WELCOME

It is a pleasure to welcome you to The American Community School at Beirut. We are a dynamic learning community committed to an environment of trust, understanding and respect that will lead to the development of responsible citizens.

In the Early Years Division, our goal is to foster the development of the whole child. Our programs are designed to promote the cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth of each child in a way that will move them successfully along the developmental continuum.

We believe strongly that success leads to further success and structure our environments to enable students to feel confident and capable.

The partnership between school and home is a high priority. Effective communication is essential and our commitment is to communicate regularly and thoroughly during the course of the year. We welcome your questions, concerns, suggestions and kind words. As partners in this learning community we can support each other as we enable our students to reach their potential.

This booklet is designed to facilitate your transition into The American Community School. We hope that it proves useful and encourage you to feel free to call or drop in if you have any questions. Our doors are always open for you.

We sincerely hope that your experiences at The American Community School will be both rewarding and memorable. I look forward to working with you and getting to know you better as we begin a new year.

Sincerely,

Sawsan Yaseen
Early Years Principal
Mission Statement

“ACS empowers students to solve problems with creativity and integrity, to lead well-balanced lives, and to serve Lebanon and the world community with understanding and compassion.”

We believe:
Students learn at different rates and in different ways.
Students achieve success by being active participants in their learning.
Students develop character through engagement with others from different backgrounds and through interaction within the community.

We achieve our mission by:
Setting high expectations for ourselves and our students
Empowering students to be critical thinkers and independent learners
Working collaboratively with all members of our community
Understanding and utilizing innovative teaching and learning
Creating a safe environment for students to take risks and learn from their mistakes
Facilitating students’ intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth
Engaging students in relevant and reflective learning
Encouraging students to explore different forms of personal expression
Providing opportunities for students to make choices, to lead, and to demonstrate responsibility
Supporting students to be caring, empathetic, respectful and tolerant
Developing student awareness and communication skills through the study of languages
Involving students in local and international community service projects
Preparing students to seek admission to the most selective colleges and universities

The Academic Heritage

ACS, first known as the Faculty School, was established by the American families of the American University of Beirut, formerly known as the Syrian Protestant College. The school opened on October 23rd, 1905 with eighteen pupils and three teachers. Classes were held on the first floor of the Dorman house. The Orly Cinema now stands on the site of the original school.

There were twelve boys in the school and in 1907 eleven of them were on the soccer team.

Three years after its establishment the school was moved to the A.U.B. Hospital grounds to a building which was later known as the X-Ray department. When the student number reached thirty-three students in 1920, the school was moved again, this time to a small building on Sidani Street in Hamra. At this time the Presbyterian Mission joined the college in managing and financing the school, and the name was changed to the American Community School. In 1949, the school moved to its present site near the Mediterranean Sea. Since then the campus has been enlarged to include the existing academic buildings, gym, tennis courts, and playing fields.
Administration

Hamilton Clark - Head of School
Karim Abu Haydar - Deputy Head of School
Ziad El Hdary - Physical Plant Director
Najwa Zabad - Dean of Admissions
Fadwa Ghannoum - Director of Development and Alumni Affairs

Early Years

Sawsan Yaseen - Early Years Principal
Mona Koleilat - Executive Assistant to Principal/Scheduler
Nour Domloje - Administrative Assistant
Tamar Avedissian - Lower School Nurse

Early Years Goals

We are committed to the personal growth of each child. Our goals are to:
- Provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to promote emotional, social, linguistic and intellectual growth.
- Foster self-confidence, independence and decision making by providing choices of various activities and by accommodating for different learning styles.
- Develop basic skills for care of self by providing emotional and physical security.
- Develop responsibility by setting achievable goals and providing the support for the children to reach these goals.
- Develop positive self-discipline in children and establish clear rules and consequences.
- Encourage knowledge, appreciation and value of cultural differences and environmental awareness.
- Provide opportunities for children to think critically, reason and solve problems.
- Nurture self-expression and imagination in a non-threatening environment which encourages individuality.
- Develop curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner and personal initiative.

Parent-School Communication

Communication with Parents
The staff will regularly communicate with parents in a positive and supportive manner. Information regarding family issues and personal lives will be handled confidentially. Records concerning the child's enrollment forms, health records, observation records and written parent-teacher conference reports are confidential information and will only be accessible to school staff directly working with the child and the parents of the child.

Visitors
Parents and visitors are welcome to visit the School and are asked to register their names at the front gate security posts. All guests will be issued a visitor’s badge.
Arrival and Pick Up
Our doors are open at 7:30 a.m. Class hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Early Years children should not arrive at school before 7:30 a.m. as there is no one to supervise them. In order to avoid children becoming fatigued, it is important for parents or drivers to collect the children on time at the end of the school day. We ask parents to contact the school at 01-374370 ext. 150 if they know they are going to be detained.

Authorized Caregivers
We release children to authorized persons only. At the time of enrollment, parents must provide the school with names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons authorized to drop off/pick up their child. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to update this information as necessary. Any authorized person who is not recognized by the faculty/staff will be required to provide photo identification before the child is released.

Parent Conferences
A strong family school partnership is essential to achieve our program goals. We regularly plan conferences with parents for mutual sharing of information about the child’s needs and progress.

Feedback
Parental feedback is very important to us and we welcome any suggestions and comments. If parents have a concern or a complaint we ask them to contact their child's teacher immediately in order to solve the problem in a mutually satisfactory way.

School Information

Library
Early Years students have access to a classroom library as well as the Lower School library, which they visit once during the six day-cycle. An extensive collection of reading materials is available. ALL students check out books during library hours. All Early Years parents may visit the library to check out books for their children as well.

Rest Time
A daily rest time of thirty minutes is scheduled for Nursery children in order to allow them to relax and unwind from their busy morning schedules. Each child has a mattress labeled for his/her exclusive use.

Birthdays
Birthdays are celebrated in a casual and informal manner. A birthday cake (preferably home-made with no frosting) can be sent to class so that children may celebrate with their classmates. Teachers will hand out birthday invitations to the students, only if the whole class is included. All children need to feel accepted and welcomed, and when children do not receive an invitation, they feel hurt and left out. Parents are kindly requested not to attend the birthday party and not to send presents or party favors.
Children's Belonging
Each child is asked to bring to school a complete set of clothing including socks in an adult shoe-box. All items should be clearly marked with the child's name. We ask parents to change the set of clothing according to the season. We strongly advise writing your child’s name on all removable clothing such as sweatshirts, jackets, sweaters so that it may be returned if lost.

Snacks
Our concern for the children’s health and development is reflected in our snack policy. The school provides milk for 2 days a week, yoghurt (Laban Ayran) 2 days a week and fresh juice once per week. A late morning snack of fruit or vegetables is also provided by the school.

Parents are asked to send a healthy snack with their child for mid-morning. At the beginning of the year we will send some information about nutrition and list some snack ideas. Students are NOT allowed to bring unhealthy snacks such as marshmallows, chocolate, potato chips, cake with icing, sugary cereals, etc. If sugar is the first or second ingredient, it is considered a treat rather than a healthy snack. Snack time, like any part of the day, is also an opportunity for learning about health, social skills, and self-help skills. A written notice will be sent home if your child brings an unhealthy snack and he/she will not be allowed to eat it. We will provide the student with a healthy alternative. This may upset your child. In order to avoid this please do not send unhealthy snack food to school. Together we can foster the development of healthy choices and lifestyle for our children.

Water
Please send a bottle of water, clearly marked with your child's name, to school every day.

Money
Children are requested not to bring money to school unless a note is sent from school regarding certain school related activities.

Toys from Home
Except for security items (that may be needed at the beginning of the school year) and items brought to school for "Show and Teach", we ask parents to leave their child's toys and any items of value at home.

Outdoor Play
Outdoor play, scheduled daily, is an important part of a child's day contributing to the overall health and well-being of the students. Children who are well enough to be at school will be expected to participate. Any concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to the Principal.

Transportation
ACS uses the services of a bus company for transportation of students to and from ACS. The company has bus supervisors trained by ACS. Buses are equipped with seat belts, a fire extinguisher, and a first aid kit. Only children who are designated bus riders are allowed to ride the bus. If your child regularly rides a bus but is not going to be riding that bus on a particular day or is going to be picked up by someone else, please write a note to the teacher indicating your permission to have your child take other means of transportation home. This policy is necessary in order to protect your child.
**Field Trips**
Four to five trips are planned for each grade level. The purpose of these trips is educational and related to topics discussed in class. Parents will be given information about each scheduled trip and a permission slip will be sent home at the beginning of the school year to be signed. Only students whose parents have signed the permission slip may participate in the field trips.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**
ACS has two infirmaries with two full-time registered nurses.

Students can see the nurse when they have any physical discomfort during school hours. Parents will receive a note from the school nurse mentioning the health problem their child had at school with the proper intervention taken. In the event of an emergency that is beyond the facilities of the infirmary, the nurse will inform the principal concerned and the child’s parents, and take the injured student to a nearby emergency room.

At the beginning of the school year, the ACS school nurses carry out a yearly physical screening for growth and development as well as visual acuity, dental cavities and lice check for students in the following grades: Nursery, KG2, Grades 2 and 4. Parents will be notified about the screening schedule and after the screening the results will be sent home.

It is advisable that the school nurse is informed and continuously updated by the parent about any health problems and chronic medication intake of a student in addition to the information available on the Student’s Medical History Form.

Students wearing casts after a fracture are allowed to attend school only when parents sign a form taking the full responsibility for any accident or harm that may happen to the child.

If a child is absent from school less than three days, he /she needs to bring a written excuse signed by the parent. If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, he /she has to bring a report from the doctor stating the health problem, the intervention taken and the treatment required, to be readmitted to class.

**Medication Policy**
Any medication a student is required to take at school should be administered only by the school nurse. A written request is needed specifying the student’s full name, the medication name, the reason for the treatment, the dosage and time of administration. The medication must be brought to school by the parents and should be in its original container with the child's name the medication will be sent home when the treatment is over as prescribed.

It is advisable that parents check with their child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours the child is at school. Whenever possible, the first dose of the medication should be given at home to see if the child will develop any adverse reactions.
Inclusion/Exclusion Policy for Ill Students
Children with common cold (sneezing, runny nose, nasal obstruction, sore throat, or mild general symptoms like headache) do not necessarily have to be absent from school since the child has already exposed others before seeming sick.

Many illnesses stop being contagious shortly after treatment is started. Ultimately, the faculty and the school nurse will decide when an acutely ill child meets the exclusion criteria listed below.

Certain symptoms observed in a child may suggest the presence of a communicable disease and require the need for excluding the student from school until:
- The school nurse or a physician has certified that the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent.
- The symptoms have subsided and are no longer a threat to the health of other children at school.

Preventing the Spread of Diseases
A “go home stay home” policy will be enforced for all employees and students experiencing symptoms of a communicable disease. The infected persons will go home and stay home until symptoms have subsided. The school nurses will assess symptoms on a case-by-case basis, determine enforcement of the policy, and clear all affected students/employees for return to school/work.

Guidelines for exclusion:
1. Fever (a rise in the body temperature above normal): The child has or had one episode of fever during the previous 24-hour period especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, neck stiffness, drowsiness, extreme fussiness, persistent or excessive crying and complaining of severe pain.
2. Respiratory Symptoms: The child has difficult or rapid breathing and uncontrolled coughing with or without fever.
3. Appearance / Behavior: The child is unusually tired, pale, confused, irritable, or lacks appetite.
4. Heavy Nasal Discharge: With changes in consistency and color (whitish to greenish)
5. Pain: Severe continuous pain Diarrhea: an increase in the volume, wateriness, or frequency of bowel movements associated with gas, and cramping.
6. Vomiting: Two or more episodes of vomiting within 24 hours.
7. Skin Problems: Skin rash, undiagnosed or contagious, unusual yellowish color and any persistent itching of the body.
8. Conjunctivitis: pink eyes may be the result of a viral/bacterial/allergen exposure. The child can return to class when the signs and symptoms disappear fully.
9. Lice: until treatment has been completed and no lice eggs are seen.
10. Chickenpox: until all the blisters have dried into scabs.
11. Pinworms: until treatment has been completed.
12. Measles, Mumps and Rubella or any other childhood communicable disease.

If your child shows signs and symptoms or has been exposed to a possible communicable disease, please notify the school nurse within 24 hours.
Insurance
The school has an insurance policy that covers accidents on school premises and during field trips.

Jewelry
Children should not wear jewelry to school. A bracelet, necklace, or earrings may become a health hazard when the children are at play.

Rainy Days
On rainy days, please have your child wear a raincoat and boots since the world can be an exciting place outside in the rain. Even adults can't resist a puddle if they have their boots on. Umbrellas are not allowed as they may cause injuries.

Early Years Dress Code
Children are expected to come to school dressed to play in comfortable clothes. Children should be able to fasten and unfasten their own clothing when necessary. Dresses, skirts, sandals and stacked sole shoes are not recommended due to safety concerns.

Behavior Guidance
ACS promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. We help each child process feelings, recognize the natural consequences of their actions, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop internal self-control. These goals are accomplished through educational practices that support our philosophy including the following:

We, as teachers and staff, will model appropriate behavior and communication.

We specifically design and equip our classrooms for the particular developmental levels of the children, preventing frustrations, interruptions, and hazards. In addition, our daily routine provides adequate playtime, encourages a sense of security, and involves minimal transitions and waiting time between activities.

We use positive redirection to help each child find acceptable alternatives to unacceptable behavior. We praise children for their appropriate behavior and successes by describing what we see and how we feel.

We maintain clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children. In establishing rules, each adult follows these guidelines:

1. Adults use a positive tone in communicating with children.
2. Students are encouraged to consistently follow the rules.

We will appeal to the child's growing intellectual and moral reasoning through an identification of the natural and logical consequences of one's actions, and through the process of posing relevant questions to encourage children to develop problem-solving skills. Adults will help children to identify their needs, feelings, alternatives, and choices.
We will provide comfort and privacy when a child has a physical or emotional outburst enabling the child to regain composure and ensuring the safety of other children and staff.

"Time out" will be used only as a last resort, when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative or attention-seeking behavior. It is not a punishment, but rather a time of renewal for the child. Once the child has regained control, he/she will be allowed to join the group.

Parents are asked to advise their child’s teacher if anything is happening at home that might result in a change in their child’s behavior.

As our partners, parents will be informed if challenging behavior persists.

**Family School Partnership**

We are committed to building a strong partnership with parents and strongly believe that parental involvement at school directly and positively affects the educational progress of children. Volunteers may be involved in classroom activities, in sporting events, during field trips, in sharing skills or interests, or in contributing ideas. Parents may also assist at home in learning activities that are coordinated with the children’s work at school. Information about the school's programs and children's progress is communicated on a regular basis to parents through email, websites, newsletters, telephone calls, progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences. Opportunities occur throughout the year to provide information and to engage in dialogue with parents who are our partners in the education of the children. Parent input is welcomed and encouraged as we proceed with the child in the learning journey.
**ACS Alma Mater**

By T. Robert Bassett

Praise to thee our Alma Mater,
Praise to thee dear ACS.
Hear each loyal son and daughter,
As we stand thy name to bless;
And with hearts in loving chorus.
We will pledge anew to thee.
Beneath thy banner waving o'er us,
Our love and loyalty.

Where the gold of snow-crowned mountains,
And the deep blue of the sea,
Mirrored bright in learning's fountains,
Teach us the truth and purity,
They're our colors fair and glorious,
Purest gold and truest blue,
Call us to noble deeds victorious,
And make our dreams come true.

Blue and Gold are the school colors.