



LEYSIN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND



2020-2021  
The Power of Parenting



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## Introduction

“Power of Parenting” is the name we’ve given to a collective goal we share with parents—to work together to help your sons and daughters become the best that they can be. To accomplish our mission of “developing innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world,” LAS and parents must work together. We must support each other during both the good times and the moments of challenge that your child will undoubtedly face. We believe that when we act as a team, our students—your children—are given the support they need to climb mountains!

We hope that this guidebook will be a useful resource. In the pages that follow we will describe how students adjust to boarding school life, what life is like for the parents of LAS students, and what services different LAS departments provide. We will also provide important contact details, a school calendar with important dates, and interesting background information about the Ott family who founded and continue to manage our school.

# The Boarding School Experience

You will quickly see that the boarding school decision is the right one for your young scholar. Though you will undoubtedly miss your child, as they will miss you, you can be happy knowing that you are giving them a unique opportunity to prepare for life. Students who live at boarding schools are uniquely exposed to opportunities to:



Make lifelong international friendships



Meet and overcome challenges with confidence



Become more independent



Gain an informed perspective on the world

You will notice that even though you have less time with your son or daughter, it is quality time. Before you know it, you will be sending your student off to university knowing that they are mature, confident, well-traveled, and capable of handling their independence.



# Partnership with Parents

LAS believes that the involvement of parents is integral to the success of our students. Through school-based initiatives that encourage long-distance parenting, LAS parents become partners in our educational process. There are many ways that parents can support the school. We request that you:

1. Limit phone/Skype communication during the first six weeks (we suggest setting up a scheduled time to talk once a week). Too much contact with home can make homesickness worse, not better.

2. Check for updated information on the LAS Parent Portal and PowerSchool regularly.

3. Communicate with our faculty and trust the school.

4. Avoid spoiling your child (eg. credit cards, bank accounts).

5. Respect your child's right to privacy.

Boarding school is not only a time and place for your child to become independent, but also for parents to start the process of letting go. This is an exciting time where you can step back and watch the young men and women you have raised shine!



## QUESTIONS?

*Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott, Managing Director, Head of School* | Oversees the Academic, Travel, Residential and Student Life, Advancement, and Accreditation Departments | [mott@las.ch](mailto:mott@las.ch)

*Dr. Christoph Ott, Managing Director, Head of Operations* | Oversees Marketing & Admissions, Financial Services, Operational Departments, IT, and Summer | [cott@las.ch](mailto:cott@las.ch)

## SETTING BOUNDARIES

Young people naturally tend to push boundaries. Effective parenting often involves explaining why we have certain rules in place and having the strength to say “no.” By and large, children appreciate boundaries. They also respect teachers, administrators, and their parents when they set out clear expectations and are not afraid to say “no” or hold them accountable when they break a rule.

## PARENT INITIATIVES

Belonging to the LAS community offers parents opportunities to connect with other parents in the same region who share similar interests. For more information please contact C. Ryan Joyce, Director of Advancement, at [cjoyce@las.ch](mailto:cjoyce@las.ch).

## LAS ON THE ROAD

At LAS our admissions representatives, Director of Advancement, and administrators travel across the globe to meet parents in their home countries. This is a special opportunity for us to learn more about your country and our students, and for us to be able to bring you news of your son or daughter. These meetings offer the chance to discuss any concerns you may have and suggestions on how to make our school better. Many families are kind enough to host gatherings so we can share information about our school. Your support is always greatly appreciated!

## PARENT VISITS ON CAMPUS

LAS has an “open door” policy. We are always happy to have you visit your child and our school. Remember, though, that one of the goals of the boarding school experience is for your child to become more independent. Visits, therefore, should not be too soon or too frequent.

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

To arrange parent-teacher conferences, please contact Emma Dixon at [edixon@las.ch](mailto:edixon@las.ch) at least one week in advance.

## OFF CAMPUS REQUESTS

To take your child off-campus, please submit a request via Boardingware, our travel portal for students.

## Admissions Team

**Ira Miles**  
*Director of Marketing and Admissions,*  
[imiles@las.ch](mailto:imiles@las.ch)

**Admissions Office**  
+41 24 493 4888  
[admissions@las.ch](mailto:admissions@las.ch)



# Faculty Family

Faculty Family has been a part of the LAS tradition for many years. All students are assigned to a family which consists of faculty “parents,” and peers of all ages and nationalities whom they meet with throughout the year for meetings and events.

The first role of Faculty Family is to help students navigate the world of LAS. Faculty “parents” offer advice when students are choosing classes, signing up for activities, and choosing excursions. They also monitor discipline updates, read academic

comments, track their grades, and communicate with students’ actual parents throughout the year.

The second role of the Faculty Family is social. Faculty Family time is generally on Wednesday nights. In September each family spends a weekend together enjoying exciting excursions and recreational activities. Families also meet at required school events such as special dinners, banquets, community clean-ups, concerts, and theater performances.

# Academics

## Middle School: Grades 7 and 8

The LAS Middle School provides students in grades 7 and 8 with a safe family environment in which they can learn, study, play, and thrive. Students in the Middle School program are immersed in a tight-knit community of passionate learners and are invited to take part in an exciting curriculum filled with educational field trips and hands-on, experiential learning.

## Preparatory Years: Grades 9 and 10

Preparatory Years students are in the midst of an important period of self-discovery. LAS seeks to support students during this transitional period of their lives by allowing them to test the waters in new, challenging classes, encouraging them to join teams and take on leadership roles, and exposing them to international cultural experiences.

## Diploma Years: Grades 11 and 12

Diploma Years students comprise the eldest population of the LAS family and are accordingly treated as young adults. These students are encouraged to exercise their growing independence through academic, social, and leadership opportunities within the school. As maturing young adults, our Diploma Years students act as mentors and role models to their younger peers.

# Academic Leadership Team

**Sabina Schwedtmann-Lynch**  
*Dean of Academics*  
[slynch@las.ch](mailto:slynch@las.ch)

**Jennifer Miles**  
*Associate Dean of Middle School & Preparatory Years*  
[jmiles@las.ch](mailto:jmiles@las.ch)

**Chris Taylor**  
*Associate Dean of Diploma Years*  
[ctaylor@las.ch](mailto:ctaylor@las.ch)

**Ronan Lynch**  
*IB Diploma Programme Coordinator, AP Coordinator*  
[rlynch@las.ch](mailto:rlynch@las.ch)

# Academic Support



At LAS our goal is to help each student reach their maximum potential. We encourage students to be responsible about their study habits and seek help when it is needed. We also recognize that many students may, at some point, need some form of extra support. Some students need more assistance than others to be successful, which is why we offer a range of learning resources, some of which involve an extra fee.



## QUESTIONS? CONTACT OUR LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM

*Kristin Maurer*  
Grades 7-8  
kmaurer@las.ch

*Michael Coler*  
Grades 9-10  
mcoler@las.ch

*Cristina Capuzzi*  
Grades 11-12  
ccapuzzi@las.ch



## LIBRARIES

The LAS campus has two well-equipped libraries which serve as the primary spots for students and faculty members to consult with qualified librarians, conduct research, listen to guest lectures, meet, work, and study.



## TEACHER OFFICE HOURS AND STUDY HALL

Students may seek academic assistance from their teachers during office hour sessions. These sessions are targeted toward reviewing academic content covered in class. Office hours are students' first academic support option. Students may also attend study hall where they work on their homework under the guidance of a supervisor who ensures appropriate study habits are being utilized.



## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

For students with documented learning differences as well as those identified as gifted and talented, an IEP outlines appropriate solutions and modifications necessary for the student's academic success. Clear and measurable goals are set to track and highlight each student's achievements.



## ACADEMIC INTERVENTION PROGRAM

There are three levels of support offered in the Academic Intervention Program. Each level is differentiated by the nature of support given, however, they all offer students a holistic and highly-individualized approach. All students have access to this program.



## PRIVATE TUTORING

Students in great need of academic support in a specific content area may request a private tutor. Students work one-on-one with their tutor to reinforce academic concepts or have lessons further explained. This fee-based program is limited due to staff availability. Tutoring sessions may only commence after parents have given permission.

# University Advising

LAS graduates attend some of the most renowned universities in the world. The University Advisors begin working with students in grade 9, and continue to provide proactive support in their grade 12 year to assist them with the university selection and application process. University Advisors focus on strengths, wellbeing, and personal and academic goals to help navigate the best fit for their future. Our University Advisors are delighted to be able to help you and your child(ren) with this process. We regularly communicate with faculty, staff, students, and families to provide professional and individualized services.

## WHAT WE DO

Our University Advisors offer collaborative weekly classes that coach students in organization, wellness, career focus, research tools, majors/courses and programs, university applications, and writing powerful application essays and personal statements.

LAS hosts over 100 university visits (now virtual) each year, invites guest speakers to help best support students and prides itself on the one-on-one personal relationship the University Advisors create with each student.



## QUESTIONS?

Robert Kostrzeski | Director of University Advising | rkostrzeski@las.ch



## CERTIFIED TESTING CENTER

*SAT, PSAT, IELTS, CAMBRIDGE TESTS*

Students have an opportunity to take these standardized tests: ACT, SAT, and PSAT. In the spring, LAS offers an SAT prep course. Students may also take advantage of a prep course for the IELTS in the fall.



## INDIVIDUALIZED ADVISING

Three years of individualized university advising starting in grade 9.

# Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office is primarily responsible for four areas: Residential Life, Student Conduct, Student Life, and Student Pass.

## Travel Eligibility

Students in grades 7, 8, and 9 are free to explore Leysin and may go on supervised school trips but cannot travel independently.

Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 may take independent day trips or overnight trips on school-designated weekends assuming that they have made the commendation list and received permission.

## Travel Permission

*Guidelines and Process*

1. Find a Pass (Travel) Weekend on Boardingware: Students must be on the Commendation List in order to be approved for Pass.
2. Permission from Parents: Parents must approve no later than 13:00 on Wednesdays using Boardingware.
3. Explore the World: Ready. Set. Go!



### GENERAL QUESTIONS?

Paul Fomalont, Dean of Students | pfomalont@las.ch

### TRAVEL QUESTIONS?

Sandra Brinkmeyer  
LaToya Peltier  
Leo Peltier

Grade 12 Travel | sbrinkmeyer@las.ch  
Grade 10 & 11 Travel | lapeltier@las.ch  
Grade 7,8 & 9 Travel | leopeltier@las.ch



### RESIDENTIAL LIFE

A big part of the LAS experience is getting to know students from other countries. For this reason, we do not allow students from the same country or who speak the same language to room together. Sharing a bedroom space is also a great learning opportunity. As with any relationship, sometimes there are bumps along the way. It is important to give your child space to work through occasional difficulties rather than trying to jump to the rescue.



### STUDENT CONDUCT

During the first weeks of school all students are given clear guidance on our expectations for their behavior both within the dormitories and in the classroom. Because the majority of consequences for poor behaviour choices are issued by the staff who live and work with students, we ask that parents trust us when their child receives consequences. LAS staff and the Dean of Students are always happy to discuss any questions you may have.



### STUDENT LIFE

LAS rounds out the boarding school experience by offering fun ways to get involved outside of the classroom. Students participate in after-school activities that provide opportunities for leadership experience, skill development, and community service. Additionally, the Student Life Office organizes and supervises weekend excursions to popular destinations around Switzerland allowing students lots of opportunities to have fun, shop, dine out, and explore.



### STUDENT PASS (TRAVEL)

Our location in central Europe provides students with a unique opportunity to travel throughout the year. For this reason, we have a Pass Program that allows students a certain degree of freedom to leave campus on weekends and to explore outside of Leysin. There will be approximately one weekend per month allocated as an overnight travel weekend from October to April. More details can be found in section 3.5 of the Student Handbook.



### HEALTH CENTER

The LAS Health Center is responsible for the physical and mental health of all students. One nurse and one counselor are always on call in case of emergencies. If your child has any physical or mental health concerns, please contact the Health Center at nurses@las.ch. Furthermore, please ensure the Health Center has received all medical documentation and medication so that they can continue to provide proper care.

# 2020-2021 Calendar

## Fall Semester

- AUGUST 25** New Student Arrival (Tuesday) - Arrival desk at the airport will be open from 08:00 -18:30. Students should book for flights that arrive at Geneva airport no later than 17:00. Registration at school for new students is from 09:00 - 17:00.
- AUGUST 26** Returning Students' Arrival (Wednesday) - Arrival desk at the airport will be open from 08:00-18:30. Students should book for flights that arrive at Geneva airport no later than 17:00. Students traveling by themselves to school must arrive no later than 21:00.
- SEPTEMBER 25 - 28** Long Weekend (Friday - Monday)
- NOVEMBER 13 -16** Long Weekend (Friday - Monday)
- DECEMBER 17- 18** Departures for Winter Break (Thursday - Friday). On December 16 students can depart from LAS after exams end at 16:00. Therefore, flights for that day can only be booked if they depart from Geneva airport after 20:00. On December 17 and 18, we will provide shuttles buses that depart at 03:00, 05:00, 09:00, and 12:00.

## Spring Semester

- JANUARY 9 - 10** Students Return (Saturday & Sunday)
- FEBRUARY 15 - 18** Family Winter Week - Parents visit their child at LAS. There will be scheduled activities.
- FEBRUARY 18 - 21** Long Weekend (Thursday - Sunday). Classes will finish on Thursday at 12:35.
- MARCH 27** Departure for Spring Break (Saturday) - On March 26 students can depart from LAS after classes end at 15:35. Therefore, flights for that day can only be booked if they depart from Geneva airport after 20:00. On March 27 we will provide shuttle buses departing at 03:00, 05:00, 09:00, and 12:00.
- APRIL 10 -11** Students Return (Saturday and Sunday)
- JUNE 2 - 3** Underclass Students Depart (Wednesday-Thursday) - On June 2 students can depart from LAS only after 12:00 (in case there was a delay of return time from cultural trips on June 1) and the school will provide shuttles buses departing at 12:00 and 16:00. No flights should be booked before 16:00 departure on June 2. On June 2 we will provide shuttle buses departing at 03:00, 05:00, 09:00, and 12:00.

**SCHOOL CLOSED** The school closes completely during the Winter Break and Spring Break. Following the Winter term, dormitories will not open until Saturday, January 9. Following Spring Break, the dormitories will not open until Saturday, April 10.

**GRADUATION** Graduation events on June 3 and June 4 are only open to the senior class.

PLEASE REFER TO [LAS.CH/COVID-19](https://las.ch/covid-19) FOR SPECIAL CONDITIONS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.





# Questions?

It is understandable that you will have many questions throughout the year. Everyone at LAS is always happy to help you. In the following pages you will find information that answers typical questions and discusses frequent areas of concern.



## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

General Number: +41 24 493 4888 (Weekdays 08:00 to 17:00)  
Administrator on Call: +41 79 386 9305 (Emergency number 24/7)



## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE CONTACT

Please email Ms. Dixon at [academicoffice@las.ch](mailto:academicoffice@las.ch) at least one week in advance to set up parent-teacher conferences.



## PASSPORTS, TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION, AND CREDIT CARDS

These must be handed in to the Travel Office. They will be returned to the student when traveling. Note that the school does not permit students to have bank accounts.



## PERSONAL ACCOUNT

If you have any questions about personal accounts or any payment matters, please email [accounting@las.ch](mailto:accounting@las.ch).



## RECOMMENDED READING

*Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladell (2008)

"A Nation of Wimps", Hara Estoff Marano, *Psychology Today* (2008)

*Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds* by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken (2009)

## Founding LAS and the Proud Tradition of The Ott Family

The history of Leysin American School began in 1949 when Sigrid Ott launched a summer program called "International Ranger Camps," designed to offer campers a uniquely clean and welcoming environment in the midst of a post-World War 2 world. With 130 children from various countries participating, the creation of these camps was the first step towards Sigrid's vision of creating a harmonious, international community.

Having used the town of Leysin as a base for her summer camp, Sigrid and her husband began to consider the idea of opening an international boarding school. The town was small and protected, yet close to major cities in Switzerland and the rest of Europe. Former tuberculosis clinics were vacant and the town encouraged the Ottos to use one of the buildings to start their school.

In 1961, LAS opened its doors to 89 students. In the 50 years which followed the school grew and changed, yet always stayed true to Sigrid's original vision. In 1982, her son, Dr. Steven Ott, and daughter-in-law, Doris Ott, continued the family tradition by becoming the managing directors of LAS. Today, the third generation of the Ott family, Dr. Marc-Frédéric Ott and Dr. Christoph Ott, administer the day-to-day operations of the school. The school that started as a dream is now a vibrant, educational community of students from more than 60 nations. The Ott family is proud to educate and care for your sons and daughters and to prepare them to be future leaders in our world. All who are associated with LAS feel privileged to belong to an international family sharing in Sigrid's goal of creating a more harmonious world.





**LEYSIN AMERICAN SCHOOL IN SWITZERLAND**

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