

PARENT **2021/22** **HANDBOOK** **ELEMENTARY** **SCHOOL**



Welcome from the Elementary School Principal

Welcome to the ABA Elementary School!

ABA is a wonderfully welcoming, warm and diverse community of students, educators and parents, united in working together towards the school's mission to provide "an international education of the highest quality to enable students to be confident, responsible, caring, life-long learners."

In Elementary, we value each young person in our care as a unique individual, each with particular strengths, passions, ideas, areas of potential and challenges. Our task is to nurture each child towards achieving their potential in all aspects of their development. Along with a firm academic foundation, we strive to equip each child with skills and attitudes that will enable them to thrive in and contribute to an uncertain, fast-changing world.

The International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme provides an excellent framework to reach our goals for every student's success. Its focus on authentic, student-centered, inquiry-based learning allows our children to work collaboratively to ask and answer questions, contribute and explore meaningful ideas and develop a deeper understanding of the broader concepts underpinning all areas of learning.

We hope you will find all the information you need in this Handbook. Please feel free to contact us directly if you have any questions.

Sam Cook
Elementary School Principal

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Who We Are

Founded in 1987, ABA educates the next generation of leaders and innovators, inspiring them to make a positive impact on their world. The only International Baccalaureate World Continuum International School in Oman, and a non-profit, ABA enrolls over 950 students from Kindergarten through Grade 12, representing over 75 countries. We are a non-selective school and our Diploma Programme results are well above the worldwide average. With over 20 staff nationalities, we are truly a diverse workplace and learning environment.

Mission

ABA provides an international education of the highest quality to enable students to be confident, responsible, caring, life-long learners.

Vision

ABA students achieve their maximum potential in an environment of intercultural understanding and respect, to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Values

Communication - Diversity - Inquiry - Integrity - Knowledge
Open-mindedness - Reflection - Thinking - Willingness to Take Risks

Accreditation

ABA is fully accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS), the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA). ABA is authorized to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP).



Governance

The governance of ABA is vested in a Board of Directors which has the ultimate authority of the School. The majority of the Directors are parents of children currently enrolled in the school. As stewards of ABA's future, the Board of Director's primary responsibilities includes ensuring the long-term viability of ABA through fiscal responsibility, sound governance and strategic planning in conjunction with the Head of School and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

To learn more about:

[Board of Directors 2021-2022](#)

[Senior Leadership Team 2021-2022](#)

[Faculty, Specialists and Staff Directory 2021-2022](#)

[Parent-Teacher Association 2021-2022](#)

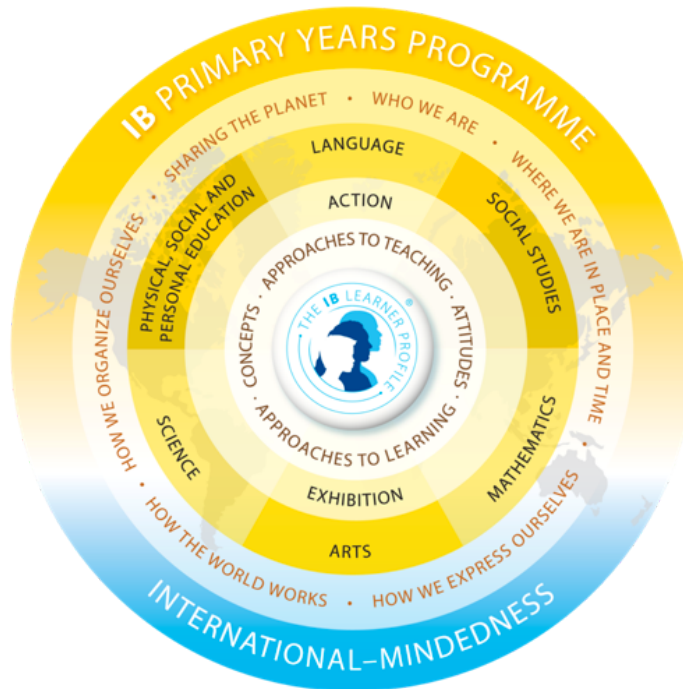
[VIPERS Booster Club 2021-2022](#)

The Elementary School Leadership Team

Elementary School Principal	Sam Cook
Elementary School Assistant Principal	Erum Banatwala
PYP Curriculum Coordinator	Bronwyn Matamu
Elementary School Counselor	Colette O'Driscoll

Our Curriculum

ABA follows the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme as its curriculum framework in the Elementary School.



The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) is part of the IB continuum of education, leading into the IB Middle Years (MYP) and Diploma Programmes (DP), which are also offered at ABA.

The PYP is designed for students aged 3 to 12. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. It is a framework guided by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, explored using knowledge and skills derived from six subjects areas and transdisciplinary skills, with a powerful emphasis on inquiry.

The IB Learner Profile

The Learner Profile guides all three programmes and lists the attributes we hope to develop in our students as they become internationally-minded lifelong learners.

As IB learners, we strive to be:

Inquirers	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
Knowledgeable	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
Thinkers	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
Principled	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
Open-minded	We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
Risk-takers	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative

Balanced	strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
	We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The Programme of Inquiry

The subject areas of mathematics, language, science, social studies, arts and personal, social and physical education are organized under six transdisciplinary themes. These themes provide ABA with the opportunity to incorporate local and global issues into the curriculum and effectively allow students to “step up” beyond the confines of learning within subject areas:

Who we are

An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; person, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human

Where we are in place and time

An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationship between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

How we express ourselves

An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic

How the world works

An inquiry into the natural world and its laws, the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment

How we organize ourselves

An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment

Sharing the planet

An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

Each transdisciplinary theme is addressed each year by all students from Grade 1 to Grade 5, with students in ECE exploring four of the six themes. These transdisciplinary themes help teachers to develop a programme of inquiry - units exploring important ideas and requiring a high level of involvement on the part of the students. These units of inquiry are substantial, in-depth and usually last for several weeks.

Since these ideas relate to the world beyond the school, students see their relevance and connect with it in an engaging and challenging way. Students who learn in this way begin to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as learners and become actively involved with their education.

All students will come to realize that a unit of inquiry involves them in an in-depth exploration of an important idea and that the teacher will collect evidence of how well they understand that idea. They will expect to be able to work in a variety of ways, on their own and in groups, to allow them to learn to their best advantage.

The Early Childhood Programme

Our early childhood programme caters for 3-6-year-olds in a safe, well-resourced and inspiring learning environment. We base our programme on a foundation of play. Children develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding with the guidance of our experienced Early Childhood teachers and Teaching Assistants. We capitalise on young children's natural desire to explore, inquire into and understand themselves and the world around them. Our EC curriculum is developed within the PYP framework and gives children the best possible foundation for later success in their elementary years.

We offer the following classes in our Early Childhood programme. For K1 and K2 students, we operate mixed-age classes, described as family classes (FC).

Class	Age range	Session timing
FC	K1: 3-4-year-olds (age 3 by 31st August)	7.30 am -1.00 pm
	K2: 4-5-year-olds (age 4 by 31st August)	
K3	5-6-year-olds (age 5 by 31st August)	7.30 am - 2.00 pm

Each class has a dedicated Teacher and a Teaching Assistant. In addition, our FC and K3 students have specialist teachers for Physical Education, Performing Arts and Library.

What are “family classes”?

“...the deliberate mixing of children from various age groups of more than one year in the one class.”

This model is frequently used in early childhood settings due to its many benefits. In the same way that children of different ages in families live, play and learn together, family classes allow children to learn from each other, for younger ones to feel supported and nurtured by their older peers, and for the older ones to develop their leadership skills. In terms of learning, when we mix students in this way, we can treat them as individuals and honour their different rates of development.

"In a mixed-age group, a teacher is more likely to address differences, not only between children but within each individual child. In a mixed-age group, it is acceptable for a child to be ahead of

his or her same-age peers in math, for example, but behind them in reading, or social competence, or vice versa." Katz (1995)

We allocate children as K1, or K2 within our EC family classes based on their birthday and administrative purposes. Still, they are all considered to be unique and equal members of the learning community.

What are the benefits?

Mixed-age classes have been widely used in school since research began exploring their benefits as far back as the 1980s. More recent research continues to support the many benefits of this model, including:

- supports social-emotional development in both older and younger students
- fosters a sense of uniqueness for each child - rather than feeling pressured to keep up with their peers, children have an opportunity to find their own voice and develop their individuality
- encourages cooperation rather than competition
- improves confidence, tolerance and a feeling of security

"Benefits include more holistic, child-responsive curriculum practices that consider the understandings, capabilities and dispositions that children need for future work, e.g. working in diverse environments that seek workers who are multi-skilled, literate, cooperative, creative, adaptable, independent and resourceful.

Children and teachers usually have the opportunity to work together for more than one year, which enhances continuity of learning and the forming of positive relationships with teachers and children, and between children.

Because of the mixed age group, the younger children benefit from the positive models of older children, often aspiring to their levels of capability. At the same time, the older children rise to the expectations of the younger children and teacher, being very responsible and having opportunities to lend and use their expertise."

Articles about Multi-age Education (2006; p3)

How does this affect the curriculum and my child's progress?

As a play-based PYP programme, the early childhood curriculum focuses on knowing our learners as unique individuals. The four learning domains enable children to develop at their own pace, with teachers observing and supporting their progress and next steps.

The model for family classes means that K1 students can benefit from two years with the same teacher, who will get to know them very well and continue to support their growth. In their second year in a family class, students become the older group in the class, with opportunities to support and guide their younger peers.

The curriculum will work on a two-year rolling cycle of units of inquiry, so children will not repeat the same units. We focus on each child's development in the four domains of learning and provide learning experiences that challenge each child wherever they are in their learning.

What about the ratios?

We roughly aim for one-third of students to be in the younger range and aim to keep the classes as balanced as possible between the two grades.

What and how do young children learn in Early Childhood ABA?

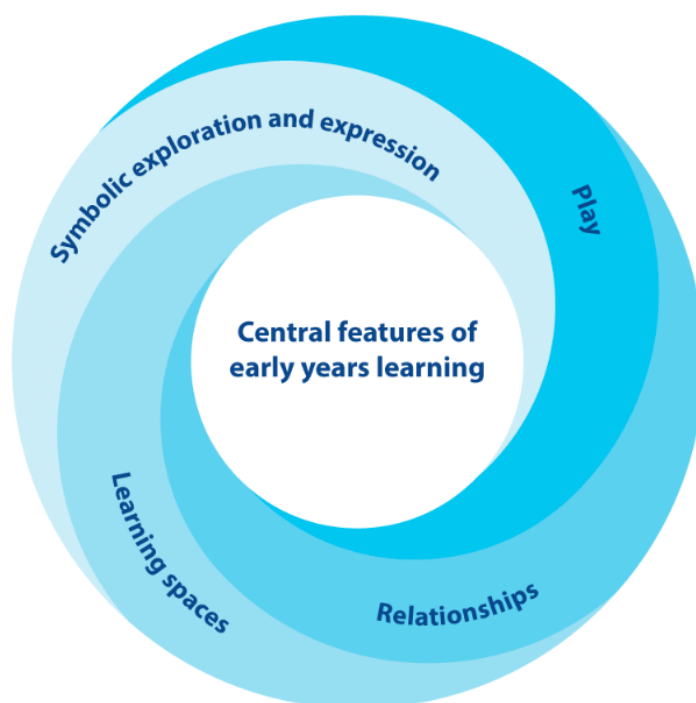


Figure EL01: Central features of learning in the early years

The Enhanced PYP

Central features:

- Planning uninterrupted time for **play**
- Building strong **relationships** with students and their families
- Creating and maintaining responsive **spaces** for play
- Offering many opportunities for **symbolic exploration and expression**

Four domains of learning

While children are learning many aspects of traditional subjects such as mathematics, reading and writing, science, art and more during their time in Early Childhood, we prefer to view their development holistically. We use the following four domains as lenses through which to bring each child's learning into focus.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity• Interactions• Relationships• Communication (oral and visual language)• Self-management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross motor development• Fine motor development• Self-help skills• Healthy and active lifestyle
Cognitive Development	Creative Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mathematics - number, shape and space, measurement, pattern and function, data handling• Language - reading, writing, speaking and listening, presentation• Conceptual understanding of ideas explored in units of inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expression through music, dance, song, role-play, visual art and other forms of creative play• Creating to represent feelings, ideas, experiences• Responding to the creations of others

Children are often engaged in learning in all four domains simultaneously, but these lenses help teachers identify progress in each area and plan for the next steps. We will also be using these domains to report to you on children's progress.

Language & Literacy

Becoming literate

Literacy invites the student into new ways of making meaning and exploring the world through language. ...students make meaning from written, viewed or oral text and apply their developing understandings of symbolic cues. Multiliteracies involve students in different ways of accessing and making meaning, including digital technologies and their vast potential for expression and audience. Through literacy, students uncover perspectives in texts and learn about the power of communication. Literature is a source of pleasure as well as thoughtful provocation as students use it to explore other ways of knowing and seeing the world.

PYP Learning and Teaching (2018) p87

Literacy is learned best when:

- Learners experience pleasure and enjoyment throughout the different aspects of learning and using language.
- Learners feel motivated by the real-world purpose of their language learning.
- Learners believe that they are readers and writers and approach their literacy learning with a growth mindset.
- Learners feel supported in their language and literacy learning.
- Learners identify the purposes of literacy in everyday life.
- Learners actively reflect on their language development to understand themselves as learners.
- Learners make connections and build on their understanding of how written language is organised to convey meaning.
- Learners apply their knowledge to express and convey meaning effectively in a variety of ways for different audiences.
- Learners access, process and comprehend written language for a variety of purposes.
- Through inquiry and exploration, learners build an understanding of the conventions of language.
- Learners engage in challenging experiences that extend their language capabilities.

Trans disciplinary and literacy learning

At ABA, language and literacy are the vehicles through which children learn. Spoken and written communication are interwoven into all the children's experiences at school, from classroom-based learning to specialist lessons and even during breaks. All teachers are

language teachers and have a responsibility to identify and maximise opportunities to learn language, learn about language and learn through language.

Learning language

Speaking, listening, viewing, presenting, reading and writing are all transactional processes around using language to communicate. Oral language is the responsibility of all teachers, who should provide opportunities for children to engage in receptive and expressive communication, as well as consider types of language appropriate to different purposes and audiences.

Learning about language

We support learners to understand how language works through exposure, inquiry and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, word study. We have identified a selection of core resources that provide a framework for supporting children to progress in learning about language. These tools are used to support learners' authentic inquiry into and use of language.

Learning through language

Learners use language and literacy as a tool to listen, think, describe, discuss, reflect and more throughout their learning experiences at school. Language is the vehicle through which knowledge, conceptual understanding, approaches to learning and learner profile attributes are developed. Language exposes the **thinking** of the learner, and this is particularly valued and supported at ABA, using strategies such as visible thinking routines and number talks.

A balanced approach to learning literacy

At ABA, we understand the importance of **striking a balance** between immersing children in a whole language approach (where meaning is paramount, authentic reading and writing opportunities are provided, children are immersed in a literate environment, modelling and support) and providing systematic exposure to the skills needed to be literate (phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, word study).¹

The focus of the reading programme at ABA is to foster a love of reading, strong comprehension skills, and confident oral reading fluency. Students experience reading at and beyond their level through regular read-aloud and shared reading. They have regular

¹ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/curriculum-update/fall1995/Whole-Language.aspx>

guided reading sessions with their teacher, with a particular instructional focus, and practice at their independent level during independent reading, and when reading at home.

The writing programme ensures that students have opportunities to write frequently and for a variety of purposes. Students learn the features of recount, narrative, information and opinion writing, and focus on traits of good writing, such as ideas, organisation, word choice and conventions. They also have opportunities to draft, edit and revise their writing through to publishing, and regular chances to discuss their writing.

Mathematics

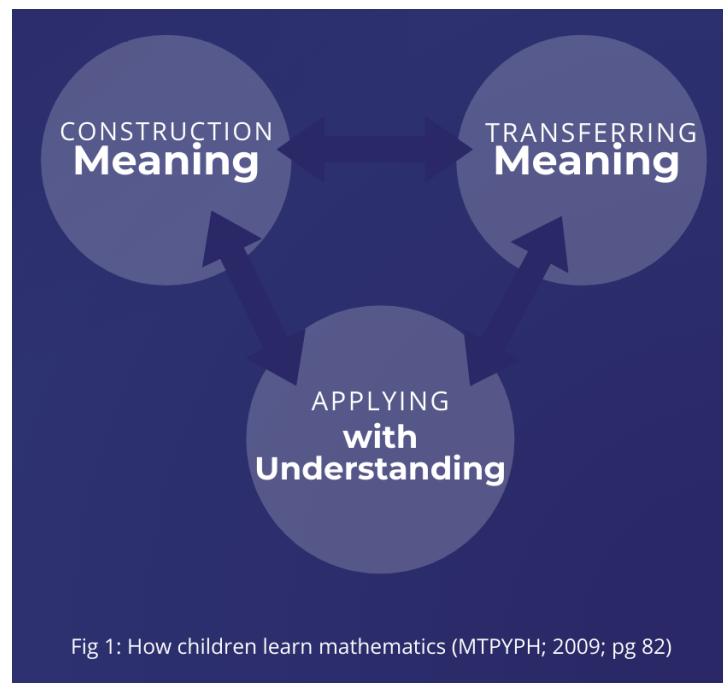
Our philosophy about learning and teaching mathematics is based on the following statements. Maths is learned best when:

- Learners see themselves as *confident mathematicians* who “expect math to make sense” and “puzzle over what they don’t understand.”
- Learners develop a *growth mindset* in an environment where mistakes are expected, respected and inspected, enabling confidence to grow.
- Learners playfully approach mathematics and connect it to the world around them.
- Learners can *select and use appropriate strategies* to solve *practical, hands-on problem-solving activities* and realistic situations.
- Learners *construct ideas* about mathematical concepts before they *transfer their understanding into symbols*.
- *Conceptual understanding* is developed when students are actively engaged in modelling, discussing, representing and applying mathematical ideas.
- *Fluency* is developed through meaningful number activities that help students to “commit math facts to heart at the same time as understanding numbers and mathematics.”²
- Learning engagements give opportunities for students to work at *an appropriate level of challenge* and to experience success (low floor - high ceiling)
- Learners are given the *time* to think deeply, consolidate and reflect on their understandings,

² [Fluency Without Fear](#) Boaler, J; (2015)

At ABA, we make meaningful links between the programme of inquiry and maths learning wherever possible. The mathematical strands of **data handling, shape and space**, and **measurement** are taught within a transdisciplinary unit of inquiry with additional focused teaching as required.

Number, pattern and function are taught throughout the year, using maths-based units of inquiry, and core mathematics teacher resources.



When planning for mathematics, teachers will intentionally plan engagements that ensure children can work at all of the above stages:

Constructing meaning about mathematics

"Learners construct meaning...by reflecting upon their interactions with objects and ideas...[at this stage, teachers involve] learners in an active learning process, where they are provided with possibilities to interact with manipulatives and to engage in conversation with others."

Transferring meaning into symbols

"Only when learners have constructed their ideas about a mathematical concept should they attempt to transfer this understanding into symbols... Learners should be given the opportunity to describe their understanding using their own method of

symbolic notation, then learning to transfer them into conventional mathematical notation.”

Applying with understanding

“...authentic activities should include a range of practical hands-on problem-solving activities and realistic situations that provide the opportunity to demonstrate mathematical thinking through presented or recorded formats. In this way, learners are able to apply their understanding of mathematical concepts as well as utilise mathematical skills and knowledge.”

Science

Science is taught within units of inquiry as part of the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. There is an emphasis on hands-on learning experiences, opportunities to inquire into authentic problems, and challenging students to answer open-ended questions with investigations of their design. The knowledge component of science in the PYP is arranged into four strands.

Living Things: The study of the characteristics, systems and behaviours of humans and other animals, and of plants; the interactions and relationships between and among them, and with their environment.

Earth and Space: The study of planet Earth and its position in the universe, particularly its relationship with the sun; the natural phenomena and systems that shape the planet and the distinctive features that identify it; the infinite and finite resources of the planet.

Materials and Matter: The study of the properties, behaviours and uses of materials, both natural and human-made; the origins of human-made materials and how they are manipulated to suit a purpose.

Forces and Energy: The study of energy, its origins, storage and transfer, and the work it can do; the study of forces; the application of scientific understanding through inventions and machines.

Social Studies

Social studies is taught within units of inquiry as part of the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. There is an emphasis on inquiring into significant and relevant areas of study, exploring a range of perspectives, including individual, local, multicultural and global dimensions, and using factual information to deepen conceptual understanding of the world. There is also a strong emphasis on empowering students to be responsible and to take action in our world today. The knowledge component of social studies is arranged into five strands:

Human Systems and Economic Activities: The study of how and why people construct organisations and systems; the ways in which people connect locally and globally; the distribution of power and authority.

Social Organization and Culture: The study of people, communities, cultures and societies; the ways in which individuals, groups and societies interact with each other.

Continuity and Change through Time: The study of the relationships between people and events through time; the past, its influences on the present and its implications for the future; people who have shaped the future through their actions.

Human and Natural Environments: The study of the distinctive features that give a place its identity; how people adapt to and alter their environment; how people experience and represent place; the impact of natural disasters on people and the built environment.

Resources and the Environment: The interaction between people and the environment; the study of how humans allocate and manage resources; the positive and negative effects of this management; the impact of scientific and technological developments on the environment.

Creative Arts

Arts are a powerful mode of communication through which students explore and construct a sense of self and develop an understanding of the world around them. Two common strands have been identified that apply across the different art forms and the artistic process:

Creating: Opportunities to communicate meaning, develop technical skills, take creative risks, solve problems and visualise consequences. Students are encouraged to draw on their imagination, experiences and knowledge as starting points for creative exploration. They have opportunities to explore their interests, beliefs and values, and to engage in a personal artistic journey.

Responding: Opportunities for students to respond to their own and other artists' works and processes. By responding to artwork, they can develop the skills of critical analysis, interpretation, evaluation, reflection and communication. They also become more mindful of their artistic development and the role that arts play in the world around them.

In the PYP, arts are identified as music, visual art, dance and drama. Homeroom teachers deliver the Visual Art programme and incorporate drama into units of inquiry wherever possible. PE teachers incorporate dance (movement composition) into their programme of inquiry.

Music is taught as a specialist subject and includes a performing strand along with creating and responding. There is an emphasis on listening to, analyzing and learning music from a variety of cultures and historical periods, working independently and collaboratively to create arrangements of songs, learning strategies for reading musical notation, learning techniques for playing a variety of musical instruments, improvising rhythms and melodies, creating and performing original compositions using musical concepts, and receiving and providing constructive criticism.

Personal, Social And Physical Education (PSPE)

At ABA, PSPE lessons are fun, engaging and active learning experiences. PSPE is taught through an inquiry-based and transdisciplinary approach. Concepts, skills, knowledge, and attitudes are embedded throughout the PSPE curriculum, and students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning through a process of planning and reflection. A focus on physical, social and emotional well being encourages students to participate in an active and healthy lifestyle, through three strands:

- Identity
- Active living
- Interactions

Students are exposed to many learning experiences in the following areas:

- Individual Pursuits (track and field, swimming)
- Movement Composition (dance, gymnastics)
- Games (invasion games, striking and fielding games, net games)
- Health-Related Fitness
- Adventure Challenge

Students benefit from two PE lessons and one Swim class per week. All students are expected to participate in Swimming, and parents are asked to provide a medical note to the PE teacher on occasions where a child cannot participate.

Additional Language - Arabic

Students who are multilingual have an improved capacity to think, talk and reflect on how languages work, which is why PYP students learn at least one additional language from the age of seven. Through learning additional languages, students become cognitively more flexible, creative and better at problem-solving. (IBO, 2018)

ABA Elementary offers Arabic to all students from K3 to Grade 5. We feel that this is a vital way to promote a positive attitude to the language of the host country, and to maximise opportunities for authentic learning and application.

Students in our diverse community come to school with rich and diverse language experiences and backgrounds, and we gather data on each child's language profile to help us identify their access point for learning Arabic. We use their language profile along with assessment data to determine their level and group them accordingly. While their proficiency could range from New to Arabic through to Arabic Speakers, we expect each child's level to vary and aim to differentiate for the learners in each group.

Students in K3 receive exposure to Arabic through two learning times per week, and those in Grades 1-5 benefit from four 40-minute lessons per week. The primary focus of the programme is for students to gain confidence in speaking and listening, but students with more knowledge of Arabic also begin to learn to read and write Modern Standard Arabic.

Information Communication Technology and Digital Citizenship

Information Communication Technology is of great importance at ABA. Our philosophy for the use of technology is that it should be an integral tool for learning. Therefore, we have integrated the use of technology into our programme, ensuring the students all use technology for investigating, creating, communicating, collaborating and organizing; as well as working towards becoming responsible digital citizens.

Students in Early Childhood, Grades 1 and 2 have regular access to school iPads. Students in Grades 3-5 are required to have their own iPad to access the curriculum fully. It is possible to order classroom-ready iPads with keyboard cover and apps needed through the school. If you prefer to buy your own device, the specifications and requirements are available on request. Students in Grades 3-5 are asked to review our Acceptable Use Agreement (a copy is included at the end of this Handbook), discuss with their parents, then sign and return it to school.

Library

The elementary library provides access to a range of physical and digital resources for use by the ABA community. Online resources are carefully selected to support learner-initiated inquiry both in and out of the classroom. Students engage with age-appropriate educational websites, specialized search engines, research databases, image libraries, videos, games, and stories to strengthen their research, thinking, and communication skills.

The elementary library also gives students access to a broad and diverse collection of over 12,000 pictures, nonfiction, fiction, world language, and graphic books. These books encourage reading for pleasure, foster vital literacy skills and serve as windows and doors to other worlds. The elementary librarian works with the community to curate collections, design library services, and facilitate learning experiences that cultivate curiosity, stimulate critical thinking, and promote reflection.

Assessment And Reporting

Teachers use a variety of ongoing assessment tools and methods to find out what children know, understand and can do. Formative assessments are ongoing throughout daily teaching and learning and help children and teachers to determine what children already

know to plan the next stages of learning. Summative assessments give students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. Some of the many assessment strategies used by teachers include:

- observing students' behaviour and responses to a particular task
- taking photos of learning in progress and annotating them
- asking children open-ended questions to assess their understanding and recording their responses
- giving children open-ended tasks, individually or in groups, observing the process and the product to evaluate knowledge, skills and understanding
- written or recorded tasks, including simple tests
- gathering assessment data in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics

Ongoing assessment

Continuums are teachers' main way of recording student progress over time in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Rather than expecting all children to reach specific targets at specific times, we see student learning as a journey, and the continuum as a map that can show how far each student has come, and what the next steps are. Teachers update continuums twice a year and use this information to track individual student progress.

Seesaw - online portfolio

Parents can access a broad picture of what their child is learning through Seesaw, our online portfolio. Student portfolios support a purposeful and ongoing process of reflection, by collecting student and teacher-selected work designed to document continuous student learning and growth in a meaningful and compelling way. Portfolios serve to:

- celebrate products or achievements
- document the learning process
- show goal-setting and working towards goals
- reflect on learning
- demonstrate student agency
- record learning in a variety of areas - knowledge, skills, approaches to learning, attributes of the learner profile, self-reflection
- facilitate regular feedback on learning from teachers

The primary audience of the portfolio is the student. It provides a continuous tool for personal reflection about learning and growth, as well as a platform to share and articulate their learning and reflection (e.g., when talking about learning with their parents at home or during conferences). The portfolio also provides information to teachers and parents on student progress, giving opportunities for student feedback, individual reflection and data collection.

Seesaw is also a powerful tool to support our distance learning plan in the event that students cannot work on campus. Teachers can post announcements, videos and other invitations to learning. Personalised tasks are posted under the “Activities” tab, where students can post their responses and teachers can provide individual feedback.

Conferences

Parents are invited to a conference with their child twice a year. The first, in October, is facilitated by the teacher and is a significant opportunity to share initial progress, strengths, goals and action plans in the months leading up to the mid-year reporting period. The second conference is held in March and is student-led. Children prepare a plan to help them guide you through the learning they would like to share with you. They will also share with you their progress towards the goals they have set and new priorities for learning. They can also share their learning in the specialist subjects during this conference.

Written reports

You will receive two written reports, one at the end of each semester (February and June). In Early Childhood, these reports are organised around the four domains of learning. In Grades 1-5, you will receive information about your child's progress in language, maths, specialist subjects and their approaches to learning, as well as their learner profile.

The Grade 5 Exhibition

The Exhibition is an integral part of the PYP for all students. In the final year of the programme, students undertake a collaborative, transdisciplinary inquiry process that involves them in identifying, investigating and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems. As the culminating experience of the PYP, the Exhibition provides students with an exciting opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their learning.

The School Day

Daily Schedule

Classroom doors open at 7.10 am for all classes.

Class	School day timings
EC - FC	7.30am-1.00pm
EC - K3	7.30am-2.00pm
G1-5	7.30am-2.10pm

Students in Early Childhood benefit from a staggered start and end time for the first few weeks to help them settle in. Information will be sent to parents about arrangements for the beginning of the year.

All Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 classes have full-time Teaching Assistants. To enrich and strengthen the classroom program students benefit from Specialist teachers delivering scheduled classes in Music, Library, IT, Arabic (Grades 1-5), and Physical Education (including swimming from K2).

Class teachers will send home copies of their schedules in the first week of school to assist families' preparations for school. Some aspects of the school day have been modified in line with COVID restrictions.

Arrival And Departure Procedures

We operate a drive-through drop-off and pick-up system, where parents/drivers remain in the vehicle while children are dropped off and picked up with the help of teachers on duty. Each family will be provided with a pick-up card to be displayed on the dashboard, and children will only be dismissed to a car displaying the correct card. More detailed information, including a map, is shared about these procedures at the start of each semester.

Students may be dropped off from 7.10am. There is no supervision for students in the school building before this time.

Students who arrive at school after 7.40 am **must** report to Reception and collect a late slip so that attendance can be updated. This is particularly important to maintain our safety requirements and be aware of all students on campus.

If parents need to come onto campus during the school day, they are required to show their parent ID card to the guard on duty to enter via the main gate.

Students need permission from parents and a gate pass from the reception to leave campus during the school day. The student may be collected from the classroom.

Students are dismissed from 2.10 pm onwards. If a student has not been collected by 2:30 pm, they will be brought to Reception (younger children will be accompanied). Here, the office staff will record their names and will ask the person who collects them to sign and log the time of departure. Office staff can also help children to call their parents if necessary.

Students are not allowed to remain on the Elementary Campus after school, including the playground, unless they are supervised by an adult or are participating in a school-sponsored activity. The library is not open to unsupervised children after school.

Snack And Lunch Times

All classes have two breaks during the day - each including the time to eat and time to play.

Supervised break-time locations vary throughout the year according to the temperature.

All students should bring their food in a chilled lunch box or bag, as well as a refillable water bottle. We encourage children to bring healthy food that is low in sugar and salt. Soft drinks are not permitted. Children are not permitted to share food items for health and safety reasons.

Elementary Life

After School Activities (ASA) Program

We offer a broad range of ASAs run by staff members for students in Grades 1-5. Activities fall into the following categories: Arts and Crafts; Performing Arts; Recreation and Sports; Technology; and Supporting the Classroom. Parents have the opportunity to choose from a selection of activities each season. Information about available activities and sign-up information is shared ahead of each season.

Assemblies

The elementary school regularly invites parents to celebrate with their child their ongoing learning at mini-exhibitions, assemblies and interactive events. The students take the lead to plan, organise and present at these events reflecting their learning and collaboration over time. Grade level teachers will keep parents notified of the dates of the upcoming events.

Behaviour

We take a positive and proactive approach to behaviour management. We use the IB Learner Profile to help us frame agreements about appropriate behaviour around the school. Classes often begin the year by collaboratively developing behaviour agreements, and all our expectations are framed around the ideas of being safe, showing respect for self, others and the environment, and doing our best.

Kelso's Choices encourage students to solve small problems using a variety of strategies, and all teachers use these as a reference point to promote independence.

However, when a classroom, school, or playground expectation is not met, students should be aware that there will be a consequence. Consequences are discussed with students and are intended to provide an opportunity for them to learn from their choices and put better decisions into practice in the future.

Consequences may include:

- A time-out or cooling-off period
- A reflection of their actions or choices, sometimes in written form
- Missing a break or other favourite activity
- A compensatory action - to attempt to resolve the conflict.
- Negotiating a behaviour plan
- Students who repeatedly break the rules or defy adult directions may be sent to the Assistant Principal.
- Students who intentionally hurt others will be sent to the Assistant Principal.
- Repeated visits to the Assistant Principal may result in a student being sent home.

Bullying

No form of bullying or harassing behaviour will be tolerated at ABA. Bullying is defined as “intentional, repeated, hurtful acts, words or other behaviour, including name-calling, threatening, shunning and deliberate exclusion, by one or more persons against others.” Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, or occur online. In cases where bullying is found to be happening, the Assistant Principal or Principal, in collaboration with the counsellor and class teacher, will be involved in determining appropriate consequences to ensure all students feel emotionally and physically safe at school.

Celebrations

Parents are welcome to have a small celebration for their child’s birthday. They may bring in a cupcake **or** savoury for each child. Juices, candies, giveaway bags and presents for students are not permitted. Please talk to your child’s teacher if you would like to arrange a birthday celebration for your child. The end of the day usually works best for such celebrations.

Many diverse celebrations hold importance for members of our school community, and we encourage children to learn about these (rather than celebrate them), to develop intercultural understanding and respect. If a parent would like to share a story or information about a cultural or religious celebration, we ask that you share the content with the class teacher first. We are required to abide by local laws and aim to ensure that we share information appropriately and sensitively.

Classes generally hold two class parties a year. These are excellent times to contribute food to share, but we ask parents to be mindful of food allergies or restrictions and avoid food waste and single-use plastic. ———

Communication

With Teachers

Teachers will share information about the grade and the class at the start of the year and as the need arises. Teachers will also regularly update SeeSaw, our platform for sharing student learning with parents. Your class teacher will share information with you about how to sign up for SeeSaw.

Teachers are always available to discuss questions or concerns you may have about your child. They can be contacted by email, and this is probably the best way to arrange a mutually convenient time for a conversation. Parent meetings will be held online via Google Meet.

With the Principal

The Elementary Principal has an office in the Administration Building. Appointments can be made through Reception. You are welcome to contact the principal for any of the following:

- You have spoken with your child's class teacher but still have questions or concerns.
- You would like to discuss a matter that is not directly connected to your child and their class but is more general, such as curriculum queries, or organisational issues.
- In case of an emergency.

With the Head of School

The Head of School will normally be aware of the most serious concerns brought to the Principals through meetings with the administrative team. If it is felt that his involvement is required, even without a request from a parent, this will happen.

Other circumstances in which the Head of School may be involved in parental concerns are:

- the matter has already been brought to the attention of the Principals and, in the opinion of the parent, it has not been resolved satisfactorily or not been dealt with at all,
- the matter is not related to the routine operation of the academic program and social life of the school,
- the matter is financial or legal and passed on from the Business Office,

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- the matter is of a truly very serious, dangerous, threatening or urgent nature requiring immediate, high-level administrative action,
 - the matter requires an interpretation of school policy,
 - the Parent-Teacher Association Committee requests action on a matter of general concern,
 - The Board of Directors, through the Chair, are required to take action on a matter.

With the Board of Directors

Parental approaches to the Board are regarded as the last recourse. Consequently, the Board of Directors, acting collectively will deal with a parental concern only in the following circumstances:

- (a) the matter has been brought to the attention of the Head of School, and in the opinion of the Head of School, the matter requires the Board's intervention

and/or

- (b) the matter is presented to the Board Chair, whereby a determination is made whether the matter needs the full Board's attention. Procedurally the Chair will then consult with the Head of School with a view to resolving the issue. Should this not be possible or if the Chair feels that the full Board should be consulted, the matter will be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Home Learning

We describe home learning as any activity in which students are involved outside of the regular school day that contributes to their education. Our priority for home learning is that it is relevant and engaging for children and should not create stress or pressure. Free play, after school activities, family time and exercise are also crucial in your child's development.

Reading should form a natural part of the daily home routine, emphasising the shared enjoyment of reading. Reading at home is an excellent means of developing thinking skills, increasing fluency, developing language skills, and helping children build confidence with their reading.

We expect that every child should spend some time at home daily, reading or sharing books they have chosen, with a focus on pleasure and enjoyment. From EC - Grade 2, we strongly recommend that reading time is shared with an adult and should include adults reading aloud to their children. Beyond Grade 2, while children are able to read more independently, adults are still encouraged to regularly spend time reading, sharing and talking about books with their children, including reading aloud to them. Reading in the home language is also essential and encouraged.

Apart from reading, children may sometimes be invited to participate in home learning activities connected with the learning in class or encouraged to pursue their own personal inquiries. Home learning tasks might involve collecting information from sources at home, responding to tasks at school using technology, or undertaking small personal projects. By Grades 4 and 5, some more regular tasks may be set to give children practice in essential skills and encourage time management. Home learning will be shared and celebrated at school but will not be used for assessment purposes.

Muscat Primary Sports League (MPSL)

The Muscat Primary Sports League (MPSL) provides member schools in Muscat with the opportunity to conduct inter-school athletic activities. MPSL strives to;

- Promote and encourage fair play
- Provide a quality sports programme for all participating students
- Encourage students to perform to the best of their ability

There are two divisions in the MPSL, U9 for the Grade 2-3 students and U11 for the Grade 4-5 students. Throughout the year, our students have the opportunity to participate in tournaments and clinics in a variety of sports such as; basketball, bench ball, TBall,

athletics, swimming, etc.

Student Clubs

Eco Rangers

The Eco Rangers elementary environmental club has student representatives from each classroom and is guided by a teacher supervisor. The Eco Rangers promote environmental awareness through their bulletin board displays, at assemblies and by class representatives facilitating conversations and activities with their classmates. The Eco Rangers also participate in the Eco Schools Muscat Eco Summit, which is hosted by a different member school each year. The Eco Ranger members are elected by their classmates, and the representatives change 2-3 times during the year to allow for more students to participate as Eco Rangers.

Student Council

The Elementary School Student Council (Grade 1-5) is an elected group of students who liaise to improve the quality of student life in the elementary school. Students are encouraged to elect responsible members of their class community to represent them at Student Council meetings. Members include one representative from each class in Grades 2-5, and elections are held twice per year. In addition, one Executive Council member from each of the Grade 5 classes remains in post throughout the year. Students meet weekly to address issues, raise awareness and plan activities such as spirit days and fundraisers. Representatives further enable communication between students and the administration.

Tech Team

The Elementary Tech-Team includes students from Grades 2-5, and two representatives are elected from each class. The team meets once a week to discuss, explore and use different types of technology available at school, including computer programming, electronic circuits, robotics, virtual reality, augmented reality and more. They also plan and run tech-related events including Digital Citizenship week, Hour of Code week, and Maker Day.

PARENT COMMITMENTS

Child Protection Policy 7.6.3

ABA seeks to be a safe haven for all our students. Child Protection procedures derived from this policy will be stated in an ABA Child Protection Handbook. This handbook will be communicated to all who work with ABA students.

All staff employed at ABA must report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect.

Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be in accordance with Omani law and the child protection procedures resulting from this policy statement.

Parent Commitment

We acknowledge that by enrolling our children at ABA, we understand the commitment to upholding rights and protecting all children. We also recognize the importance of these values in the education of our children and agree to reinforce these values at home.

I / We undertake to:

- Support the ABA Child Protection Policy and procedures included in the Child Protection Handbook which is located within the Parent Portal Handbook tab on the ABA website.
- Be present in Muscat, and if we must leave, arrange a caretaker for our child/children, and inform the school of those arrangements, including emergency contact information, to the Elementary School Main Office. This caretaker must be able to serve in the capacity of in loco parentis, with full authority to make parental decisions to ensure appropriate supervision and to respond to a medical emergency.

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- Share in the responsibility to bring forth information that supports the ABA Child Protection Policy with respect to the “Child Protection Disclosure Flowchart” found in the Child Protection Handbook.

The ABA Child Protection policy works for the child, for the family, and for our community. Research indicates that international communities are as prone to child abuse as communities in their home country. Child abuse is a multi-faceted issue that involves the dynamics of the child, the family, and the community. The ABA Child Protection Policy works to respond at all three levels.

THE ABA WAY

Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

As members of the ABA community, we have a collective responsibility for promoting and maintaining a school climate of trust and respect. Through building a strong parent-school partnership, student achievement, success, and well-being will be supported. Shared expectations of respective roles, responsibilities and expectations in line with our Mission, Vision and Values, will help ensure that the school culture continues to be one where all feel safe and valued.

Members of the ABA community (parents, staff and students) are expected to:

- Respect the laws of the Sultanate of Oman, the School's policies*, protocols and procedures**.
- Embrace the School's Mission, Vision and Values.
- Support the School's curriculum, programming, and pedagogy.
- Support the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Booster Club in school activities and events to enhance our sense of community.
- Promote and support efforts to maintain safety and security by following procedures or directions given
- by the ABA security and traffic staff.
- Treat all ABA employees, parents and students with civility, honesty, and respect.
- Presume good intent in communications and take any personal questions, inquiries or concerns directly to the person who is responsible or closest to the issue, using the published communication guidelines**.
- Work together with the school employees and other parents, as appropriate, to support the academic, social, and emotional plans for students.
- Attend appropriate meetings/conferences.

Parents

- Provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits.
- Stay informed about your child(ren)'s progress and experience.
- Attend appropriate school meetings/conferences.

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- Keep up to date with school news through publications, emails, newsletters, and social media.
 - Encourage full attendance and punctuality; please avoid taking family holidays outside school holidays.
 - Inform the school of any change of address, email details, or personal circumstances. If you will be out of town and your children will be cared for by another person, please provide up to date contact information for that person and the dates of your trip.

(Adapted from the following Sources: National Association of Independent Schools, International School of Luxembourg, American International School Lusaka)

* The Policy Manual can be found in the library ** The Student and Parent Handbooks are kept on the website.

The ABA Way is not intended to be fully definitive or exclusive. Where specific issues are not addressed above, conduct will be judged on the basis of what is morally, legally, or socially acceptable within the context of our school.

In enrolling your child (ren) at ABA, parents should understand and agree to the ABA way. Not doing so may lead to the school taking action. If a parent/guardian has engaged in significant or repeated violations of this understanding, the School reserves the right to discontinue enrolment or not to re-enrol a student.

Elementary Student Responsible Use of Technology

Due to distance learning, the following agreement applies to all students in EC and ES - parents are asked to discuss those relevant to your child (according to their age and access) before signing. Students in Grades 3-5 should also sign this agreement.

At ABA we expect you to be a kind, responsible and respectful Digital Citizen, by:

- Keeping the information private (Privacy & Security)
- Being Safe online (Internet Safety)
- Being kind and respectful to others online (Relationships & Cyberbullying)
- Thinking before posting online (Digital Footprint)
- Use your IT skills to find appropriate online content (Information Literacy)
- Giving credit to anyone's work when downloading from the internet (Creative Credit & Copyrights)

When working with my tablet or any other device:

- I will not share any personal information, inappropriate content, screenshots, photos or videos of any person of our ABA Community without their permission, via airdrop, email, social media, or other applications
- I will keep my passwords private, and only share them with my teachers and parents
- I will show respect to other people's accounts, passwords, devices and personal information
- I will always have my teacher or parent's permission before sending an email, and I will use appropriate language, emojis, photos, videos and documents
- I will follow the Seesaw blogging general guidelines
- I will bring my device to school every day fully charged, and keep it in its case at all times
- I will only use my device to support my school learning program

Online Learning

- I will only join video conference meetings scheduled by my class teachers
- I will not attend any video conference without having a teacher present

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- I will not take a Screenshot or Screen record of anyone during a video conference
 - I will ask the teacher's permission first if I need to record a video conference
 - I will use my teacher's or the Elementary Library recommended websites

General Blogging/Email Guidelines:

1. Think before you post. Ask yourself:

- *What is the purpose of my post?*
- *Do I want everyone to see it?*

2. Use appropriate language and proper grammar and spelling. Ask yourself:

- *Is this inappropriate?*
- *Does it have a title or explanation?*
- *Do I have spelling or grammar errors?*

3. Treat other people the way you want to be treated. Ask yourself:

- *Would I want someone to say this to me?*

4. Any time you use media from another source, make sure to cite the creator of the work

5. As a blogger, you will be commenting on other students' work. Good comments:

- are constructive, but not hurtful;
- consider the author and the purpose of the post;
- are always related to the content of the post;
- include personal connections to what the author wrote;
- answer a question, or add meaningful information to the content topic;
- follow the writing process. Comments are a published piece of writing.

I will inform my teacher or my parents if:

- I receive messages that are unpleasant or that make me feel uncomfortable in any way
- I find myself logged into an inappropriate website

No Expectation of Privacy

The school can and does monitor student internet access and activity, including but not limited to sites visited, content viewed, images saved, and emails sent and received. The school may examine a student's personal device and search its contents if there is a reason to believe that school policies, regulations, or guidelines regarding access to the network or use of the device have been violated.

Parental responsibility

It is expected that parents have the necessary parental controls and security settings on their child's device, as well as ensuring that none of the following is installed: non-educational games; social media applications; applications that have access to adult content. The school provides an educational email account to facilitate learning in the classroom. Parents should be responsible for any personal email account created by/for their child. Parents will monitor their child's use of the internet, online behavior, and social media

Consequences of Inappropriate Use

Students who misuse ABA's Google Applications, Seesaw or any other teacher recommended application will be subject to discipline which may include loss of access to their student's Google email account, or Seesaw and/or other appropriate disciplinary or legal action in accordance with ABA's Student Code of Conduct.

These agreements apply to devices used at school, on excursions, camps, or during extra-curricular activities. I understand that if I do not follow this agreement, I will lose my internet and E-mail access rights for a period of time or receive other consequences determined by my teacher and the ABA administration.

Financial Matters

Contact the Business Office for all financial matters - businessoffice@abaoman.org.