



MS ACADEMIC PROGRAM 2018-19



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

TASIS ENGLAND MISSION STATEMENT

TASIS England nurtures intellectual curiosity and emboldens each learner to flourish as a principled, open-minded, and compassionate member of a global community



The School's purpose is to realize its core values. We believe that: every learner has the gift of innate curiosity that we can nurture into life-long learning; all our learners can develop the ability and confidence to flourish and become who they truly are; and building a vibrant, joyful, and healthy community of principled, open-minded, and compassionate individuals is why TASIS exists.

Commitments

We realize our values through our passion as educators and the following commitments:

We promote multiple **pathways** for each learner throughout our school environment, our programs, and our community. Our commitment to nurturing intellectual curiosity prepares each learner for the opportunities and challenges of the future.

We encourage continuous personal growth through active **engagement** and a desire to seek and learn from experiences. Through a balance of support and challenge, students flourish as creative, reflective, and resilient owners of their learning.

We foster **connections** and collaboration in our community of learners by cultivating supportive relationships and celebrating the unique contributions of each member.

Outcomes

The outcomes of a TASIS England education were articulated over many decades through the vision of the School's charismatic founder, Mary Crist Fleming.

Life-long Learning cultivates curiosity, exploration, and discovery, emboldening individuals to embrace a culture of learning and celebrate the journey of continuous development toward personal fulfillment.

International-mindedness promotes the exploration, communication, and celebration of diversity. Being curious and open-minded to the richness of perspective within our global community creates a desire to flourish through action and service.

Service Leadership fosters empathetic, compassionate, and principled individuals who take responsibility for sustaining healthy relationships with themselves, their families, their communities, and their environment.

TASIS MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Table of Contents

General Academic Information	2
Academic Course Offerings Quick Reference	4
Fifth Grade Program of Studies	6
Core Academic Subjects, Grades 6-8	
English.....	8
History	9
Foreign Language	10
Mathematics.....	11
Science.....	13
Required Specialized Subjects, Grades 6-8	
Health/PSHEE.....	14
Physical Education	14
Art.....	15
Music.....	15
Drama.....	16
S.T.E.M.	17
Skills	17
Elective Courses, Grades 7-8.....	18
Support Services	20
Homework	22
Assessment	23
Academic Dishonesty	24
Faculty Advisors	24
Academic Concerns	25
Formal Complaints	25
Academic Monitoring.....	25

GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The School Day: The Academic Day runs from 8:15 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. except Wednesdays, which run from 9:10 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Middle School students have optional Sports and Activities until 5:05 p.m., usually on a Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday schedule.

Attendance: Regular attendance on a daily basis is required. Students may not miss a class, study hall, or sports obligation unless he or she has been excused by the School Nurse or the appropriate member of the School's administration. If your child is absent, please email msoffice@taissengland.org or phone 01932 582336 to let the Middle School know the reason. Even if your child is ill on consecutive days, the School must be informed each morning. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please contact the Middle School Office so your child may collect a Planned Absence Form. Please note, we are not able to grant excused absence for electively missing school. If your child needs to leave school during the day, he or she must sign out in the Middle School Office and then meet you in the car park. If requested, assignments can be collected from the appropriate teachers and held at the Middle School Office for collection at the end of the school day. Many assignments can also be accessed through the school's online learning management system.

Daily Schedule: Fifth Grade students operate in a self-contained classroom, changing classrooms only for specialized subjects, and in some cases, mathematics. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 follow a different schedule each day of the week, with six class periods each day, plus the Tutorial/Advisory period and Lunch/Recess. At the beginning of each semester, students in Grades 7 and 8 will receive a printed copy of their daily schedules, indicating when each class will meet. Students in Grade 6 receive their schedule at the beginning of the school year and their schedule remains the same throughout the year. Any changes to schedules must be made by the Head of the Middle School. Students and parents can view the schedule on the LMS, including classes for both semesters.

Each student takes five core academic subjects, which meet four times a week, along with required specialist courses in art, music, drama, and physical education, which meet twice weekly. The five academic requirements are English, (Reading in Fifth Grade), History, Foreign Language or Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. A Skills class is required for all 6th graders and meets once a week. Health/PSHEE is required for all 7th and 8th graders and meets twice per week for one semester. Details of the Academic Program of Studies begin on Page 8.

Participation in the after-school sports and activities program is optional, but once a student has enrolled in a sport or activity for a fall, winter, or spring term, his or her attendance is expected and absences should be reported in advance to shudgens@tasisengland.org.

The School Year and Reports to Parents: The school year is divided into two semesters, August to mid-January and January to June. Grade reports are available to parents four times a year. At each mid-semester point and at the end of each semester, parents receive grades, effort marks, and advisors' comments. In Grades 6-8, the grade books are open in the LMS on the student and parent portals to see on an ongoing basis.

Academic Progress and Homework: Students are expected to keep up with daily homework assignments. There are numerous opportunities for extra help from teachers, but final responsibility for completion of academic work on schedule rests with the student. Students excused from classes due to illness, field trips, sports tournaments, etc., are responsible for all assignments, tests, and quizzes missed and must make the work up in a reasonable time upon return to class. Students are always encouraged to seek guidance on studying and time management from their teachers, or their advisor. Please see the Homework section on Page 24 for expectations and time guidelines.

Student assignments, assessments, and grades are posted regularly (often daily) on the LMS (Learning Management System) on the class page for each course in which students are enrolled. Students and parents have access to the LMS through the student and parent portals in order to monitor homework and other assignments and check progress.

Grading: TASIS England employs a traditional A through F grading system, with the grade of A denoting Superior work, B Commendable, C Satisfactory, D Passing, and F Failure. To compute grade point averages (GPAs), the following numerical equivalents are assigned: A+=4.33 A=4.00, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.00, etc. No courses are weighted, and only core courses are used to compute GPAs. P.E. and elective course grading is slightly different.

Effort Marks: Effort marks are given in each subject for each quarter to indicate the teacher's estimate of the attitude, co-operation, and effort of the student, regardless of achievement. Effort marks are numerical, on a scale of one (outstanding) to five (unsatisfactory). The average mark, for students who meet basic standards and expectations, is a two.

Middle School Effort Indicators:

- Is attentive and engaged in classroom activities
- Brings appropriate materials and is on time to class
- Demonstrates a positive, proactive approach to coursework
- Exhibits an interest in the subject and may complete extra work independently
- Attempts to resolve difficulties by him/herself and seeks additional help from the teacher if needed
- Takes the initiative to make up missed work when absent
- Is a positive influence in the class, and helpful to peers and teacher
- Completes work/assignments thoroughly and on time
- Is willing to revise, reflect, persevere
- Follows instructions
- Complies with the MS Code of Conduct

Student exhibits the above behaviors with the following frequency

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Consistently | (85-100% of the time) | (Outstanding) |
| 2. Usually | (70-85% of the time) | (Good) |
| 3. Often | (50-70% of the time) | (Satisfactory) |
| 4. Infrequently | (30-50% of the time) | (Poor) |
| 5. Rarely | (less than 30% of the time) | (Unsatisfactory) |

Honors: Honors lists (Grades 6–8 only) are compiled at the end of each semester and are based on the five core academic semester grades. The lists are determined as follows: High Honors are awarded for outstanding academic achievement (A- average—3.67—and no effort mark below 3). Honors are awarded for highly commendable academic achievement (B+ average—3.33—and no effort mark below 3), or superior effort (1 and 2 effort marks only) in ALL classes.

TASIS ENGLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL 2018-2019

ACADEMIC COURSE OFFERINGS QUICK REFERENCE

<u>GRADE 5</u>		
<p>Required Core Academic Subjects, Year Long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Language Arts • Math • Science • History & Geography 	<p>Required Specialized Courses (2/week, year-long)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Music & Choir • Physical Education • Library (1/week) • Skills (1/week) (2/week, one semester) • Drama • Spanish • French 	<p>Elective Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL or Learning Support
<u>GRADE 6</u>		
<p>Required Core Academic Subjects, Year Long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • History & Geography • Science • Math • Foreign Language (French, Spanish, or English Language Arts) 	<p>Required Specialized Courses (2/week, year-long)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education • Art • Drama • Music (Choir/Band/General) • Skills, once per week 	<p>Elective Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL or Learning Support

GRADE 7

<p>Required Core Academic Subjects, Year Long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • British History • Science • Math • Foreign Language (French or Spanish) 	<p>Required Specialized Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education 2/week, year-long • Art 2/week, semester • Drama, Video Production, or Choreography & Dance 2/week, semester • Choir, Band, Strings 2/week, year-long/General Music, 2/week, semester • Health/PSHEE 2/week, semester • STEM 2/week, semester (unless taken in Grade 8; Creative Computing, Intro to Coding, MakerSpace & Design Thinking) 	<p>Elective Options*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearbook • Approaches to Learning • Debate • Current Events • Writing Mechanics Workshop • Ancient Greek Mythology • Creative Computing • Intro to Coding • MakerSpace & Design Thinking • EAL or Learning Support
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GRADE 8

<p>Required Core Academic Subjects, Year Long</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • American History • Science • Math • Foreign Language (French or Spanish) 	<p>Required Specialized Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Education 2/week, year-long • Art 2/week, semester • Drama, Video Production, or Choreography & Dance 2/week, semester • Choir, Band, Strings 2/week, year-long/General Music, 2/week, semester • Health/PSHEE 2/week, semester • STEM 2/week, semester (unless taken in Grade 7; Creative Computing, Intro to Coding, MakerSpace & Design Thinking) 	<p>Elective Options*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearbook • Latin • Approaches to Learning • Debate • Current Events • Writing Mechanics Workshop • Ancient Greek Mythology • Creative Computing • Intro to Coding • MakerSpace & Design Thinking • EAL or Learning Support
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*Subject to demand and availability
Denotes choice required

ACADEMIC PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Fifth Grade

The Fifth Grade curriculum focuses on teaching specific developmental skills within five core subjects: reading, language arts (which includes process writing, spelling, speaking and listening, and grammar), mathematics, science, and history/geography. Subjects are often taught in an integrated manner, for example, reading historical fiction that encompasses goals from both the reading and history curricula. The curriculum is delivered in self-contained classrooms with the exception of art, music, drama, PE, IT, and library skills.

The **reading** curriculum offers a full range of vocabulary, comprehension, study skills, listening, and speaking activities. Children read stories, poems, plays, folk tales, biographies, true-to-life narratives, and full-length novels. Our multiple-copies literature collection, the classroom library collections, and the school library collection are continuously maintained to encourage children to read about a broad spectrum of ethnic, social, and cultural situations and to help them understand the common humanity of the world community—past and present. Reading instruction is scheduled every day. Reading skills are strengthened and reinforced in all of the subject areas. Children are encouraged to read independently for their own enjoyment, in addition to daily home reading, book sharing, reading journals, and other book related projects.

To complement the reading curriculum, a full range of **written and spoken communication skills**, collectively described as language arts, are also taught. Spelling, composition, expressive writing, grammar, and handwriting have a prominent place in the weekly schedule (at least one period daily) with the use of *Scott Foresman's Everyday Spelling*, *D'Nealian Handwriting*, *Write Source*, and *Wordly Wise* as text resources. The basic skills learned in language arts are applied and practiced in other subject areas. (For example, the skills of outlining and note taking would be used in history lessons.) Speaking and listening skills are reinforced, largely through oral presentations in class and at regular assemblies.

The Fifth Grade places great emphasis on **process writing**. The children write every day, if possible, and share their pieces—in all drafts—with peers and their teacher. Selected works may be published and shared with classmates. Throughout this process, the focus is on the “child as author,” and writing development is steady. Mini lessons and editing work focus attention on grammar, spelling, and punctuation skills. There is carry-over into other subject areas as children progress in their writing throughout the year.

In the fifth grade, students continue to build on their **mathematics** foundation, including place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, decimals and fractions, percent, ratio, estimation, measurement, geometry, and graphing. Problem-solving is emphasized. Where possible, mathematics skills are reinforced and applied in other subject areas, particularly science. The students are placement tested and grouped, with some students receiving a faster paced program, and others given time to practice and consolidate their skills in a spiraling fashion, where concepts are reintroduced.

Science is taught in topics from three major areas: life science, earth science, and physical science. Hands-on opportunities in the laboratory are offered as often as possible. Experiments and projects are an essential part of the program as children learn to manipulate their natural environment. The health strand includes separate sessions on “Growing Up”.

History and Geography are content and project oriented, often using our advantageous position here in England to take field trips that enhance the curriculum, comprising topics in U.S. and world history and geography.

Instruction in **French and Spanish** (one semester of each) is introduced to assist the fifth grade students with making their choice of one of these languages to study in sixth or seventh grade. Lessons are taught by specialist teachers with an emphasis on verbal work. The objectives of this program are to develop an awareness of the language and its sounds, in addition to learning about the culture in French and Spanish speaking countries around the world.

Library skills classes teach students to locate, organize, and use information, and meet one period per week. Children are instructed in the use of the computerized catalog and check-out system, Internet sources, and research skills. Browsing is included during the class lesson time, but children can take out books and return them at any time. The open door policy of the Library encourages students and teachers to make the most of the facility.

Art classes meet twice a week. Students learn and apply art concepts such as abstraction, balance, line, form, pattern, shape, color, space, and texture through activities using clay, paint, wood, cloth, and metal. Our young artists display their work throughout the year at all-school functions.

Instrumental and vocal **music** is taught by a specialist teacher twice a week and such concepts as rhythm, balance, and volume are explored. Children begin to read music and learn part-singing and harmonization. Recitals, performances, and more informal assemblies are held regularly for children to demonstrate their developing skills and talents. Instrumental lessons are available if scheduling can be arranged during non-instructional time.

In the **physical education** program, the students are provided with opportunities to consolidate their earlier learning, to increase knowledge, experience, and creativity, and to gradually extend their abilities to tackle new and more complex tasks. The students are given the opportunity to develop the concepts of fair play, honest competition, and good sportsmanship and are encouraged to “manage” the spirit of competition (either within a team framework or as an individual) and to compete with themselves. Fifth grade students have two physical education classes per week.

The study of **drama** includes a variety of techniques to introduce students to concepts of drama, communication skills, and creative self-expression. Classes are held twice a week for one semester (January-June). The children work individually, in small groups or pairs, as well as whole class as they are introduced by the drama specialist to theater games, improvisations, role-play, mime, vocal exercises, and text. In drama, learning occurs through cooperation, interaction, and participation. By working on their own as well as within the group, students will have the opportunity to develop interpersonal communication skills and to begin to understand the performance skills necessary to present effective drama.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Core Academic Subjects, Grades 6–8

ENGLISH

ENGLISH, GRADE 6

In addition to developing an appreciation for different genres of literature, this course covers the following basic English skills of grammar, vocabulary development, writing, and oral expression.

The goals are to recognize, comprehend, and apply principles of language usage, and to raise the level of reading comprehension and literary analysis. Literature is studied and analyzed through class studies of core novels which offer variety and encourage cooperative learning.

Previously taught writing skills are reviewed and reinforced. New skills are introduced with regard to grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary development, sentence structure, paragraph and essay development, and research. Creative and expository writing are taught, and students practice the writing process as they learn more about creative writing and expository writing.

Work may be assessed on the basis of one or several of the following criteria: logical development, grammar, content, creativity, vocabulary, organization, and clarity.

TEXTS:

Membean.com (vocabulary)

The Giver (Lois Lowry)

I am Malala (Malala Yousafzai)

Other written resources include classic and modern short stories and poetry, the TISIS libraries, and the Internet.

LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADE 6

This course is for students who need to continue developing their reading and writing skills in English before starting to study a foreign language. Course content includes reading comprehension, writing skills, grammar, spelling, and mechanics. In addition to two Language Arts lessons per week, two lesson periods are reserved for structured homework help.

Language Arts is taken in addition to English and takes the place of a foreign language. Selection of this course is made in consultation with parents and teachers and must be approved by the Head of Middle School.

ENGLISH, GRADE 7

Seventh grade English deepens the student's awareness of, appreciation for, and understanding of literature and strengthens the basic skills of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, oral expression, listening, and writing. Where possible, skills are developed through the literature, and a variety of techniques are used to foster individual comprehension, curiosity, critical thinking, imagination, sensitivity, cooperation, responsibility, and confidence.

Course content includes: reading (the study of novels, poetry, and plays); writing (creative writing, essay writing, book reports); grammar (including basic parts of speech and usage taken from student generated work and errors whenever possible); vocabulary (from literature and day-to-day work and Membean.); speaking experience (through presentations, reading, drama, and discussion); listening skills (through our day-to-day interaction and peer conversation); and finally, study skills (through the formal evaluation process).

TEXTS:

Membean.com (vocabulary)

A selection of novels, plays, poems, and short stories such as:

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Beowulf

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Mark Twain)

Twelfth Night (William Shakespeare)

Boy (Roald Dahl)

The Sword in the Stone (T. H. White)

Students choose novels for independent reading and maintain a reading journal. Other written resources include writing books, poetry books, the TASIS libraries, and the Internet.

ENGLISH, GRADE 8

The eighth grade English course is designed to further students' appreciation of different genres of literature (novels, plays, poetry) and a variety of writing domains, in addition to mastery of, and practice in the basic skills of grammar, spelling, and acquiring vocabulary. Particular time and attention is paid to the craft of writing and composition (essay, analytical, creative, research, oratory), preparing students for Upper School and formal writing requirements. The students create a diverse writing portfolio and assess their writing based on a 6-trait analytical rubric.

Course content, activities, and literature are chosen to engage and appropriately challenge the reader. Emphasis is placed on the drafting of writing, spelling, grammar, research, critical thinking, effective oral interaction, and general study habits. Vocabulary words are taught on a weekly basis through literature, etymological background, word relationships, and practical application in the context of students' own writing.

TEXTS:

Membean.com (vocabulary)

A selection of novels, plays and poetry including:

To Kill a Mockingbird (Harper Lee)

Romeo and Juliet (William Shakespeare)

Sonnets, English and Italian

Students also choose from a variety of contemporary novels for independent reading and book talks.

HISTORY

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY, GRADE 6: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Sixth grade Ancient Civilizations charts the rise and development of ancient societies. Using a variety of methods, sources, and techniques, students examine the importance of mankind's struggle to develop civilization. These aspects include the arts, science, and architecture, and the various social structures that make up our definition of civilization. An understanding of the geography of the ancient world is also a major component of the course. By studying history from the dawn of civilization to the fall of Rome, students gain insights into the many concepts that shaped the past and still influence our world today.

TEXT: *World History—Ancient Civilizations* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2008)

HISTORY, GRADE 7: BRITISH HISTORY

The aim of the seventh grade British History course is to inspire students to think actively about history while enhancing their appreciation of their surroundings here in the United Kingdom. The course begins with the origins of Britain in Prehistoric times and traces how each region developed politically, religiously, and socially. Students are exposed to a wide range of material, including primary sources, illustrations, maps, works of art and architecture, and Internet sites. Research, presentation, and technological skills reinforce the curriculum. Students gain additional knowledge and understanding of the topics from their experiences on field trips. Assessment is achieved through both traditional and alternative means throughout the year.

TEXT: *The Young Oxford History of Britain and Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 1998)

HISTORY, GRADE 8: AMERICAN HISTORY

Using both chronological and thematic approaches, the eighth grade American History course covers the story of America from pre-history to modern times. Major events, topics, and individuals are discussed in order to see how America has dealt with its problems and forged one nation from the many disparate groups that make up its population. American government is examined, with special emphasis placed on the study of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. A variety of skills are taught, including work in primary sources, geography, essay and creative writing, researching, note-taking, cause and effect relationships, chronology, and use of technology for presentations.

TEXTS: *Discovering Our Past* (McGraw-Hill, 2013); supplemented by a wide variety of historical readings.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

For the global village in which we live, the study of a foreign language is a very powerful tool which allows individuals to communicate with other cultures and communities as well as fostering empathy and respect for another country and its peoples.

Primarily using the direct method (immersion) approach, the emphasis is placed on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as the acquisition of an extensive range of applied grammar and vocabulary. Cross-cultural understanding is fostered and real-life applications are emphasized throughout the courses.

The Middle School foreign language program is designed to meet the varied and wide-ranging needs of the student body. Each student is placed according to ability level and prior experience in the study of a foreign language. Students continuing at TESIS follow the natural progression of courses upon the successful completion of each individual course.

FRENCH: BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED

The main goal of the French course is to enable students to acquire proficiency in French through a linguistic, communicative, and cultural approach to language learning. The target language is used almost exclusively in the instruction and communication inside the classroom.

Emphasis is placed on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Cross-cultural understanding is fostered and different methods and techniques are used in order to facilitate and develop the learning process for each student.

The program is composed of three levels: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. As resources, we use the texts in addition to a variety of other materials including games, films, songs, books, computer programs, and the LMS (a secure online Virtual Learning Environment).

TEXTS:

Beginning French: *Discovering French Bleu-Part I* (D.C. Heath), *Panorama 1, Etoiles*

Intermediate French: *Discovering French Bleu-Part II* (D.C. Heath) *Panorama 2, Viens Voir*

Advanced French: *Discovering French Blanc* (D.C. Heath) *Viens Voir*

SPANISH: BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE, ADVANCED

The Spanish Program is designed to present and cultivate the necessary elements of the language to provide students with a solid background in the language. The target language is used almost exclusively in the instruction and communication in the classroom. All four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are emphasized equally and developed simultaneously. A variety of techniques are employed to facilitate the learning process of each student. With continuous guidance and support, the students are able to develop the necessary language skills for future foreign language study.

The program is composed of three levels: Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. Students learn an extraordinary amount of vocabulary associated with school, family, environment, pastimes, social/political issues, and advertising. The basic grammatical concepts, regular/irregular verb conjugations, and basic tenses (present tense to subjunctive) are presented. Frequent video programs, films, podcasts, games, websites, weekly cultural texts, and cultural projects support the cultural component of the program.

TEXTS:

Beginning Spanish: *¿Cómo te va? A nivel verde* (Glencoe), *Gente Joven 1* (Difusión)

Intermediate Spanish: *¿Cómo te va? B nivel azul* (Glencoe), *Gente Joven 2* (Difusión)

Advanced Spanish: *Avancemos 2* (Holt McDougal)

LANGUAGE ARTS, GRADE 6

This course is for students who need to continue developing their reading and writing skills in English before starting to study a foreign language. Course content includes reading comprehension, writing skills, grammar, spelling, and mechanics. In addition to two Language Arts lessons per week, two lesson periods are reserved for structured homework help.

Language Arts is taken in addition to English and takes the place of a foreign language. Selection of this course is made in consultation with parents and teachers and must be approved by the Head of Middle School.

MATHEMATICS

Students are placed in an appropriate level math course based on the results of math placement testing, standardized math test scores (ERBs), recommendations of students' previous math teachers, and/or records presented to us from previous schools.

Mathematics contains many skills which are strengthened and built up during each successive year. These basic skills include addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. Measurement and geometry are also reviewed annually, and become more sophisticated with the inclusion of more advanced computation and related activities. Students are introduced to functions and algebraic expressions from the sixth grade. "Mental math" problems are presented often to increase students' powers of abstract numerical thought and calculation. Word problems are used to develop computational skills, critical thinking in practical situations, and students' self-confidence.

As the switch to the SI (International System) or Metric System is not yet universal, the customary units of inches, cups, pounds, etc. are also taught. American money is presented too, as a working knowledge of the units of currency is assumed in terms of all our standardized testing.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards are incorporated in the materials, the philosophy, and the methodology of the middle school math courses.

The Math Department makes use of all technologies available to us. Calculator usage is integrated into lessons where appropriate. The use of specialized software provides a valuable resource for instruction.

MATHEMATICS, 6

In Math 6, students are instructed in a broad range of topics in order to establish a solid foundation upon which future mathematical knowledge will build. Instruction is delivered using a variety of methods. Some content is presented with the goal of introducing the students to a particular concept or skill, while other material is to be mastered. Skills to be mastered include: adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing whole numbers, fractions, mixed numbers, and decimals; identifying least common multiples and greatest common factors; estimating products and quotients; evaluating expressions containing variables and exponents; calculating perimeter, area, and volume; measuring length, mass, and volume in both U.S. customary units and metric units; creating and interpreting graphs, classifying angles and polygons; and writing and solving equations. Learning is assessed through daily homework, class activities, quizzes, and tests.

TEXT: *Mathematics, Grade 6*, by Bennett, Burger, Chard, et al (McDougal, 2012)

MATHEMATICS, 7

Math 7 is an intermediate middle school math course building logically and progressively from the sixth-grade course material. Students are instructed in a broad range of topics in order to establish a solid foundation upon which future mathematical knowledge will build. Instruction is delivered using a variety of methods guided by current research and best practice in early adolescent education. Mathematical concepts from the sixth-grade course are reinforced. The incorporation of more abstract concepts differentiates this course from the sixth-grade class and all concepts are studied in greater depth. Having practiced multiple problem-solving strategies, students are expected to become proficient in choosing the most expeditious method. Learning is assessed through daily homework, class activities, quizzes, and tests.

TEXT: *Middle School Math, Course 2* by Larson, Boswell, Kanold, Stiff (McDougal Littell, 2004)

PRE-ALGEBRA

This is a broad-based course that comprehensively covers various aspects of mathematics and emphasizes day-to-day applications. The primary focus is on developing and refining computational skills while reviewing arithmetic, as well as on extending algebraic and geometric concepts and applications. Developing logical and analytical thought is stressed throughout the course, as are applications to real-life mathematics problems.

The course reviews basic arithmetic skills to fully equip students with the skills and knowledge they will need for the formal study of algebra and geometry. Topics include solving simple equations and multi-step equations, graphs and statistical data, computation, integers and fractions, ratios, proportion and percent, geometry (including formulas for perimeters, areas, and volumes), inequalities, word problem solving, probability, basic trigonometry, and graphing in two variables on a coordinate plane.

TEXT: *Pre-Algebra*, by Larson, Boswell, Kanold, Stiff (McDougal Littell, 2004)

ALGEBRA I

Algebra I is an upper school course that is offered to students who have demonstrated good knowledge of the material covered in the seventh grade mathematics and Pre-Algebra courses, as well as by previous strong mathematics performance. The course covers all topics that would be found in a high school Algebra I course.

After a brief period of intensive review, students begin the core work of the course: linear equations and inequalities, exponents, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, exponential functions, data analysis and probability.

The course is designed to prepare students for the upper school courses in Geometry and Algebra II.

TEXT: *Algebra 1*, by Burger, Chard, et al. (Holt McDougal, 2012)

GEOMETRY

Geometry is an Upper School course. It is offered to those students who have continued to excel in mathematics and have done well the previous year in Algebra I. The course provides a thorough foundation in plane Euclidean geometry with emphasis on the formal nature of definition, the structure of knowledge, and inductive and deductive reasoning. Topics of study include parallel lines and planes, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, inequalities, similar polygons, transformations, circles, right triangles and trigonometry, planar and space measurements, and coordinate geometry.

TEXT: *Geometry* by Burger, Chard, et al (Holt McDougal, 2015)

Please note: High School credit will be granted for Algebra I and Geometry taken in the Middle School at TASIS. Students taking these courses will be granted advancement to take higher levels of mathematics in the TASIS Upper School.

SCIENCE

In all science courses, a major emphasis is on the introduction and application of the scientific process through laboratory investigation. This provides students with a rational, ordered way of thinking. By emphasizing scientific literacy and problem-solving, students develop a sound basis for further scientific inquiry.

SCIENCE, GRADE 6

The sixth grade course surveys earth science and its relationship to the physical and life sciences. Students are given the opportunity to develop practical skills such as observing, identifying, describing, comparing, classifying, stating a conclusion, inferring, constructing models, and measuring. They are urged to ask what, how, and why questions that lead to and reinforce critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Units of study include: The Nature of Matter, Energy Transfer and Resources, Astronomy, Plate Tectonics, and Oceanography.

TEXT: Delta Science Readers

SCIENCE, GRADE 7

The seventh grade course surveys topics from physical and life sciences to show their interrelation. Students utilize their developing practical skills to analyze qualitative and quantitative data effectively. They construct and demonstrate their understanding of natural phenomena by practicing technical writing skills through formal laboratory reports and research projects. Units of study include: Atomic Structure and the Elements, Chemical Bonds and Reactions, Chemistry of Life, Cell Structure and Function, Cell Division, Genetics, and Evolution by Natural Selection.

TEXT: *Science Dimensions* (HMH, 2018)

SCIENCE, GRADE 8

The eighth grade course surveys topics from physical science. Students further develop their practical skills in measurement and problem-solving, with a focus on error and uncertainty. They evaluate data and do further research to substantiate and communicate their conclusions through class presentations and formal laboratory reports. Units of study include: Density, Forces, Motion, Machines, Electricity and Magnetism, Sound Waves, and the Electromagnetic Spectrum.

TEXT: *Pending*

ACADEMIC PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Required Specialized Subjects, Grades 6–8

All students must take physical education for the entire year, plus at least one course each from the Art, Music, and Drama areas. Sixth graders must complete a Skills course. Seventh and eighth graders must take a semester Health class and must complete at least one STEM course in either seventh or eighth grade.

HEALTH / PSHEE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)

HEALTH/PSHEE, GRADES 7 & 8

The 7th and 8th grade PSHEE/Health Courses introduce students to the major themes in health education and how they affect physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Throughout the curriculum, it is stressed that all the areas of health are related and equally important.

SEVENTH GRADE UNITS OF STUDY

1. What is health? The purpose of Health Education
2. Personal Identity
3. Self-esteem and Body Image
4. Hygiene and personal care
5. Nutrition—the fast food industry; obesity; the food pyramid; eating disorders and their impact on physiological systems
6. Drugs, legal and illegal
7. Social Media, Cyber safety and bullying, effects on relationships
8. Relationships: different types, including positive and negative
9. Establishing boundaries in relationships
10. Informed Decisions

Resources: PSHE Association (<https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/>)

EIGHTH GRADE UNITS OF STUDY

1. Healthy versus Unhealthy Relationships and Social Support Networks
2. Self Concept/Self-esteem
3. Self image and the media
4. Eating Behaviours
5. Alcohol and Drugs - legal and illegal usage
6. Making healthy decisions
7. Consent - how to give and receive consent
8. Male and Female Anatomy
9. Reproductive Health
10. Prejudice and Stereotypes
11. Personal Finance and Money skills - the value of money
12. Next chapter - moving away/moving to Upper School

Main Text: *The Teenage Body Book* by Kathleen McCoy, Ph.D (Berkley)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PE, GRADES 6 - 8

The aim of the PE courses is to engender an understanding that sport is for all, regardless of age or ability. Underpinning this belief, all classes are co-educational, with the greatest emphasis placed on true sportsmanship, cooperation, and participation. The courses instill in students the confidence and desire necessary to enjoy recreational or competitive sports at any time of life. The well-balanced program includes individual and team sports, extended lever and ball sports, net and invasion games, body management, dance, and health-based fitness units. The Middle School curriculum is balanced to incorporate a variety of transferable skills for each sport. Students will participate in five units during the year and take part in a life support (First Aid) course. Students are evaluated and assessed as “achieving,” “exceeding,” or “progressing toward” a set of grade-specific expectations. The goal of education in the physical domain is to result in the individual student experiencing the satisfaction of performing an activity well, expressing oneself physically, and discovering a hidden talent.

ART

ART, GRADE 6

The sixth grade art course has been developed to give students a knowledge of the elements of Art and Design. Students are encouraged to be creative, imaginative and expressive through a series of investigative challenges and projects. Using both two and three dimensional materials, students are asked to develop new practical, and analytical skills as they progress through a rigorous year-long program of study. Students explore the role of the artist and the designer both throughout history, and in a variety of social and cultural contexts. Through regular critiques and class discussions, visual arts vocabulary is developed and encouraged with the aim of enriching each student's personal identity.

ART, GRADE 7

The Art and Design course for the seventh grade students has been designed to give each student a visual arts tool kit so they can be creative, expressive, and engaged as artists and designers. During the semester, all the students will produce studies experimenting with the use of both two and three dimensional materials as a means of communicating their ideas and designs for a series of challenges and projects. The students develop a final portfolio of work, consisting of drawings, paintings, sculptures and collages. Students are encouraged to develop an appreciation of their own work and the work of others, and expected to participate in all aspects of the creative process. With each assignment students will also be asked to explore new art ideas through the research of relevant historical, social, personal and cultural references.

ART, GRADE 8

The eighth grade Visual Arts course has been structured for the students to investigate the application of the elements and principles of Art and Design. During the semester, the students create a series of projects and assignments that have been designed to motivate, challenge and inspire the students to be creative, expressive, open and engaged. Through practice the students develop knowledge of working with materials in both two and three dimensions creating a final portfolio of drawings, paintings, collages, photographs and sculptures. Students are encouraged to develop an appreciation of their own work and the work of others, and participate in group critiques. With each assignment students will also be asked to explore new art ideas through the research of relevant historical, social, personal and cultural references.

MUSIC

All Middle School students take music each year. They may choose among performing groups (Choir, Band, and Strings) or General Music.

GENERAL MUSIC 6, 7, 8

The general music classes meet twice weekly throughout the semester, and focus on exposure to and appreciation for various musical forms and are designed as an alternative to the performing groups.

CHOIR 6, 7/8

Middle School Choirs meet two times weekly throughout the year, and are open to all Middle School students regardless of previous experience or ability. Choirs perform in concerts once each semester.

BAND 6, 7, 8

Middle School Bands meet twice weekly throughout the year, and are offered as elective courses. Band is open to all middle school students who have instrumental experience, at the discretion of the instructor. Beginners who wish to join the band will be encouraged to take private instrumental lessons until they have achieved a standard of playing suitable for the ensemble. Bands perform in concerts once each semester.

STRING ENSEMBLE

The string ensemble meets twice weekly throughout the year, and is open to all violin, viola, cello, and double bass players in Grades 7 and 8. The group performs in concerts once each semester. Students in Grades 5 and 6 with strong interest will be included in performances whenever scheduling permits.

INDIVIDUAL MUSIC LESSONS

These are offered to all grades as an extracurricular activity (at additional expense). Eighth grade students with serious interest may take lessons to fulfill their music requirement. Individual instruction is offered on piano, strings, guitar, flute, brass, saxophone, oboe, clarinet, percussion, and voice on a weekly basis. Please refer to the separate and more detailed form available from the Music Office for information on teachers and fees.

DRAMA

DRAMA 6, 7, and 8

The Middle School Drama Program is designed to explore the artistic self through active participation, creative involvement and reflection of performance based tasks. A variety of topics will be covered, encouraging each student to communicate confidently, take dramatic risks and to perform freely in front of an audience.

Sixth grade students take Drama 6 twice a week throughout the year. Seventh and Eighth grade students take Drama 7 or Drama 8, Choreography and Dance, or Video Production and Performance for one semester.

CHOREOGRAPHY AND DANCE (7th and 8th Grade)

Students study dance as a performing and expressive art examining modern and jazz dance primarily, as well as exploring processes for dance construction through improvisation and as an expression of a specific idea, feeling, or concept. Individual technique and footwork will be taught in this course, and therefore, some experience with these dance styles is preferred, although not a prerequisite. Innovative choreographers will be studied (e.g. Bob Fosse and Jerome Robbins) and their ideas understood through practical exploration. Students will utilize these various processes for dance construction in order to express and communicate meaning through informal or formal dance performance.

VIDEO PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE (7th and 8th Grade)

Students in this course will explore both sides of the camera in this video-based course. In terms of performance, students will gain a foundation in the skills and techniques employed in the intimacy of acting for the camera. They will learn how scripts and character development are different for on-camera acting (as opposed to stage acting). Production content will include scripting, storyboarding, camera shots and angles, recording, editing, and post-production. Each student will also be involved in a final group project bringing together production and performance elements.

S.T.E.M.

All Middle School students are required to take a minimum of one STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) course in **either** their 7th or 8th grade year.

INTRODUCTION TO CODING

Learn the basics of Web Development using HTML and JavaScript. Learn to create web pages and add interactivity to websites by validating form data, and adding animations and forms to pages. Discover how web standards work and how to use them. Students learn how to build a basic app and will be able to learn at their own pace, and work individually or as part of a group to complete projects. This process will develop analytical skills, encourage curiosity, and employ creativity find solutions to complete tasks.

CREATIVE COMPUTING

In this course, students transition from being consumers of technology to creators of technology. This course is designed to be fun, engaging, relevant, collaborative, and creative. Students will build their understanding of computing concepts and will apply their understanding through creative group projects in the Scratch or Snap! programming language, where they learn to make animations, music, drawings, and games. In this course, students also strengthen their problem solving and critical thinking skills.

MAKERSPACE and DESIGN THINKING

A hands-on course where students explore challenges using tools and technology (from glue guns to Arduinos) to investigate and implement creative solutions. Be prepared to make some seriously silly inventions and to learn how to bring out your inner creativity to solve problems along the way. Students engage with the design thinking process, creating prototypes generated by identifying the needs of the 'client' while working within the criteria and constraints presented by the challenge. The scope and length of each challenge will vary depending on the skill being developed. There will be plenty of opportunity to work independently and collaboratively throughout the semester; all skills levels with hand tools, electrical circuits, and Arduinos welcomed.

SKILLS

The Skills 6 course is designed to meet the needs of sixth grade students at a time when more complex research, organizational, and technical skills are required for academic success. Classes, which meet once a week throughout the year, are structured to provide support and to teach the skills associated with time management, library research, computer skills, and test taking. Reinforcement and assessment of skills are based on material from core classes, particularly English, History, and Science classes. In the Second Semester, a Health unit is also included in this course. All sixth grade students are assigned to this year-long course.

TEXT: *TASIS England Middle School Guide to Research*

ACADEMIC PROGRAM of STUDIES

Elective Courses, Grades 7–8

Students in Grades 7 and 8 have the opportunity to select one or two electives per year, depending on their other courses. Scheduling is based on student preference, enrollment, availability, and conflicts with other courses.

LATIN HONORS, 8

In the Middle School, an honors course is offered to eighth grade students who display high motivation and strong academic talents. The Latin course introduces students to fundamental Latin grammar and vocabulary, delineating etymology and derivatives which strengthen SAT vocabulary as well as offering a foundation in classical mythology, art, history, and culture. Through a lively and varied approach, the overall aim of the course is to demonstrate that Latin is still very much alive! This elective lasts the entire year, meets four times a week, and covers all of the requirements for the introductory level of the National Latin Exam, which is administered to the students in March. Both written and creative assignments will be given, as well as regular memorization and review. (Please note: This class meets during four periods a week and precludes the taking of two art/drama/music and elective courses each semester. Approval by the Head of the Middle School is required and only genuinely self-motivated students should apply.) TEXT: *Oxford Latin Course* (OUP)

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Approaches to Learning is taught by our Learning Resource Specialist two days a week during one of the elective blocks. The course has some of the same topics as the 6th grade skills class and focuses on these main areas of study: student organization, self-management, and specific study techniques. Using the class calendars, time-management, remembering information, reading and taking notes from textbooks, and effective classroom note-taking are all addressed. The students explore study techniques for test-taking and preparing for semester exams. Students also focus on developing their individual learning styles and look at how best to utilize their strengths. Students may be recommended to be enrolled in this class through faculty input and/or may elect to enroll in this class.

YEARBOOK

This class is open to students interested in photography, layout design, and journalistic writing. While the ultimate goal of the course is to produce the Middle School's annual yearbook, emphasis is placed on acquiring knowledge about conventional and digital photography, fluency in the use of an industry standard software program, and mastering the principal aspects of layout design used in the publishing industry. Common publishing terms will be learned, and journalism is practiced through reporting and writing stories on school events and organizations.

WRITING MECHANICS WORKSHOP

Students work on individualized writing tasks to strengthen areas of weakness or further develop areas of interest. Depending on the student, this can include practicing sentence structure and variety, paragraph or essay organization, grammar, punctuation, or research skills. through practice exercises, peer review, and class discussions. Classes are small and students receive customized instruction and coaching.

DEBATE

Students learn formal techniques for effective argumentation and advocacy, while simultaneously developing critical thinking and listening skills. Students also gain experience and confidence in public speaking. Debates vary from formal to informal and topics include a variety of current issues, ethical dilemmas, and historical events.

CURRENT EVENTS

Students will examine news on a wide range of topics from various sources and discuss the significance of events happening around the world. Credibility of sources and bias in stories will also be examined. Students have the opportunity to compare and contrast how various news organizations cover the same story and think about why some stories receive more news coverage than others. Students develop tools to distinguish between opinion and fact, between evidence-based statements and empty rhetoric, and between sensationalism and solid journalism. Students engage in news analysis through lively discussion and debate and also increase their knowledge of world geography by regularly identifying the location of news stories on a map.

ANCIENT GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Explore the cultural significance of the mythology of Ancient Greece. Learn the adventure and excitement-filled myths and legends surrounding this great civilization--from the Titans to the Olympians, the Twelve Labours of Heracles to The Trojan War. Discover how these stories shaped their society, including the arts, science, literature and drama, and how they eventually influenced our world today.

SUPPORT SERVICES

ENGLISH-AS-AN-ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

In the Middle School, EAL instruction is customized to meet the individual needs of each student as instruction is provided in a small group. With this sort of dedicated approach, the teacher is able to follow closely the curriculum in the mainstream classes of the students and tailor EAL support lessons accordingly. Additional instruction may be given in grammar and pronunciation as well as in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Task-based learning is the program model used by the Lower and Middle School EAL Support Specialist.

LEARNING SUPPORT

TASIS the American School in England has limited facilities for students with mild, specific learning difficulties, but will do all that is reasonable to comply with its moral and legal responsibilities, and work within the guidance provided in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

We aim to accommodate the needs of students who have mild, specific learning difficulties for which, with reasonable adjustments, the school can cater adequately. These students are capable of functioning in the academic mainstream, but require small group or individual attention, or specific learning accommodations.

The goal of the TASIS Learning Support Team is to provide the academic support students require in order to reach their potential. TASIS recognizes the importance of including students, parents, guardians, classroom teachers, learning support staff, and administrators in a collaborative process to deliver special services to students with mild, specific learning difficulties.

TASIS provides a range of support services from Lower School through Upper School. Areas of support offered include informal observations, academic support, classroom guidance, and individual counselling. The Learning Support Team also provides information about community-based providers.

TASIS does not offer a full continuum of special education programs. Admission is contingent upon a match between the student's and family's needs and the level of service available. For that reason, the admission of any student with mild, specific learning difficulties is determined on a case-by-case basis using multiple sources of information such as school records, evaluations, and interviews with students, parents, teachers, and program capacity.

It is important that parents of students who have received special services or who believe they may need support contact the Admissions office as soon as possible. Specific information relating to a child in need of learning support will be considered by the administrators and learning support staff who make determinations about admissions.

It is our hope that each and every one of our students will find success in their academic endeavors at TASIS; this program will assist in accomplishing that goal.

Mild, Specific Learning Difficulties Testing

TASIS has limited support and staffing for students with mild, specific learning difficulties. If particular academic problems encountered by a student, during the course of the year, suggest that he or she may have such difficulties, parents may wish to arrange for the student to be tested by an Educational Psychologist (in the UK called a Chartered Psychologist) as needed.

Parent Support: Parents who have concerns or questions about their child's academic needs or progress are encouraged to contact the school. Initially, parents should contact the classroom teacher directly. Following this, administrators are also available to meet with parents about academic concerns.

Middle School Learning Support

Our Learning Support Program provides structured learning support for students with mild, specific learning difficulties, and it is intended to assist those students identified as needing extra assistance with their schoolwork. The Learning Resource Specialist works with students, either individually or in a small group, one or two times a week, typically during a study hall, an elective period, or after school. In some cases, the foreign language requirement will be deferred to a later academic year in order to give the student the support he or she requires.

All students considered for the Learning Support Program must have educational diagnostic assessments that are current within 3 years.

At the beginning of the program, the Learning Resource Specialist will prepare a learning profile for the student, which will identify goals and strategies for instruction. The student's progress will be monitored on a regular basis, with parents kept informed throughout the school year. The Learning Support Program uses a variety of approaches to support the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics, and to help students learn appropriate study and organizational skills. The Learning Resource Specialist works closely with the students, classroom teachers, and the parents, as well as with our school counselor when necessary, to provide a coordinated, individualized program which includes the creation of a learning profile.

HOMWORK

Homework in the TASIS England Middle School is part of the instructional program. Assignments will vary in accordance to the needs of the grade/class and will relate to the curriculum. Homework assignments are intended to reinforce and extend learning initiated in the classroom and serve as a tool for teachers to assess student understanding. The routine completion of developmentally appropriate homework assignments can motivate students to develop good work habits, while increasing the opportunity for individual initiative and responsibility. Homework can also stimulate creativity and critical thinking, and the awareness that learning can take place outside of the classroom. The guidelines below indicate how students and parents (teachers and administrators have guidelines also) all have a responsibility for the success of homework. Homework will not be assigned during school holidays except for the expectation that students will read for English or for pleasure/interest. Occasionally holiday time can be used for completion of previously assigned long-term projects.

Students are responsible for:

- Understanding assignments clearly before leaving class—what their homework is and when it is due.
- Bringing home the proper materials to complete the assignments.
- Always doing their best work.
- Handing in completed assignments on time.
- Making a time plan for long-term assignments.
- Completing any work missed due to absence from class; time frame to be agreed with the teacher.
- Talking to the teacher and/or advisor if having difficulty with homework.

Parents should:

- Be familiar with the philosophy and guidelines of the homework policy.
- Provide a time and place to do homework assignments with limited interruptions.
- Check that your child understands the homework assignment.
- Actively supervise homework completion, particularly monitoring the use of the internet.
- Oversee completion of long-term assignments to assist in understanding time management.
- Contact the teacher with questions or concerns, especially if your child exceeds the allotted time frame.
- Parents should not complete homework for their child.

While it is understood that the time it takes to complete homework assignments may vary with each child, the times below are the general guidelines for each grade level. If your child is having difficulty on a consistent basis completing assignments within the time frames established, please contact your child's teacher for assistance. The amount of work brought home may be impacted by opportunities, if any, to complete assignments in school. Teachers will be aware of grade specific or school-wide evening commitments for students and adjust homework accordingly. Studying for quizzes/tests and work on long-term projects will be figured into the time guideline.

Homework Time Guidelines

Grade 5—No more than one hour in total. Students are encouraged to read each night for 15-20 minutes in addition to his/her homework, if time allows.

Grade 6—15-20 minutes of homework per course, per night, not to exceed one hour. 20 minutes of English reading will also often be assigned.

Grade 7—20 minutes of homework per course, per night, not to exceed one and one-half hours. 20 minutes of English reading will also often be assigned.

Grade 8–20-30 minutes of homework per course, per night, not to exceed two hours, including assigned reading.

If a student is experiencing difficulty, parents have the option of signing off at the upper time limit for a subject's daily homework, provided the student has worked diligently and has produced quality work.

Homework will be assigned five days per week maximum. Nightly homework would only be due the next day for a maximum of four subjects. Students will not always receive homework every day in every class.

Students taking advanced courses can expect to spend more time on homework. This would apply especially to eighth grade students taking Latin and seventh/eighth grade students taking Algebra I or Geometry, or Upper School courses.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment should be an **integral** part of planning, teaching and learning at TASIS. Teachers are encouraged to employ a wide variety of assessment, based on **clear** and **realistic** expectations. Assessment should not be a mystery to our students; instead, it should promote a shared learning culture. Measuring pupil performance, it should also provide **regular** and **meaningful** feedback. Assessment can be both formative and summative; it can be both informal and formal. It should use **appropriate** and **diverse** strategies to accommodate different learning styles.

Assessment should aim to:

- **monitor** progress and support learning; *it should identify what our students know, understand and can do; it should enable us to monitor consistently student progress.*
- **recognize** the achievement of pupils; *it should identify individual learning strengths and weaknesses; it should encourage progression in learning.*
- **guide** future planning, teaching and curriculum development; *it should promote a variety of teaching practice and strategies; it should assist lesson planning, informing a review of content and skills.*
- **encourage** self reflection; *it should provide students with opportunities to review their own learning; it should enable them to plan accordingly and develop goal setting for the future.*
- **inform** parents and the wider community of pupil achievement; *it should help communicate student achievement and progress to parents on a regular basis.*

Middle School Assessment Practices

Middle School teachers employ a variety of assessment strategies. Routine **formative** assessment (assessment which is part of the instruction and influences instruction) strategies take the form of:

- individual, small group and whole group discussion where anecdotal evidence of understanding is gathered and participation noted
- classroom observation during student work
- homework assignments as a means of gauging understanding
- self and peer evaluation
- laboratory experiments
- oral recitation (particularly in English and foreign language)
- graphic organizers such as active reading response charts, diagrams and study aids such as flash cards and learning webs
- binder-checks, journals, worksheets, or packets

Summative assessments are designed for students to be able to demonstrate mastery of skills and knowledge acquisition over the course of a unit of study or academic period. Summative assessments are not intended to be

exercises in fact memorization, but should reflect learning of skills, critical thinking, analysis, and understanding and synthesis of information. Summative assessments are to be listed on class page calendars, in advance, to ensure that these student assessments are spread out and manageable. (Tests must be posted at least 4 class periods in advance and quizzes 2 class periods.) The maximum number of summative assessments that Middle School students should be preparing for is two tests and a quiz in one day; one test and two quizzes; or three quizzes. ("Pop" quizzes are not acceptable as summative assessments.) Examples of summative assessments used regularly in the Middle School are:

- criterion referenced (graded quizzes, tests, or exams) of material learned*
- criterion referenced projects (i.e with rubrics) such as structures, PowerPoints, posters, displays, presentations, and films
- presentations and displays at end of instructional unit: musical, dramatic, visual arts, physical education, TESIS TV, newspaper, yearbook
- reports, essays, and other formal written summations

*Cumulative semester **tests** (one class period in length) are administered to sixth grade (optionally), and seventh and eighth grades at the end of the first semester. Semester **exams** (two hour block, with approximately 90 minutes of assessment) are administered only to students in Upper School level courses. At the end of the second semester it is as above, except eighth grade students have semester exams in all core courses in preparation for same in Upper School.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The School considers any incident of academic cheating or plagiarism as very serious. Copying another student's classwork or homework, cheating on a test, or turning in material claimed as one's own when taken from another source are examples. These actions are both dishonest and non-educative.

Cheating is defined as submitting for credit as one's own, someone else's work obtained either in or out of class; giving to or receiving from another student unauthorized assistance in the preparation of work for credit; using unauthorized materials in the preparation of work for credit.

Plagiarism is defined as submission of work copied directly from any source whatever that is not properly enclosed in quotation marks and acknowledged by footnote, bibliography, or reference in the paper itself. This includes re-arrangement of phrases and sentences from outside sources and "cutting and pasting" from digital resources. Unacknowledged paraphrasing and the mere restatement of an author's original idea are also considered to be plagiarism.

All matters concerning academic dishonesty will be referred to the Middle School Dean of Student Life and the Head of Middle School. Credit will be forfeited for the relevant work submitted, the parents will be contacted, and the student will be subject to further disciplinary action, including detention, in-school discipline day, fixed-term exclusion, and/or probation.

FACULTY ADVISORS

Every student in Grades 6–8 has a faculty advisor. The advisor is there to work with his/her advisees in all areas of school life—to monitor academic progress, to be a counselor, to listen, and to be a supporting advocate in disciplinary situations. The advisor will regularly be informed of the student's progress in all areas, and the advisor's written reports become part of the student record. Advisories meet formally as a group every Friday. During the tutorial periods held Monday – Thursday, students can seek help and/or work on homework. In the Fifth Grade, the student's classroom teacher is his or her assigned "advisor".

ACADEMIC CONCERNS

Student and parental academic concerns (poor achievement, questions about assessments, grading, or effort marks, workload, assessment conflicts, etc.) should be directed to the classroom teacher. Students should attempt to advocate for themselves and contact the teacher directly, through email or in person. Students can also ask for help from their advisor or the school counsellor if they are feeling overwhelmed or feel they need some help in interceding with a classroom teacher. Chronic or unresolved concerns can be escalated to the Head of Middle School, either by the student, advisor, or parent, but generally concerns should first be directed to the classroom teacher.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Concerns unresolved in the steps noted above can be escalated to the Head of School using the process outlined in the Complaints Policy, which can be found in the Policies section of the TASIS website.

ACADEMIC MONITORING

Students may be placed on Academic Monitoring at the discretion of the Head of Middle School in consultation with Middle School faculty and the Student Support Team if a student is making inadequate progress in one or more courses. During monitoring the student and his/her parents receive weekly feedback from the classroom teachers(s). The student may also receive additional support from the Learning Resource Centre, and his/her advisor in order to get back on track. A parent conference may be required to discuss additional interventions, including outside tutoring or other support services. Academic Monitoring is intended for short term interventions, generally for four weeks, and is intended as a constructive, rather than punitive measure. Students who are on Academic Monitoring may have their Reinvitation to the school deferred, pending the outcome of the monitoring period.



Middle School



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