depending on the availability of qualified instructors. The charge for most activities is 12,000 CFA, other than those that are offered at no cost, such as team sports, student council, and Math Mania (or other such remedial academic activities). For questions regarding the program, call our Activities Coordinator at 2022-47-38 or send an email to skone@aisbmali.org.

Please Note: Once an activity has begun, there will be no refunds available for students who change their minds. Also, students who are before or beyond the grade levels designated for the activity will require permission to join, and may not necessarily be accommodated. We design activities for specific grade groupings.

Drama, Art and Music

The art, drama and music teachers at AISB present a variety of performances during the school year at both the elementary and secondary levels. Generally, elementary students participate in a Winter Music Program and/or Drama Program, U.N. Day, Annual Art Show and Africa Day performances.

Community Celebrations

AISB sponsors a variety of events during the year for the school community. Each October AISB celebrates the multicultural diversity of our student body through **United Nations Day** with a special flag parade and a cultural food festival. Also in October is the **Halloween Carnival** put on by the PTO. In the spring, the school, with the organizational support of the PTO, puts on an **International Festival** with games, a raffle and prizes, student performances, a costume parade and booths with great international food. Finally, the year comes to a close with **Africa Day** in May.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Parent Teacher Organization works collaboratively on activities throughout the year to help support the school and students at all grades. Money raised goes back into activities and special purchases for the school. The PTO strives to include all parents in our school community and helps new families with their transition to AISB. All AISB Parents are welcome to join, attend meetings, or get involved on committees working toward particular events or projects being organized. Watch for upcoming events and news in our PTO display case, located just to your right as you exit the main campus gate!

School Routines

Attendance

The school year contains approximately 176 student instructional days. A child is most likely to make maximum educational progress when attending as many of those days as possible. Days away from school can be detrimental to the natural sequence and continuity of learning. Whenever possible, family vacations should be planned to coincide with school vacations. Where it is not possible, the student will be responsible for making up any missed work. Please make an effort to obtain work assignments from teachers prior to any planned absence.

In the event of illness or family emergency student absences will be excused. When a student is absent from school, parents need to inform the school office by phone. When a student returns to school, a note should be turned in to the office. If a student arrives late to school, they must check in at the office with a note explaining the tardiness. If a child will be missing school for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the school and teacher, and to be in touch if work to be sent home is desired. For a multiple day absence, parents should ask for make-up work before or during the absence, to help the child not to fall too far behind. Generally, the same number of days as were missed will be allowed to complete make-up work.

Absence and After School Activities

A student absent on a given day is not eligible to participate in after school activities on that day unless given special permission by the Administration.

Birthday Parties

Parents who wish to arrange for a birthday celebration at school need to plan with the teacher as to what works best for the class. Regarding after school/weekend birthday parties, if all children in a class are invited (most preferable), then invitations may be sent to school to be passed out during the day. If the party does not include everyone, invitations will need to be delivered outside of school. We wish to avoid hurting any child's feelings.

Change of Address/Phone Numbers

Please contact the Office with a change of address, email address, and/or telephone numbers, both landlines and cell phones. It is important to keep the school informed of any changes so that parents can be contacted in case of an emergency.

Emergency Procedures

Fire drills and Emergency Evacuation procedures are practiced periodically so that students and teachers have the opportunity to learn safety procedures. In the event of an actual emergency, the school will provide information for parents as soon as possible. A phone tree will be used in the case of a real emergency.

Field Trips

Field trips are a vital part of the curriculum of AISB. Each field trip site will be fully researched by an AISB faculty member prior to visiting the site with students. If you have fieldtrip site suggestions, please email them to your child's teacher. All field trips are supervised by the classroom teacher and by sufficient adult supervisors. The Director approves all field trips to be taken, and parent permission forms must be signed and returned prior to the trip.

Guardianship

Should a business trip or family emergency take both parents out of the country, we request that the school be notified as soon as possible. A letter or email to the school administration indicating the following information is needed:

- The name of the guardian and contact information on how that person can be reached during the school day.
- Contact information: where parents can be reached in case of emergency i.e. telephone number, fax number, e-mail.
- Any special information that may be helpful for the teacher and office

Illness

Students who have a fever or obviously contagious symptom (e.g. pink eye or head lice) should be kept at home for the day and see a doctor immediately for treatment and a recommendation for staying home or returning to school. Also, students who are coughing and/or sneezing frequently or have a fever should stay home while sick, to keep germs from spreading to others at school.

Lost and Found

Any unidentified/ unclaimed items left on school grounds are taken to the lost and found, which is located in the restroom area of the Elementary School. For small items, such as rings and lockets, and all items of greater value, ask in the main office. All items such as clothing and shoes remaining in the lost and found are given to a local charity during the longer holiday breaks during the year. Please ask your child to check the lost and found from time to time!

Lunches and Snacks

Students should bring a cold lunch and a snack for recess, from home. Nourishing snacks and lunches of fruits, vegetables and protein are encouraged. Soft drinks, all candy and other items high in sugar content should be avoided. Drinking water is available at school, but we expect students to bring their own refillable water containers. Students can bring bought water or other drinks in non-breakable containers. *Drinks in Glass Bottles are not allowed at school.

Materials, Technology and Supplies

The school supplies necessary books and materials for use in the classroom such as scissors, rulers, glue, markers and construction paper. Elementary students are asked to provide their own stationery supplies as are listed at the end of this handbook and on the school website. Suggested items for students to have at home are colored pencils and markers, scissors, glue, ruler and a dictionary. A calculator may sometimes be used in math, although the teacher specifies it when this is allowable. A computer with a printer would also be helpful, and is more important to our students as they move up by grade level in the school.

Recess

Children may choose from a variety of activities during daily recess times such as soccer, foursquare, basketball and traditional playground equipment. There is a morning recess break and play time during lunch. It is expected that students will stay on school property during this time where they can be supervised by the designated playground supervisor. Students must follow directions given by any school adult to promote safety and respect.

School Hours

School hours for the students at AISB Elementary, Kindergarten to G5, are 7:30 to 2:25 (Monday-Thursday) and finish at 1:30pm on Friday. PK3 students attend

school from 7:30 to 11:25, and PK4 students attend from 7:30 to 12:40 Monday to Friday. The school office is generally open from 7:15 – 4:00 Monday through Friday. Students are not allowed onto the campus grounds prior to 7:15 a.m.

Security

AISB utilizes the commercial security firm used and recommended by the U.S. Embassy in Bamako. There is one entrance to each campus of the school. The gates are kept closed and are always monitored by a security guard. All visitors to AISB are screened at the gate and are asked to check in at the office.

Transportation

The AISB bus fleet includes one full size bus and three small buses. AISB employs professional, certified drivers. Bus transportation is available for students who require the service. The bus has one pick up time for each student, and is scheduled to arrive at AISB before 7:30 when classes begin. There are four possible departure times: leaving school after 11:30 for the Pre-Kindergarten-3 students, departing at 12:45 for Pre-Kindergarten-4 students, departing at 2:40 following school (1:40 on Friday) and at 3:40 following the after school activities program Monday - Thursday. This service is considered a privilege and students must abide by the bus rules of respectful and orderly behavior while traveling. Students are expected to wear their seat belts.

Note: A special services fee is charged for bus services. Refer to the school fee schedule for exact amount.

Telephones

The school telephone is for school business. The school phone is not available for personal use. In cases of emergency, students are allowed to use the phone with the permission of the office receptionist. Students must make arrangements for visiting friends after school before coming to school. If a student is going home in a different vehicle than normal, the school asks that the student bring a note from home rather than phoning for permission.

Cell phones, if brought to school, are the responsibility of the student. AISB does not take responsibility for expensive personal items that students bring to school. Cell phones need to be turned off and kept in lockers or backpacks during the day and may not be out or used for any purpose during class.

Visitors

All visitors should sign in at the designated area when arriving at the school. Parents are welcome to visit a classroom as long as advance arrangements have been made with the teacher. If students wish to have a student visitor, arrangements must be made with the teacher and the Director at least 2 days before the visit. A visit may be allowed for one day only.

Water

Clean, filtered, drinking water is provided to students free of charge by AISB. There are several water stations located throughout the campus. Because of the extreme temperatures experienced here in Mali, students are encouraged to drink water throughout the day to keep hydrated. Children should bring their own non-breakable container to school, which they can refill from the water coolers.

Withdrawal from School

Parents should inform the office at least 30 days in advance when a student is planning to withdraw from AISB. Please use the withdrawal form available in the office. Once the withdrawal date is confirmed, the school will prepare report cards and other official documents. All textbooks and other school materials must be returned to the school. Teachers and the librarian must verify that this has been completed. (**Note:** The departing student will be charged replacement costs for all missing materials.) When all obligations have been met, the student is cleared for withdrawal and school records will then be released.

Yearbooks

A yearbook is created each year of the classes and events throughout the year. They are distributed to each child at the end of every school year. The cost of the yearbook is included in the tuition fee. Please provide a forwarding address so yours can be mailed to you if you move before they arrive.

Rules and Regulations

After School Hours

Elementary students are not to remain on campus after school unless they are accompanied by a teacher, involved in an after school activity, or are with their parents. After 2:40 and the buses have left, there is no scheduled supervision on campus except for those students enrolled in the after school activities program. We expect parents to pick up their children on time. Continued late pick-up is very hard on children, and disrespectful of school employees. Please do not allow your child to be picked up late from school.

Behavior Expectations

Here at AISB, the priority is to provide a positive environment where students can feel safe and educationally supported as they learn to make responsible choices. Respect for people and property is the foundation of our behavioral guidelines. To this end, we hold three overarching rules in the elementary school.

1. Respect Yourself

- Be prepared for school each day with homework complete and materials ready.
- Practice safety at all times.
- Be honest and take responsibility for your words and actions.
- Do your best at work and at play.

2. Respect Others

- Treat all adults and children with respect, kindness and consideration.
- Use appropriate language and an acceptable tone of voice.
- Give everyone a chance to be included and refrain from excluding anyone else.
- Welcome new students and be helpful to them, introducing yourself and easing their way into the school community.
- TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO TREAT YOU!
- Share.

3. Respect School Property and the Belongings of Others

- Do not interfere with or take the belongings of others.
- Return lost property to the owner, your teacher or the office.
- Take care of school buildings, bathrooms, classrooms, equipment and materials.
- Clean up after yourself at recess, lunch and in the classroom.

Discipline Guidelines

The Elementary School disciplinary process is based on an expectation of respect for the individual and for the learning environment. We emphasize the need for children to learn from their mistakes and to experience logical consequences for the choices that they make. We require adults to structure a consistent and safe environment for children. Appropriate role modeling and respectful and consistent interactions are keys to raising capable, self-reliant children. Teachers set rules and consequences for disobedience of them. Many behaviors are addressed by the classroom teacher, who will contact the director or parent if there is a continuing issue. The administration gets involved with the child when deemed appropriate.

With this in mind, the following procedures may apply for students who repeatedly break rules or engage in unsafe, violent, rude, destructive or other severe behaviors. For instances of cheating, stealing, fighting, or insubordination, the supervisor will remove the student from the activity and inform the classroom teacher and the administration. In all of these cases, the parents will be contacted and depending on the severity of the behavior, a student may be suspended for a length of time. Psychological assessment may be suggested.

Discrimination and Harassment

AISB is committed to maintaining a school that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment of any student or employee for any reason.

Students and employees of AISB enjoy the right to study and work in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Any kind of discrimination or harassment is not tolerated because it jeopardizes the harmonious relationships necessary for the effective operation of the school.

Discrimination includes any hurtful words or actions based on gender, race, religion, intelligence, skills, appearance or sexual orientation that deprives an individual of their full rights as a member of the AISB community. Harassment includes hostile, intimidating, or offensive actions and verbal and non-verbal expressions.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. The following guidelines apply:

1. Personal appearance should be neat and clean
2. Clothing must cover the midriff - no bare bellies
3. Shorts or skirts must be modest - no "short shorts"
4. Shoes must be worn at all times
5. Clothing may not contain designs or writing which promote drug use, alcohol, prejudice or violence
6. For Physical Education, T-shirts, (without buttons and with sleeves), sport shorts or sweatpants, socks and sneakers are required. No bare feet, please.

If a student comes to school inappropriately dressed, the parents will be notified. For a second occurrence, the parent may be required to bring a change of clothes to keep on hand at school, for their child.

Forbidden Items on Campus

Items that are not allowed on campus:

- Matches/lighters
- Pets (unless prearranged with classroom teacher)
- Skateboards and Scooters
- Any replica of a weapon
- Toys, electronic games, or any items which may disrupt school activities
- Weapons including any type of knife, gun, or device intended to inflict harm.

If any of these items are found with a student, the item will be removed and the parent notified. If the item is a weapon, the child may be suspended.

Medication Protocol

Students in the Elementary and ELC in need of medication while under AISB's supervision are required to provide a written request from their parents with the labeled medication indicating the dosage, time, restrictions and possible side effects of the medication. The student's name must be on the request.

Playground Rules

Students are expected to obey and be respectful of the playground supervisors. These are the basic playground rules:

1. Cooperative and creative play is encouraged. AISB students do not push, hit, bully, play rough, use bad language or hurt people's feelings.
2. Teachers and aides are outside for the safety of each student. Listen to and respect what they say.
3. Students are not allowed to play in the bathroom.
4. Food and drink are permitted and encouraged in the picnic table area. Students clean up after themselves.
5. Merry-go-round riders must stay seated. Merry-go-round pushers stay in one spot while they push and must push carefully.
6. Climbing trees is permitted on the big tree up to the painted white line.

Technology Use Guidelines

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school area. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The network is provided for students to conduct research, store and process data and communicate with others. Access to network service is given with an understanding that users will act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege - not a right. Access requires responsibility.

Individual users of the school's computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards in an honorable and respectable manner. Beyond the clarification of such standards, the school is not responsible for restricting, monitoring, or controlling the communications of individuals utilizing the network. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to developmentally appropriate information will be honored.

Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers would always be private.

During school, teachers will guide students toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as

they exercise with other information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive or harmful media.

Users of the Internet are expected to practice good network manners. Bad network manners would include:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging computers, computer systems, software, or computer networks
- Accessing and/or altering another person's folder or file without permission
- Copying someone else's work, including web site information
- Using another's id/password

Technology Use Agreement for Students

The American International School of Bamako provides a wide range of computer and technology resources to its students for the purpose of advancing the educational mission of the School. As a user of School computers, you are expected to review and understand the Acceptable Use Procedures. You are expected to:

1. Protect your login information from others. Do not use other users' passwords.
2. Exercise good judgment while using technology and the internet.
3. Respect school property and be responsible in the use of the equipment. Do not destroy, modify or abuse the hardware or software in any way.
4. Do not add or delete software on school computers. Get permission to download large files. Streaming audio or video is prohibited.
5. Personal laptops need to be registered with the Network Administrator and Internet use will be monitored.
6. Do not use school computers for illegal, harassing, vandalizing, inappropriate or indecent purposes.
7. Accessing or processing inappropriate material is a violation of school policies. Notify an adult when witnessing information or messages that seem inappropriate.
8. Be ethical and courteous. Sending hate, harassing, obscene, or discriminatory remarks is a violation of school policy Number 721.
9. School computers may not be used to interfere or disrupt other users,

services or equipment, including distribution of unsolicited advertising (Spam), propagation of viruses and distribution of large quantities of information (chain letters, network games or broadcasting messages).

10. Do not assume that because something is on the Internet that you can copy it. Please respect copyright laws and avoid plagiarism.

11. Do not give out any personal information over the Internet.

12. No social networking or live streaming sites (ie: Facebook, MySpace, YouTube) can be accessed during school hours.

Violation of any of the above conditions of use may be cause for disciplinary action. Violations may constitute cause for revocation of access privileges, suspension of access to School computers, other school disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

What Can I Expect From My Child's Teachers?

The teacher is expected to know your child as a learner and use that knowledge to match the child with a meaningful learning experience. The teacher is not expected to develop an individualized curriculum or program for each student.

The teacher is expected to support your child's development; this includes the very important aspect of developing independence in learning and a sense of personal responsibility. For this reason, the teacher will often insist that children strive to develop the independent habits expected at their age, rather than doing tasks for them that they find difficult to manage.

The teacher is expected to respect and get to know your child as a person, and to strive to develop a trusting and confidential relationship that will support healthy social and emotional growth.

The teacher is expected to carry out regular assessments of your child's learning, academic, social and behavioral, and record this in such a way that it may be shared with you and your child, and used to develop future goals for your child.

The teacher is expected to form an active partnership with parents to nurture the overall development of the child. Outstanding achievements and growth, or patterns of learning or behavior that give cause for concern, are expected to be communicated to you as soon as possible.

What Does AISB Expect From Parents?

Parents are expected to be active partners in their child(ren)'s education. Children always achieve the greatest success when teachers and parents are united in supporting their learning.

AISB expects that parents will ensure their children attend school regularly and on time, on all scheduled school days. They must also be collected promptly when school ends if not using school bus transportation.

AISB expects that parents will attend parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring and other meetings as announced, including Open House early in the fall. Only by attending such meetings will parents fully understand their child's progress and their child's teachers' opinions and concerns.

AISB expects that parents will communicate with the teacher if they have a concern about a learning or behavioral matter; and that they will seek verification from the teacher if they are concerned about information their child gives them about school. (Remember, children may not be in possession of all relevant information). We also like to be informed if there are circumstances at home that may be affecting your child emotionally or academically.

AISB expects that parents will inform themselves about activities that are taking place in the school by reading the school newsletters and other communications that are sent home, and respond where necessary.

AISB expects that parents will take an interest in the work their child brings home, to provide encouragement and support without taking over the work, and to show pride in their child's achievement. We expect that parents will support the school in helping children develop independence and a sense of responsibility by allowing them to manage their home learning, as far as possible, unaided. Praise should be given for specific accomplishments. Monitoring assignment books and/or daily folders if used, is the most helpful way to be supportive of your child. If consistent problems are experienced with home learning, we would expect you to inform the teacher who will investigate the problem and make efforts to help. Finally, we expect our parents to be caring, supportive and responsible in their roles as parents and partners in their child's development.


A Final Note:

At AISB we strive to provide a nurturing and safe environment in which children will thrive and learn. We care about your child and promise to do our utmost to ensure that their needs are met, and their progress toward reaching their potential will be significant.

We appreciate your ongoing support of your child's health and emotional well-being. A child needs routines, plenty of sleep, clear boundaries that are reinforced in a respectful manner that does not demean or humiliate the child, and regular, nourishing meals. With these things provided as norms, a child can be expected to learn and grow, and to be happy and enjoy doing so.

Thank you for your ongoing support of your child's education at AISB.

School Supply List 2010-11

PK-3/PK-4/K AISB Provides	3rd Grade 1 3-Ring Binder Set of 3-Ring Binder Dividers 2 Boxes of 10 Pencils 2 Erasers 2 Sharpeners 1 Box Color Pencils 1 pair of Scissors White Lined Paper 1 Box Color Markers 4 (small) Lined Notebooks	5th Grade 10 Pocket Folders 2 Box of 10 Pencils 4 Erasers 2 Sharpeners 2 Box Color Pencils 1 Pair of Scissors White Lined Paper 1 Package of Grid Paper 1 Box Color Markers 1 Compass Box 1 Pencil Bag 1 USB Flash Drive 4 (small) Lined Notebooks	Secondary School 7 3-Ring Binders Pens (blue, black, red) Pencils Erasers Sharpeners Coloring Pencils 2 Highlighters Scissors Ruler Protractor Compass Notebook White Lined Paper Grid paper Calculator: MS Regular or TI-30XS HS TI -84 USB Flash Drive (~2GB) English Dictionary & Thesaurus English/French (or Eng/Spanish) Dict.
1st Grade 3 Boxes of 10 Pencils 4 Erasers 1 Pencil Bag/Case 8 Glue Sticks 1 Box of 16 Crayons 1 3-Ring Binder (1 inch)	4th Grade 1 3-Ring Binder 2 Box of 10 Pencils 2 Erasers 2 Sharpeners 1 Box Color Pencils 4 Small Lined Notebooks White Lined Paper 1 Package of Grid Paper 1 Pair of Scissors 1 USB Flash Drive		ESOL English/Other Language Dictionary
2nd Grade 3 Boxes of 10 Pencils 4 Erasers 2 Sharpeners 1 Pencil Bag/Case 1 Box Color Pencils 1 Box Color Markers 1 3-Ring Binder 4 glue sticks			
All Grade Levels: AISB P.E. Uniform (T-shirt & shorts) plus tennis shoes (Mandatory for Secondary Students) School Sized Back Pack/Book Bag and a Refillable Water Bottle Note: Camping Equipment is Used Once or Twice a Year for Grades 4-12			
At Home We Recommend: Pencils, Erasers, Colors, Glue, Tape, Ruler, Paper and for Secondary Students - Access to a Computer/Internet			