

ACS Middle School Course Description Booklet

2024-2025



ACS Mission

The American Community School of Abu Dhabi provides a balanced learning program to foster excellence in academics, the arts, and athletics. In partnership with parents, we empower all students to define and shape their futures. Our dynamic and challenging educational program prepares a culturally diverse student body for learning, service, and global citizenship.

ACS Core Values

- **Courage:** Having the confidence to take risks and do the right thing.
- **Curiosity:** Being eager to learn and explore to gain a deeper understanding through inquiry and critical questioning.
- **Compassion:** Taking actions to understand how others think and feel and appreciating the value of difference.
- **Integrity:** Being honest, fair and responsible in words and actions, and staying true to one's principles.

Core Beliefs

- Curiosity and an enthusiasm for learning foster creativity, innovation, and deeper understanding.
- An ethical and compassionate community is built through participation, collaboration, and mutual respect.
- Reflection on learning experiences in and out of the classroom enables learners to define and shape their futures.
- Intellectual, physical, social, and emotional balance contribute to one's well-being.
- Leadership is developed through courage, resilience, and integrity.

Profile of Learners

ACS engages, prepares, and inspires its community to be:

Collaborative team members who...

- promote and sustain learning.
- communicate and listen actively and openly.

Responsible people who...

- balance their intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being.
- act with integrity and courage.

Self-directed learners who...

- are curious problem solvers and resourceful critical thinkers.
- persevere in the face of challenge.

Global citizens who...

- respect diversity.
- actively contribute to their world with empathy and compassion.

Mathematics

Philosophy

The Mathematics program at the American Community School provides grade-level benchmarks for knowledge and skills as well as a focus on problem solving, reasoning, constructing mathematical arguments, mathematical modeling, using mathematical tools appropriately, and attending to precision. Both conceptual understanding and procedural skill are emphasized as critically important components of overall achievement in our mathematics program. Students identify relationships between mathematical concepts and everyday situations. An emphasis will be made on clearly communicating mathematical thinking and application to solving real-world problems.

We believe that students learn Mathematics best when they:

- embrace challenges and believe that they can be successful.
- persevere and feel comfortable taking risks.
- articulate their thinking processes.

Grade 6 Math

Grade 6 Math focuses on conceptual understanding, problem solving and reasoning, modeling and using tools and procedural fluency. Instructional time is spent in four critical areas:

- connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems;
- completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers;
- writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and
- developing understanding of statistical thinking.

Grade 7 Math

Grade 7 Math focuses on conceptual understanding, problem solving and reasoning, modeling and using tools and procedural fluency. Instructional time is spent in four critical areas:

- developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships;
- developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations;
- solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and
- drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

Math Placement Decisions

We at American Community School give careful consideration to all class scheduling to ensure our students are placed in the appropriate classes. As our students transition through Middle School, a variety of data points are used to assess a student's developmental readiness which, in turn, gives us the information we need to decide the best Mathematics course to place a student into.

At this point, the data used by the Mathematics department to determine the best course for each student are MAP scores, academic grades, Approaches to Learnings, student motivation and teacher professional judgment. Additionally, a student also demonstrates other learner qualities such as:

- Ability to learn concepts through a variety of methods
- Ability to transfer learning to new situations
- Insight and perseverance
- Gaining an initial understanding of a concept or skill without additional individual instruction
- Seeking teacher feedback

Grade 8 Math

Grade 8 Math focuses on conceptual understanding, problem solving and reasoning, modeling and using tools and procedural fluency. Instructional time is spent in three critical areas:

- formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations;
- grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and
- analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Integrated Math 1

Integrated Math 1 builds the foundations of algebra by developing students' understanding of linear and exponential relationships, systems of equations and inequalities through quantitative reasoning and pattern recognition. Principles of geometry are connected to algebra through the study of transformations, congruence with a focus on triangles. Students will also be introduced to statistical measures and models. Throughout these topics, an emphasis is placed on communicating mathematics and understanding the mathematical concepts behind each new skill. *Note: Students who successfully complete this course are qualified to IM 2.*

Science and Engineering

Philosophy

The Science program at the American Community School reflects the interconnected nature of the discipline as it is practiced and experienced in the real world. Equipping students with scientific knowledge and engineering skills will allow them to analyze the major challenges facing the world and design solutions to address them.

We believe that students learn Science best when they:

- engage in the practices of science and engineering.
- are captivated by a sense of wonder and are stimulated to ask questions.
- attempt to make sense of real-world phenomena.
- apply their knowledge to solve problems.
- have opportunities to collaborate.

Science For Grade 6, 7, and 8

Aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the middle school science program is an inquiry-based study that incorporates three distinct and equally important dimensions to learning science and engineering. Weaving together core disciplinary ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices, teachers provide opportunities for students to build conceptual

understanding, knowledge and skills in the areas of life, physical, earth and space science as well as in engineering. Critical thinking and communication of ideas are integrated into science and engineering learning, allowing students to develop key literacy skills while building and sharing understanding.

Students engage in the authentic practices of scientists when they ask questions and design investigations of real-world phenomena, analyzing real-world data, develop evidence-based claims related to scientific phenomena, and engage in scientific argumentation. As engineers, students identify human problems and design, test, evaluate and share multiple solutions.

Grade 6 Science Units:

Life Science:

- Structure, Function, and Information Processing
- Growth, Development, and Reproduction of Organisms

Earth and Space Science:

- Weather and Climate
- The Environment and the Human impact

Physical Science:

- Forces and Motion
- Structure of Matter

Grade 7 Science Units:

Life Science:

- Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems
- Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

Earth and Space science:

- History of the Earth
- Earth's Systems

Physical Science:

- Force and Interactions
- Waves and Electromagnetic Radiation

Grade 8 Science Units:

Life Science:

- Mechanisms of Diversity

Earth and Space Science:

- Space Systems

Physical Science:

- Structures & Properties of Matter
- Chemical Reactions
- Energy

English

Philosophy

The English Language Arts program fosters reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language to shape citizens who interact purposefully with the world around them. Students are given the opportunity to enhance critical thinking skills through exposure to a variety of experiences with the intention of students being thoughtful consumers and producers of content.

We believe that students learn English Language Arts best when they:

- Are immersed in the **workshop model** which:
 - builds sustained reading habits,
 - builds sustained writing habits,
 - emphasizes students cognitive engagement,
 - integrates strategies for the gradual release of responsibility, and
 - incorporates the use of mini-lessons for skill and knowledge development.
- Are regularly given **choice** in
 - what they read,
 - what they write, and
 - how they are able to demonstrate learning.
- Are able to enhance their **self-directed** learning skills by
 - gaining autonomy of their learning process,
 - consistently reflecting on their learning throughout the process, and
 - building metacognitive skills.
- Are encouraged to see value in the **process over the product** (formative vs summative) in order to:
 - develop self-directed skills,
 - become responsible for their overall learning, and
 - engage critically with their understanding.
- Are part of a **learning community** who:
 - feel safe to share ideas and take risks,
 - give and receive non-judgmental feedback, and
 - trust that the process they are going through is in place to help them be successful.

English 6

The MS ELA program fosters a variety of literacy skills to help students inquire about the world around them. Doing so allows students to develop critical thinking skills necessary to move them from being consumers of content to thoughtful producers of content. Students will embrace the perspective of others, develop a love and appreciation of literacy, and feel empowered to make a difference in their world by finding their voice and using it for positive change.

The MS ELA Course focuses on:

- Building sustained reading habits across multiple genres and formats, both fiction and nonfiction
- Writing in three genres (informational, narrative, and argumentative)
- Speaking and listening as means of effective communication

Grade 6 ELA Units:

- Tapping the Power of Nonfiction and Argumentative Writing
- A Deep Study of Character and Narrative Writing
- Literary Nonfiction Book Clubs and Narrative Writing
- Poetry and Informational Writing
- Social Issues Book Clubs and Argumentative Writing

English 7

The MS ELA program fosters a variety of literacy skills to help students inquire about the world around them. Doing so allows students to develop critical thinking skills necessary to move them from being consumers of content to thoughtful producers of content. Students will embrace the perspective of others, develop a love and appreciation of literacy, and feel empowered to make a difference in their world by finding their voice and using it for positive change.

The MS ELA Course focuses on:

- Building sustained reading habits across multiple genres and formats, both fiction and nonfiction
- Writing in three genres (informational, narrative, and argumentative)
- Speaking and listening as means of effective communication

Grade 7 ELA Units:

- Independent Reading
- Investigating Characterization Book Clubs and Writing Realistic Fiction
- Historical Fiction Book Clubs and Informational Writing
- Argumentative Writing
- Reading and Writing Poetry

English 8

The MS ELA program fosters a variety of literacy skills to help students inquire about the world around them. Doing so allows students to develop critical thinking skills necessary to move them from being consumers of content to thoughtful producers of content. Students will embrace the perspective of others, develop a love and appreciation of literacy, and feel empowered to make a difference in their world by finding their voice and using it for positive change.

The MS ELA Course focuses on:

- Building sustained reading habits across multiple genres and formats, both fiction and nonfiction
- Writing in three genres (informational, narrative, and argumentative)
- Speaking and listening as means of effective communication

Grade 8 ELA Units:

- Poetry Reading, Analysis, and Narrative Writing
- Critical Literacy Book Clubs
- Informational Writing
- Dystopian Book Clubs and Argumentative Writing
- Literary Nonfiction Book Clubs and Argumentative Writing

Social Studies

Philosophy Statement

The Social Studies program inspires students to inquire about the world and examine it from different perspectives. Experiencing an inquiry arc, students develop strategies to become knowledgeable, thoughtful, and active global citizens.

We believe that students learn Social Studies best when they:

- see themselves in the histories, stories, images, and resources used for learning.
- actively inquire about the world through the lenses of the past, present, and future.
- examine the world through the disciplinary lenses of civics, economics, geography, and history
- evaluate and analyze sources to further make sense of the world with particular attention on identifying and understanding limitations because of biases.
- feel empowered to make a difference in their world by taking informed action.

Social Studies 6

This course is a thematic inquiry based survey of the world focusing on early humans and ancient civilizations. Based on our units of study students will make connections among historical developments in different times and places and explore how these regions have interacted. Through an inquiry approach, students will learn and use concepts and skills from the social sciences that shape our understanding of the world.

Social Studies 7

This course is a thematic inquiry based survey of the world from the time period of the middle ages to the industrial revolution. Based on our units of study students will make connections among historical developments in different times and places and explore how these regions have interacted. Through an inquiry approach, students will learn and use concepts and skills from the social sciences that shape our understanding of the world.

Social Studies 8

This course is a thematic inquiry based survey of the world examining contemporary issues while imagining the future. Based on our units of study students will make connections among historical developments in different times and places and explore how these regions have interacted. Through an inquiry approach, students will learn and use concepts and skills from the social sciences that shape our understanding of the world.

World Languages

In line with our Middle School philosophy, MS students are required to take a World Language. Three language programs are offered in Arabic, French and Spanish for grades 6-8.

Philosophy

The World Language program at the American Community School promotes open-minded, culturally sensitive, life-long learners. We empower students to engage in meaningful and collaborative communicative activities to prepare for real-world situations.

We believe that students learn world languages best when they:

- interact primarily in the target language.
- acquire the strategies to learn the language and communicate.
- utilize authentic materials.
- are challenged and comfortable to take risks while communicating in the target language.
- can reflect on their learning and set clear learning targets.

As students enter into our Middle School World Language program, they will be placed depending on their language background and proficiency level. **Students who are registered at the school as citizens of Arab countries are required by the U.A.E. Ministry of Education to enroll in Arabic.** Students with a heritage language background in Spanish or French may be placed in a different world language course, if course offerings do not support their proficiency level. A new World Language may be taken once the student has entered high school.

Arabic in Middle School: Two Arabic language pathways are offered in Middle School.

- **Modern Standard Arabic Program (MSA):**

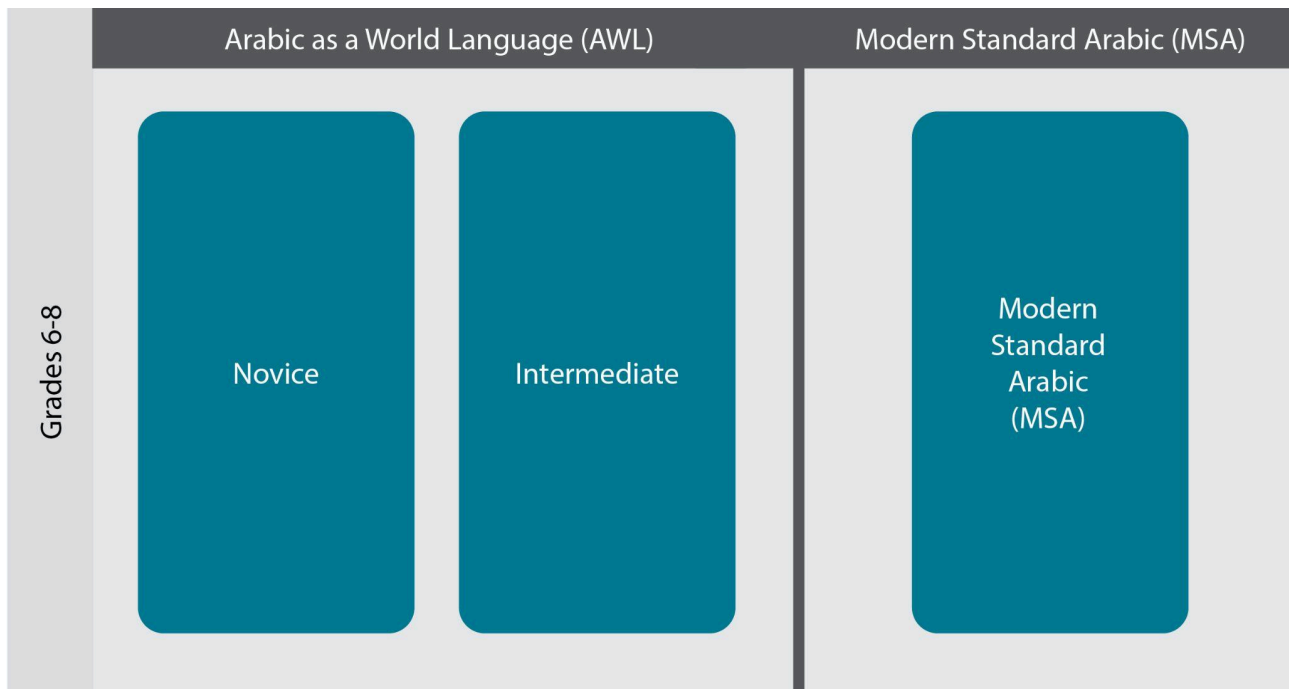
A literacy-based program designed for heritage speakers of Arabic and aims to promote the learners' communication and literary analysis skills.

- **Arabic as a World Language Program (AWL):**

A communication-based program designed for heritage learners of languages other than Arabic. The program provides the learners an opportunity to build their communication skills and cultural understanding of the target language and culture.

Students who are registered at the school as citizens of Arab countries are required by the U.A.E. Ministry of Education to enroll in Arabic language and will be placed in the MSA pathway. Students who choose Arabic will be placed in the MSA or AWL courses based on their background and proficiency level.

Typical pathways for Arabic are as follows:



Arabic as a World Language (AWL) - Novice Level

Grades: 6-7-8

This multi-year course is designed for students who have little or no experience with the Arabic language, and it provides students with the necessary skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication in a supportive and rich environment. The course focuses on the development of listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many communicative tasks in predictable social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language), and respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information. The skills of writing and reading are also integrated into the course to the extent that they foster the development of students' oral communication. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand the main idea in simple sentences, or a few supporting details in short and simple texts on very familiar and everyday topics.

Arabic as a World Language (AWL) - Intermediate Level

Grades: 6-7-8

Prerequisite: AWL Novice or equivalent

This multi-year course is designed for students who have completed the Novice proficiency level. The course focuses on promoting the students' communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging them in intermediate-level communicative tasks. These tasks are designed for students to interact using the target language in familiar life situations around topics such as family, home, daily activities, interests. Students, at the end of this course, will be able to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They will be able to recombine learned materials in order to express personal meaning and produce sentence-level language.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 6

Grade: 6

Prerequisite: MSA 5 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course focuses on strengthening the students reading, writing, listening and speaking skills through exposing the students to various types of texts: descriptive, narrative, and informative. Throughout the course, students participate in reading and writing workshops that enhance their reading comprehension and writing skills. Emphasis in this course is placed on structured writing tasks and on-level text comprehension. At the end of the course students will be able to engage in text rendering, speaking and writing tasks in the following genres: short narratives and descriptive informational texts.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 7

Grade: 7

Prerequisite: MSA 6 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course aims at increasing students' proficiency in reading and writing. Students in this course will continue to participate in reading and writing workshops where they are exposed to a range of reading and writing tasks in various genres. Emphasis in this course is placed on cohesive writing and on-level text analysis. At the end of this course, students will be able to write short narratives and descriptive informational texts and respond to texts orally and in writing.

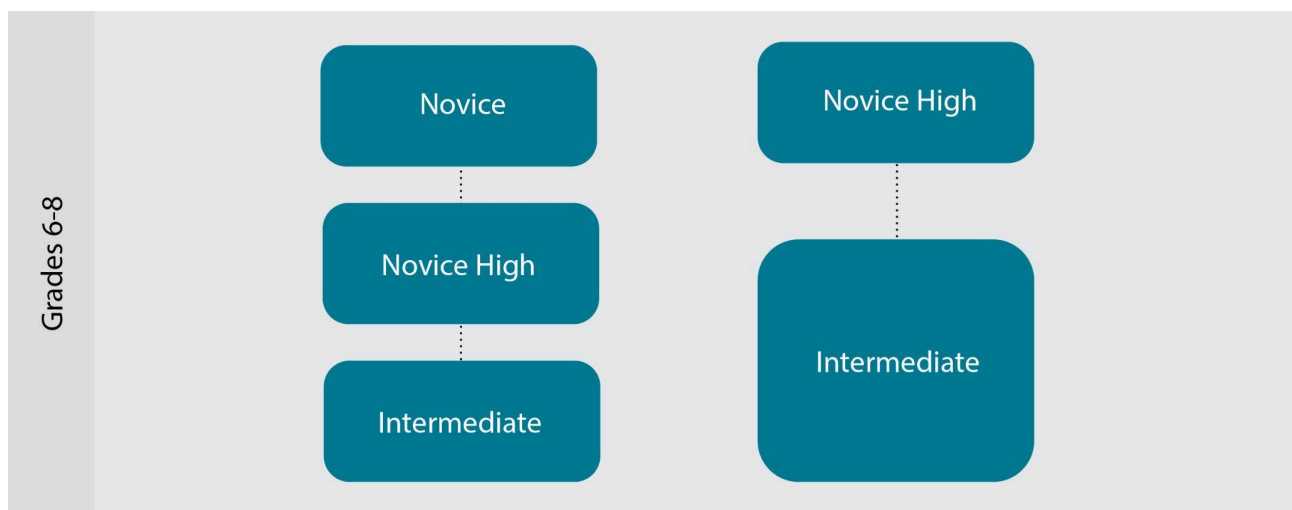
Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) 8

Grade: 8

Prerequisite: MSA 7 or equivalent

This course is designed for students who are heritage learners of Arabic. The course aims at enhancing and strengthening the language skills that the students acquired in previous years. Students in this course are expected to function with increased proficiency in reading comprehension and writing. At the end of the course, students will be able to write short stories, articles, invitations, and descriptive texts and respond orally and in writing to a range of texts in various genres.

Typical pathways for those beginning French or Spanish in MS are as follows:



French Novice

This one-year course is designed for students who have little or no experience with French. It provides students with the foundational skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication about themselves, their families and activities, their school and their immediate community. The course focuses on developing listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in familiar social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying on learned phrases (memorized language) and responding to simple, direct questions or requests for information. To further support their listening comprehension, students will be exposed to authentic videos and audios. Reading and writing are integrated to the extent that they foster the development of students' oral communication.

French Novice High

Prerequisite: French Novice or equivalent

This one-year course is designed for students who have completed French Novice or the equivalent. The course focuses on promoting the students' communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging them in intermediate-level communicative tasks to support their growth from Novice to Intermediate. These tasks are designed for students to interact using the target language in familiar life situations around topics such as lifestyle habits, eating out, making plans while traveling, and digital trends and personal tech use. Students, at the end of this course, will be able to express themselves in speaking and writing using simple sentences and a series of sentences. Students will also be able to determine key parts of the main idea and some supporting details in short texts and authentic audios on familiar topics.

French Intermediate

Prerequisite: French Novice High or equivalent

This two-year course is designed for students who are able to demonstrate the Novice proficiency level in French. The course promotes the students' communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging them in intermediate-level communicative tasks in familiar life situations. The skills of writing and reading are integrated into the course to the extent that they foster the development of students' oral communication. By the end of the course, students will be able to express their own thoughts and maintain conversations by asking and answering various questions on familiar topics related to school, home, social life, food and healthy living, interests and travel. They will also be able to determine the main idea and understand many supporting details in short texts and authentic audios on familiar topics.

Spanish Novice

This one-year course is designed for students who have little or no experience with Spanish. It provides students with the foundational skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication about themselves, their families and activities, their school and their immediate community. The course focuses on developing listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in familiar social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying on learned phrases (memorized language) and responding to simple, direct questions or requests for information. To further support their listening comprehension, students will be exposed to authentic videos and audios. Reading and writing are integrated to the extent that they foster the development of students' oral communication.

Spanish Novice High

Prerequisite: Spanish Novice or equivalent

This one-year course is designed for students who have completed Spanish Novice or the equivalent. The course focuses on promoting the students' communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging them in intermediate-level communicative tasks to support their growth from Novice to Intermediate. These tasks are designed for students to interact using the target language in familiar life situations around topics such as lifestyle habits, eating out, making plans while traveling, and digital trends and personal tech use. Students, at the end of this course, will be able to express themselves in speaking and writing using simple sentences and a series of sentences. Students will also be able to determine key parts of the main idea and some supporting details in short texts and authentic audios on familiar topics.

Spanish Intermediate

Prerequisite: Spanish Novice High or equivalent

This two-year course is designed for students who are able to demonstrate the Novice proficiency level in Spanish. The course promotes the students' communication skills and cultural understanding by engaging them in intermediate-level communicative tasks in familiar life situations. The skills of writing and reading are integrated into the course to the extent that they foster the development of students' oral communication. By the end of the course, students will be able to express their own thoughts and maintain conversations by asking and answering various questions on familiar topics related to school, home, social life, food and healthy living, interests and travel. They will also be able to determine the main idea and understand many supporting details in short texts and authentic audios on familiar topics.

Islamic Studies

Philosophy

Islamic Studies is a compulsory course for all Emirati students in grades 6-8. Non-Emirati Muslim students may choose to opt out of this course. Islamic Studies is offered as per the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum and students will follow the curriculum appropriate for their grade level. Islamic Studies teaches students the Quran, the Sunnah (Prophet sayings/actions), Islamic Morals, the History of Islam and the Pillars of Islam. The curriculum and resources used are provided by the UAE Ministry of Education.

Physical & Health Education

Philosophy

The Physical Education and Wellness program at the American Community School aims to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge and skills to move with confidence and competence in a wide range of activities. We endeavor to promote lifelong enjoyment and participation in physical activity.

We believe that students learn Physical Education and Wellness best when they:

- are in a safe environment that promotes motivation, enjoyment and confidence.
- engage in a variety of engaging physical activities.
- have opportunities to develop physical motor skill competence with appropriate level of challenge.
- use life-skills of personal and social responsibility to maintain and strengthen relationships that respect self and others.

The Middle School Physical Education program has been designed around the [SHAPE standards](#) in order to help students develop their personal and social responsibility, physical motor skills, and knowledge and understanding of different sports and athletic pursuits. Students will be exposed to a variety of team and individual activities that vary by grade level. These may include, but are not limited to: Invasion Games, Net/Wall Games, Target Games, Fielding/Striking Games, Fitness, Movement (Dance/Gymnastics) and, Aquatics units.

Wellness is embedded within Physical Education classes and taught by our Physical Education teachers. Each grade cycles through the four dimensions of wellness focusing on building developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge in each area. The four dimensions are the physical, social, mental-emotional, and spiritual dimensions of wellness. This strand is a discussion-based, non-graded portion of Physical Education in which students discuss and practice proactive health and wellness strategies, learn about their bodies, explore their thoughts patterns and feelings, and learn how to cultivate and strengthen healthy relationships through the lens of the four dimensions of wellness. Embedded throughout the year is the practice of strengthening self-awareness through practicing mindfulness and awareness of attention strategies.

Visual Art

Philosophy

In alignment with the American Community School of Abu Dhabi's mission statement, the Visual and Performing Arts program strives to foster excellence in the arts as a part of a well-rounded education. Students take risks and actively engage in their learning through hands-on and authentic experiences, making meaningful art, learning from artists and designers from the local and global community, and connecting their learning to other areas of their lives. With the skills and confidence developed throughout their art and design education, students are equipped for a lifelong pursuit of art exploration and appreciation.

We believe students gain the most from the Arts when they:

- have an opportunity to generate, organize, and refine their own creative work.
- analyze, interpret, and convey meaning in the performance, production, or presentation of artistic work.
- perceive, evaluate, and respond to artistic work in ways that make them think about the original intent of the creator.
- connect artistic work to their experiences and other contexts to deepen understanding.
- use artistic work to communicate and engage with others around them.
- find ways to include the Arts as part of their overall wellbeing and personal realization.

Exploring Art 6 (Semester)

In Exploring Art 6, students will become proficient in their knowledge of art skills, tools, processes, media, and styles. Students will produce their own art & design pathway according to their interests, talents, and abilities. Perspective drawing, sculpture, illustration, industrial design, watercolor techniques, and acrylic painting are just a sample of the types of skills available to investigate. Art, technological and other tools await discovery for inventive minds, budding artists, and engineers. Creating, presenting, producing, responding, and connecting are how students will communicate themes and ideas, and identify problems that could eventually become real-world products. A variety of materials will be utilized in creative and useful ways, all inspired by historical and contemporary artists. A connection to ancient and modern civilizations, surrealism and impressionism, and other art styles and movements will provide inspiration for critical thinking and problem solving skills. The semester will end with a presentation of the student's artistic discovery.

Exploring Art 7 (Semester)

Exploring Art 7 is a continuation of the knowledge of skills, tools, processes, media and styles. Returning students will revisit their art & design pathway and make adjustments according to their expanded interests, talents, and abilities. Students will study the historical background of art and its impact on modern civilizations. Students may wish to continue where they left off from Exploring Art 6, or expand their knowledge by taking on new challenges (learning new skills, tools, processes, media, or styles). They may also utilize their multi-leveled digital skills (a.k.a techtoo skills) and merge them with their skillful art training to focus on a creative and innovative project implementation of an idea. The semester will end with a presentation of the student's artistic growth.

Exploring Art 8 (Semester)

Exploring Art 8 is the culminating middle school level where students will become advanced in their knowledge of skills, tools, processes, media and styles. Students will study the remixed art society we live in today. Students will refine their art & design pathway and make adjustments according to their renewed interests, talents, and abilities. Students may continue with their Exploring Art 7 Techtoo/Art & Design project or take a deep dive into an art topic of their choice. This is an

opportunity for students to fully explore their artistic interests and to shape and create their learning in preparation for high school art. The semester will end with a presentation of the student's artistic achievements, and a portfolio of artwork that best represents their technical abilities as an artist.

Band

Grade 6 Music (Yearlong)

This music course will blend the best of both the choral and instrumental worlds. Our grade six students will have the opportunity to begin a band instrument while they continue to grow as singers in a choral setting. The integrated approach to music will include ensemble skills, note reading, and an introduction to musical elements including rhythm, melody, form, tempo, dynamics, timbre or tone color, harmony, and style. This course provides students the opportunity to begin a band instrument. No previous musical experience playing an instrument or reading music is required. This course provides students the opportunity to begin a band instrument and explore how vocal and instrumental skills are related and connected. Students will begin on a woodwind instrument (flute, or clarinet) or brass instrument (trumpet, trombone, or euphonium). Students will have the opportunity to audition to transition to French horn, saxophone, oboe, bassoon, tuba and percussion during the year to help fill out proper concert band instrumentation. Regular home practice and performances are a necessary part of this course. Students in grade six music will give two performances as a combined group. There may also be other small performances throughout the school year.

Curricular materials: Sound Innovations, Book One and choral and band literature from the ACS Music Library. ACS has a large instrument inventory and instruments are available for year long rental for AED 500.

Grade 7 Band - Yearlong (YL)

This course builds upon the musical foundations previously established in the beginning band—a minimum of one year of previous playing experience is required. Students will meet together as a full ensemble for each class. Emphasis is placed on the development of technique, articulation, tone and overall musical understanding for woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Home practice, and performances are required for this course. Students will perform in two formal concerts as well as other small performances throughout the school year. Students in this class have the opportunity to audition for the MESAC Junior Fine Arts Band and the AMIS International Honor Band.

Curricular materials: Essential Elements 2000, Book Two and performance literature from the ACS Music Library. ACS has a large instrument inventory and instruments are available for year long rental for AED 500.

Grade 8 Band - Yearlong (YL)

This class places emphasis on the continued advancement of musicianship, more advanced instrumental technique and the development of tools for understanding and executing a variety of musical styles—approximately two years playing experience is required. Emphasis is placed on the development of technique, articulation, tone and overall musical understanding for woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Home practice, and performances are required for this course. A small number of after-school meetings and rehearsals may also be necessary for proper preparation in this class. Concert Band students may at times combine with the Grade 7 Band and the High School Bands for some performances. Students will perform in two formal concerts as well as other small

performances throughout the school year. Students in this class have the opportunity to audition for the MESAC Junior Fine Arts Band and the AMIS International Honor Band.

Curricular materials: Essential Elements 2000, Book Two and performance literature from the ACS Music Library. ACS has a large instrument inventory and instruments are available for year long rental for AED 500.

Exploring Music (Semester)

In Exploring Music, Grade 7 & 8 students will dive into and learn about a variety of music from different time periods, cultures and eras. Students will discuss what goes into making these different types of music, with having the opportunity to make their own music in various ways using a variety of instruments and digital composition. Throughout the course we will listen to a variety of music, while students develop the skills to be critical listeners as we explore everything from popular music to obscure experimental music.

Choir

Grade 6 Music Yearlong (YL)

This music course will blend the best of both the choral and instrumental worlds. Our grade six students will have the opportunity to begin a band instrument while they continue to grow as singers in a choral setting. The integrated approach to music will include ensemble skills, note reading, and an introduction to musical elements including rhythm, melody, form, tempo, dynamics, timbre or tone color, harmony, and style. This course provides students the opportunity to begin a band instrument. No previous musical experience playing an instrument or reading music is required. This course provides students the opportunity to begin a band instrument and explore how vocal and instrumental skills are related and connected. Students will begin on a woodwind instrument (flute, or clarinet) or brass instrument (trumpet, trombone, or euphonium). Students will have the opportunity to audition to transition to French horn, saxophone, oboe, bassoon, tuba and percussion during the year to help fill out proper concert band instrumentation. Regular home practice and performances are a necessary part of this course. Students in grade six music will give two performances as a combined group. There may also be other small performances throughout the school year.

Curricular materials: Sound Innovations, Book One and choral and band literature from the ACS Music Library. ACS has a large instrument inventory and instruments are available for year long rental for AED 500.

Grade 7 Choir Yearlong (YL)

The major emphasis of this course is on ensemble singing activities and individual vocal production. This standards-based course develops the skills necessary for singing a wide variety of musical genres, and reading music notation. Grade 7 Choir students will also continue to develop an understanding of musical elements (rhythm, melody, form, harmony, expression, and style), and musical terminology while working collaboratively with other students. Written and oral assessments and at-home practice are integral elements of this course, as well as summative performances outside of school.

Students enrolled in Grade 7 Choir will have the opportunity to audition and participate in two annual choir festivals: The Middle-East South-Asia Middle School Arts Invitational (2015-2016

school year - American School of Doha) and the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Middle School Honor Choir (Location TBA). Auditions for these festivals will be held in September.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing an ACS Polo shirt that will be used for concerts only (color/style TBA), black dress pants or knee-length skirt and black dress shoes.

Curricular materials: Choral Octavos, Successful Sight-Singing, Book 1; Online Rehearsal Tracks (Veracross); Garage Band Program; ScoreCloud Online Notation Software

Grade 8 Choir Yearlong (YL)

This course is designed to further students' understanding of the fundamentals of singing and reading music. Previous participation in Grade 6 and Grade 7 Choir or Band is preferred, but not required. This standards-based course focuses on further study of music reading, the understanding of musical terminology, musical elements (rhythm, melody, form, harmony, expression, and style) and the performance of music in individual and group settings. Written and oral assessments and at-home practice are integral elements of this course, as well as summative performances outside of school.

Students enrolled in Grade 8 Choir will have the opportunity to audition and participate in two annual choir festivals: The Middle-East South-Asia Middle School Arts Invitational and the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Middle School Honor Choir. Auditions for these festivals will be held in September.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing an ACS Polo shirt that will be used for concerts only (color/style TBA), black dress pants or knee-length skirt and black dress shoes.

Curricular materials: Choral Octavos, Successful Sight-Singing, Book 1; Online Rehearsal Tracks (Veracross); Garage Band Program; ScoreCloud Online Notation Software

Drama

Grade 6 Drama (Semester)

Over the semester the students work towards creating a safe and caring environment where all students feel comfortable to explore new ideas. The goals for this course are for the students to learn to work cooperatively with their peers as well as improve their presentation skills and confidence. By focusing on using their eyes, body, face, voice and a dedicated rehearsal process, the students grow as performers during our time together. The units we use as tools to improve these skills include an exploration of trust, tableau, choral dramatization, and scene study. We offer a taste of quite a variety of theater styles in sixth grade so that the students can see there are many different elements of theater to appreciate.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS Polo or t-shirt and black full length pants without branding (dress or sweat pants) that will be used for performances.

Grades 7 & 8 Production (Semester)

In this class students all work together to create a performance of a professionally written play. The students learn about technical and publication jobs as they take on different roles and responsibilities of the production team. They also focus on their performance skills as they switch gears and become the actors for the show - working on their audition, character development, physicality, and vocal traits for their individual role. The students then perform their show for a live audience.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS Polo or t-shirt and black full length pants without branding (dress or sweat pants) that will be used for performances.

Grade 7 & 8 Theater Medley (Semester)

In this course our units include stage combat and characterization. The students learn approximately 20 different stage combat moves including rolls, slaps, kicks, and punches that they put together to create a fight sequence with a partner. The moves are incorporated into a scene so the students can learn to balance all of the elements of a fight sequence with the challenge of maintaining a believable character. For their final performance, the students are given the opportunity to create the technical elements for their show as well, as they learn how to program the lighting board and use music to enhance the theatricality of their performance.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS Polo or t-shirt and black full length pants without branding (dress or sweat pants) that will be used for performances.

Grade 7 Drama (Semester)

This is a semester based course for students in 7th grade. Drama is taught as an experiential subject through collaborative learning experiences and creative opportunities. Drama focuses on the development of presentation and performance skills, creating original work, making connections between the real world and the world of theater and responding to the ways in which art conveys meaning. Grade 7 Drama includes units exploring monologues, clowning, playwriting and the works of Shakespeare.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS Polo or t-shirt and black full length pants without branding (dress or sweat pants) that will be used for performances.

Grade 8 Drama (Semester)

This is a semester based course for students in 8th grade. Drama is taught as an experiential subject through collaborative learning experiences and creative opportunities. Drama focuses on the development of presentation and performance skills, creating original work, making connections between the real world and the world of theater and responding to the ways in which art conveys meaning. Grade 8 Drama includes units exploring puppetry, scene studies and devised theater.

Performance Uniform: Students will be responsible for purchasing a black ACS Polo or t-shirt and black full length pants without branding (dress or sweat pants) that will be used for performances.

Technology

Philosophy

The American Community School of Abu Dhabi emphasizes Digital Age Learner (DAL) skills and qualities we want for students, enabling them to engage and thrive in a connected, digital world. ACS actively engages students across the curriculum, with every age student, with a goal of cultivating DAL skills throughout a student's academic career. Students will be responsible for achieving foundational technology and information literacy skills.

Students will amplify learning with technology and challenge themselves to be agents of their own learning, prepared to participate in a world yet to be imagined. Students utilize technology best when they:

- leverage it to take an active role in choosing, achieving and demonstrating competency in their learning goals, informed by the learning sciences.
- recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world, and they act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical.
- critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.
- use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful or imaginative solutions.
- develop and employ strategies for understanding and solving problems in ways that leverage the power of technological methods to develop and test solutions.
- communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.
- use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally.

Exploring Technology

By using our new Techttoos program students pick different tech projects to work on to earn Techttoos stickers for their laptops. Students choose the projects that show them how to be creators and not just consumers of technology, and they work at their own pace, so if they want to spend more time on certain parts of a project they can. Some of the projects include; YouTube Show, Robotics, Video Game Coding, Rocketry, Design and Animation to name a few. All Techttoos have different levels so students could spend months working on the same strand, like coding, or spend a few weeks on each one as a way of sampling and learning what interests them. In addition, students in Grade 7 or 8 may get involved in the "Tech Saves the World" project where students learn and use technology to find solutions to real world problems that have been identified with the UNSDGs. Students complete modules and project work that will then be presented in a showcase at the end of the year. *For more information visit www.MyTechttoos.com.*

Learning Support

Philosophy

The Learning Lab class provides instruction to students who require support to be successful in their grade level classrooms. Students enter the program for various reasons. Most students are referred by their teachers; however, some may be placed in the program due to psychometric testing results or a history of support in a previous school setting. Students enter and exit Learning Support through approval by an SST (Student Support Team), which consists of the principal, counselor, parents, teachers, the learning support teachers and the Director of Student Support Services. Learning Support consists of two components:

Curricular Support

Rather than remedial in nature, the Learning Lab is designed to provide the student with direct support in curricular areas, as well as to teach compensatory strategies for independent learning. A focus is placed on writing skills development, reading strategies, math skills, and applying these skills to content areas.

Study Skills

Independence and responsibility are essential to academic success. Students are taught executive functioning skills (organizational skills, self-advocacy, note-taking, and test-taking skills). Learning preferences are also explored. An emphasis is placed on learning these skills within the context of their daily assignments. Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for maximizing their learning potential and educational opportunities.