



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND



THE CURRICULUM CONUNDRUM: AMERICAN, INTERNATIONAL OR BRITISH?

For families, identifying the right school for their children ranks high among the most important decisions. Consistency of curriculum and familiarity with an education system may be paramount for some and we have put together a few practical considerations to guide you as you explore what type of education is best for your child.

AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN GREATER LONDON

A truly international school is not defined by the number of nationalities or languages represented in its community, but rather by the way it encourages students to become internationally minded by giving them opportunities to explore and understand global cultures, attitudes, and values.

- A number of American and international schools are located in London and the surrounding counties.
- Some offer more than one curricular choice, e.g., the American system and the International Baccalaureate (IB). Exploring the curriculum will help to determine which might best suit a family's needs and a student's learning style.
- For older students, it is much easier to transfer from a British curriculum to an American or International one due to extensive course work and preparation required for GCSEs or A-levels (standardized examinations) in the British system.



THE BRITISH SYSTEM

Americans who consider enrolling their children in British schools may be surprised by a number of factors.

- Fee-paying independent senior (i.e., high) schools are often called public schools or colleges.
- The top independent (private) schools have a well-deserved reputation for excellence, however many require registration years before a student's start date, entrance exams are common, and limited attrition means there are few places available.
- It can also be difficult to secure places at desirable state schools and academies (funded by the local authority or central government, respectively) which may have long waiting lists.
- Usually families must have an address within the school's catchment area before applying and availability of places is not guaranteed.
- In London demand is fierce for the most popular schools; a recent survey found a third of pupils did not get into their first-choice secondary school.

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- In England, year groups are strictly based on the student's age on September 1. Children start formal school with structured learning in the term in which they turn five and, by age six, are expected to be able to read and to know math facts. There is a common misconception that, as a result, American/international schools lag behind UK schools in math and literacy, but the evidence shows otherwise.
- High school students often have difficulty transferring into the British system at age 15 or 17, which is mid-way through the two-year programs of extensive course work and preparation for GCSEs or A-levels (standardized examinations).
- A-levels are academically renowned, but have less global emphasis than the IB Diploma Programme and could potentially encourage students to specialize too early by limiting them to as few as three subjects.

“The variation between individual students is greater than that between the two systems, so the key is to ensure that the school provides appropriate support for students at both ends of the spectrum.”

Choosing the right pathway can be difficult and confusing, but one thing is certain: a relocation abroad gives your children an unparalleled opportunity to develop international mindedness, an attribute that will serve them well in the complex and interconnected world of their future.



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TASIS The American School in England offers a challenging American curriculum with Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme to day (ages 3-18) and boarding (ages 13-18) students. On its beautiful Surrey campus, students from more than 50 nations are emboldened to flourish as principled, open-minded, and compassionate members of a global community.

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