

The American School in London

Curriculum Policy

The current version of any policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is the version held on the ASL website. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are following the most up-to-date version.

Responsible person	Office of teaching and learning
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Approval date	October 2023
Next review date	October 2025

Overview

The American School in London (ASL) is an independent, college-preparatory, Kindergarten-Grade 12 day school dedicated to the intellectual and personal development of every student in its care.

The mission of ASL is “to empower each student to thrive as a lifelong learner and courageous global citizen by fostering intellect, creativity, inclusivity and character.” The school’s mission and core values—respect, responsibility, kindness, integrity, and the courage to act—guide the academic and personal development of each

student and serve as guideposts for our academic curriculum and co-curricular programs. The ASL Portrait of a Learner combines the core values with the academic and personal aspirations and attributes we seek to develop in each student: thinker, explorer, collaborator, innovator, communicator, and understanding of well-being. The focus on global and intercultural competency in our program prepares students for life in a global society and reflects the school's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The ASL curriculum:

- Provides a broad and balanced education for all students that is coherently planned, sequenced and aligned to American and international content standards for English, mathematics, social studies, science, world languages, technology and media literacy, physical education, and visual and performing arts.
- Develops intellectual and personal engagement for students through critical thinking, experiential learning, curiosity, collaboration, innovation and breadth of opportunity.
- Enables students to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills to be able to apply their learning in novel and relevant situations or to teach what they have learned to others.
- Provides the challenge, inspiration and engagement that nurture “lifelong learners.”
- Promotes confidence, self-advocacy and well-being.
- Equips students with the global and intercultural competency skills that they need to work and engage across lines of difference and become “courageous global citizens.”
- Ensures access to learning for all students, with high expectations for every student and appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- Embeds fundamental British values in curriculum and classroom interactions: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and the mutual respect and tolerance for those who hold differing faiths and beliefs.
- Introduces students to multiple points of view so they will develop their own opinions about issues, share their beliefs and views respectfully with others and embrace the courage to act.
- Supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students through multiple curricular and co-curricular programs and opportunities for all students.
- Provides relationships, health and sex education as well as programming for students' physical development to embed responsibility for their own physical, social and emotional health.
- Seeks to provide an outstanding educational experience, conducted in a vibrant, international community.

- Prepares students for the next stage in their education as well as future careers and employment.

Currently, the ASL Academic Leadership Team (ALT) is led by the director of teaching and learning and comprises the head of school, divisional principals and assistant principals, the director of diversity and inclusion, the director of technology and library services, and the director of student support services. ALT works collaboratively with middle-level curricular leaders to direct the overall pedagogy and effective implementation of the curriculum at the School, including the professional development required for faculty learning and collaboration.

Lower school curriculum, Grades K-4

In Kindergarten through Grade 4, students' learning is scaffolded to match the developmental needs of the students. Inquiry-based learning is used to nurture individual interest and guide continued growth. Children learn by doing, practicing previously learned skills and acquiring new ones. Students learn to take risks and explore their world through concrete experiences. Field trips and field studies, including regular trips to the school's environmental learning center at Canons Park, enhance the learning experiences of lower school students. Teachers encourage the development of learning dispositions such as working independently, participating actively in class, communicating with confidence and demonstrating self-motivation. They endeavor to stimulate every child's interest, curiosity and creativity, to challenge each student to fulfill their potential, and to promote a true love of learning.

The lower school curriculum includes the following courses based on grade-level research-based and rigorous content standards: literacy, mathematics, science, environmental education and social studies, further enriched by specialized instruction in music, physical education, art, technology and media literacy, health and Spanish. All students participate in the Responsive Classroom program, which provides social-emotional support and community-building activities for all students.

Middle school curriculum, Grades 5-8

The middle school program, Grades 5-8, is designed to nurture the intellectual, ethical, social, emotional and physical development of young people during their transition from childhood to adolescence. During middle school, students experience a dramatic shift in their cognitive abilities as they move from a concrete mode of thought to a more abstract level of thinking. To foster this growth, the curriculum is structured to guide students in making connections and seeing relationships among subject areas and with the world beyond the classroom. The

development of student voice is a priority. Instruction in critical thinking and study skills is integrated into curricular units and projects.

Teachers for Grades 5-8 educate students to develop their skills as independent learners to acquire a range of thinking skills: comprehension, interpretation, extrapolation and synthesis. Students take required coursework in English, science, mathematics, social studies, world languages and cultures, music, drama, art, physical education, health, technology and media literacy, along with a panoply of enriching elective offerings. Experiential programs in outdoor education and curriculum-based field trips enhance classroom instruction and build personal skills of independence, resilience and self-confidence. All students participate in the advisory program, which provides social-emotional support and community-building activities. Lunchtime clubs and after-school offerings provide opportunities for students to pursue additional interests.

High school curriculum, Grades 9-12

The high school curriculum provides students with a comprehensive and rigorous secondary education that includes English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages and cultures, computer science and engineering design, technology and media literacy, performing and visual arts, health and physical education, and experiential education. The high school curriculum prepares students for success at the university level and for non-university paths.

Graduation requirements: 4 years of English; 3 years of social studies and a world language; 2 years of math, science and art; also semester requirements in technology and health/PE. Multiple elective courses in all subject areas are available beyond the required coursework to qualify for graduation status and for the purpose of extended study.

ASL's College Board's Advanced Placement program offers students the opportunity to take college-equivalent courses during high school, which may result in earning credit or advanced standing once a student enters college. ASL offers Advanced Placement courses in Art History, Biology, Calculus AB and BC, Chemistry, Chinese Language, Computer Science A, Computer Science Principles, Environmental Science, European History, French Language, Human Geography, Macro- and Microeconomics, Music Theory, Physics 1, 2 and C, Psychology, Spanish Language, Spanish Literature, Statistics, Studio Art, and US History. Independent research and advanced study is available to expand and enrich the academic experience for students in any disciplinary area.

Through a variety of programs, students develop their independence and pursue topics of interest. Students can choose from more than 160 options for work experience and internships, which create opportunities for students to learn about various professional career paths. Students also participate voluntarily in community partnerships that create connections with London and the local community. Alternatives and Music Tour are two programs in which students engage in authentic experiential learning involving travel opportunities in and around London, and in our broader environs in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe. Student leadership opportunities give students a platform for developing their voice and agency. All students participate in the advisory program, which provides pastoral care and support through the provision of social-emotional support and community-building activities. Students can choose among a number of clubs for leadership or participation opportunities.

View our [School Profile](#), which gives a full profile and description of the accomplishments of the Class of 2023, the most recent graduating class, as well as university results for the past three graduating classes.

View full description of our [academic programs](#).

All curriculum units are documented electronically in ATLAS. Curriculum maps include student outcomes, enduring understandings, essential questions, assessments, and reflections for improvement for each course.

View the ASL [Assessment Policy](#), which guides the responses of teachers to student work.

PSHE, including health education, and relationships and sex education (RSE)

- Health and well-being
 - Students study health and well-being topics K-12. In Lower School, health curriculum is delivered by counselors and covers topics that include conflict resolution, community and personal safety, emotional awareness, and making healthy choices.
 - [Responsive Classroom](#)
 - In Middle School, the health and well-being topics are taught in four thematic units: purpose (identifying individual goals) and planning; health promotion and safety; emotional health and well-being; ecology of health, community and engagement; and RSE. The advisory program curriculum is designed to establish classroom norms, build intra and interpersonal

emotional awareness, assist self-regulation, promote empathy and perspective taking, and restore communities after conflict.

- [RULER program](#)
- In High School, health and well-being topics are taught in required health courses in Grades 9-10. Advisory groups, organized by grade level, provide a place where students can:
 - reflect on their own experiences while learning about others;
 - work with their advisor to understand the consequences of their actions;
 - plan their high school journey;
 - process and reflect on the issues they encounter in and out of the classroom;
 - acquire life skills to help them succeed after high school.
 - [High school advisory program](#)
- Relationships health and sex education (RSE)
 - Relationships and health topics are included in K-Grade 4 curriculum and taught by lower school counselors.
 - RSE is included in Grades 5-10 and taught by middle and high school health teachers.
 - All relationships and health/sex topics follow UK statutory guidance.

ASL's Relationships and Sex Education Policy can be found on our policies page.

- Living in the Wider World
 - A K-12 program on community service and partnerships in London and beyond. K-Grade 4 students have class-organized service projects. Middle School has both all-class and individual service opportunities for students. In the High School, 87% of the Class of 2022 participated voluntarily in community partnerships.
 - Students participate in coursework and club activities that promote civic duty in terms of sustainability and environmentalism, publishing newspapers on school/national/international topics of interest, initiating philanthropic drives and reporting on current events.
 - Civic duty is promoted through elected positions and coursework: National Honor Society, middle and high school student leadership councils, middle and high school clubs, high school Student-Faculty Disciplinary Board, Community Action Council, Model United Nations competitions, and coursework such as Human Rights Seminar.

- The School emphasizes and speaks regularly about the ASL's core values in assemblies and small group meetings: respect, responsibility, kindness, integrity, and the courage to act, with the expectation that students will be equipped with the skills and dispositions to contribute thoughtfully to the future before them.

Learning support/SEND

View full information about ASL's [student support services](#).

The School offers learning support to the full continuum of students in the program. Students with identified mild to moderate learning differences may be granted accommodations or specific programming and learning interventions that a student may need. (Approximately 110 students are in the Specific Learning Differences (SLD) program.) The School provides 12 learning support teachers, two educational psychologists, three speech and language therapists and a lower school reading specialist to support children with learning differences in help students to access the curriculum, fully engage in classroom learning and fulfill their potential. Students in our learning support program perform successfully and regularly matriculate at highly competitive universities. (This data is available in the office of student advising.)

Careers education and guidance

Through “family shares” in the Lower School and a variety of speakers and programs in Middle School, students are exposed to a variety of career paths.

The office of student advising (OSA) in the High School provides several programs that support education for various career paths for ASL students. Bespoke guidance supports the needs, interests and aspirations of each student. Grade-level deans and university advisors provide this support, which is developmentally appropriate and encourages student agency. The primary vehicle for the program is the WorkX program, which provides more than 160 opportunities for high school students to experience various career opportunities. Skills obtained include resume preparation and interview skills in addition to the actual work experience.

View full information about [career education and guidance in the High School](#).

Related policies and documents

Policies available publicly:

- American and international curriculum content standards:

- [Common Core State Standards for English](#),
- [Common Core State Standards for Mathematics](#),
- [AERO Social Studies Standards](#),
- [Next Generation Science Standards](#),
- [CSTA Computer Science Standards](#),
- [National Core Arts Standards](#),
- [SHAPE Standards](#),
- [ACTFL World Languages](#)
- ASL Teaching and Learning Handbook
- [ASL Portrait of a Learner](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- Behavior policies:
 - [Lower School](#)
 - [Middle School](#)
 - [High School](#)
- [Specific Learning Differences](#)
- Responsible Use Agreements
 - [Lower School](#)
 - [Middle School](#)
 - [High School](#)
 - [Employees and personnel](#)
- [Relationships and Sex Education](#)

Documents available to faculty:

- All policies related to academic matters, including but not limited to assessment, homework, grading, reporting, academic honesty, testing
- Schedules delineating the number of lessons taught per cycle and number of classes for every subject for each grade
- ASL Teaching Standards, Professional Code of Conduct, Safe Working Practices and Professional Growth Cycle

Roles and responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of the Curriculum Policy and hold the head of school responsible for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- the governing body fulfills the expectations of leadership to work in partnership with the senior leaders of the School to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum.
- a robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- the School is teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum," which develops subject-specific knowledge and skills and includes English, math, science, social studies, world languages and cultures, technology and media literacy, performing and visual arts, relationships and health/sex education, and monitors the results achieved in terms of student growth.
- proper provision is made for students with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs: Specific Learning Differences (SLD) or mental health challenges.
- the governing body reviews the Curriculum Policy on a regular basis.

The Head of School

The head of school will align the curriculum to the philosophy and pedagogy that supports the mission and values of the School and will ensure the implementation of the curriculum as described in the Curriculum Policy.

The head of school will also ensure that:

- all required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects that the School chooses to offer, have outcomes that reflect and fulfill the mission and values of the School and indicate how the needs of individual students will be met.
- all academic leaders in the School—principals, assistant principals, the director and assistant director of teaching and learning, department and team leaders—will implement curriculum in accordance with this policy.
- a robust framework is clear and established for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- the amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate.
- the school's procedures for assessment are effective and clearly communicated.
- the school's commitment to its core values as well as global and intercultural competency is implemented effectively.
- proper accommodations are in place for students with different abilities and needs, including children with mental health needs.
- faculty, student and parent feedback on the Curriculum Policy will be taken into consideration in the assessment of the curriculum.
- the governing board is advised on all-school educational objectives in order to support the School.

- the Curriculum Policy is shared, reviewed and approved on a regular basis with the governing body.

Summary

ASL leadership uses the following foundational principles and goals to determine the curriculum offered by the School:

- **Academic excellence:** To provide engaging and challenging academic programming for each student; to provide the highest quality teaching to inspire the intellectual and creative growth of each student; to set learning goals that reflect appropriate challenges for each student; to ensure that students are successful and confident.
- **Performance view of understanding:** To engage students in strategies that define “understanding” as the ability to apply knowledge in a novel situation or to teach knowledge to someone else; to stimulate students to be responsive and responsible for their own learning and to establish a love of learning; to encourage initiative and independence as well as metacognition and reflection about their own process of learning.
- **Learning principles:** To embed research-based practices for an optimum learning environment in the program. These practices are: to connect new knowledge to the core ideas of a discipline; to construct new understanding by activating prior knowledge and experiences; to reflect and apply metacognitive skills; to collaborate, discuss and share their learning; to be motivated; to make a connection with their teacher and feel supported in the learning environment; to have ownership of their learning; to have meaningful opportunities to practice their learning; to receive timely and goal-directed feedback; and to have opportunities to move, play and explore to connect mind and body.
- **Well-rounded curriculum:** To offer a wide range of subjects through the entire 14-year sequence of the program; to ensure both vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum as well as breadth and depth in each discipline to emphasize holistic programming; to offer opportunity, when possible, for student “voice and choice” to extend learning beyond the stated objectives of a subject by encouraging individual interests, including independent study; to encourage creativity through a panoply of offerings; to use current events to expand student understanding of established learning outcomes.
- **Global and intercultural competency:** To celebrate and engage with the cultural diversity in and beyond the school community; to learn to value the diversity of race, gender, nationality, religion, ability, socioeconomic status (among other similarities and differences) at the School and encourage intercultural dialogue; understand protected characteristics and their importance;

to deepen empathy and kindness in each student; to understand the importance of equity and inclusion to enlarge a student's concern for, and responsibility to, the wider community; to prepare students for their futures and to make the world a better place.

- **Effective assessment:** To respond in a timely fashion to student work; to use a variety of assessment strategies to reflect different learning styles; to consider which assessment strategies best reflect the learning outcomes desired; to guide students to deeper understanding of disciplinary knowledge and skills; to encourage reflection and depth of understanding.
- **Experiential learning:** From the school's inception, the use of London as a "laboratory" to enhance the curriculum through field trips beginning as early as PreK and extending through Grade 12; to plan overnight trips designed to dovetail with curricular emphasis, also to build resilience and self-confidence for all students, starting in Grade 4; for middle and high school students, trips to a variety of UK field study sites, including Wales, to broaden and deepen curricular topics; weeklong high school trips, Alternatives and Music Tour; experiential trips for robotics, newspaper conferences, honors trips for musicians, Model United Nations conferences, peer advisers seminars, ecology and world languages trips, debate competitions, among other experiences for middle and high school students.