



# ACS Middle School

## Course Description Booklet

### 2020-2021



## ACS Mission

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

## ACS Core Values

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

## Core Beliefs

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

## Profile of Learners

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

### *Collaborative team members who...*

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

### *Responsible people who...*

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

### *Self-directed learners who...*

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

### *Global citizens who...*

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

# Mathematics

## Philosophy

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

We believe that students learn Mathematics best when they:

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

## Grade 6 Math

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

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

Curricular materials: Engage New York CCLS Math Modules, Eureka Math resources, and a variety of digital and print materials.

## Grade 7 Math

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

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

Curricular materials: Engage New York CCLS Math Modules, Eureka Math resources, and a variety of digital and print materials.

## Math Placement Decisions

We at American Community School give careful consideration to all class scheduling to ensure our students are placed in the appropriate classes. As our students transition through Middle School, a variety of data points are used to assess a student's developmental readiness which, in turn, gives us the information we need to decide the best Mathematics course to place a Grade 8 student into.

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

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

## Grade 8 Math

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

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

Curricular materials: Engage New York CCLS Math Modules, Eureka Math resources, and a variety of digital and print materials.

## Integrated Math 1

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

# Science and Engineering, Grades 6-8

## Philosophy

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

We believe that students learn Science best when they:

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

## Science For Grade 6, 7, and 8

Aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the middle school science program is an inquiry-based study that incorporates three distinct and equally important dimensions to learning science and engineering. Weaving together core disciplinary ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science and engineering practices, teachers provide opportunities for students to build conceptual understanding, knowledge and skills in the areas of life, physical, earth and space science as well as in engineering. Critical thinking and communication of ideas are integrated into science and engineering learning, allowing students to develop important literacy skills while building and sharing understanding. In addition, science units incorporate the analysis of mathematical data.

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

## Grade 6 Science Units:

Life Science:

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

Earth and Space Science:

- Weather and Climate
- The Environment and the Human impact

Physical Science:

- Forces and Motion
- Structure of Matter

## Grade 7 Science Units:

Life Science:

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

Earth and Space science:

- History of the Earth
- Earth's Systems

Physical Science:

- Force and Interactions
- Waves and Electromagnetic Radiation

### **Grade 8 Science Units:**

Life Science:

- Mechanisms of Diversity

Earth and Space Science:

- Space Systems

Physical Science:

- Structures & Properties of Matter
- Chemical Reactions
- Energy

Curricular materials: NGSS developed documents, digital texts, videos, labs, and technology-based learning resources.

## Humanities For Grades 6, 7, & 8

The MS Humanities program combines English Language Arts and Social Studies. Using the Readers and Writers Workshop model, students foster a variety of literacy skills to inquire about the world around them and to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to move them from being consumers of content to being thoughtful producers of content. Students will embrace the perspective of others, develop a love and appreciation of literacy, and feel empowered to make a difference in their world by taking informed action.

### Philosophy

The English Language Arts program at the American Community School fosters foundational, visual, and digital literacy skills to shape citizens who interact purposefully with the world around them. Students are given the opportunity to enhance critical thinking skills through exposure to a variety of experiences with the intention of moving them from consumers of content to thoughtful producers of content.

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

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

The Social Studies program at the American Community School inspires students to inquire about the past and make connections to the present. Utilizing disciplinary lenses, students develop strategies to become knowledgeable, thinking, and active global citizens.

We believe that students learn Social Studies best when they:

- look at the world from different perspectives.
- take ownership of their own learning and are encouraged to engage in self- reflection.
- are challenged and feel comfortable taking risks.
- have opportunities to collaborate with their peers.
- feel empowered to make a difference in their world by taking informed action.

## **Units of Study for Grade 6, 7, and 8**

Each unit of study has an overarching theme rooted in Social Studies. Students engage deeply in reading and writing that is closely aligned to these themes. Classroom assessment practices ensure ongoing feedback through the use of detailed instructions, organizers, rubrics and models. Curricular materials include various sets of trade books, novels, plays, short stories and poems, the DBQ Project, History Alive, and a variety of videos, digital and print texts, maps, graphics, historical documents, and artifacts.

### **Grade 6: Continuity and Change**

- Envisioning our Reality
- Understanding and Communicating the Past
- Rise of the River Valley Civilizations
- Where Do We Go From Here?

### **Grade 7: Culture, Connections, and Challenges**

- Understanding Who We Are
- Character Development Through Challenge
- The World is Made of Stories

### **Grade 8: Power and Change**

- Identity
- Civilizations Collide
- Road to Revolution
- Means of Change



# World Languages

## Philosophy

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

We believe that students learn world languages best when they:

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

## Arabic Novice

This course is designed for students who have little or no experience with the Arabic language, and it provides students with the necessary skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication in a supportive and rich environment. The course focuses on the development of listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language), as well as respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information.

## Arabic Novice High

*Prerequisite: Arabic Novice or equivalent*

This course is designed for students who have some previous experience with the Arabic language. It is not meant for true beginners with no previous exposure to the language. Arabic Novice High students should already know the basics of the Arabic alphabet and should be able to combine letters to form words when writing. The course provides students with the necessary skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication in a supportive and rich environment. The course focuses on the development of listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language), as well as respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information.

## Arabic Intermediate

*Prerequisite: Arabic Novice High or equivalent*

In the context of new culturally rich thematic units, teachers support students in proficiency building by focusing on interpersonal listening and speaking, where students are able to handle a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express their own thoughts and maintain conversations by asking and answering a variety of questions related to themes such as family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping and travel.

### **French Novice**

This course is designed for students who have little or no experience with the French language, and it provides students with the necessary skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication in a supportive and rich environment. The course focuses on the development of listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language), as well as respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information.

### **French Intermediate**

*Prerequisite: French Novice or equivalent*

In the context of new culturally rich thematic units each year, teachers support students in the proficiency building process. This course focuses on interpersonal listening and speaking, where students are able to handle a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express their own thoughts and maintain conversations by asking and answering a variety of questions related to themes such as family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping and travel.

### **Spanish Novice**

This course is designed for students who have little or no experience with the Spanish language, and it provides students with the necessary skills to understand and engage in meaningful communication in a supportive and rich environment. The course focuses on the development of listening and speaking through interpersonal communication, where students can manage many uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases (memorized language), as well as respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information.

### **Spanish Intermediate**

*Prerequisite: Spanish Novice or equivalent*

In the context of new culturally rich thematic units each year, teachers support students in the proficiency building process. This course focuses on interpersonal listening and speaking, where students are able to handle a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. They can express their own thoughts and maintain conversations by asking and answering a variety of questions related to themes such as family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping and travel.

## Islamic Studies (Grades 6, 7 & 8)

### Philosophy

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

# Physical Education

## Philosophy

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

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

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

The Middle School Physical Education program has been designed around the SHAPE standards (<http://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/pe/>) in order to help students develop their personal and social responsibility, physical motor skills, and knowledge and understanding of different sports and athletic pursuits. Students will be exposed to a variety of team and individual activities that vary by grade level. These may include, but are not limited to: Invasion Games, Net/Wall Games, Target Games, Fielding/Striking Games, Fitness and Movement (Dance/Gymnastics). Students are further challenged to take risks within a safe environment with our Rock Climbing and Aquatics units.

# Wellness

## Philosophy

Wellness is a year-long course, delivered in the core classrooms by the middle school counselor and physical education teachers. Each grade cycles through the four dimensions of wellness focusing on building developmentally appropriate skills and knowledge in each area. The four dimensions are the physical, social, mental-emotional, and spiritual dimensions of wellness. This class is a discussion-based, non-graded course in which students discuss and practice proactive health and wellness strategies, learn about their bodies, explore their thoughts patterns and feelings, and learn how to cultivate and strengthen healthy relationships through the lens of the four dimensions of wellness. Embedded throughout the year is the practice of strengthening self-awareness through practicing mindfulness and awareness of attention strategies.

# Visual Art

## Philosophy

In alignment with the American Community School mission statement, the Visual and Performing Arts program strives to foster excellence in the arts as a part of a well-rounded education. Students take risks and actively engage in their learning through hands-on and authentic experiences, making meaningful art and connecting it to other areas of their lives. With the tools developed throughout their arts education, students are empowered to continue learning about and connecting to art long after their time at ACS.

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

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

## Exploring Art Class - Grade 6 (Semester)

Exploring art classes will use a variety of tools and techniques to create two and three-dimensional works of art. Topics of study will include drawing, design, painting, and sculpture. Students will study the historical background of art and its impact on ancient and modern civilizations. Students will have the opportunity to record ideas that express personal expressions about art. Creative problem solving skills and critical thinking skills will be developed during the semester in Art.

## Exploring Art Class - Grade 7 Yearlong (YL)

Exploring Art class in grade seven will be a continuation of the sixth grade program. Topics of study may include drawing, design, painting, printing and sculpture. Students will study the historical background of art and its impact on modern civilizations. Students will build on skills from grade six and will have an opportunity to express personal feelings, responses to society, and what it is like to a Middle School artist in this year long art course.

## Exploring Art Class - Grade 8 Yearlong (YL)

Exploring Art class in grade eight will be a continuation of the seventh grade program. Topics of study may include drawing, design, painting, printing and sculpture. Students will study the remixed art society we live in today. Students will build on skills from grade seven and will have an opportunity to express personal feelings, responses to society, and what it is like to a Middle School artist in this year long Art course.

## Mixed Media - Grades 7 & 8 (Semester)

Mixed Media is a two and three-dimensional art course that will explore various combinations of media, such as found object assemblage, plaster, printmaking, and painting. Students will explore a variety of techniques to communicate themes and ideas in their work. Students will study historical and contemporary artists who work in mixed media towards understanding what it is like to be an Artist.

## **Design and Technology - Grades 7 & 8 (Semester)**

The goal of Design and Technology class is to develop students' abilities to develop innovative solutions to design challenges. Design and Technology is the perfect class for future inventors, entrepreneurs, engineers, and artists. Design and Technology has a unique focus on creativity, innovation and the successful implementation of ideas. Working in real world contexts, students identify problems and opportunities for innovation and respond with ideas and products in this semester based course.

# Band

## **Beginning Band Grade 6 Yearlong (YL)**

This course provides students the opportunity to begin a band instrument. No previous musical experience playing an instrument or reading music is required. Students will begin on a woodwind instrument (flute, oboe, bassoon, saxophone or clarinet) or brass instrument (trumpet, trombone, euphonium, French horn or tuba). Students will have the opportunity to audition to learn percussion during the year to help fill out proper concert band instrumentation. Students will learn to play with characteristic tone and develop good musical, listening, and playing habits including: posture, breathing, internal pulse/tempo, balance, blend, intonation, as well as notation reading skills. Regular home practice and performances are a necessary part of this course. A small number of after-school meetings and rehearsals are also necessary for concert preparations in this class. Students in the 6th Grade Beginning Band will give two performances as a combined group. There may also be other small performances throughout the school year.

Curricular materials: Essential Elements 2000, Book One and performance literature from the ACS Music Library

## **Band Grade 7 Yearlong (YL)**

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

## **Band Grade 8 Yearlong (YL)**

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

Curricular materials: Essential Elements 2000, Book Two and performance literature from the ACS Music Library



# Choir

## Grade 6 Choir Yearlong (YL)

The major emphasis of this course is to provide students with a variety of musical experiences and activities. This standards-based course focuses on the development of vocal ensemble skills through a variety of singing, listening, note reading and writing activities. Students will have an introduction to musical elements including: rhythm, melody, form, tempo, dynamics, timbre or tone color, harmony, and style. The course also develops discrimination and critical judgment in music that is heard or produced, and encourages interest in music from diverse cultures and historical periods. Written and oral assessments and at-home practice are integral elements of this course, as well as summative performances outside of school.

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

Curricular materials: Choir Folder, Choral Octavos, Online Rehearsal Tracks (Veracross)

## Grade 7 Choir Yearlong (YL)

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

Students enrolled in Grade 7 Choir will have the opportunity to audition and participate in two annual choir festivals: The Middle-East South-Asia Middle School Arts Invitational (2015-2016 school year - American School of Doha) and the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Middle School Honor Choir (Location TBA). Auditions for these festivals will be held in September.

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

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

## Grade 8 Choir Yearlong (YL)

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

Students enrolled in Grade 8 Choir will have the opportunity to audition and participate in two

annual choir festivals: The Middle-East South-Asia Middle School Arts Invitational and the Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) Middle School Honor Choir. Auditions for these festivals will be held in September.

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

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

# Drama

## Grade 6 Drama (Semester)

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

## Grades 7 & 8 Production (Semester)

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

## Theater Medley (Semester)

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

## Grade 7 Drama Yearlong (YL)

This is a year long elective course for students in 7th grade. It includes units exploring monologues, clowning, set design, scene study, and playwriting.

## Grade 8 Drama Yearlong (YL)

This is a year long elective course for students in 8th grade. It includes units exploring abstract theatre, monologues, playwriting, and scene study.

# Technology

## Philosophy

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

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

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

## Exploring Technology- Grade 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade (Semester)

By using our new Techtoo program students pick different tech projects to work on to earn Techtoos stickers for their laptops. Students choose the projects that show them how to be creators and not just consumers of technology, and they work at their own pace, so if they want to spend more time on certain parts of a project they can. Some of the projects include; YouTube Show, Robotics, Video Game Coding, Digital Music, and Animation to name a few. Some techtoos have different levels so students could spend months working on the same strand, like coding, or spend a few weeks on each one as a way of sampling and learning what interests them. *For more information visit [www.MyTechtoos.com](http://www.MyTechtoos.com)*

# Learning Support

## Philosophy

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

## Curricular Support

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

## Study Skills

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

