Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Pre-Primary to Grade 5

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Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG

COGNITA AND STAMFORD SHARE A COMMON VISION

Thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

WELCOME FROM

OUR ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our leadership team warmly welcomes you to Stamford American School Hong Kong. We comprise a team of education professionals who are all experienced in international education and the latest most progressive best teaching practices.

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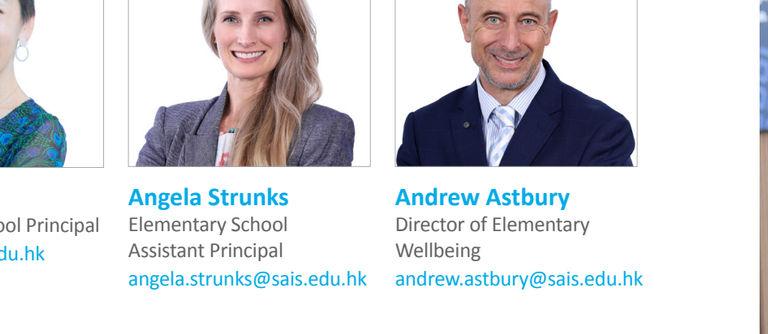
OUR TEACHERS

Our teachers bring a wide range of experiences to Stamford that serve to enrich our collaborative community with diverse perspectives and a deep commitment to students and learning.

Teachers continue to grow through rich professional experiences within established learning communities at Stamford, formal external training, internal learning with colleagues and educational consultants, and daily interaction with their students and colleagues. At Stamford, we firmly believe that learning takes place every day for everyone.

At specific times during the year, parents receive formal feedback on their children's progress through report cards and Parent Teacher Conferences. Teachers also keep parents informed of class progress via teacher pages on MyStamford throughout the year. Please feel free to contact your child's teachers at any time using their email addresses with any questions, comments or concerns.

Approximately 12 additional specialist teachers across the subjects of language acquisition (Mandarin and Spanish) physical and health education, and all the arts (drama, music, visual art) also teach students in the elementary school.



OUR FRAMEWORK

AMERICAN STANDARDS

When thinking about 'the curriculum,' one should keep in mind it is made up of many parts, all working in unison to provide the best possible learning experience for students. Curriculum represents an ongoing, ever-evolving process of constant reflection and modification to ensure the latest pedagogical practices and tools are being brought to the classroom. With this in mind, we can say Stamford American's curriculum is defined by several elements, including:

- Academic standards that define knowledge and skills
- Key concepts and enduring understandings
- Essential questions to guide learning
- Learning activities supported by primary and secondary resources
- Cross disciplinary elements such as 'Approaches to Learning' traits, Learner Profile attributes and global citizenship linkages
- 'Approaches to teaching' strategies that guide teaching pedagogy
- The style and personality of the teacher
- The dynamics of the class as well as individual learners

First and foremost, the anchor of our curriculum is well-established rigorous American standards.

Subject Area	Standards and Benchmarks
English Language, Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Sciences	American Education Reaches Out (AERO) (based on Common Core framework)
Modern Languages (Spanish and Mandarin)	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
Music, Drama, Visual Arts	Massachusetts Arts (MA)
STEM/Innovation	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
Physical Education	Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) National Health Education Standards (NHES)
Social Emotional Learning	Second Step Program

Every unit of study a student participates in is underpinned by these standards.

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

While academics are indeed important during a student's time at school, we know that a child's learning does not just include knowledge and skills—children need to be able to function socially and emotionally too. To address this, Stamford embeds specific components into its curriculum framework to help students build self-confidence, develop communication and collaboration skills, and learn how to think critically. These components either serve as extensions to or are interwoven into normal lessons:

- Global Citizenship
- Approaches to Learning
- Service Learning
- IB Learner Profile
- Social-Emotional Learning

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Global citizenship is closely linked with the notions of international-mindedness and intercultural understanding. We want our students to have a world perspective that is balanced and informed. We want them to genuinely care about the future of humankind and develop a basic framework for understanding the complexities of our global society which is no small task! It requires students to be able to consider multiple perspectives, critically examine the costs and benefits of different options, and then to have the courage to take action.

One way we do this is in our academic unit planning. Each unit of study includes the element 'global citizenship,' which weaves the concept of global mindedness & understanding into all our units of inquiry. Teachers and students are striving to answer the question: how are we all connected and interdependent?

Additionally, there are many times during the day when global citizenship connections can happen naturally. Perhaps it comes up during a student council discussion when students are pondering how to use their limited time and material resources. Alternatively, maybe it comes up in the lunchroom when a student notices another with a different kind of food from home and wonders what it is and why they have chosen that for lunch. Each grade explores the Sustainable Development Goals throughout the year, culminating in the Grade 5 Global Goals Showcase. The possibilities for meaningful engagement are almost endless.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Approaches to Learning (ATLs) are a set of academic and affective skills grouped into five areas:

- Communication
- Research
- Thinking
- Social
- Self-management

ATLs are transdisciplinary skills that essentially help students learn how to learn. While they are purposely embedded in every unit of instruction (meaning they are explicitly taught and assessed), ATLs also turn up in all sorts of less formal co-curricular experiences too, like during outdoor education camps, in after-school activities, at sports competitions or when students are performing in a play or choral concert.

Communication

INTERACTION

Exchange thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction.

LANGUAGE

Read, write and use languages to communicate information effectively.

Research

INFORMATION LITERACY

Find, interpret, judge and create information.

MEDIA LITERACY

Interact with media to use and create ideas and information.

Thinking

CRITICAL THINKING

Analyze and evaluate issues and ideas.

CREATIVE THINKING

Generate new ideas and perspectives.

TRANSFER

Use knowledge and skills in new contexts.

Social

COLLABORATION

Work effectively with others.

Self-management

AFFECTIVE SKILLS

Manage personal state of mind, concentrate and be focused. Learn from mistakes and problems.

ORGANIZATION SKILLS

Manage time and tasks effectively and use technology well.

CREATIVE THINKING

I can (re)consider the process of learning. I can choose and use effective ATL skills.

SERVICE LEARNING

As part of developing globally minded individuals, we seek to engage our students in service learning to help broaden their awareness of both local and global issues. Working with the Parent School Association (PSA), local and international charitable organizations we provide opportunities to engage in student learning.

This can take different forms based on grade level and the units of inquiry students are exploring, as we provide a deeper, richer and more engaging learning experience for our students.

Our service learning is not only driven by teachers, but also by our Elementary Student Council and through students discussions within their homerooms. Some examples of service learning include a school-wide food drive for the elderly and Grade 3 students selling self-decorated pencils to raise money for charity. This activity extends their current inquiry unit on social advocacy and their persuasive writing unit. All money raised will be donated to The Elephant Foundation to support their meaningful work conserving African elephants and rhinoceros in East Africa. We also organize fundraising bake sales and raffle ticket sales to support various causes.

These are just a few examples of the projects children will undertake, and we are continuously seeking to expand the involvement all our students have in educational experiences beyond our doors to enrich their educational and life experience.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

We adopt the principles of the IB Learner Profile, which align to our school's values, and we believe supports students to become responsible members of local, national and global communities. The elements of the IB Learner Profile is weaved into what we do. This begins to prepare and support our students for their future IBDP education.

The IB Learner principles we strive for:

INQUIRERS

- Nurture curiosity
- Learn independently and with others
- Learn with enthusiasm all our life

KNOWLEDGEABLE

- Develop and use conceptual understanding to explore knowledge
- Engage with issues and ideas that are important in lives and for the whole world

THINKERS

- Use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take action on complex problems
- Show initiative In making reasoned and ethical decisions

COMMUNICATORS

- Express confidently and creatively in more than one language
- Collaborate effectively by listening carefully to the perspectives of others
- Share ideas respectfully

PRINCIPLED

- Act with integrity, honesty and a strong sense of fairness and justice for all
- Take responsibility for actions and their consequences

OPEN-MINDED

- Appreciate cultures and personal histories, as well as the traditions and values of others
- Seek and evaluate a range of points of view
- Grow from experiences

CARING

- Show empathy, compassion and respect
- Commit to service learning
- Act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world

RISK-TAKERS

- Work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas
- Develop innovative strategies
- Be resourceful and resilient in the face of challenge, change and uncertainty

BALANCED

- Balance different aspects of life - intellectual, physical, and emotional
- Create well-being for ourselves and others
- Recognize interdependence with other people and the world in which we all live

REFLECTIVE

- Consider the world, ideas and experiences thoughtfully
- Understand strengths and weaknesses in order to support learning and personal development

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Every child receives formal instruction in social-emotional learning (SEL) every week. We use the Second Step framework, which is a classroom-based program that promotes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills—key skills underlying the principles of the Common Core State Standards. Students with these skills are better able to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults and have more coping strategies to manage stressful situations.

In the elementary years (Pre-primary to Grade 5) the main focus is on building a strong foundation in four main areas: skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem solving.

Skills for learning: This unit deals with skills to become respectful learners by learning to listen, focus attention, follow directions, using self-talk to focus and maintain attention, being assertive and planning for learning.

Empathy: Being able to recognize and name their own feelings will help learners to figure out how other people feel. Caring about how someone else feels helps learners to develop compassion, thus being able to show care and concern.

Emotion management: The role of emotions and how to handle strong feelings such as anger and worry are discussed and self-regulation strategies are explored. With these skills, students find positive ways when facing challenges or difficulties, and ultimately are more equipped to make and maintain friendships and future academic rigor.

Problem solving: Being calm and using words to describe problems enables students to think of and implement different solutions. This unit explores concepts such as playing fairly, handling name-calling, dealing with negative peer pressure, seeking help, dealing with gossip and taking responsibility for your actions.

The program also offers children practical strategies to cope with situations such as bullying; this means also supporting their peers by being responsible bystanders.

In addition to the four core topics the program also focusses on two additional units.

Bullying Prevention and Child Protection: The Bullying Prevention unit incorporates practical skills and examples of how to report and refuse bullying and be a responsible bystander that supports peers. The Child Protection unit create strategies for adults and students to protect children and keep them safe from abuse (recognize, refuse and report).

OUR PROGRAM

The transdisciplinary framework of the Stamford curriculum allows students to learn in ways that research indicates enrich their experiences. Through our concept-based inquiry approach to learning, students learn in the context of what is significant and relevant to them by asking questions and making connections to their previous knowledge, experiences, and their readiness and interest level. At the core of our curriculum are the traditional subjects of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (Inquiry/STEMinn). Woven within all of these subjects areas are teaching and learning opportunities in STEMinn (science, technology, engineering, math and innovation) and social-emotional development, which is supported by the Second Step Program.

These integrated elements of the curriculum are also woven into the specialized disciplines that all Stamford students engage in. These include daily foreign language instruction (Mandarin or Spanish), Visual and Performing Arts (Drama, Music and Visual Arts) and Physical Education. Overall, this design ensures that students engage in a rigorous academic program that is connected and relevant, while including a wide array of disciplines, thus appealing to student interest and engagement.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Language is fundamental to learning and permeates our curriculum. By learning language as well as learning about and through language, students develop an appreciation of the richness of language and a love of literature. Our program arranges student development into three main strands:

ORAL COMMUNICATION

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

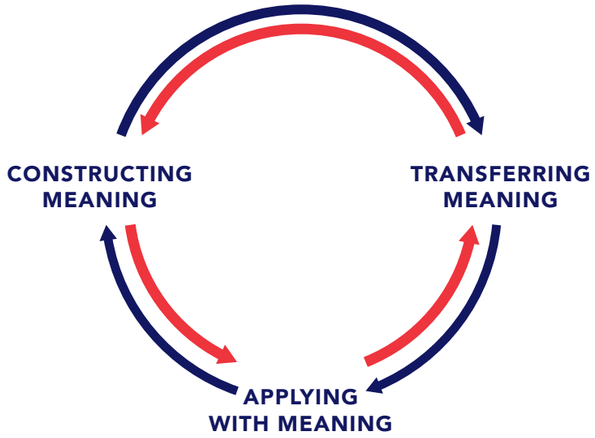
VISUAL COMMUNICATION

These communication strands are organized into sub-strands, which include listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting—all of which are interactive elements of the program. Literacy learning is supported by the AERO Standards in Language Arts, the Columbia Teachers' College Writing and Reading Units of Study, a rich classroom literacy environment including classroom books, and an extensive collection of quality reading books.

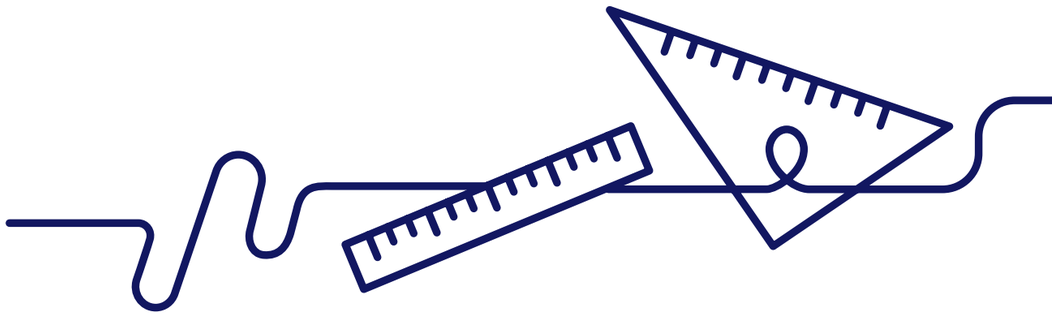
MATHEMATICS

At Stamford, mathematics is viewed as a way of thinking and a language for exploration and understanding. To study mathematics is to inquire into this language and to learn to think in a way that is balanced. This balance includes the development of deep conceptual understanding, to know how and when to apply appropriate strategies and algorithms, and to be able to apply these skills and understandings to dynamic real-world problems. Stamford's mathematics standards identify the expectations considered essential in the subject. These expectations are based on the domains and practices in the AERO mathematics standards and REVEAL math program, primary resources for Stamford's mathematics instruction. They are:

- Numeracy (including counting, numbers in base ten and fractions)
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking
- Geometry
- Measurement and Data



In addition to ensuring students have a deep and broad base of mathematical skills, students at Stamford are deeply engaged in mathematical practices, and the application and transfer of strategies, across a wide range of authentic learning engagements. This balance of skills and mathematical practices enable us to achieve rigor in mathematics that balances conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and application. Our commitment to student progress in mathematics is evident in the time devoted to mathematics learning, in our enriched mathematics assessment tools, and by our project based strand that emphasizes application and transfer of mathematics learning to real-world problems.



INQUIRY/STEMINN

Our innovative concept-based inquiry STEMinn program is designed to create opportunities for students to develop core skills needed for success in STEM subjects like science, technology, engineering, math and social studies. These subjects are fully integrated into our Units of Inquiry and are aligned with applicable transdisciplinary themes for authentic applications. In addition to focused study on the core strands of sciences including life, earth and physical sciences, students gain overall understanding of how scientists think and work within the scientific community. Our curriculum is anchored by the 3 dimensions of the NGSS/AERO Science Standards; Cross-Cutting Concepts, Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Science and Engineering Practices. Likewise, our social studies curriculum is anchored in AERO Common Core Standards which allows students to gain an overall understanding of human commonality, diversity, and how multiple perspectives can be applied to the human condition.

PRE-PRIMARY	GRADE 1	GRADE 2
1. ME AND MY COMMUNITY **Inquiry:** Understanding our roles and responsibilities and how this affects my community **STEMinn:** Using my senses to investigate how forces affect movement around me	**1. COMMUNITIES IN OUR WORLD** **Inquiry:** Exploring our roles and responsibilities in their communities **STEMinn:** Solving problems with the help of the scientific method to make responsible and healthy choices	**1. COMMUNITIES, CULTURES AND CONNECTIONS** **Inquiry:** Exploring global citizenship and its roles in understanding world cultures **STEMinn:** Building a cultural showcase to demonstrate how parts come together to complete a whole
2. PLANTS AND ANIMALS **Inquiry:** Studying how living things affect each other and their environments **STEMinn:** Understanding what plants and animals need to survive	**2. OUR LIVING WORLD** **Inquiry:** Investigating how plant and animal adaptations help humans solve problems **STEMinn:** Mimicking special plant and animal traits to create tools and techniques to improve human lives	**2. BUILDING BLOCKS OF OUR NATURAL AND DESIGN WORLDS** **Inquiry:** Investigating how different properties of matter affect the way things work **STEMinn:** Applying the scientific method to demonstrate how changes to the natural world affect the design world
3. CULTURES AND HEROES **Inquiry:** Understanding that physical and social attributes of an environment affect cultures **STEMinn:** Using tools to measure local weather patterns and determine how cultures affect societal norms related to natural conditions	**3. PROTECTING OUR WORLD** **Inquiry:** Investigating the causes of environmental issues and its effects on our planet **STEMinn:** Developing solutions through the problem solving cycle to protect our world from human activity	**3. OUR ENVIRONMENT** **Inquiry:** Exploring the external (location, climate) effects of and on a habitat and ecosystem **STEMinn:** Investigating how diversity of life is accomplished through animal behaviors and adaptations
4. CARING FOR OUR PLANET **Inquiry:** Investigating how our actions can make a difference for sustainability (3Rs) **STEMinn:** Exploring ways to repurpose and upcycle solutions to reduce impact on our environment	**4. OUR ROTATING WORLD** **Inquiry:** Understanding how the Earth is affected by the Sun and Moon **STEMinn:** Using our observations to predict and determine patterns	**4. PROCESSES THAT SHAPE THE EARTH** **Inquiry:** Understanding landforms and the processes that shape the Earth **STEMinn:** Conducting experiments to observe fast and slow changes and determining solutions to address the changes

DESIGNING TRANSDISCIPLINARY UNITS

The transdisciplinary units of instruction outlined below include learning standards from both the AERO Social Studies framework and from the NGSS/AREO Science framework. When designing and reflecting on the units, teachers give careful attention to ensuring important areas are addressed: independent investigation, communicating and applying what is learned, and critical thinking. This is in line with an action based hands on constructivist approach to teaching. Through a concept-based inquiry approach, students are actively engaged in their learning - thinking, creating, collaborating, asking and solving.

GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5
1. FORCES AND MOTION **Inquiry:** Understanding different forces, how they cause movement **STEMinn:** Using experimental design to test theories and develop an understanding of how the world works	**1. STRUCTURE, FUNCTION AND INFORMATION PROCESSING** **Inquiry:** Investigating conditions that help us learn **STEMinn:** Understanding how structures function to support growth, development and survival of living things	**1. CONNECTIONS MATTER** **Inquiry:** Understanding how the past influences the present and future **STEMinn:** Investigating the origins of particles, the way they work and its place in our current world
2. SOCIAL ADVOCACY **Inquiry:** Investigating the rights, roles and responsibilities within a society and how they meet needs **STEMinn:** Identifying problems in society and using the engineering design process to create solutions.	**2. FOSSILS AND EROSION** **Inquiry:** Exploring changes over time to determine natural history through geology **STEMinn:** Investigating fossils and evidence of landform changes due to human activity	**2. SPACE, THE GIFT OF CURIOSITY** **Inquiry:** Understanding the impacts of technologies on society and costly explorations **STEMinn:** Applying technology to investigate science principles related to our Earth amongst the stars
3. SPECIES SURVIVAL **Inquiry:** Investigating adaptations and how they allow groups of animals to better survive in their environment **STEMinn:** Design solutions to limit the environmental impacts humans have on animals and ecosystems	**3. EARTH'S SYSTEMS AND NATURAL RESOURCES** **Inquiry:** Investigating how global issues affect renewable and non-renewable energy sources **STEMinn:** Comparing conservation efforts that affect decisions related to resource use	**3. ECOCULTURES** **Inquiry:** Investigating the evolution of cultures and their effects on the natural world **STEMinn:** Comparing effects of cultures' influences on our sources of nourishment and the natural world
4. ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS **Inquiry:** Comparing the cultures, contributions, and geographic locations of ancient civilizations, and how they change throughout time **STEMinn:** Analyzing artifacts and fossils to better understand what came before	**4. ENERGY** **Inquiry:** Determining how energy can be transferred, stored and used to change our world **STEMinn:** Investigating various forms of energy and its impact on the natural and manufactured world	**4. GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY** **Inquiry:** Investigating the social and physical aspects of the world on a global scale **STEMinn:** Exploring how human activity has impacted the globe in various issues
5. WEATHER AND CLIMATE **Inquiry:** Investigating geographic location and its relationship to weather and climate **STEMinn:** Design solutions that will help reduce the impact of weather-related disasters	**5. WAVES AND INFORMATION** **Inquiry:** Exploring social systems and how information is disseminated and shared **STEMinn:** Describing how advances in science and technology have affected communication and gathering of resources and information	**5. WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE** **Inquiry:** Determining patterns of trade with a focus on waterways **STEMinn:** Investigating the effects of using water systems to support the planet and its activities
		6. WAVES OF CHANGE **Inquiry:** Examining power and social systems over time **STEMinn:** Investigation of the effects of waves across various spectrums

DIGITAL LEARNING INTEGRATION

Digital Learning at Stamford focuses on reimagining the experience of education, drawing on the power of today's technology to improve student engagement and learning. The integration of technology across all curriculum areas provides opportunities for students to investigate, create, communicate, collaborate and organize, while remaining responsible for their own learning and actions. In turn, students achieve a deeper understanding of its relevance and applicability to their everyday lives. Student learning and engagement is also enhanced by digitally connecting with peers and experts beyond the walls of the classroom, from every corner of the globe. Through the use of technology, students develop their own learning styles, pace and preferences and apply strategies for critical and creative thinking, engage in inquiry, make connections and apply new understandings and skills in different contexts. Throughout the curriculum, teachers model and develop students understanding of global citizenship, linked to Common Sense Media, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and American Education Reaches Out standards in both the physical and digital environments.

Promethean interactive whiteboards and iPads are among the many technological tools used for teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum. The use of digital devices enhances research skills, critical thinking, problem solving, processing and presenting skills, efficiency, organization and collaboration.

Through a range of digital devices, including 1-1 iPads, learning is personalized for the students as they elevate their engagement, amplify and apply their learning knowledge and skills, as they become 21st Century learners.

ENGLISH/MANDARIN BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Our G1-G5 bilingual program fosters a child's ability to competently think and learn in 2 languages. For this to occur we focus on the idea of students being able to translanguage, that is the ability and flexibility to use the codes of 2 languages.

The Bilingual program at Stamford is a 50/50 English/Mandarin dual immersion model, using simplified Chinese characters. Students spend approximately 50% of their homeroom time immersed in English and 50% immersed in Mandarin. Using a combination of a 1-teacher model in Grade 1 (one bilingual speaking homeroom teacher), and a 2-teacher model in Grades 2 - 5 (a native English teacher and native Mandarin teacher interchange), our bilingual program builds upon previous years and supports the age and stage development of our students.

The Bilingual Program follows the same grade level curriculum as our monolingual classes, with only the languages of instruction being English and Mandarin. All Specialist classes: Art, Music, Drama, PE, STEMinn Lab being taught in English. The approach to teaching and learning remains the same as our monolingual classes, being concept-based inquiry.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Stamford welcomes students for whom English is not their primary language. Our mission is to advance the academic language development and academic achievement of English language learners, so that these students can successfully access the school curriculum in English. Our objective is to develop the EAL students communicative competence in English to a level that will allow the student to function on a peer group level academically, socially and culturally. Our focus is to build academic and language proficiency in the four language domains, listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to support students in their language learning, English language assessments are given upon entry. This assessment helps us to determine the needs of each EAL student. Students are reassessed throughout the year in order to monitor their English language progress.

The Accelerated Language Program (ALP) is designed to support developing students English proficiency in a full time homeroom setting. The ALP is offered in Grade 4 and in Grade 5.

With dedicated resources, your homeroom teacher and the teaching assistant will be the designated specialists to support your child's English development across subjects for the whole year. These faculty are trained to provide highly personalized learning based on language ability, helping students gain confidence to access the full curriculum successfully.

Students in the ALP homeroom will be delivered the same grade level curriculum, using our Stamford concept-based inquiry approach.

STUDENT SUPPORT

We believe every student can be successful and we strive to provide the best learning experiences for all. For all students to reach their potential, our Student Support Department provides services for students with additional needs. The Student Support Department is comprised of learning support teachers, behavior specialist, guidance counselors, speech therapists, and occupational therapists who use research based interventions and strategies when working with students individually and in groups. To identify students, we conduct three data reviews per year to provide quick entry and exit from services. Our teachers and therapists use frequent progress monitoring to ensure our students are receiving effective services. Our team continuously works alongside classroom teachers, parents, and administrators to support student development to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students.

SPECIALIST TEACHING AREAS

MANDARIN

Lower Elementary students are encouraged to communicate and interact in Mandarin Chinese naturally and spontaneously with their teachers and classmates. Numerous opportunities are provided for students to develop their communication and social skills, which are crucial for everyday interactions. Through a diverse range of activities, students are equipped to express their thoughts and understanding both verbally and in writing.

In Upper Elementary, children learn through inquiry, where the focus is on functional usage of Mandarin Chinese for communication purposes in everyday situations. The curriculum is designed to cover all of the basic skills, such as: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The ultimate aim of the program is to develop students' interest in learning Mandarin, engage in conversation using this target language, develop appreciation of the Chinese culture, and build basic knowledge for further study of a world language. Students enjoy learning by making meaningful connections between the classroom and the world at large.

SPANISH

The Spanish elementary curriculum integrates language learning as an essential component of academic development. Following ACTFL standards, students develop functional communication skills through engaging, culturally-rich instruction that prepares them for meaningful engagement in our interconnected world.

Aims of the program

- Enhance communication skills through increasingly complex language use
- Foster cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse traditions
- Encourage curiosity and lifelong engagement with language learning

Students are exposed to a variety of Spanish voices in music, spoken and written word, and learn about the cultures of different Spanish speaking countries. Students are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude, cooperative learning skills and a willingness to experiment with a new language. Students are assessed through direct observation of oral, aural and written work during all group activities and through individual, one-on-one oral, aural and written assessments of key vocabulary and structures.

ART

Art at Stamford is designed to foster creativity and self-discovery. By creating and responding to works of art, students develop the ability to relate to aesthetics and beauty in a visual society. The program aims to engage students in the creative process, self-expression, developing visual language, art history, and art criticism.
At Stamford, the visual arts enable students to communicate in powerful ways that go beyond their spoken language. Students can construct an understanding of their community, environment, feelings, and emotions. Students are encouraged to be a part of the assessment process through thoughtful self and peer reflections. In addition, our educators assess student progress using the Massachusetts Visual Art Standards and evaluate growth through students' portfolios and sketchbooks. Students are assessed on three objectives, which include: knowing and understanding, developing skills and thinking creatively, and reflecting and responding. At Stamford, the visual arts aim not only to teach students technical abilities employing various art mediums but also 21st-century skills and behaviors that will benefit them far beyond the art studio.

DRAMA

The drama program offers students a variety of diverse opportunities to develop their skills both within the classroom and during co-curricular activities. Drama at Stamford focuses on the development of communication and social skills, while encouraging students to think creatively and expand their imaginations. Students are encouraged to become risk takers and problem solvers, while immersing themselves in the creative process. Students in lower elementary engage in process and teacher-led drama in order to build confidence, creativity, and cooperation skills. In contrast, upper elementary students (beginning in grade 3) are more independent with their work, taking ownership of their learning to become more dramatically technical and skill-aware. Throughout the program, students create a variety of in-depth characters by changing their physicality, facial expressions, voice and persona.

MUSIC

The music program is an experiential learning environment which includes singing, playing instruments, moving to music, and creating music to enable students to acquire skills and knowledge that can be developed with increasing levels of sophistication. Learning to read and notate music gives students a skill with which to explore music independently and with others. Listening to, analyzing, and evaluating music are important building blocks of musical learning. To participate fully in a diverse, global society, students must understand their own historical and cultural heritage and those of others within their communities and beyond. Because music is a basic expression of human culture, every student should have access to a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of study in music.

Through the use of the Kodaly method for note-reading, the Dalcroze Eurythmics method of movement, the World Music Drumming curriculum and the Orff- Schulwerk philosophy for playing and improvisation, students are introduced to recorder, keyboard instruments including xylophones and glockenspiels, African drums including tubanos and djembes, and a multitude of percussion instruments. Our classroom work is enriched by our after-school program offerings of Choir, Orchestra, World Music Percussion Ensemble and concerts. We host two show productions per year including our recent performances of “Wizard of Oz” and “Into the Woods”. Students may also choose to study an instrument with a private teacher, during the day, through our Private Instrument Program. Qualified, dedicated teachers provide private instruction, on campus, for a variety of instruments and voice.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In physical education (PE) students learn the ‘language’ of physical movement, exploring the skills associated with different strands of PE. They learn to understand what they can and cannot do physically and become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Physical activity is an essential aspect of a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle and through PE, it helps build self-esteem, confidence, cooperation and fitness. The areas of learning are arranged into five strands:

- Individual Pursuits
- Movement Composition
- Games
- Adventure Challenges
- Health-related Fitness

Individual pursuits involves the development of basic motor skills and the body’s capacity for movement through locomotor and manipulative skills and/or experiences; the techniques, rules and purpose of a range of activities (for example, track and field, swimming, etc.); recognizing a high level of achievement and how to improve a performance. Movement composition means recognizing that movements can be linked together and refined to create a sequence of aesthetic movements. Movements can be in response to stimuli or performance elements and/or criteria and can communicate feelings, emotions and ideas (for example, gymnastics, dance, martial arts).

Playing games helps students recognize the challenges presented by games; the importance of manipulating space; the categorizing of games; identifying and developing appropriate skills and strategies; recognizing the importance of rules and how they define the nature of a game; modifying existing games and creating new games; teamwork. Adventure challenges provides a variety of tasks requiring the use of physical and critical-thinking skills by individuals and/or groups; challenges that require groups to work together collaboratively in order to solve problems and accomplish a common goal; recognizing the role of the individual in group problem solving. And finally, students in Grade 5 would be introduced to some health-related fitness concepts. They would begin to recognize and appreciate the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle; the body’s response to exercise including the interaction of body systems and the development of physical fitness.

STRUCTURE

TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

Students arrive at school between 7:10-7:40 am. The school day starts with a 10-minute 'Morning Advisory' at 7:45 am and there is a 20-minute morning break at 9:15. Throughout the day, students attend 9 periods, one of them being for lunch and recess. Pre-Primary, Grades 1 and 2 have lunch Period 5, Grades 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 have lunch Period 6, and Grades 4, 5 and 7 have lunch Period 7. Approximately one-half of the teaching blocks are 'double-blocks' (85 minutes) and half are single blocks (40-45 minutes). Co-curricular activities typically happen for one hour after school.

Period	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morn Advisory	7:45 am - 7:55 am					
1	7:55 am - 8:35 am	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts
2	8:35 am - 9:15 am	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts
Snack	9:15 am - 9:35 am	**Snack**				
3	9:35 am - 10:15 am	EngLangArts	Math	Art	EngLangArts	Phys Ed.
4	10:15 am - 10:55 am	Music	Math	Art	Music	Phys Ed.
5	10:55 am - 11:40 am	**Lunch**				
6	11:40 am - 12:25 pm	Math	InquirySTEM	Math	Math	Assembly
7	12:25 pm - 1:10pm	InquirySTEM	InquirySTEM	InquirySTEM	InquirySTEM	Math
8	1:10 pm - 1:55 pm	ModLang	ModLang	ModLang	ModLang	ModLang
9	1:55 pm - 2:40 pm	SecondStep	Drama	InquirySTEM	InquirySTEM	STEMinnLab
CCAs	2:55 pm - 3:55pm					

Students follow a full timetable of study, spending the majority of their time with their homeroom teacher being instructed on core subjects, which include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Specialist teachers instruct students in the areas of Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Physical Social and Emotional Education, Modern Languages (Mandarin or Spanish), and Library. Our program is typical of American international schools around the world, allowing your child to easily transition should you relocate. We further offer opportunities for students to learn beyond the classroom through outdoor education and co-curricular activities (CCA) programs.

HOMEWORK

Homework provides the opportunity for practicing, extending and consolidating learning in class and develops planning and organization abilities in students to assist with their learning. Homework should be relevant to classroom learning, appropriate to the individual student's learning abilities and purposeful—not homework for the sake of homework.

Homework should have a purpose. It may be to:

- Prepare students for upcoming class work
- Be an extension of the lesson to practice or revise skills already developed
- Encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively
- Occasionally finish off incomplete class work
- Transfer new skills or concepts to new situations

We encourage reading for all of our students and especially those in the lower grades. For Pre-primary students, reading daily is their expected homework. In grade 1 and above, teachers plan the homework as a grade to ensure it is purposeful and an extension of the learning occurring in class. This could be a project, completing a short piece of work, or an activity using technology. As a student moves up in school their homework time may increase, however homework is always meaningful and not set to meet a time limit.

ASSESSMENT

Progress reports are made available to students and parents four times a year to give an update of the child's progress across all of his or her subjects. The purpose is to provide a basis for constructive conversations about areas of potential growth and improvement. Current progress is reported on a 4-point scale and the grading as follows:

4 = **EXCEEDING:** The student consistently exceeds grade level expectations.

3 = **ACHIEVING:** The student is consistently meeting grade level expectations.

2 = **APPROACHING:** The student often requires support to complete grade level expectations.

1 = **EMERGING:** The student is experiencing difficulties meeting grade level expectations.

Stamford grading is learning-outcomes-related, not norm-referenced. This means individual student performance is compared to pre-developed and communicated expectations which may come in the form of a set of grade level descriptors or a rubric. Therefore, students are not compared to each other, ranked or placed on a percentage scale. Grades are not calculated or averaged out, but instead are determined using a "best-fit" approach, which research supports as being the best way to give ongoing feedback and as being a reliable indicator of real student performance. Using best-fit requires professional judgement on the part of the teacher, and judgements are always supported by multiple and varied examples of student performance.

CONCEPT-BASED UNIT PLANNING

Our STEMinn units are transdisciplinary, with each grade completing 5-6 units per year. Being transdisciplinary enables students to transfer concepts across many subject areas, with a focus on the conceptual understanding and how it links between the different curriculum areas and ideas. This approach allows students to form generalizations, which are applied in multiple contexts to deepen learning.

Through the weekly use of our STEMinn Lab, students apply their conceptual learning and knowledge to create, construct and seek solutions to global issues. Twice during the year, students showcase their solution focused STEMinn projects to the school and parent community. In Grade 5, this culminates in the Global Goals Showcase, where students personally connect with one of the Sustainable Global Goals, and develop a “call to action” to support the goal.

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)

In addition to normal Stamford American progress reports, all students also sit for Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exams twice a year, at the beginning and end of the school year. The purpose of these exams is to provide us more data on individual student growth over the school year. We use these as just one measure of learning, to be considered alongside the rich three-dimensional picture of learning that includes your child’s progress report, Seesaw portfolio and parent-teacher communications.

The MAP assessment is an external, standardized, adaptive computerized test in the three subject areas of reading, mathematics and science (science in grade 3-5 only), to provide an estimate of the student’s achievement and growth levels. The version of the MAP assessment that our students take aligns with the American AERO/Common Core Plus standards frameworks on which our planning for learning is based.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Students in Pre-primary to Grade 2 participate in our outdoor education program where students go on one to two excursions each semester. These half-day excursions include visits to local ecological parks, beaches, and mountain trails where students learn a deeper appreciation for nature as well as participate in a variety of planned activities such as science scavenger hunts, wildlife/nature cataloging and interactive games. This program not only challenges children outside of the classroom but develops the foundational skills for the Outdoor Education Camps.

From Grade 2 to 5, as well as half-day excursions & field trips, these students participate in Outdoor Education Camps. Grade 2 participate in an extended day outdoor education experience. For our Grade 3 to 5 students, they have progressively longer overnight camps.

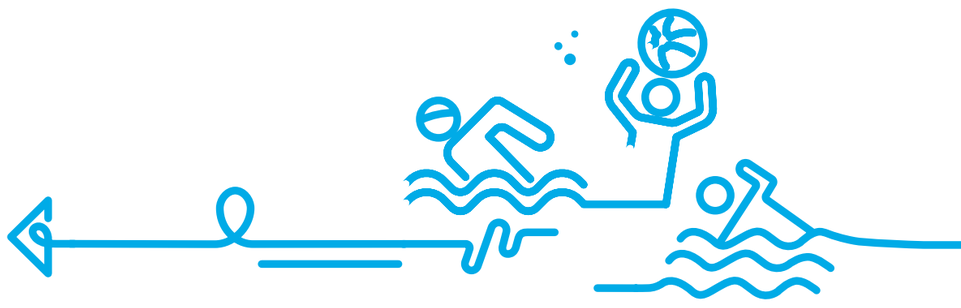
The aim of our outdoor camps is to support a holistic education, where students are involved in field-based learning in the effort to develop leaders who are ecologically literate, compassionate and engaged global citizens. Through the camp experiences, students develop leadership traits, resilience, compassion for others and communication skills to allow them to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Outdoor education camps are an extension of, and link to, the school curriculum. Our locations are camps within the Hong Kong area, and are age and stage appropriate, both in location and range of activities.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/CLUBS

Stamford currently offers over 70 after-school co-curricular activities (CCAs) and clubs in which students can participate. Through our extensive CCA offerings, students have an opportunity to pursue a passion, or explore something new, which could ultimately led to a passion. We encourage our students to participate in CCAs, as a way to create a healthy and well balanced lifestyle and view of the world.

Some of our CCAs work towards the Elementary School Production and Musical, external Choir performances and overseas sporting or robotics trips. Other CCA offerings include robotics, coding, taekwondo, Chinese arts, chess, basketball, swimming, football, creative writing or art.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What additional support do students receive?

A: In addition to the dedicated lessons, Stamford is committed to nurturing a caring community. All our staff support students to make positive choices throughout the school day. All staff also help students develop positive character attributes to ensure they have not only the academic foundation but also strong social skills and attitude to be real leaders. Our student support team of nurses, counselors and our Student Welfare and Safety Principal provide additional care for all our students.

Q: Does Stamford give tests? If so, how often?

A: In reference to internal assessments, yes, and it varies by instructor. Typically, summative assessments happen approximately every three to four weeks and are meant to assess a student's progress with learning that has recently happened. However, there is more of a focus on the concept of formative assessment, commonly referred to as assessment for learning (not of). Teachers can use a variety of strategies and approaches to help students see how, by engaging with concepts and content on a daily basis, that they can remember what they've learned and apply it to things across different contexts and subject areas more consistently and effectively. This is the meaning of true learning and should always remain the focus of day-to-day activities.

Q: How much homework do children get?

A: In Pre-primary children don't receive any homework during the first semester, although we encourage daily reading for all our students. Throughout the remainder of their time at Stamford children receive homework that is an extension of the learning in class. The goal of homework is to be purposeful in its goal to enrich learning. This means there is no set time requirement per day, however, as children move onto secondary school the following guidelines are a good representation of the average:

GRADE 1 – 20 minutes
GRADE 2 – 30 minutes
GRADE 3 – 40 minutes
GRADE 4 – 50 minutes
GRADE 5 – 60 minutes

Q: How does the curriculum at Stamford prepare children for post-graduate studies?

A: The Stamford curriculum is rigorous and broad and balanced. To prepare students for life beyond our doors, teachers incorporate a variety of hands-on projects and a diverse range of subjects. Upon graduation, students receive a Stamford American High School Diploma and the option of the IBDP, both accepted at top universities around the world

Q: What grade does the IB Diploma Programme start?

A: Students can choose to take the IB Diploma Programme which begins from Grade 11 until graduation in Grade 12.

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