



American Academy Junior School, Larnaca

Curriculum Policy

(See also Curriculum Guidelines and Expectations Policy)

'to grow and to serve'

The American Academy Junior School is situated in the rich culture and heritage of Cyprus and is an international learning community of renown. It will inspire young minds in the pursuit of excellence and success, ensuring that it meets the individual needs of its pupils. The American Academy Junior School will be based on the English NC, EYFS and KS 1 and 2 curriculums. It will enhance the educational opportunity of a local and international pupil population. A key aspect of the enriched curriculum will be the special emphasis placed on the teaching and learning of the Greek language, the promotion of national culture and identity to all pupils, high levels of EAL and SEN support and additional extra-curricular activities.

The curriculum is supplemented and enriched by additional programmes of study reflecting the very best in other programmes such as 'Working With Others'. This will provide for learning opportunities set in a global and local context. The school's aim is to be informed by best global practice through independent enquiry based learning.

The School believes that passion and inspiration drives successful learning. Pupil empowerment and inspirational teaching will see pupils increasingly aiming higher and achieving more. The link between passion and inspiration, empowerment and success in an environment that inspires pupils to achieve their best, is the driving force that underpins our mission.

There will be an appreciation for the heritage and culture of the Cyprus which will include the understanding and appreciation of wider world cultures.

- The American Academy Junior School pupils will be at the centre of a community of learners that includes parents, educators, staff and School Board members dedicated to the pursuit of excellence, personal growth and social responsibility.
- The American Academy Junior School will design its curriculum creatively to meet the different needs of all its pupils with wider needs such as Greek, English, Special Needs (including Gifted and Talented Pupils)
- Working within a collaborative culture, pupils will develop a love of lifelong learning and will acquire the skills and confidence to realize their full potential as contributing members of the global community.

To be a school where everyone enjoys learning where excellence and individuality will be valued and where everyone is committed to

- Having high aspirations and expectations of our pupils
- Being a listening school
- Valuing progression and continuity in learning
- Drawing strength from our diversity.

So that all pupils will:

- Feel valued and nurtured
- Be happy and well balanced in their outlook
- Develop true international understanding and be considerate of the needs of all others.
- Develop the confidence to learn as individuals and as part of a team
- Fulfil their unique potential

The School's Mission will also be realised through the careful recruitment of first class educational professionals. The staff will form positive relationships with pupils and parents and thus realise the School's mission.

As the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) states: *'Pupils learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Positive relationships are warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging. Positive relationships are sensitive and responsive to the pupil's needs, feelings and interests supportive of the pupil's own efforts and independence, consistent in setting clear boundaries'*.

The environment at The American Academy Junior School will ensure that pupils and adults value all people and that all people value learning. The pupils will also be offered stimulating resources, relevant not only to Cyprus but also to the pupils' varying cultures and communities. Staff will ensure that all pupils' prior knowledge and learning will be acknowledged to allow a seamless transition between home and school. Pupils will be provided, through carefully planned enriching learning activities, a meaningful PSHE Programme, an environment that offers safe opportunities for pupils to take risks and explore both independently and collaboratively.

The school aims to be a living, vibrant and integral part of the community. It aims to develop each individual to his/her own full potential, to encourage personal, social, spiritual and moral development, and promote equal opportunities for pupils in every area of school life. The Curriculum will promote an ethos in which pupils are motivated to become independent learners and creative thinkers who are prepared to 'think outside the box'.

In summary, The American Academy Junior School, Larnaca aims to combine the best of the traditional values of primary education, in a forward looking International environment. It will promote the core values of respect for others, self-respect, honesty, politeness and an understanding of right from wrong. All pupils will be encouraged to broaden their inter-cultural experiences, to grow in maturity and autonomy, to demonstrate their potential as leaders. They will also be expected to be committed to their work, tolerant of others and grow into respectable citizens of the world. Above all, they will be happy, confident and well-adjusted young people.

The American Academy Junior School is committed to the following:

- Its curriculum will be designed to be meaningful, relevant, useful and engaging, so that the pupils will be inspired by what they learn, have fun and develop to their full academic and social potential.
- Its curriculum will be broad, balanced and based on the EY and National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
- The curriculum will also respect the requirements of the Ministry of Education.
- The curriculum will seek to develop skills and understanding that respect the nature of individual subject disciplines, while seeking regular opportunities for cross curricular inquiry.
- The curriculum will embed the use of ICT to facilitate up to date learning across all the phases.

Our core curriculum will:

- Develop English as first and second language and teach Greek as a first and second language
- Promote mathematical, scientific, and ICT skills and understanding
- Develop local and global understanding
- Ensure the provision of Personal, Social and Health Education and embed Christian values.
- Develop social & emotional intelligence and relationships through programmes such as Working with Others

A pupil-centred holistic curriculum and continuity in learning

All schemes of work and every curriculum unit will reflect our beliefs about pupil learning, progression and engagement. Curriculum design will enable pupils to build on and use their prior learning. Related concepts, skills and knowledge will be incorporated into each stage of the curriculum in a progressive manner, promoting continuity and re-enforcement.

The American Academy Junior School curriculum will be fundamentally holistic. The staff will create exciting and secure learning environments for the children to develop their individual strengths and talents where new abilities and talents will unfold. Pupils will develop into creative and independent learners who value their own achievements and also those of their peers. Pupils' unique experiences and specific interests will be valued and celebrated on different occasions and communicated to parents.

The sports facilities will promote physical development. The physical education programme will ensure that pupils grow in a healthy way and acquire positive healthy living habits. The arts curriculum will help inspire and develop artistic and creative talents. Specialist staff will provide subject-knowledge to support the development of the arts throughout the school curriculum.

Important reasoning and analytical skills and creativity will be nurtured from an early age through planned Enrichment lessons and exciting investigations in the Humanities and Sciences. The curriculum will attach great importance to supporting and developing the pupils' personal, social and emotional wellbeing so that all pupils develop positive attitudes to learning through the PSHE Programme. Pupils will learn to share, co-operate and work together harmoniously; displaying appropriate manners and consideration for others at all times through the Working with Others Programme.

Opportunities for direct experience

The curriculum will seek to expose pupils to a wide range of learning experiences, both inside and outside the class room. To this end the school will value the place and importance of play, educational trips, invited guest speakers to the school, residential opportunities, where children are given the opportunity to develop their social skills, and extra-curricular activities. Practical investigative, manipulative and kinaesthetic experiences will also feature as important aspects of our broad and balanced curriculum that pupils will be exposed to.

Development of Global and Local themes

The exposure to global and local themes will be further developed across the school in all programmes of study supported by IPC resources. Developed on a thematic basis that embraces the culture, history and increasing multiculturalism of Larnaca and Cyprus will be central to the delivery. The staff will ensure that pupils develop a strong social, cultural and global awareness. Pupils will also be exposed to the local culture and heritage through celebrations of national events and exposure to places of historical and geographical interest. Greek Week celebrations will feature strongly in embedding an awareness of national and local culture

The school will also promote inter-cultural awareness through the arts and music. With pupils from diverse nationalities, pupils will become proud of their individual cultures and the richness that this brings to the school. As the school develops, it will be an example of a successful international community characterised by understanding, encouragement and support of one another.

Early Years Framework

The EYFS is a broad curriculum that allows teachers to teach a wide range of skills and outlooks with the use of English as a transferable language. The curriculum provides extensive and balanced range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and cultural backgrounds. It will enable pupils to develop academically, socially and physically by acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding in line with EYFS frameworks. The curriculum will be reviewed in line with EYFS requirements to ensure quality provisions at all times.

At The American Academy Junior School the UK's Foundation Stage framework will be the basis for teaching, learning and assessment. The EYFS Framework is a play based cross-curricular curriculum that caters for all learning styles and an ever changing world. It is based on the premise that every pupil deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Pupils develop quickly in the early years and a pupil's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life. High quality early learning will enable pupils to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year providers must meet to ensure that pupils learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure pupils' 'school readiness' and gives pupils the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every pupil makes good progress and no pupil gets left behind
- a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual pupil and are assessed and reviewed regularly
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every pupil is included and supported

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding pupils and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for pupils in all early years settings
- the early learning goals that providers must help pupils work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding Pupils should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)
- the safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep pupils safe and promote their welfare

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years' settings. These are:

- every pupil is a unique pupil, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- pupils learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- pupils learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and pupils develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all pupils in early years' provision, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

- pupils have the best possible start in life
- pupils have a right, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Pupil, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender

At The American Academy Junior School staff will use the EYFS documents to consider the nature of the individuals' interests and cohort as well as providing a framework upon which cross-curricular themes can be planned in an international context. Pupils' skills, knowledge, experience and understanding can be weaved into the seven areas of learning and development in meaningful and interesting context. It also ensures that pupils receive an education that takes into account the diversity of the cohort.

Greek Provision

The American Academy Junior School will also offer all pupils the opportunity to be introduced to the Greek language in the Early Years. This will benefit the pupils giving them an early knowledge and understanding of their community as well as ensuring a smooth transition for pupils as they move into the junior section.

The Holistic development of young pupils

Education is all about holistic development including the critical factor of developing the learning environment appropriate to the age and stage of learning. This aligns well with the EYFS philosophy. The three Characteristics of Effective Learning outlined in the EYFS will also help with this. The staff will provide an exciting and secure learning environment for the pupils to develop individual strengths and for talents and abilities to unfold over time. The EYFS is a curriculum that enables practitioners to offer pupils playful and play-based cross curricular teaching and learning in a happy, supportive and safe environment. It enables pupils to be active, creative and independent learners that value not only their own achievements but those of their peers. It ensures that each pupil's experience and interest is valued and considered and that every pupil can be encouraged through the EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning to actively seek out other pupils to "engage with other people and their environment" to play and explore, and to be creating and thinking critically.

It is the Characteristics of Effective Learning in the EYFS that underpin development across all Seven Areas of development:

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

Learning will begin with immersion in an environment in which the skills are being used in purposeful ways. "Early Learning Goals" in different areas of the curriculum that apply to all pupils will be developed. Pupils will explore each of these areas every day through structured activities and purposeful experimental play and each pupil will be supported to remain an effective and motivated learner, a learner that has their own ideas and is prepared to "have a go", take risks and make mistakes, and thereby learn from these.

Physical Development plays an important role and the pupils will regularly participate in physical development lessons. The School will develop pupils' reasoning and analytical skills from an early age through investigational activities.

At The American Academy Junior School we believe that the curriculum for the Early Years underpins all future education, by supporting, fostering and developing the pupil's personal, social and emotional wellbeing and promoting positive attitudes to learning. The School will attach great importance to the development of social skills and encourage pupils to share, play co-operatively and to display good manners and consideration for others in line with our vision of developing caring, happy and well balanced pupils. Individual assessments will be carried out regularly. Parents will receive, thrice yearly, written reports showing their son/daughter's progress.

The Early Years unit will comprise of bright, modern purpose designed rooms with self-contained toilets and wash basins and direct access to the break out spaces, hall, and outdoor play areas. The rooms will be fully equipped to stimulate opportunities for social play and the development of physical skills. Pupils will be introduced to quiet reflective activities to encourage their social, cognitive and manipulative abilities. These include matching and sorting, colour, number and letter recognition and listening to poetry, rhymes and stories. Through structured sand and water play, role-play and constructive and creative activities pupils will be better prepared for the transition to the more formal learning they will experience in Grade 1. Pupils will also be provided opportunities to be creative through a range of extra-curricular activities.