Middle School
STUDENT-FAMILY HANDBOOK
2025-2026

ACS Mission and Vision

Our community empowers all students to define and shape their futures for learning, service, and global citizenship. We are a compassionate, student-centered community of learners that engages, prepares, and inspires.

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 appreciate 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.

ACS Learners Are ...

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

Social Media Channels

Follow us on our social media channels Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Middle School Community,

Welcome to what promises to be an inspiring and dynamic 2025–2026 school year at the American Community School! We are excited to have you as part of our Middle School community.

In Middle School, our approach to education is grounded in research and best practices for students in Grades 6–8, reflecting our school's mission and values. Our curriculum is rigorous and thoughtfully designed, with instructional strategies that challenge, engage, and support every learner. We aim to help all students master essential concepts and skills while developing curiosity, creativity, and confidence.

Beyond the classroom, we offer a wide range of exceptional programs—from athletics and arts to service learning, leadership opportunities, and innovative electives—that allow students to explore their passions and discover new interests. Our incredible teachers are dedicated professionals who bring expertise, care, and energy into every lesson, inspiring students to do their best and think deeply. And our amazing students bring the heart and spirit of our Middle School to life every day through their enthusiasm, kindness, and commitment to growth.

Please take some time to review our *Middle School Handbook*. It serves as a guide for students, teachers, and parents, outlining the opportunities we offer as well as the expectations and responsibilities for learning and behavior. Inside, you will find information on our community beliefs, commitments, policies, and systems. As a living document, it will be updated as needed, and we will communicate any changes promptly.

Above all, we encourage every member of our community to engage fully—academically, socially, and personally. Build strong relationships, respect and support one another, and approach challenges with courage and balance. On behalf of the entire Middle School team, we wish you a year filled with meaningful learning, connection, and growth.

Sincerely,

Karl Poulin
MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
✉ kpoulin@acs.sch.ae
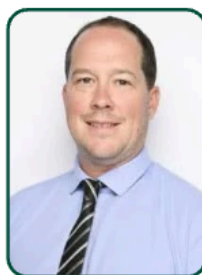
Rob Desormeau
MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
✉ robdesormeau@acs.sch.ae

MIDDLE SCHOOL BELIEFS

Our Middle School beliefs stem from our school's mission statement and core values and are formulated with an understanding of the educational needs of young adolescents. We believe that our MS should be firmly grounded in the reality of today's students. We endeavor to role model risk-taking while at the same time creating an inviting, safe environment for learning. We recognize that working with adolescents requires hard work and a good sense of humor.

Our beliefs can be summarized as follows:

Balanced Education for the Whole Child
We believe in assisting students to develop:
- healthy habits of the mind and body
- an appreciation of the arts
- a love of learning
- strategies for individual learning styles
- the skills necessary for success across curricular and co-curricular areas
- a positive sense of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness
- personal development in Academics, the Arts, Athletics and Service Learning

Importance of Environment
We believe that children thrive in an environment in which:
- people celebrate the diversity of our international community
- learning is made engaging
- safe, caring and nurturing behaviors are modeled
- positive attitudes and consistency in behavior are encouraged
- cooperation builds connections among students, parents, and teachers
- people demonstrate concern for others

Responsibility
We believe in assisting students to:
- understand and accept responsibility and accountability for their actions
- move towards greater independence as learners
- model our school's core values

Scholarship
We believe in assisting students to:
- commit to a high standard of learning and academic achievement
- achieve their highest potential by establishing meaningful and challenging goals
- think analytically, critically and creatively
- make informed and reasoned judgments
- take risks and experiment with new skills

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

As an independent international community school, we encourage parent participation in all facets of school life. This agreement aims to help families understand the importance of parent involvement in the ACS experience.

The School's Commitment:

- We will do everything possible to fulfill the mission of the school and live the school's values. ACS offers a not-for-profit, college-preparatory, American-based curriculum. We promote excellence in the arts, academics and athletics, as well as strong commitment to service and experiential learning.

- We are committed to providing a safe and secure place of learning for all our students, staff, and community members.

- We are cognizant of child development as we provide instruction and learning experiences for our students. We look to foster growth in the whole child. We make every effort to provide support for all students, including remediation and extension when necessary. We do not place students beyond their age-appropriate grade level. Our focus is on development and growth.

- In the spirit of true partnership, all staff members of the school – most notably the teachers who work directly with your child – share responsibility with you for your child's success. By subscribing to the ideas outlined in this partnership agreement, you will help your child succeed at ACS. Positive parent partnership cannot be understated, and your cooperation with the agreement is essential, and enrollment and re-enrollment of your child is dependent on this parent partnership.

Our Parents' Commitment:

- Talk to my child often about school life, demonstrating my interest in helping the school equip my child with the ability to inquire, interact, and accept constructive criticism.

- Help my child learn from mistakes and to benefit from suggestions for improvement.

- Ensure that my child has ample scheduled time and quiet surroundings for home study and to reinforce my child's use of homework, especially as my child progresses into higher grades that require more homework.

- Ensure that my child has proper rest, nutrition and recreation.

- Understand our school curriculum and to realize what is offered and what is not offered. ACS is limited in its ability to offer special needs and/or gifted instruction. Most differentiation happens within the ability of the classroom teacher.

- Attend orientations, back to school nights, parent conferences, and be an active participant in school functions.

- Be informed with regards to school communication – to read emails and newsletters, to view the school's website and calendar, to update contact and health information, to communicate when something is unclear, and to provide feedback and participate in surveys, etc.

- Help my child accept and comply with the student dress code, and as parents to dress appropriately on campus, taking into consideration the modest local culture.

- Practice and model effective conflict resolution by handling concerns appropriately, directly, and honestly, only with those involved.

- Ensure that my child arrives on time and remains for the full length of the school day.

- Comply with the school calendar for vacations.

- Make tuition payments and other fees on time so that ACS can continue to be a financially stable non-profit organization.

- Balance activities outside of school and school responsibilities.

- Permit and encourage my child to attend grade level and experiential field trips, acknowledging that they are an integral part of the curriculum.

In order to effectively pursue our mission, it is important that the school and parents partner together to instill pride, self-worth, and a passion for learning in our students. Parents can play an integral role in the program.

Contact Details

Parents must inform the school promptly of a new address, telephone number, and/or email address. Notification can be given via email to the , or contact our Executive Assistant, Julie Craven directly (jcraven@acs.sch.ae).

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION HANDBOOK

We are committed to:

- Protecting students against any physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect and/or peer on peer abuse.

- Identifying at-risk students and taking action to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm.

- Reporting when there is reasonable suspicion of harm or risk of harm to students.

- Applying Safer Recruitment and hiring practices, including staff training (as defined in the Child Protection Handbook).

Every suspicion or disclosure of abuse from within or outside the school will be taken seriously. Action will be taken by members of the Child Protection team and as appropriate may include referral to an external agency.

Please take the time to review the contents of the Student Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures Handbook and let your Counselor, Principal or Superintendent know if you have any questions about our commitment to work in partnership to protect children.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BASICS

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OF ABU DHABI *SINCE 1972*

2025-2026
SCHOOL CALENDAR

JULY 2025
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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AUGUST 2025
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31						

SEPTEMBER 2025
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OCTOBER 2025
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NOVEMBER 2025
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DECEMBER 2025
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JANUARY 2026
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FEBRUARY 2026
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MARCH 2026
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APRIL 2026
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MAY 2026
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JUNE 2026
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28	29	30				

AUGUST
- Aug 11 - 15   Professional Learning - No School for Students
- Aug 18   New Family Orientation
- Aug 19   Grades 1 - 12 First Day of Classes
- Aug 20 - 21   KG 2 First Day of Classes - Staggered Start
- Aug 21- 22   KG 1 First Day of Classes - Staggered Start
- Aug 30   PTA New Family Welcome

SEPTEMBER
- Sept 5   Prophet's Birthday - No School
- Sept 15   Professional Learning - No School for Students

OCTOBER
- Oct 3, 6 & 7   MS/HS Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Oct 6 & 7   ES Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Oct 8 - 10   Fall Break - No School
- Oct 24   PTA Fall Festival

NOVEMBER
- Nov 3   Professional Learning - No School for Students
- Nov 27   Thanksgiving - Early Release Day

DECEMBER
- Dec 1   UAE Commemoration Day - No School
- Dec 2-3   UAE Union Day - No School
- Dec 6   PTA Holiday Extravaganza
- Dec 15 - Jan 2   Winter Break - No School

JANUARY
- Jan 26   Professional Learning - No School for Students
- Jan 31   PTA International Day

FEBRUARY
- Feb 18 - March 15   Ramadan Schedule (Subject to Change)

MARCH
- March 13 - 20   Spring Break - No School
- March 18 - 20   Eid Al Fitr Holiday - No School

APRIL
- April 8   ES Student- Led Conferences
- April 11   ACS Gala
- April 24   Professional Learning - No School for Students

MAY
- May 27 - 29   Eid Al Adha Holiday - No School

JUNE
- June 11   Last Day of Classes - Early Release Day
- June 12   Professional Learning - No School for Students

*Islamic religious holidays are subject to change based on government announcements.

School Hours

Our classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and it is essential that all students arrive at school before this time. Our official drop-off times are 8:15 - 8:30 a.m. each day, and for students who arrive between 8:00 and 8:15 a.m., they are admitted into the supervised and shady area of our courtyard, away from traffic in front of the school. On our hotter and more humid days, we admit students into the lobby area of school at 8:10 a.m. Once the National Anthem plays at 8:30am, students are considered tardy if they are not seated in class, and must report to the office prior to attending classes. Our school day ends at 3:30 p.m. (Monday-Thursday) and on early release Fridays, classes end at 12:00p.m.

There are after-school activities that take place most days of the week, with the exception of Wednesday when teachers are engaged in professional learning. Most activities (including athletics) typically end by 4:30 p.m., though some may go later (please check with your activity sponsor/coach). All Fun After School Activities (FAS) end at 4:30 p.m.

In order to ensure proper supervision and student safety, students not participating in after-school activities must leave campus by 3:30 p.m. unless they are attending Office Hours until 4:00 p.m.. MS students may not stay after school, unless they remain in areas that are supervised, either in a classroom with a teacher or in the library. Unsupervised areas include classrooms where there is not a teacher supervisor, playgrounds, outdoor fields, MS/HS courtyards, the gym or cafeteria.

All students must leave the school grounds by 3:30 p.m. unless they are directly supervised (12:00 p.m. on Fridays).

Any special events or changes will also be announced in the Principal's Newsletter, published every Friday. During open campus times, Middle School students must be directly supervised by a parent or guardian (not a nanny).

Student Schedules

Students receive their schedules on or before the first day of classes each year. In Grades 6-8, students can choose from a limited range of Performing Arts Electives and World Languages (Arabic, French, and Spanish). Preferences for Performing Arts electives are submitted via course selection forms distributed each spring. Schedules are created based on these preferences, and whenever possible, students are placed in their top choices. Please note that student schedules are based on subject preferences, not teacher or friendship preferences. Students are expected to accept their schedules, and the school reserves the right to make placement decisions that best support the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of the students.

Students are enrolled in eight classes, meeting with four each day on a rotating schedule. Any changes to this schedule will be shared through our Principal's Newsletter.

In addition, the Middle School day includes a block of time—currently scheduled after lunch—called Flex. During Flex, students take part in a variety of experiences such as Oasis (advisory), Service Learning initiatives, student-directed Exploratory courses, grade-level challenges, or assemblies.

Food Services

ACS has three food service outlets:

- The first is the Cafeteria, located at the entrance of our MS/HS building. The Cafeteria serves hot whole food, and a variety of grab and go options.
- The second is the Café '72, located in the Athletics Complex. Café '72 serves pre-prepared healthy food and beverages and freshly prepared grab-and-go food options.
- The third food outlet is Nectar located in the First Floor of the MS/HS building. Nectar offers specialty/healthy snack food and beverage options.

Students are required to use the Spare App for food purchases. Parents can add funds to the app, which is linked to the student's ID number. At school, students use their Student ID card to pay for food and beverages.

Snack and Meal Expectations

Middle School students are expected to wash their hands before eating and to use good table manners. Each student is responsible for clearing their tray, returning utensils, and cleaning their area after meals, whether eating indoors or outdoors.

A scheduled morning break provides time for a snack. Snacks, sandwiches, and wraps are available for purchase from any of the three food vendors on campus, and students may also bring healthy snacks from home.

Sharing large bags of chips, cookies, or other snack items with peers is not permitted. Students are also not allowed to sell food items on campus or order food for delivery to school.

Lockers

There is a limited number of shared lockers for students and they are used for day-use only. It is the school's expectation that students:

- Keep lockers clean and organized
- Use only the locker that is used for the day
- Do not write on lockers or place stickers on any locker
- Take home leftover food and sweaty clothing on a daily basis
- Do not bring valuables to school. If you are worried about losing something, leave it at home.

The school reserves the right to inspect lockers should the need arise. All books and other items left carelessly in the locker areas will be gathered daily and placed in the lost and found box.

Emergency Contacts

It is essential that we can contact parents in the event of an emergency. Please check your contact information on Veracross to make sure that it is correct, and that you have the right people listed as Emergency Contacts. Students are only permitted to leave the school campus during the school day with an adult listed as an Emergency Contact with permission to pick up.

Students Leaving Campus

Student safety is our highest priority. Any student leaving campus during the school day must be accompanied by a parent or by an adult listed as an authorized Emergency Contact in Veracross. If an

unregistered adult arrives to pick up a student, the parent will be contacted and asked to send written email authorization naming the person permitted to collect the student.

Procedures for Leaving Campus:

- Students must have parent permission, coordinated through the Middle School Office, and approval from the principal and/or nurse.
- Students who are ill must first visit the school nurse, who will then contact parents.
- Students must meet their parent/guardian in the Middle School Office and collect a pass before leaving.
- A pass issued by the Middle School Office or nurse must be shown to security guards when exiting.
- Upon returning, students must sign in at the Middle School Office and collect a class entrance pass.

School-Sponsored Activities

Students leaving campus for school-sponsored activities must complete a Planned Absence Form and return it to the Middle School Office with all required signatures.

Student Transportation

Parents are responsible for student transportation to and from campus, unless their child(ren) takes a bus. Limited parking is provided in front of the school. Patience and care are needed when dropping off and picking up students. Since ACS has children as young as four years old, cautious driving by everyone is imperative. Details of traffic flow are published to parents at the beginning of each school year and are available to new parents in the front office throughout the year. Expectations for bus behaviors are found in the section related to *Student Behavior Expectations*.

Campus Guests and Visitors

All guests, including alumni, must check in at Gate 1 to obtain a visitor's pass. A valid photo ID is required and will be held at the gate. Visitors must then report to the Middle School Office. With the principal's approval, alumni may visit during Middle School lunch hours only. To minimize disruptions to learning, visitors are not permitted to attend classes.

Student & Parent ID Cards

All students and parents must obtain an ACS ID card. Students must have their ID to enter the school and will need it throughout the school day for printing access and food services. For parents, IDs must always be worn while on campus. Replacement cards are available for a AED50 fee.

Emergency Drills

Emergency evacuation drills are scheduled at intervals throughout the school year. Classroom teachers will give their classes specific instructions. Each classroom has an evacuation plan posted near the exit door. Teachers will ensure that all students are familiar with proper evacuation procedures.

COMMUNICATION

Channels of Communication

As partners in your child's education we value open lines of communication. The school will communicate with parents through the weekly Parent Newsletter; via scheduled Parent Coffee events, Veracross, scheduled student-parent conferences, report cards, topic specific emails, the ACS website, and at PTA meetings. Students and parents are expected to follow the appropriate lines of communication when faced with an issue or concern.

1. Student → Teacher
2. Student → Counselor
3. Parent → Teacher
4. Parent → Principal
5. Parent → Assistant Superintendent

Phones and Personal Devices

To foster a focused and engaged environment, students must place phones and earphones in their backpacks before entering school gates each day. Devices may be used again after dismissal at 3:30 p.m. Smartwatches must have notifications turned off, and all non-school apps (including gaming and VPNs) should be closed before arrival.

Teachers may permit phone use for learning activities, but devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks before leaving class. Phones may not be used to purchase food; all transactions must be made with student ID cards preloaded with funds through the Spare App. Parents are asked to ensure funds are available.

To maintain this phone-free environment, please contact the Middle School Office rather than your child during school hours. Students are not permitted to use mobile devices for direct communication with parents during the day.

Consequences for Misuse

- **First incident:** Device held in the MS Office, returned at end of day.

- **Second incident:** Device held until a parent retrieves it.

- **Third incident:** The students must check the device into the MS Office each morning for one month; it may be collected after school each day.

Parent Newsletter

At the end of each school week, the Principal sends an e-newsletter via email. This is the primary source of information for parents from the school, and it is important that parents take the time to read it each week.

Gmail and Google Apps

All students are set up with a school Google Apps account so they can communicate via email using Gmail. Students are responsible for making sure their Google Apps password is kept private and that they check their email at least once a day.

Veracross – Student Information System

Veracross is the school's student information system, used by teachers to take attendance, record assessment data, and provide ongoing feedback. Parents have access to a secure Parent Portal, which includes each child's classes and electronic gradebook. Through the portal, families can view student progress, weekly learning targets, resources, homework tasks, and upcoming assessments.

Teachers post learning targets, home learning information, and dates of major assessments in Veracross. Students are also expected to record their homework in their student planner or in another digital tool used in class.

Each parent and student receives a unique login and password for access throughout their time at ACS. For assistance with logging in or technical issues, families should contact the Technology Helpdesk at (helpdeskacs.sch.ae).

Viper News

MS Viper News is the daily bulletin, presented by our teachers during the first period of each day. We also share messages via grade-level Google Classrooms. Any student interested in posting information on MS Viper News must send an email request to Karl Poulin, the Middle School Principal.

Social Media Channels

ACS uses a variety of social media channels to help MS students and parents stay connected. Please follow us on Instagram (@acsabudhabi), Facebook (ACSAbuDhabi), LinkedIn (American Community School of Abu Dhabi) and Youtube (acs-events@acs.sch.ae).

The ACS Yearbook

The yearbook is published and available for purchase annually in May/June, and is a summary of the year's events. Yearbooks come available for purchase at different times throughout the year.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The Middle School academic program focuses on the whole child experience. Student schedules are balanced between core curriculum and electives, which include opportunities to try new experiences or to build on areas of interest. Below is just a brief overview of the required areas of study.

Core Courses

Core courses consist of subjects which students must take during each academic year. The core subjects required in Grades 6-8 include English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Physical Education & Wellness, and World Language.

Electives

Elective classes are offered so students may experience and understand the importance of learning through a variety of mediums. Students will choose two electives. Band and Choir classes are full-year classes, while other semester-based classes are offered in Music, Drama, Art and Technology. Currently, all students in Grade 6 take Exploring Technology and choose their top choice for a semester elective course.

Please refer to the Middle School Course Description Handbook on the ACS website for more information about academic courses and electives in Middle School.

Requests for Changing Class Schedules

Students make course requests prior to the beginning of the school year. School administration will try to honor requests, as they fit in a student's schedule. Any requests for a change in scheduled courses must take place within the first four days of the semester. Students who enroll after the first week of the semester will only have two days to request a change of class. All changes must be approved by the MS Assistant Principal and/or MS Counselor, in coordination with the divisional Principals.

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

Overview
Definition & Purpose

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering information in a variety of forms related to what students know, understand, and are able to do. The primary purpose of assessment is to provide meaningful feedback for improved student achievement. As an ongoing interaction between teachers and students, assessment serves to deepen student understanding and enhance teaching.

Standards-Referenced Learning System

A standards-referenced learning system is designed to ensure transparency in all elements of the teaching and learning process: *curriculum, instruction, assessment* and *reporting*. Teachers articulate clear learning goals that describe what students should know and be able to do, design learning experiences that help all students achieve those learning goals, and gather evidence of achievement aligned to established criteria that define quality.

Reporting Timeline

The academic calendar is divided into two semesters, and students and parents receive feedback throughout the school year on Approaches to Learning (AtLs) and academic achievement.

- First Quarter (October): Progress Reports (AtLs and Conferences)
- First Semester (January): Report Cards (AtLs, Mid-Year Achievement Levels, and Narrative Comments)
- Third Quarter (April): Progress Reports (AtLs, Conferences)
- Second Semester (June): Reports Cards (AtLs and End-of-Year Achievement Levels)

Narrative Comments

Narrative comments are composed for all students in each subject at the end of the second reporting period. These comments are posted on Veracross for students and families to review.

Family Conferences

There are two times in the year (fall and spring) designated for Family Conferences. The fall conference is initiated by the family, allowing the families and students to visit with teachers to review and discuss approaches to learning and academic progress. Families and students sign up online to arrange a time to meet with the teacher. Students are expected to attend these conferences along with their parents/guardians.

The spring family conference is teacher-initiated, meaning that the teacher requests a meeting with the student and parents/guardians. Typically, these conferences are limited to students who are:

- performing well below grade level expectations;

- not meeting expectations in regard to the Approaches to Learning Rubric.

Teachers will notify parents/guardians and students if a meeting is requested.

How Student Learning is Assessed and Reported

Assessment Based on Clear Criteria

Students are assessed against clear criteria that describe levels of proficiency on the learning standards. Rubrics outline success criteria at each level, making expectations transparent and guiding both teaching and student learning.

Evidence Collected by Strand

Each course includes key strands—core components defined in the curriculum. Teachers collect evidence of student learning in each strand to provide a more complete picture of progress.
Example: In Mathematics, the strands are Concepts & Procedures, Communication & Reasoning, and Problem Solving.

Formative and Summative Assessment

Teachers use both **formative** (practice) and **summative** (performance) assessments to gather evidence of student learning.

- **Formative assessments** offer students a chance to practice, reflect, and receive feedback in a low-stakes environment. It also supports teachers in guiding their daily instruction. These assessments are ongoing, varied in format, and designed to support growth rather than assign grades.
- **Summative assessments** provide evidence of learning at a particular point in time, showing how well a student can apply their knowledge and skills.

Both types of assessment are connected through shared rubrics and proficiency descriptors, ensuring students know what success looks like every step of the way.

Feedback Using Proficiency Levels

Students receive feedback using four proficiency levels:

Emerging Proficiency (EmPro)	Developing Proficiency (DevPro)	Demonstrating Proficiency (DemPro)	Extending Proficiency (ExtPro)
The student attempts to demonstrate understanding of the standard. The student is able to demonstrate skills in isolation of each other	The student demonstrates partial and inconsistent understanding of the skills within the standard. The student	The student demonstrates a thorough and consistent understanding of the standard.	The student demonstrates an exceptional and consistent understanding and/or the ability to transfer

and are not yet making connections between the skills and concepts.	may have some conceptual misunderstandings.		skills and concepts within the standard to a variety of contexts.

Determining Achievement Levels

At reporting periods (January and June), teachers review student performance in each strand, focusing on summative assessments and overall growth. Using professional judgment, they determine the most consistent level of achievement in each strand. Report cards provide feedback for each strand using proficiency levels above.

Academic achievement reflects performance on summative assessments aligned to standards, while Approaches to Learning (AtLs) capture behaviors and attitudes that support learning.

Approaches to Learning (AtLs)

AtLs are behaviors that support learning: **collaboration, responsibility, self-directed learning,** and **citizenship**. Approaches to Learning (AtLs) are taught and learned, improve with practice, and develop incrementally. They provide a solid foundation for learning independently and with others and a common language that students and teachers use to reflect on and articulate the process of learning.

A common Grade 6-12 rubric with descriptors is used by teachers and students to ensure a common understanding of behaviors. All students in Grades K-12 receive feedback on the same AtLs. The expectations are developmentally based on the age of the student, but all center around the same four big questions:

- *How does the student work with classmates?*
- *How does the student maximize learning opportunities?*
- *How does the student reflect on learning in order to become more self-directed?*
- *How does the student demonstrate open-mindedness and global awareness?*

AtL Skill	Specific Performance Criteria
Collaboration *How does the student work with classmates?*	- Prepared to do work together. - Focused and on task to help the group achieve the collaborative goal. - Listens and contributes to discussions to build on understanding. - Encourages others to share ideas and listens to build a deeper understanding. - Treats classmates with respect.
Responsibility *How does the student maximize learning opportunities?*	- Arrives at class on time with all the necessary materials. - Uses class time constructively. - Listens actively, takes notes and responds to class discussions and instructions.

	• Stays focused on tasks. • Follows the class rules and expectations. • Takes responsibility for actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Self-Directed Learning *How does the student reflect on learning in order to become more self-directed?*	• Awareness of goals and expected learning. • Uses mistakes to continue learning and grow. • Seeks and uses feedback to enhance learning. • Uses prior experiences to build on current learning. • Flexible in thinking and use of new strategies.
Citizenship *How does the student demonstrate open-mindedness and global awareness?*	• Shows respect for people and the classroom environment. • Considers different perspectives and respects the ideas of others. • Contributes to a positive learning environment and behavior that allows others to learn. • Responds appropriately to the ideas of others. • Uses ACS Core Values.

How do teachers determine Approaches to Learning (AtLs)?
Teachers record evidence on the four AtLs throughout the school year and are encouraged to ask students to frequently self-assess and have conversations following self-assessment opportunities. Feedback on AtLs is given on Progress Reports and Report Cards.

How do teachers record Approaches to Learning (AtL) in Veracross?
Teachers indicate whether a student **consistently, sometimes** or **rarely** demonstrates collaboration, responsibility, self-directed learning, and citizenship. Each student is provided with an indication of the consistency with which each skill is demonstrated independently or with support.

Rarely (R)	Sometimes (S)	Consistently (Co)
When demonstration of the skill happens infrequently	When demonstration of the skill happens at certain times, but is inconsistent	When demonstration of the skill is typical

Assessment Conflicts
Students should not have more than two assessments or other major assignments (not including quizzes) in core subjects (English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, or World Language) on any given day. Students should attempt to resolve issues regarding three or more assessments on one day as far in advance as possible. In general, unless some other compromise has been reached, the most recently announced and/or posted test will be rescheduled.

Homework and Assignments

Homework serves as a basis of a follow-up to class discussions or reinforcement of information and ideas learned in class. If a teacher is using a flipped model of classroom instruction, homework may serve as preparation for an upcoming class. Homework also promotes individual responsibility, independent practice, and good work habits.

As a general guide, students can expect homework, although homework may not be necessary each night. Knowing that homework may ebb and flow throughout the school year, up to two hours of homework is a reasonable expectation at this level for the student who applies him or herself during the day. In the MS, homework on weekends will be kept to a minimum. Extended assignments and long-range projects will often require weekend work. Since assessments may be given on Monday, studying on Saturday and Sunday could be necessary and expected. **No homework will be assigned during holidays. Students should read for pleasure throughout the week and even during breaks.**

Assignments and assessments will be posted on Veracross. This will allow students and parents to find out about upcoming assignments, and enable students to plan their study time accordingly. In addition, teachers will be better able to avoid overloading students with work at any one time.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

The assessment calendar is divided into two semesters, each approximately 19 weeks long. Report cards are provided at the end of each semester (end of Quarter 2 and 4). Progress Reports are given in the middle of each semester (end of Quarter 1 and 3).

The Middle School uses Veracross for the communication of academic reporting. When progress reports or report cards are published, parents can access their child's reports via the parent portal on Veracross. As no paper reports will be sent home, it is important that parents and students understand how to log in to access student progress reports and report cards.

Standardized Testing

All students in the MS complete standardized tests annually. Students take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, and the ACTFL Assessment of Performance towards Proficiency in Languages (APPL).

Standardized testing provides another data point and:

- Helps teachers as they plan instruction for individual students
- Provides teachers and parents an additional insight to their child's learning
- Provides information on our curriculum
- Prepares students for more traditional assessments at a later age
- Helps us see how our students are performing when compared with peers outside ACS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The MS administration and teachers are responsible for ensuring students understand academic dishonesty. As students in middle school become more independent, our Approaches to Learning (ATLs) — Collaboration, Responsibility, Self-Directed Learning, and Citizenship — along with ACS Core

Values (Compassion, Courage, Curiosity, and Integrity), are key to guiding them. Academic Integrity is treated as a serious learning opportunity, with an emphasis on Responsibility and Integrity.

All students will work with their teachers to learn how to use Artificial Intelligence tools responsibly and transparently. In addition to guiding students on proper AI use, our teachers also use AI detection tools in alignment with our K12 AI Policy. This ensures that student work remains authentic and aligns with our school's values of honesty and original thinking.

Students must show integrity by taking responsibility for their own learning. Academic dishonesty includes:

- Presenting someone else's ideas or online sources (including AI) as their own.
- Copying sections from any printed or digital materials without citing the source.
- Cheating on tests or exams.
- Allowing others to copy homework or test answers.

Students are expected to complete assignments and assessments independently, as both individual and collaborative work are essential lifelong skills.

Homework, Formative and Summative Assessments

Students are expected to complete assignments independently. While collaboration is sometimes allowed and even encouraged, it is important to understand when it is inappropriate. Helping classmates is acceptable only if the teacher has indicated it is appropriate for that specific assignment. Copying homework is never allowed, but assisting someone in understanding the work is acceptable. Copying homework or sharing information during tests or quizzes is considered academic dishonesty. Always assume you are to work independently unless your teacher says otherwise. If you're unsure, ask your teacher for clarification.

Academic dishonesty includes:

- Copying others' work, including content from artificial intelligence tools.
- Allowing others to copy your work.
- Sharing or requesting information during tests or quizzes.
- Possessing unauthorized materials during assessments.
- Communicating assessment content to other students.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that occurs when you use someone else's ideas or expressions without giving proper credit. Essentially, it is a form of intellectual theft.

You are plagiarizing if you:

- Present someone else's ideas as your own without citing the source.
- Paraphrase without crediting the original source.
- Use direct quotes without quotation marks or proper citation.
- Submit a paper or assignment that has been heavily altered by someone else, making it no longer your own work.
- Use artificial intelligence to write content for you.

Keep in mind that these are skills Middle School students may be learning for the first time.

The Principal will document each incident of academic dishonesty. Incidents of cheating and plagiarism are cumulative throughout a student's MS years and may result in consequences as outlined below.

The consequences are as follows:

1st offense
- A student's academic misconduct will be confidentially communicated to all of his/her teachers.
- The student will have to redo the assignment or complete an alternate one.
- If this includes using AI, the students will meet with the principals and re-teach the policy document; the student then reflects and revises their work.
- The student will meet with the teacher during breaks or after school to discuss the incident, the nature of the incident, and how this will be avoided in the future.
- The parents will be notified.
- The assistant principal will be notified.

2nd offense
The above steps will be taken and additionally:
- A meeting will be held with the assistant principal along with contact or a meeting with the parents and student together.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, the student may have additional consequences including detentions and may serve a one day **in-school** suspension, depending on the nature of the cumulative incidents at this point.

3rd offense
The above steps will be taken and additionally:
- The student will serve a one-day suspension.
- The student and parents will sign a binding Learning Support contract.

4th offense
The above steps will be taken and additionally:
- The student will serve a **2 day out-of-school** suspension.
- The principal will be notified and an SST (student support team) meeting will be held.
- The student will be placed on social probation and may lose privileges related to the offense.
- Students and parents will sign a **last/revised binding Learning Support contract**.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Counselors

The Middle School Counselors provide support to students, parents, and staff. Parents who wish to meet with a counselor may contact the counselor directly or arrange an appointment through the Middle School Office.

Confidentiality is an essential part of effective counseling. However, confidentiality may be broken under the following circumstances: if a student poses a threat to themselves or others, if someone else poses a threat to the student, or if the student grants permission for the counselor to share information with a specific person. Counseling conversations are not included in student records, except in cases related to admissions

Student Transitions

The Counselors helps to ease the transition for the new students through a variety of strategies including, but not limited to: screening admissions files; administering admissions screening tests; matching new students with buddies, meeting with new students in transition groups and offering parenting support groups. Our counselors also work on the transitions for students moving up from Grade 5 and for our students who transition to High School. We also offer extensive support for students who leave our community.

Oasis

Oasis serves as our advisory program, designed to be developmentally responsive and provide consistent support for all students. Each year, students engage in activities that promote critical thinking and reflection, helping them better understand themselves, connect with their community, and gain a broader perspective of the world.

The purpose of Oasis is to build a strong sense of community, foster connections, and regularly check in with students to support their well-being. Through Oasis, students will explore their unique cultural identities, learn to accept and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of others, and embrace the richness of the entire ACS community and beyond. Oasis plays a crucial role in developing essential skills for our students, such as building empathy and compassion, improving communication, and fostering a sense of community.

Oasis lessons encourage students to ask questions, seek understanding, and foster meaningful connections with all stakeholders. The goal of Oasis is to nurture an inclusive and supportive environment where relationships are built, and individual and collective identities are celebrated. These skills align with the Universal Youth Needs, which include Belonging and Membership, the Ability to Contribute, Safety and Structure, Independence and Control, Competence and Mastery, Self-Awareness, and Spirituality. By nurturing these areas, Oasis supports students in their personal growth, helping them build meaningful relationships and thrive in a supportive and structured environment.

Student Support Teams (SST)

In the Middle School special teams of school personnel (teachers, counselors and principals) are organized to support and assist students who experience difficulties in academic performance, behavior, or social interactions. These teams are known as the Student Support Teams (SST). Occasionally, parents are invited to meet with the SST in order to keep them actively involved in the aid of their child. Some strategies that are available to help a student may include testing by the Counselor, or School Psychologist, support services, counseling services, Veracross updates and weekly SST reports sent home.

Health Office

The Health Office is open 7.45 a.m. -4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday and from 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Friday. It is staffed by two HAAD licensed nurses. They support the health and well-being needs of the school population through delivery of the HAAD (Health Authority Abu Dhabi) School Health Program. This includes responding to minor injuries on the campus, prevention of ill health through monitoring communicable diseases, undertaking the School Health Screening for Grades 1-12, childhood immunizations programs (G1+G11), health promotion campaigns, and working to HAAD standards of practice to ensure the safety and well-being of all our students.

We strive to be an **allergen aware campus** rather than an allergen-free school. An allergen aware campus seeks to create an environment in which children with severe allergies can learn to make appropriate choices to keep themselves safe.

Students who have chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma, diabetes will require their parent to complete a health care plan with relevant supporting medical reports/prescriptions so that we can ensure their health needs are met and considered throughout the school day (downloadable from our webpage)

- If a student requires a course of medication through the school day, parents are required to contact our school nurses. **Students are not permitted to carry and take their own medication during the school day.** All medications must be taken in our Health Office
- If a student becomes unwell during the school day they are to attend the Health Office where the nurses will document and assess if they need to go home.
- **Students who have a fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting need to be free of symptoms at least 24 hours without medication prior to returning to school per Health Authority directive, even if they feel well enough to attend school.** This reduces the risk of infectious diseases/ill health to our students and staff.

For any inquiries to either school nurse, please email nurses@acs.sch.ae or telephone 02 508 4412. For any additional health information and guidance, check out the Health & Wellness page under community links on the ACS website.

STUDENT LIFE

Fun After School (FAS)

The Fun After School (FAS) program is an after school program designed to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a number of non-competitive sports and activities throughout the school year. While students are engaged in the FAS program they will be encouraged to identify with the ACS core values of curiosity, compassion, courage and integrity. It is the intent of this program to provide a wide variety of opportunities for MS students to improve familiar talents, expand upon existing interests and explore altogether new arenas of ability. Deciding to sign-up for a program is a commitment and **attendance is monitored.** Students are to inform the supervisors if they are unable to attend.

Athletic Teams

We have an active Middle School athletics program, which is divided into three seasons – fall, winter, and spring. Our teams participate in the Junior Emirates Athletics Conference (JEAC - Grade 6 teams), the Development Emirates Athletics Conference (DEAC), and the Emirates Athletics Conference (EAC). Grade 8 athletes may try out to participate in a High School Junior Varsity (JV) team. In High School, ACS is a member of MESAC (Middle Eastern Schools Activities Conference), which consists of six schools in the region.

All important details regarding the athletics program can be viewed in the Athletics Handbook.

If a student is disciplined on a JEAC, DEAC, EAC or MESAC trip for serious rule violations, he or she forfeits the privilege of representing our school on our teams. The student may also become ineligible

for the next season of participation if the infraction is deemed serious. The Principal makes this determination in consultation with the Athletic Directors.

Activity Nights

We will host Activity Nights throughout the year which are organized by the Student Council, and supported by parents and our teachers. Some events involve all students and some are grade-level events. All events held at school are supervised and chaperoned by school personnel and/or parents.

Regular school rules and expectations apply during these events, and the following special rules also apply:

- **Only current** ACS students are eligible to attend. A student must have attended a full day of school the day of the event.
- Students attending the event must arrive within the first part of the event (usually within one hour). Students **may not leave** the event before the established finishing time.
- Students must wear appropriate dress. This will vary with the different themes of the events and will be published by the sponsoring organization.
- Students must behave appropriately for the social activity as determined by the chaperones for the activity.
- Students need to be picked up on time at the end time of the event, as there will not be any supervision after the activity is complete.

Field Trips

Teachers occasionally organize field trips to extend the learning for students into the community and take advantage of opportunities that cannot be duplicated within the school. Any student participating in a school-sponsored field trip must have written permission from a parent or guardian. In most cases the general permission, which is signed by parents during the application process, will suffice. In some cases, a special permission form may be required which is in compliance with procedures indicated by the principal, teacher, or sponsor of the group involved.

At the discretion of the teacher(s)/chaperone(s), and with the concurrence of the MS principal, students who have encountered disciplinary problems may be prohibited from attending out-of-town field trips, including the week-long MS Viper Venture excursions.

Viper Venture

As part of the regular school program, students travel on extended field trips in support of the school curriculum. These trips are known as our Middle School Viper Ventures.

The purpose of a Middle School Viper Venture experience is to expand intercultural understanding and invites personal growth through off-campus opportunities that demand self-directed learning, effective collaboration, skillful communication, creative problem-solving and a refined awareness of their impact on a community and the environment as ethical global citizens who are caring, empathetic and respect diversity.

A Middle School Viper Venture experience should endeavor to include experiences that allow students to gain new perspectives for our ACS Core Values:

- *Compassion:* Taking actions to understand how others think and feel and appreciate the value of difference. (Advocacy, Service: Local or Distant)
- *Courage:* Having the confidence to take risks, and do the right thing. (Outdoor Education, Values-based activities)
- *Curiosity:* Being eager to learn and explore to gain a deeper understanding through inquiry and critical questioning. (Opportunities for productive and authentic engagement with members of a local community)
- *Integrity:* Being honest, fair and responsible in words and actions, and staying true to one's principles (Serving as an ACS ambassador)

A Viper Venture experience may include problem-based or inquiry-based learning opportunities and have components that use our four ACS Pillars as guidelines.

Further, the trip experience should have a reflective component that summatively captures the entire week's experiences. It is hoped that each student realizes that the experience itself was an enriching learning opportunity.

Each grade-level team should endeavor to set-up opportunities for students to prepare for an educational component that prepares students for the Viper Venture experience. Students actively engage in learning that is related to the educational component while on Viper Venture and later completes the learning post-trip. Students may present this new learning at a grade-level assembly, division assembly or for a student/parent evening event.

Middle School Assemblies

Students are to be on time for assemblies and should sit down as soon as they enter the venue. We ask that all students follow these guidelines:

- Give their full attention to the speaker.
- Face the speaker.
- Behave in ways that allow for everyone to hear what any speaker is saying.

Performances & Special Events

Students should know how to conduct themselves when watching others perform.

At an athletic event, it is acceptable for students to make appropriate noise and show enthusiasm. Students should not make any negative comments or actions towards other teams or individuals who are visiting our campus. We expect that our students show their support using the ACS Core Values.

At other performances, students will be expected to sit quietly, refrain from talking and moving around and demonstrate respect for the performers. To avoid interfering with the ability for others to hear or appreciate a performance, students are expected to be courteous and respectful.

Out of support for our students who have worked so hard to bring you quality entertainment, we would ask that you please abide by the code outlined below:

- Please do not leave the performance venue until the entire performance is finished. It is inappropriate for an audience member to leave a performance unless he/she becomes violently ill or receives word that there has been an emergency. Moreover, it is considered particularly

insensitive to leave a performance once the person whom you have come specifically to watch has finished performing.

- Mobile devices should be turned off during the performance. Audience members run the risk of being asked to leave should their phones ring during the performance.

- Please do not engage in behaviors of any kind that might distract performers on stage. Talking, flash photography, walking around, eating, drinking, playing video games, etc. — all are strictly prohibited.

Eligibility Guidelines for Extracurricular Activities

The following eligibility guidelines will be applied to all extra-curricular activities, which require regular after-school practice sessions and/or would require a student to be absent from regularly scheduled classes.

- Class attendance is mandatory the day of and the day following any extra-curricular activity. Participation in extracurricular activities is an additional responsibility that should not conflict with the student's primary academic responsibilities.
- A student will be considered eligible to participate during that quarter if they are in good academic standing and are not on disciplinary probation, or conditional re-enrollment in that quarter. Students who require additional Learning Support may participate, but must also seek permission from the teachers.
- If a student is declared ineligible, the time period involved will be from the day report cards are issued until the last day of the current quarter.
- Students on probation for disciplinary reasons or placed on social probation at any point in the quarter become ineligible.
- Absences for MESAC or other school sponsored trips count toward the total absences for a quarter.
- Students eligible to travel on MESAC events will be in grades 8-12.
- In deference to students of host schools and to show sensitivity to different cultures, students will not be allowed to travel on a school sponsored activity while having hair dyed unnatural colors (green, blue, purple, orange, etc.).
- If a student is selected for a team or other school-sponsored activity/event and accepts a position with that team/group/cast, she/he cannot quit that activity to join another school-sponsored activity. The student is ineligible to participate in any manner until after the initial activity or team has finished for the year.
- A student is declared ineligible if in violation of the ACS Activities code.

MS/HS Library

The MS/HS Library offers a variety of resources for research and recreational reading to support the school's curriculum and students' personal interests. The Library provides a variety of tech equipment for check out, access to databases, news sources and research tools. In the Library, students have places to read, quiet study rooms as well as spaces for collaborative work. The Library's goal is to promote a love of reading, learning, and provide a place for collaboration.

The Library is open Monday through Thursdays from 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Students have access to the Library before school, during break and lunch periods, after school and during class time as deemed appropriate by their teachers.

Library Expectations:

- Treat the library and all materials with respect.
- When working in the library, respect the learning environment of others.
- As a courtesy to others, wear headphones when listening to audio/video.
- Water bottles and drinks must be in sealable containers.
- All students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

Print Material Checkout Policy:
- Print materials may be checked out for three weeks. Books may be renewed, unless there is a waiting list.
- Students are responsible for all borrowed materials. A replacement fee will be charged in the case of a missing, lost, or damaged item.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

People flourish in safe and caring relationships and people are responsible for their choices, actions, and consequences that result. The overarching principle that guides our enforcement of these behavioral guidelines is based on trust, respect, and continuous open dialogue, with the end goal being not to punish, but to change behavior and build responsibility. All students are expected to practice the ACS Core Values.

Staff and Student Rights, Responsibilities and Expectations

Rights
- A safe environment (physically and emotionally)
- Clear communication about academic and behavioral expectations
- To be treated with respect

Responsibilities
- To conduct ourselves in ways which promote and preserve these rights for others, and ourselves, and which meet our behavioral expectations.

Expectations
- Safe and legal behavior
- Adherence to class rules and teacher instructions
- Respectful behavior towards others
- Punctuality and regular attendance
- Scholarly effort
- Honesty
- Respectful attire (see dress code)
- Respect for the host culture

The following types of behavior are considered major school rule violations:
- The possession or use of alcohol, cigarettes, shisha, dokha, e-cigarettes and vape pens / MODS.
- Attendance at school or school activities under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Disruption or obstruction of the learning activities through violence, defiance, force, insubordination, noise, coercion, extortion, threat, intimidation, fear or passive resistance.

- Possession and/or use of any potentially dangerous materials or weapons (guns, knives, chemicals, fireworks, etc.).
- Assault or physical injury or fighting with anyone at school, adult or student.
- Arson, vandalism and/or initiating a false fire alarm.
- Forceful, unapproved and/or irregular entry of school premises.
- Theft or stealing of any kind.
- Any other unlawful or illegal activities while under school supervision.
- Disrespectful, rude and/or inappropriate language.
- Physical, verbal and/or mental abuse, or harassment (including sexual harassment).
- Leaving school and/or missing classes without authorization.
- Forgery of any kind.
- Violation of another student's personal property.

Please note that although not a major infraction, **students are not permitted to chew gum** at school.

Bus Expectations

Students should remember that they represent our school community while they are on and off campus. Therefore, students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the American Community School of Abu Dhabi. This includes behavior while traveling on the bus to and from school. It is expected that they will be courteous and respectful to all adults and students on the bus. For more information about traveling on ACS buses, please see the Bus Transport website, which includes the Code of Conduct.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Showing Respect to All

Students are expected to show respect to all members of the ACS community. Talking back, being rude, making threats, using put downs, refusing to follow directions, and being argumentative are all examples of showing disrespect. Remember our guards, cafeteria staff, cleaning staff, and grounds staff are all members of the ACS community and all deserve our respect.

Our Middle School is built on a foundation of mutual trust, respect, inclusivity and kindness. Any behaviors and/or actions that prevent a person from feeling safe, secure, and happy to live and learn at ACS will be addressed promptly and seriously. We encourage activities that promote connection and belonging, ensuring that no one is left out or made to feel isolated. We do not tolerate any activities that demean, or socially isolate other community members. Our discipline policy attempts to take a proactive approach to issues of meanness and unkindness by confronting them head-on and working with students involved through counseling and administrative measures.

During Break and After Lunch

This is the time to play and have fun with your friends. If the weather is nice, spending time outside is a great idea. Remember to throw away any trash before going to class. If you have to be inside, be mindful of your voice level and activity choices. You may use the gym only when there is appropriate supervision.

With Friends

Be sure to use appropriate language (no cursing, no put-downs). Displays of affection are not permitted on campus. Students are not to engage in any type of tackle game

while on break. Nor are students permitted to play any type of game or activity that includes hitting or harming others. Students must wear appropriate footwear when on the soccer/football pitch and while playing in our gyms.

Students will not:

- Play tackle games
- Have rough physical contact with other students (for example playing tag by grabbing shirts or body parts)
- Push or pull each other while playing
- Technology use should not be disruptive to other students

Behavior Management & Consequences

The primary means of behavior management and intervention is the teacher. Classroom rules and expectations will be clearly defined. Positive reinforcement throughout the school is encouraged. The consequences for students who choose to not show respect to fellow students or staff, or who have not followed the school's policies will depend on the seriousness of the problem and the harm done to others and/or the educational environment. At ACS, we encourage students to report ongoing negative behaviors that do not adhere to our expectations for a safe environment. Students can always talk to our teachers, our counselors and the principals.

It is our philosophy that students should learn from behavioral difficulties. Therefore, when consequences are necessary, they are always intended to help students in this process. The formulation of a plan by the student to take responsibility for their behavior and to improve behavior is one effective way to facilitate this learning. Teachers, with the help of the principal when necessary, will work individually with a student in an attempt to help the student meet expectations.

Our Behavior Guidelines and Expectations establish general guidelines for responsible and respectful behavior at school and in public. The school will not condone or tolerate behavior, either during or outside school hours, which is damaging to the school community nor which jeopardizes the reputation of ACS. Specific school rules notwithstanding, all students are expected to adhere to and respect UAE law at all times.

Level 1 Infractions and Consequences

Minor infractions, including:
- Violation of classroom rules
- Disruptive behavior
- Minor tech including being off-task
- Initial inappropriate use of AI
- Dress code violations
- Chewing gum
- Initial tardies

Consequences: Interventions by the teacher, staff member or assistant principal. May involve students being removed from the classroom environment. Student commits to a verbal improvement plan.

Level 2 Infractions and Consequences

Violations of conduct and behavior expectations, including:
- Repeated incidents of level 1 transgressions

- Academic dishonesty
- Technology device interruptions (including from phones, ipads and smartwatches)
- Inappropriate use of technology during class time (gaming, apps, videos or others)
- Continued inappropriate use of AI
- Lack of integrity while using technology
- Disobedience
- Rude behavior
- Profanity
- Excessive tardies - (3rd through 9th Tardies in a Quarter)
- Dangerous behaviors
- Irresponsible behaviors
- Gaming, video watching, or social media during class time
- Skipping classes
- Vandalism

Consequences: Will most likely involve intervention by the Assistant Principal. May involve the student being removed from the classroom environment. Contact made with the parents, teachers and counselor. Detentions (lunch and after school), technology consequences, possible in-school suspensions, and/or written behavior action plans.

Level 3 Infractions and Consequences
Gross violations of conduct and behavior expectations, including bullying.
- Repeated incidents of level 2 transgressions
- Repeated incidents of academic dishonesty
- Repeated incidents of inappropriate use of AI
- Excessive tardies (10 or more tardies in a quarter)
- Using technology to disrupt student learning, and/or to embarrass, harm or isolate others
- Using technology, such as social media or messaging platforms, to harass, intimidate, or spread harmful information about another student. This can include online threats, spreading false rumors, or sharing inappropriate images without consent.
- Targeted harassment, or intimidation (in any form) / bullying (see below)
- Any actions or statements targeting individuals based on gender, perceived sexual orientation, religion, disability, or other protected characteristics.
- Any form of unwelcome sexual advances, or inappropriate physical contact. This includes both verbal and non-verbal actions, such as sharing explicit content or making sexual comments.
- Possession or use of any weapon, including knives, or other objects intended to cause harm, is strictly prohibited.
- Any defamatory language or actions that belittle or harm someone based on their race, ethnicity, or nationality. This includes using racial slurs, promoting stereotypes, or engaging in racially motivated bullying.
- Intentional physical aggression or threats of violence, including fighting, hitting, or bullying that results in physical harm.
- Deliberately damaging or stealing school property or the property of others, including significant damage to school infrastructure.
- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol, or other illegal substances on school property or during school activities.

Consequences include intervention by the principal, a warning on record for failure to meet school conduct expectations, behavior contracts, in-school suspensions, technology restrictions, out-of-school

suspensions, conversations about withdrawal from school, and/or counseling may be expected for the student and/or family.

Bullying

Conflicts between students can be a natural part of school life, and when appropriate, faculty and staff intervene early to help students reach a resolution. However, when conflict escalates into bullying, immediate action is taken by the principals. At ACS, bullying is defined as repeated, intentional behavior meant to cause harm, often involving an imbalance of power. These behaviors are not tolerated in our community and must be reported to the school principals and/or counselors as soon as possible.

When bullying is reported, the principals conduct a thorough investigation to determine if the behavior shows intent to harm, is part of a pattern, and includes an imbalance of power. In cases where the issue stems from ongoing conflict, rudeness, or mean behavior, parents are informed, and the counselor or principals mediate to resolve the situation.

If bullying is confirmed, principals meet with the parents of those involved. The student affected by bullying receives social-emotional support, and a safety plan may be implemented if needed. The student exhibiting bullying behavior faces consequences, which may include a change in the student's schedule, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and/or a behavior contract designed to foster positive behavioral changes. Continued bullying could lead to discussions about withdrawal from school. Counseling may also be recommended for both students, as necessary.

Detention

Students will serve detention during lunch, or after school and will include a conversation with the assistant principal or principal. Detentions are served in a supervised setting to reflect upon their behavior. Students are informed about the detention as soon as possible, and follow-up conversations with parents are had, as necessary.

Suspension

Students may be removed from classes and not allowed to participate in activities for a period of one to three days. In all cases of suspension, students will not be allowed to participate in any school activities during the period of suspension, and a parent conference may be required before the student may return to regular classes.

In-School Suspension

In-School suspension will be in a non-classroom setting at school with teachers sending students their work from the classroom. Students who receive in-school suspension are encouraged to bring their own lunch to school.

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School suspension will be used when the problems have been repeated or are of a more serious nature. Students who are serving their suspensions at home are expected to complete all of their assignments while they are at home. If necessary, students will be asked to make up assessments upon their return to school outside of the normal school day.

Behavior Contracts

The principal may place students consistently in violation of school rules and regulations on behavior contracts. First violations of a more serious nature may be handled in this manner. This means that the student may be prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities or from being on campus except during regular school hours. Probationary status may be assigned at any time, and will be reviewed by the Student Support Team. Students and parents will be informed in writing and/or through meetings of the terms and reasons for the behavior contract. Students failing to show the necessary improvements may be placed on a conditional re-enrollment at ACS, or notified for non-admittance for the following school period. Such a decision would involve the Superintendent.

Dress Code

The Ministry of Education requires students to wear a school uniform each day. ACS strives to comply with this mandate while providing options in your child's daily style. This section outlines the various options available for the School Uniform. Please make arrangements to purchase your child(ren)'s uniform well in advance of the beginning of the school year.

All students (KG1 - Grade 12) are required to wear the official ACS uniform to school every day. Please see the detailed information below.

Learning within a multicultural community offers all individuals the opportunity to become responsible global citizens. At ACS, we seek to understand and respect cultural differences of beliefs and values while ensuring that we are sensitive to the customs and norms of our host country. While we appreciate the role that attire plays in expressing individuality, we expect all members of our community to wear the ACS uniform.

For the most up-to-date information related to the dress code, [please visit our website].

For all after school events, the students and parents are expected to dress in modest clothing, respecting our host country:
- Shorts, dresses, and skirts must be knee-length.
- Clothing cannot be transparent or torn showing skin.
- Hats or shades are not appropriate while in school building.
- Shirts and Tops must:
    - Cover both shoulders, without having to pull it up (nothing sleeveless);
    - Fully cover the back or belly and have a modest neckline;
- Ensure that undergarments are not visible at any time;
- Not include images, words or phrases that are offensive or make reference to alcohol or drugs.

 Students who are in violation of ACS dress code will not be admitted to class, will meet with the Assistant Principal and will modify his/her clothing before going to class.

Instances of dress code violations will be handled as follows:
- A warning: the problem is solved in the office (e.g. change shirts or shorts) or students call home for a change of clothes. Parents are notified.
- A detention: the problem is solved in the office (e.g. change shirts or shorts) or students call home for a change of clothes. Parents are notified
- Parent conference: students call home for a change of clothes.

Further Violations – Will be at the Principal's discretion and further conversation with parents, students,

and Assistant Principal. The administration reserves the right to make final decisions on the acceptability of student attire. We thank you in advance for your understanding of our school beliefs and for supporting both the specific parameters of the dress code as well as the spirit in which it is intended.

Physical Education (PE) Uniforms
All students in PE are required to take part in scheduled class activities and to be appropriately dressed. For Physical Education classes, students are required to wear athletic shoes, socks, and the ACS PE uniform. All details for PE uniforms can be found on the Uniforms and Supplies page of the ACS website. Students are given time to change back into school uniform after each PE class. Uniforms, socks and towels should be taken home and washed between PE classes.

Attendance
Regular participation in class activities is a vital part of the learning process, and it is therefore important and expected for students to be present on time, in each class, every day.

Learning and understanding gained from classroom instruction, activities and interactions cannot always be replicated independently. Regular and timely attendance and participation are necessary to develop a coherent understanding of a body of knowledge and to develop skills sequentially. As a result, we believe a commitment to school attendance on the part of both students and parents is an essential component of a high-quality learning experience and parents are expected to do everything possible to ensure each student's regular attendance.

Arriving to School on Time
To ensure students arrive on time for the start of school at 8:30 a.m., it's important to plan ahead and take responsibility for navigating city traffic, which can be unpredictable, especially around the NYU area at this time. We appreciate your efforts in adjusting morning routines to help your child be punctual. Official drop-off times are between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. For students arriving earlier, between 8:00 and 8:15, they are welcomed into a supervised, shaded area of the courtyard. On hotter, more humid days, students may enter the school lobby starting at 8:10 a.m.

Absence Notification
The Middle School Office must be notified if your child is unable to participate in synchronous (real-time) or on-campus learning ahead of time at jcraven@acs.sch.ae. The students are expected to notify teachers of their impending absence to find out what assignments they will be missing the day(s) they are absent.

Planned Absence
If a student is planning to be away from school for one or more days (e.g. due to family responsibilities), the school would like to be informed. MS students must submit a completed Planned Absence Form to the school four to five days prior to leaving. Students must take the form to each of their teachers to indicate work to be completed. Forms are available from the MS office. If you have any questions, you may contact the MS office.

Teachers and Counselors are closely monitoring daily student attendance. Students and families will be contacted by the Assistant Principal when missing classes that are unexcused.

Excused and Unexcused Absences
Generally speaking, there are two main categories of absences:

Category 1: Excused Absences
Students may be allowed to miss school for the following reasons:
- Illness (the school may require a physician's certificate from the parent for 3 consecutive days of illness and in cases of chronic or extended absences for an illness);
- Physician appointment (when at all possible, families should try to arrange appointments before school, after school or during holidays);
- School sponsored trip;
- Religious holiday;
- Hazardous weather conditions;
- Passport renewal;
- Visa/immigration appointments;
- Death in the family.

For reasons of illness or injury, students may be excused from PE class activities. The following will be honored:

- Notes from parents requesting an excuse from class for up to two consecutive PE days.
- An excuse written by a physician that includes the reason for the excuse and beginning and ending dates. Not being dressed in appropriate attire is not an excuse for non-participation in PE.

Category 2: Unexcused Absences / Notified Unexcused Absences
An absence that does not fall under one of the above conditions, and occurs without prior notification from parents, is an Unexcused Absence. Unexcused Absences will result in the instructional time being made up before or after school in a supervised study hall, and parents are notified. Note: Teachers will help students make up work when the absence is excused; however; no such obligation exists when the absence is unexcused.

Request for Student Absence for Family Reasons
It is sometimes the case that families request to remove their child from school for a family trip. As a courtesy, we ask that parents please notify the Principal in writing at least 7 days prior to the absence for a family trip. While, in most cases, the school does not support these absences, prior notification does allow the student to have a conversation with his/her teachers and keep up with coursework during the absence.

Returning to School After Student Trips
Students returning from school-sponsored trips are not required to report back to school until 10 hours after their plane lands in Abu Dhabi or 12 hours after landing in Dubai. Any absences or tardiness beyond this timeframe will be considered unexcused and may impact eligibility for future activities. The trip administrator will inform students at the airport about the expected time to return to school and will also notify the Middle School office. To ensure fairness and accountability, it's important that students follow this guideline to maintain participation in future trips and activities.

Tardies
Students who are late either to school or class negatively impact their learning and the learning of others. It is the student's responsibility to attend all classes on time. If a student is late for class, he/she will be marked "tardy." A student, and family will be notified after accruing two or more tardies in one reporting period.

The following are the consequences for tardies for our classes at the start of the day:

- The student, and family will be notified after their **second** tardy
- The student, and family will be notified after their **third, and subsequent** tardies, will continue to serve detentions.
- The student, and family will be notified after their **sixth** tardy that a meeting with the Principal will have to occur.
- The student, and family will be notified after their **tenth** tardy and the student and parents will meet with the Principal and an Attendance Contract will be created. The student may be denied further participation in school-related or co-curricular events.

Teachers, counselors and principals will always work with students to help remedy tardy issues related to classes for each block of the day.

Make-Up Work
Students returning after an absence will be given a reasonable time (if the time is extensive) to complete missed assignments/tests. Students are responsible for contacting teachers regarding missed assignments and missed tests. It is an expectation for students to complete their work while away from school.

Students arriving late to school should contact teachers whose classes they missed to discuss make up assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. Similarly, students who anticipate leaving school early should notify those teachers who the student will not see in the afternoon, at least one day prior to the early departure.

Students who become ill during the school day will be sent home only if the parent or emergency contact is notified by the nurse's office. It is important that an emergency contact is stated on each student's registration form and health record. The nurse must excuse students before leaving school because of illness.

Admission Slip
Students who have been absent for all or any part of a day are asked to bring with them, when they return, a statement signed by the parent or guardian which specifies (1) the date(s) and/or time of the absence and (2) the reason for the absence. This note is presented to the MS Executive Assistant, from whom the student will receive an admission slip required for readmission to classes. If you know that your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, please email or call the MS Executive Assistant. In addition, the MS office may contact parents concerning a student's absence from school at any time.

Class Attendance / Activities
In order to participate in after-school and evening extra-curricular activities (sports, concerts, theater, etc.), **students must attend a minimum of 2 class periods that same day** (when events occur on the evenings of school days). If a school activity occurs during the weekend, participating students must be in attendance at school on Friday for a minimum of 2 class periods. A doctor's notification and other relevant information may alter the enforcement of the regulation in extenuating circumstances. The final decision in all cases lies with the principal.

Additionally, students participating in after-school and evening activities **are expected to be at school the following day**. Not attending school the following day may result in the student not being able to participate in further extra-curricular activities.

One Trip Per Quarter

Middle school students are normally allowed to be absent from school for a trip to participate in an extracurricular activity once during a quarter. Please note that **absences due to such trips** do count as an absence with respect to the 80% attendance policy. If a student is involved in activities that will result in more than one trip per quarter, the student must submit a written request to the MS principal for permission to take the additional trip. The review panel consists of the MS principal, the athletic director, the counselor, the activity sponsor, and selected teachers. In general, **students who are demonstrating proficiency and extending proficiency in all classes,** and who have an exemplary attendance record, may be favorably considered. Students struggling academically **or with poor attendance** will normally not be allowed to travel on a second trip.

Nuisance Items

The term "nuisance items" includes such things as toys, gadgets or any item that disrupts the classroom learning environment. These include digital applications that may intentionally disrupt the learning environment. These items should not be brought into classrooms, or downloaded onto devices, unless the teacher in question specifically permits them for an activity.

Other Items

Pocket knives, water pistols, slingshots, and similar items are not allowed on campus, or on any field trip. **Bringing a replica of a weapon to school may result in suspension**.

If a student roller blades, or rides a skateboard or scooter to school, it should not be used once the student is on school campus; it should be stored in the appropriate rack. It is suggested that bikes and scooters are locked.

Technology Policy

At ACS, we believe technology is more than just a collection of tools. It is a powerful enabler of learning, creativity, and connection across all grade levels. We view technology as a means to deepen thinking, spark creativity, and support meaningful collaboration. Whether students are researching, designing, coding, composing, or reflecting, they are using technology to enhance their learning experience and develop future-ready skills. Our complete K12 Technology Philosophy and Responsible Use Policy is available here.

Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

ACS recognizes the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) as well as the need to approach its integration with purpose and care. We believe that the use of AI should start with human curiosity, and end with human judgment and insight, ensuring it remains intentional and grounded in human agency. Our aim with this policy is to foster a collaborative partnership with AI that sparks innovation, enriches learning, and develops AI literacy and critically engages with AI-generated content.

This AI policy, like the ACS Technology Responsible Use Policy, is grounded in our core values. It establishes a clear framework for the ethical and responsible use of AI, promoting consistency in

expectations across our school community. Just as importantly, it reflects our commitment to safeguarding and supporting our community as we explore this evolving digital landscape together. The complete K12 AI Policy is available here.

Creating Usernames

Most ACS applications are connected to our students' ACS username. For those applications that are used at school, but are not purchased as ACS site licenses, students will follow these guidelines when creating usernames:

1. **First Name + Last Initial**: This keeps it simple and identifiable (e.g., **JohnD**).
2. **No Nicknames or Emojis**: Usernames should remain appropriate for an academic setting, avoiding any nicknames, symbols, or emojis that may distract from the learning environment.

The goal is to ensure that the username is respectful, easy to identify, and appropriate for a school environment.

Gaming at School

Unless granted permission by the Middle School Administration, students are not allowed to play online or on downloaded games at school. This includes watching gaming videos or using the network to download gaming-related content.

Laptop Use During Breaks and Lunch

It is important that Middle School students use break times during the school day to socialize with others and take a rest from screen time. With balance in mind we have guidelines for when and where MS students should use their laptops.

Students may use their laptops before and after school to complete work in the library only. **Laptops will not be used during the lunch break.** Middle school students are not permitted to use their laptops during breaks unless under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Violations of these expectations may result in disciplinary action, and will have consequences that fall in line with our disciplinary practices. Serious violations may be reported to law enforcement.

Users should have no expectation of privacy when using the school's technology resources. The school reserves the right to monitor and access any data, messages, or files stored in or transmitted through its resources. By using our technology resources, users acknowledge their understanding of and commitment to upholding these expectations.

Protecting Student Identity & Personal Information

With so much information available online, it's really important to keep your personal details safe. Once something is shared on the internet, it can stay there for a long time. Personal information includes things like your name, phone number, student ID, address, usernames, and passwords. To protect yourself and others, never share your accounts or passwords, especially for things like email, ACS accounts, or social media. Keep personal information, like your home address and full name, private at all times. Students are not permitted to download and use student, faculty and staff photos without administrative permission.

Additional Devices in School

In addition to their Mac laptop, if students are permitted to have their personal devices out at school, and they are using the ACS network, please know that the ACS Technology Policy around applies to the use of all devices.

Printing @ ACS

We encourage the community to use as little paper as possible. But if needed, printers are available for students in various shared spaces. Students may not access other printers, including office printers.

DIRECTORY

Middle School Leadership Team

Karl Poulin	Principal	kpoulin@acs.sch.ae
Robert Desormeau	Assistant Principal	rdesormeau@acs.sch.ae

Middle School Counseling Team

Bernadette Brown	Counselor	bbrown@acs.sch.ae
Kia Beguesse	Counselor	kbeguesse@acs.sch.ae
Kalen Bruce	K-12 School Psychologist	kbruce@acs.sch.ae

Middle School Administrative Support

Julie Craven	Executive Assistant	jcraven@acs.sch.ae

Team Leaders

Christine Bates	Grade 6 Team Leader	cbates@acs.sch.ae
John Abbott	Grade 7 Team Leader	jabbott@acs.sch.ae
Chantelle Dreyer	Grade 8 Team Leader	cdreyer@acs.sch.ae

Middle School Teaching Faculty

Calera, Cristina	English
Digges, Loren	English
Rose, Christopher	English
Silverman, Laura	English
Miller, Matt	Math
Abdel-Ghany, Hadeel	Math
Pfeiffer, Robert	Math
Williams, Marrice	Math
Neurinski, Christopher	Science
Abbot, John	Science
Bird, Shannon	Science
Dreyer, Chantelle	Science
Bates, Christine	Social Studies
Poole, Chandra	Social Studies
Allan, David	Social Studies
Hirsch, Jeremy	Social Studies
Avila, Mercedes	Spanish
Marraccini, Carolina	Spanish

Joundeya, Belal	Arabic
Raad, Rita	Arabic
AlMaeeni, Moza	IA – Arabic
Magnin, Ludovic	French
Loulou, Radia	French
Last, Daniel	Drama
Delaire, Lari	PE/Wellness
Raven, Brent	PE/Wellness
Vanta, Josh	PE/Wellness
Winter, Zachary	PE/Wellness
Luswata, Kevin	PE/IA
Lucero, Junior	Design Tech
Arora, Pittrapim	Design Tech
Hallab, Nada	IA – Innovation Lab
Digges, Sarah	Art
Gietz, Emily	Art
Massaquoi, Heather	Music & Choir
Ramsey, Tracey	Band
Stout, Matt	Band
Abdou, Hanan	Student Support Services
Herron, Adam	Student Support Services
Anjah, Stephanie	IA – Learning Support
Eggett, Laurie	Student Support Teacher (Private)
Muhammad, Sumera	Islamic Studies
Kattaa, Omar	Islamic Studies
Kottai, Babita	IA - Math
Hugo, Joan	IA - Science
Kontozoglou, Kalli	IA - Science/Spanish/Band

Administrative Offices

Flickinger, Monique	Superintendent
Al-Tamimi, Waheeda	Superintendent's Office Executive Assistant
Greene, Amy	Assistant Superintendent
Rafai, Amber	Business Office Admin Assistant
King, Jacqueline	Director of Finance
Mawlawi, Mona	Accountant
Pradeep, Nija	Accountant
Rajasree, Nimmi	Accountant/Cashier
Panwar, Abhisha	Financial Analyst
Bafagih, Mahmoud	Director of Government Relations
Jama, Faiza	Government Relations Admin Assistant
Salem, Saleh Ali	Government Relations Assistant
Al Hashemi, Omar	Government Relations Assistant
Philip-Jayendran, Marise	Director of Human Resources
Ashley, Sarah	Human Resources Assistant
Lefort, Jodi	Director of Admissions
McColgan, Mia	Admissions Assistant
Arellano, Frances	Admissions Assessment Coordinator

Bohara, Kapil	Campus Operations Coordinator
Donison, Bobbi	Director of Teaching and Learning
Thivianandan, Joy	Executive Assistant in the Office of Learning
Campbell, Yvette	Director of Institutional Advancement
Pineda, Yahaira	Director of Communications
Manola, Anthi	Institutional Advancement Associate
Salloum, Monica	Alumni Relations Coordinator
McIntyre, Brenda	Communications Specialist
Cooper, Tia	Visual Content and Social Media Coordinator
Alhefeiti, Reem	Communications Assistant
Stanicole, Adi	Librarian
Wellborn, Erinn	Technology Systems Analyst
Gietz, Preben	Director of Athletics and Activities
Moog, Jordan	Assistant Athletics Director
Dreyer, Shaun	Athletics and Activities Executive Assistant
Shelby, Aaron	Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
Pubil, Melisa	Service Learning / CAS Coordinator
Zuhdi, Randa	Service Learning / CAS Coordinator Assistant
Al Nobani, Karen	School Nurse
McMarrow, Grainne	School Nurse
Obraztsova, Anna	Health Office Administrative Assistant
Muhammed, Ashiq	Facilities Manager
Devitt, Christina	Director of Learning Innovation and Technology
Smith, Chris	K12 Learning Innovation Coach
Sfeirova, Sandra	Data Systems Manager
Balakrishnan, Rajanish	Systems Administrator/Technician
Nelliyullathil, Suhail	Infrastructure Administration