



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL BEIRUT

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This is the 3rd newsletter compiled by the ACS Welcoming Committee. We hope that you are getting excited about moving to Beirut to join us at ACS. If you have any questions, you can ask your assigned buddies or you can e-mail Jocelyne (jdiabbitar@acs.edu.lb) and we will do our best to address them in our final newsletter in June.

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|  |  |  |
| Beirut | Baalbek | Tripoli |
|  |  |  |
| Byblos (Jbeil) | Batroun | Vineyard, Bekaa |
|  |  |  |
| Tyre (Soor) | Jeita Grotto | Sidon (Saida) |

ACS Welcomes You

Meet Hanadi Dayyah

ACS Curriculum Coordinator/ Arabic Coordinator

Welcome to ACS and welcome to my home city Beirut (in Lebanese terms I am a “Beiruti”)!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to ACS. This is my third year as the Curriculum Coordinator and my eighth year as the Arabic program coordinator at ACS. Like Beirut, ACS is a vibrant, very welcoming place that will charm you, trigger your curiosity and daily challenge you to think creatively. You will join a community of dedicated learners and a city of passionate people.



As I wear the Curriculum Coordinator’s hat, I welcome you on board as we sail towards achieving our strategic goal of designing and implementing a “guaranteed, aligned and viable curriculum”. We adopt the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) standards that are the international version of Common Core. Please visit www.projectaero.org to learn more about AERO project.

You will soon receive an email with login instructions to access your courses on Atlas Rubicon. I encourage you to browse Atlas to familiarize yourself with the courses you will be teaching, the ACS adopted standards, and units of study. At the beginning of next year, we will offer training sessions on Atlas, so please do not worry if Atlas is new to you.

I will end my message by wearing the Arabic coordinator’s hat to introduce you to your first two Lebanese words: “Marhaba” (Hello) and “Ahla wa sahla” (welcome) to ACS Beirut.

If you are interested in learning Lebanese Arabic, Wafa Kays, one of our Arabic teachers, offers 10 free Arabic classes for teachers after school. Her book, *Wafa’s Way*, is offered for sale for \$20. In addition, apps such as Keefak and websites such as [Abjadiye](#) and [Memrise](#) can get you started. Be aware that regional Arabic differs quite a bit from the more formal Modern Standard Arabic. See the next page for some examples of Lebanese Arabic words and phrases.

Greetings:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Hello | Marhaba |
| Nice to meet you | Tsharrafna |
| Good bye | Mah es salameh |
| Thank you | Shukran |
| How are you? | Kifak (m), Kifik (fem) |

أَهْلًا وَسَهْلًا

Conversation:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| How much is this? | Adday heyda |
| I want | Baddeh |
| I don't want | Ma Baddeh |
| I live in Hamra | Beity bil Hamra |
| I love Beirut | Bheb Beirut |
| I work at ACS | Ana beshteghel bil ACS |
| Hurry | Yalla |
| A little bit | Shwai |
| What | Shoo |

Life in Beirut

Although some people may still associate Beirut with the civil war, the following articles offer a fresh perspective. The New York Times highlights the thriving arts scene in, [The Eternal Magic of Beirut](#). For food lovers, Beirut was recently named the [Number 1 food destination](#) by Travel and Leisure. Additionally, [Anthony Bourdain](#) filmed two episodes of No Reservations here and interviewed our very own Welcome Committee member, Talar. Many agree that Beirut is the [hip Mediterranean capital you should visit now](#) and that, in general, [Beirut is Back](#).



Where you will live: Ras Beirut, Hamra, Ein el Mreisseh

All overseas hires will reside within walking distance of the school. Ras Beirut, Hamra, and Ein el Mreisseh are the three areas of the city where our school housing is located and all are within 15 minutes of the school on foot. All of these areas are high-end residential areas of the city with shops, grocery stores, and restaurants nearby. All three areas are highly pedestrian and are considered safe for pedestrian traffic both day and night. When going out late at night, it is recommended that you go out in pairs, which is prudent advice in any major city.



General Safety

Because of the fluid political climate in the region, you may want to register with your local embassy upon arrival, so you can receive warden messages and updates from your Department of State. Depending on where you are coming from, the police and military presence in Beirut and throughout the country may take you by surprise. Armored military vehicles, soldier transports and armed policemen are common and should not alarm you. It is part of everyday life and does not represent a threat.

Safety in Beirut as a Family

“As I tell anyone who wants to know what life is like in Beirut, my family and I feel lucky to be here. Beirut is a wonderful city full of charm and charisma. We enjoy walking the streets, shopping at local shops, and eating from all the different restaurants and stalls we find on our journeys. The key to being safe while working and living in Beirut is to be smart and ask about destinations before venturing out.”

-ACS teacher with children

Safety in Beirut as a Single Female

“I have lived in more than a dozen countries, and can genuinely say that I feel very safe in Beirut, more so than the American cities I’ve lived in, such as Brooklyn and Philadelphia. There is very little crime here, largely due to the closely-knit neighborhoods. However, it is still a city and, of course, precautions should be followed, especially late at night. All in all, I continue to live my very independent life as a woman here in Beirut.”

- ACS single female teacher

Transportation

There is a wide variety of local shops within walking distance of your apartment and the school and teachers generally do not purchase cars. Taxis are readily available both day and night and are easily identified by their red license plates. Company taxis, such as Allo and Uber, are considered the safest and most reliable. They can be booked either by calling the company or through an app. Some teachers find a taxi driver that they like and will use one driver for all their transportation needs. Drivers will pass you their business card upon request. You’ll find that a standard taxi ride will cost you 10,000 Lebanese Lira, which is about \$6.70. You can also take a *service* taxi which is a taxi that is shared with other passengers going the same way that you are. These are very cheap and cost between 2,000- 4,000 lira (\$1.25-2.70), depending on traffic and area of destination.



Buses are also available for 1,000 lira and run daily in Beirut, though some routes change on weekends. There are no specific bus stops (you just wave them down) and the routes can change at the discretion of the driver. This is by far the cheapest form of transportation around Beirut.

You can find a tentative bus route map and a great interactive map if you download the app Zawarib. You can find quarterly-updated, free paper copies in shops around Beirut.

Exploring Beirut and Lebanon

Lebanon has so much to offer from skiing and hiking, to thousands of years of history to uncover in ruins that are located throughout the country. While touring and experiencing the country is an exciting way to spend your free time, it is imperative that you are aware of the current political situations happening in the region when you are planning your outings.

Banking in Beirut



Instead of new hires going to the banks to open up accounts, bank representatives will come to the school during orientation and will bring the needed papers to fill out so you can set up your account at that time. Some of the banks most teachers use are [Bank Audi](#), [BLOM Bank](#), and [Bank Med](#). You will be paid in Lebanese Lira, so if you would like to send money abroad, be sure to ask each bank about wire transfer fees. We recommend you check out the bank websites so it will be easier for you when you arrive.

Important Health Information

ACS has two infirmaries run by two full time RNs and fully equipped with OTC medications, first aid supplies and emergency equipment if the need arises. All ACS employees are insured with a private insurance company. The school health insurance company provides ACS with two Family Medicine physicians from the American University of Beirut – Medical Center who serve us daily according to a pre-planned schedule. These doctors can provide you with medical treatment on campus, requests for lab tests, and referrals to a specialist.

ACS Welcomes You

Mail Service

You may forward your mail to either of the following addresses, as it is not advisable to have it delivered to your apartment. *The school is not responsible for lost mail.* Please note: Bulk mail, parcels, catalogues, pamphlets, will not be forwarded.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| School mailing address | American Community School at Beirut 67 Nigeria Street Jal el Bahr 2035-8003 Beirut, Lebanon | Use it for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Local delivery to school● Parcels |
| School Post Office Box (checked 2-3x/week) | American Community School at Beirut P.O. Box 11-8129 Riad El Solh 1107-2260 | Use it for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Regular mail● Magazine subscriptions |
| School US mailing address (arrives once a week) *You may also send mail to the US via this service if you bring US postage stamps | American Community School 3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 8th floor New York, NY 10017-2303 USA | Use it for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Important mail such as bank statements● Small (5"x9") lightweight envelopes - up to 2 oz |

Mobile Phone Service

If you are planning to bring a phone with you, please make sure to get a **factory unlocked** phone.

Lebanon has two main mobile telephone operators: [Alfa](#) and [Touch](#). Mobile phone lines are either prepaid or postpaid. Prepaid lines are more practical because they are easier to operate. When you buy a new prepaid line you need to have your passport or other identification. The cost of a new line is \$25 with a credit value of \$22.73. It can be purchased (recharge cards too) from any mobile reseller store. Such stores are on every street in town. Postpaid lines can be purchased from the mobile operators or their appointed resellers. You will need a valid passport or other identification, a deposit of \$50 or \$100 (reimbursed if you chose to terminate the contract), a payment method (Touch service centers, bank domiciliation, online payment, and other channels), and a contract to be completed and signed (for Touch lines). There's a monthly flat fee of \$22 for postpaid lines, along with other fees for optional services. For more details please check the Alfa and Touch websites.