



Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG



HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

Grade 9 to Grade 12



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COGNITA AND STAMFORD SHARE A COMMON VISION

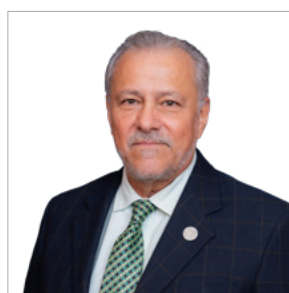
Thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Stamford's High School Team welcomes you

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 and IB education and the latest most progressive best teaching practices.



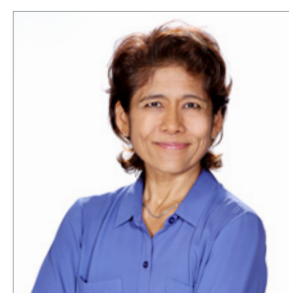
Andrew Noakes
Head of School



Ocki Fernandes
High School Principal



Julius Drake
Assistant Principal (Academics)
& IB Diploma Coordinator



Rachel De Rozario
Assistant Principal
(Wellbeing)

Our Teachers

At Stamford, our teachers bring a wealth of experience that enhances our collaborative community, offering diverse perspectives and a strong commitment to student learning.

In addition to our core subject faculty, we have specialist teachers who instruct high school students in Mandarin and Spanish, physical education, and the arts (drama, music, and visual art).

Our teachers have over 12 years of experience, and 60% hold postgraduate qualifications, including MSc and PhD degrees. Most of them have experience with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme and are well-versed in progressive teaching practices.

Continuous professional development is a priority at Stamford. We provide opportunities for growth through established professional learning communities, formal external training, internal collaboration, and daily interactions with students and colleagues. We believe that learning is a lifelong journey for everyone.

Parents receive formal updates on their children's progress through report cards and parent-student-teacher conferences held at specific times throughout the year. We encourage parents to reach out to their children's teachers anytime with questions, comments, or concerns.



**OUR
FRAMEWORK**

American Standards

A curriculum has many parts, all working together to provide students with the best possible learning experience. The curriculum at Stamford represents an ongoing process of reflection and innovation to ensure the latest teaching and learning tools and practices are delivered in our classrooms.

- **Academic standards** that defines 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, which underpins our curriculum in grades 9-10.

Standards and Benchmarks by Subject Area

Subject area	Standards and Benchmarks
English Language, Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Education Reaches Out (AERO) (based on Common Core framework)
Language Acquisition (Spanish and Mandarin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
Music, Drama, Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Massachusetts Arts (MA)
STEM / Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)• International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE)• National Health Education Standards (NHES)
Social Emotional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wayfinder Curriculum

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

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

Academics play a crucial role during a student's time in school. However, life involves more than just acquiring knowledge and skills; young adults also need to function effectively in social and emotional contexts within an increasingly complex world. To address this need, Stamford integrates programs and projects into its curriculum framework. These initiatives help students build self-confidence, develop communication and collaboration skills, and learn to think critically.

These components either serve as extensions or are part of standard coursework:

- **Global Citizenship**
- **Approaches to Learning**
- **Action and Service**
- **IB Learner Profile**
- **Cornerstones Program**
- **The Sophomore Project**
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Global Citizenship

Global citizenship is closely linked to having an international mindset and intercultural understanding. We want our students to develop a well-rounded and informed world perspective. It is essential for them to genuinely care about the future of humanity and to establish a basic framework for understanding the complexities of our global society. This is no small task! It requires students to consider multiple perspectives, critically examine the costs and benefits of various options, and have the courage to take action.

Each unit of study incorporates the element of global citizenship, where teachers connect the concepts of multilingualism and intercultural understanding to the unit's other objectives. By using identified curriculum standards, knowledge, and skills, teachers can find natural connections to global citizenship.

Furthermore, there are numerous opportunities throughout the day for students to engage with global citizenship concepts. For instance, this might arise during a student council discussion about how to use limited time and resources effectively. Alternatively, it could occur in the lunchroom when a student notices a peer with a different kind of food from home and wonders about its significance and choice. The possibilities for connecting to global citizenship are almost endless.

Approaches to Learning (ATLs)

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

Communication



Interaction

Exchange thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction.



Language

Read, write and use languages to communicate information effectively.



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.



Collaboration

Work effectively with others.

Self-management



Affective skills

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



organizational 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.

ATLs are cross-curricular 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.



When the academic and service connection is deliberate and includes student initiative, authenticated needs, reciprocal collaborations with community partners, and meaningful reflection, we call this service learning.

Cathryn Berger Kaye

Creativity, Action and Service

All students are required to participate in service, creative, and active (physical) endeavors. These experiences — which may include service opportunities, after-school sports teams, or involvement in the school drama production — serve as meaningful preparation for the CAS program in Grades 11 and 12.

- **Creativity** Encourages students to explore and express their imaginative ideas through various artistic and creative pursuits.
- **Activity** Promotes physical exertion and a healthy lifestyle through participation in sports, fitness, or other physically demanding activities.
- **Service** Involves collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community, addressing real needs and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

Service Learning uses the five stages of investigation, preparation, action, reflection and demonstration as a teaching and learning strategy. Meaningful community service is integrated with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

The Service Programme aims to develop students who:

- Enjoy and find significance in a range of Service experiences
- Purposefully reflect upon their experiences
- Identify goals, develop strategies and determine further actions for personal growth
- Explore new possibilities, embrace new challenges and adapt to new roles
- Actively participate in planned, sustained and collaborative Service projects
- Understand they are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment

Non IB DP students in Grade 11 and 12 must complete at least one service project per year lasting more than one month and provide **at least three written reflections (initial, mid-point and final)** per service experience.

The reflections must address the following learning outcomes:

1. Identify own strengths and develop areas of growth;
2. Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process;
3. Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a Service experience;
4. Show commitment to and perseverance in Service experiences;
5. Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively;
6. Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance at a local level; and
7. Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions.

Some learning outcomes may be achieved many times, while others may be achieved less frequently. Not all Service experiences lead to a Service learning outcome. Students must provide evidence of having achieved each learning outcome at least once through their Service programme. The evidence of achieving the seven Service learning outcomes is found in students' reflections.

CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) is a compulsory program for Grade 11 and 12 students. It emphasizes student-driven experiences across three interconnected strands, encouraging personal growth, reflection, and a sense of social responsibility.

IB Learner Profile

The IB Learner Profile includes 10 attributes valued by IB schools worldwide. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help students become responsible members of local, national and global communities. The Learner Profile supports the notion of international-mindedness and is a central component to all our unit plans.

As IB learners we strive to be:



Inquirers

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



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



Knowledgeable

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



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



Principled

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



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



Thinkers

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



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



Communicators

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



Reflective

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

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

A Caring Community of Happy Learners

Happiness and achievement go hand in hand. At Stamford, an essential part of school life is fostering a caring community where students feel valued, supported, and excited to come to school each day. Social-emotional skills are foundational to student well-being and to building a strong culture of care. We are committed to nurturing age-appropriate life skills while strengthening meaningful relationships among students, teachers, peers, and families. Research consistently shows that students with higher levels of emotional well-being demonstrate greater engagement and stronger academic achievement—both now and in their future studies.

Guided by Stamford’s team of full-time, in-house counselors and support specialists, our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program utilizes the Wayfinder curriculum. Wayfinder’s future-ready skills framework is thoughtfully integrated into advisory periods and academic classes, ensuring that social-emotional growth is embedded throughout the school experience.

The Six Core Skills for Future-Ready Students developed through Wayfinder include Purpose, Self-Awareness, Agency, Collaboration, Empathy, and Adaptability —essential competencies that prepare students to thrive in school and beyond.



Wayfinder - Preparing Students for an Unpredictable Future

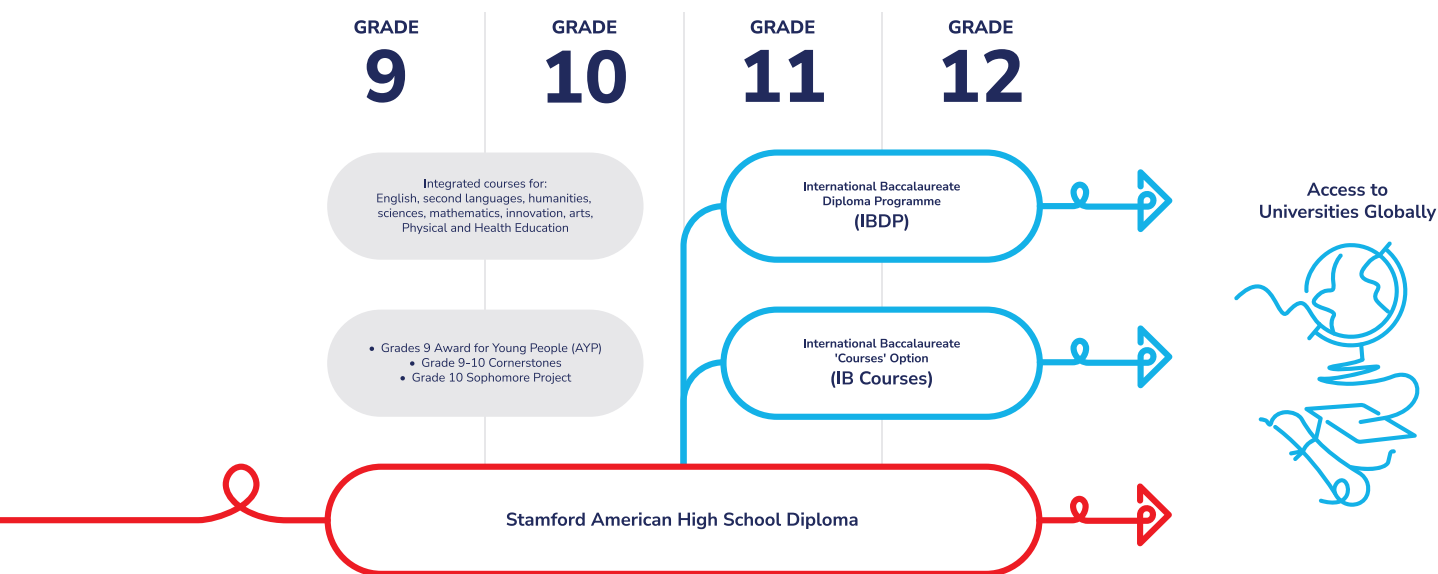
The future of work is changing rapidly, and research consistently shows that long-term career success depends more on human skills than on technical expertise. Skills such as adaptability, communication, critical thinking, collaboration, self-management, and resilience are increasingly valued because they remain relevant despite technological and cultural changes.

Stamford American School uses the WayFinder curriculum because it provides a structured, research-backed approach to intentionally teaching the durable, human-centered skills students need for future success. Wayfinder’s six research-backed Core Skills connect classroom learning to the future-ready skills needed to succeed in the real world.

By implementing WayFinder, we ensure that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills necessary to adapt, lead, and thrive in an ever-evolving world.



**GRADUATION
PATHWAYS**



Stamford High School Diploma - Overview

- Accredited by the CIS/WASC and grants access to universities globally
- Students may choose DP courses (typically at Standard Level) and non-DP courses.
- Students document and reflect on creative, active, and service-learning involvement.

This diploma option affords the most flexibility and allows students to pursue admission to universities worldwide (CIS/WASC accreditation) without the pressure of IB exams to achieve their highest potential graduation outcome. See below for greater detail.

Stamford HS Diploma and IB 'Courses' Program

- Flexible HL and SL IB course combinations.
- May take DP external exams in only certain subjects (flexible).
- Not required to complete the Extended Essay or Theory of Knowledge course.
- Eligible for university credits for IB exam courses.

This diploma option allows students to pursue admission to universities worldwide (CIS/WASC accreditation). The IB courses provide students with advanced standing at many universities and additional admissions consideration.

Stamford HS Diploma and IB 'Diploma' Programme - Overview

- Three subjects at Higher Level (HL) and Standard Level (SL).
- Complete Theory of Knowledge, Extended Essay, and Creativity-Activity-Service (CAS).
- Sit IB exams in all subjects.
- Eligible for university credits for IB exam courses.

STAMFORD AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

All students who satisfactorily complete their courses while at Stamford earn a Stamford American School - Hong Kong - High School Diploma. All courses in Grades 9-12 count toward the high school diploma, so students should be aware that all semester grades that are earned beginning in Grade 9 will appear on their official high school transcript.

Graduation Requirements

SAS Subject	Credits
English	4
Language Acquisition	2
Humanities	3
Sciences	3
Mathematics	3
Arts	2
Physical and health Education	1
Other Courses / Electives	6
Total Minimum Credits during Grades 9-12	24 total

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (IBDP)

As students enter Grade 11, they may begin the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme alongside the Stamford US High School Diploma. The IBDP is a rigorous, internationally recognized two-year curriculum that prepares students for university and lifelong learning. The IBDP at Stamford challenges students to think critically, engage with global issues, and develop the skills and dispositions of the IB Learner Profile.

The IBDP consists of six subject groups and three core components.

Six Subject Groups

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 Studies in Language and Literature | 4 Sciences |
| 2 Language Acquisition | 5 Mathematics |
| 3 Individuals and Societies | 6 The Arts |

Course selection is guided by Stamford's academic team in consultation with students and families, taking into account university aspirations, academic strengths, and personal interests.

The IB Core

Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

The **Theory of Knowledge** course is a two-year course which provides IBDP students with an opportunity to explore and reflect on the nature of knowledge and the process of knowing. The course centers on the examination of questions that are asked about the themes of:

- **Knowledge and the knower,**
- **Two of** - knowledge and technology, knowledge and language, and knowledge and politics
- **Five knowledge areas:** Natural sciences, human sciences, history, mathematics, and the arts

The knowledge questions are addressed within the above themes through a framework that analyses the scope of knowledge, different perspectives on knowledge, the methods and tools used, and ethical considerations. The course is rich in discussion, addresses formal writing proficiency and immerses students in an analysis of the real worlds they live in. Final assessment of the course consists of a formal externally assessed sixteen-hundred word essay, and an internally assessed and externally moderated exhibition where students are required to select one prompt from the list of 35 internal assessment prompts provided in the subject guide and then curate an exhibition of three objects connected to their chosen prompt. Students who choose not to assess externally in the course can elect to sit the first year only but must submit a written application to the DP Coordinator.

The Extended Essay (EE)

The Extended Essay is a compulsory, externally assessed piece of independent research into a topic chosen by the student and presented as a formal piece of academic writing. The extended essay is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity while engaging students in personal research. This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing of up to 4,000 words in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned, coherent and appropriate manner. Students are guided through the process of research and writing by an assigned supervisor (a teacher in the school). All students undertake three mandatory reflection sessions with their supervisor, including a short interview, or viva voce, following the completion of the extended essay.

Creativity, Action and Service (CAS)

Creativity, activity, service is at the heart of the DP. With its holistic approach, CAS is designed to strengthen and extend students' personal and interpersonal learning.

CAS is organized around the three strands of creativity, activity and service defined as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| • Creativity | Exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance. |
| • Activity | Physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle. |
| • Service | Collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need. |

CAS aims to develop students who:

- Enjoy and find significance in a range of CAS experiences
- Purposefully reflect upon their experiences
- Identify goals, develop strategies and determine further actions for personal growth
- Explore new possibilities, embrace new challenges and adapt to new roles
- Actively participate in planned, sustained and collaborative CAS projects
- Understand they are members of local and global communities with responsibilities towards each other and the environment.

A CAS experience is a specific event in which the student engages with one or more of the three CAS strands. It can be a single event or an extended series of events. A CAS project is a collaborative series of sequential CAS experiences lasting at least one month. Typically, a student's CAS programme combines planned/unplanned singular and ongoing experiences. All are valuable and may lead to personal development. However, a meaningful CAS programme must be more than just a series of unplanned/singular experiences. Students must be involved in at least one CAS project during the programme.

IB DP Subjects Offered at Stamford

Subject Group	Subject	Level
The DP Core	Theory of Knowledge (TOK)	
	Extended Essay (EE)	
	Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)	
Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature (Language A)	English	SL and HL
	Chinese	SL and HL
	School Supported Self-Taught Literature	SL
Group 2: Language Acquisition (Language B)	English	SL and HL
	Chinese	SL and HL
	Spanish	SL and HL
Group 2: Language Acquisition (Language Ab Initio)	Chinese ab initio	SL
	Spanish ab initio	SL
Group 3: Individuals and Societies	Business Management	SL and HL
	Economics	SL and HL
	History	SL and HL
	Psychology	SL and HL
	Environmental Systems and Societies (interdisciplinary Gp 3 & 4)	SL and HL
Group 4: Sciences	Biology	SL and HL
	Chemistry	SL and HL
	Physics	SL and HL
	Computer Science	SL and HL
	Design Technology	SL and HL
	Environmental Systems and Societies (interdisciplinary Gp 3 & 4)	SL and HL

Group 5: Mathematics	Analysis and Approaches (AA)	SL and HL
	Applications and Interpretation (AI)	SL and HL
Group 6: The Arts	Music	SL and HL
	Theatre	SL and HL
	Visual Arts	SL and HL

What makes a strong IB learner?

Students who thrive in the IBDP typically:

- Want to challenge themselves against world benchmarks
- Enjoy collaborative work practices
- Have the ability to work across different subject areas
- Demonstrate a good work ethic and strong time management skills

- Have an interest in internationalism and global issues
- Aspire to succeed at university, not just gain entry
- Possess higher-order thinking skills
- Want to impact positively on the world
- See themselves as lifelong learners

Students who successfully complete all requirements earn the IB Diploma, which is recognized by universities worldwide.

What Diploma Option is the Best?

With all options leading to notable universities globally, the best diploma option is the one that allows a child to pursue their aspirations and achieve successful results without sacrificing well-being. At Stamford, we take a non-selective approach and support all students to follow their best-fit pathway. Starting from Grade 8, our team of caring faculty works in partnership with students and parents to guide them through planning and choosing the best possible path for them.

Stamford is non-selective and aims to accept interested and qualified students to the IBDP. At the same time, the school acknowledges that not all students are well-suited to the rigid requirements and rigorous workload of the IBDP. The school does list recommended entry levels for the IBDP in its Senior Course Outline Booklet. Through these critical years, the school and families will work closely to ensure students are on-track to pursue the best-fit pathway for their career aspirations.

Subject Selection Timeline

Date / Time	Event
November of G10	Subject Selection: Career and College Perspectives Talk
November	Course Selection Fair for parents/students.
December	Options workshop
January	Early indication survey + guidance from teachers
March	Final selections
April	Review period
August-September of G11	Course alteration period
After September	No changes to subject choices other than HL/SL or to drop subjects/requirements
After Q3 of G11	No changes to DP courses other than to drop subjects / requirements

Credit Breakdown by Subject

SAS Subject	Credits
English	4
Language Acquisition/Additional Language	2
Humanities	3
Sciences	3
Mathematics	3
Arts	2
Physical and health Education	1
Overflow / Electives	6
Total	24

Graduation Requirements

Core Requirements

<div>4</div> <div>Years of High School</div> <div>Grades 9 through 12</div>	<div>24</div> <div>Carnegie Credits</div> <div>Minimum credits required to graduate</div>	<div>Grade of or Higher 3</div> <div>Minimum passing grade for every course</div>
<div>90%</div> <div>Attendance</div> <div>Required in every class to earn credit</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Years of English</div> <div>English Language studied all four years</div>	<div>19</div> <div>Years Old or Younger</div> <div>Must be age 19 or younger at the time of graduation</div>

Service Learning Completed across each high school year

Attendance & Credit Earning

- Students earn 0.5 credit per semester course with a grade of 3 or higher.
- Must attend 90% of each class to receive credit.
- Tardiness to 10% or more of a class = credit denied.
- Non-regular (Overflow/Electives) components earning 0.5 credit/year: Cornerstones, Theory of Knowledge (TOK).
- No credit awarded for: Sophomore Project, Extended Essay (EE), CAS.

Credit Recovery

A maximum of 3.5 recovery credits may be applied toward graduation requirements. Credit recovery options are available for students who need to make up coursework.

Advanced Courses

- A max of 3 Higher Levels can be taken within the full IB DP (3 HLs and 3 SLs).
- Advanced courses have recommended entry levels - please see relevant course information in the Senior Course Outline Booklet (Grades 11-12).



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Studies in Language and Literature

Language A: English, Chinese, School-Supported Self-Taught Literature

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
English Language & Literature 9	English Language & Literature 10	English A Language & Literature 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	English A Language & Literature 11 & 12
Chinese Language & Literature 9	Chinese Language & Literature 10	Chinese A Language & Literature 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Chinese A Language & Literature 11 & 12
	School-Supported Self-Taught Mother Tongue Pilot Program	Spanish A Language & Literature 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Spanish A Language & Literature 11 & 12
		School-Supported Self-Taught Literature 11 & 12 (SL)	

Studies In Language and Literature (Language A) includes a balanced study of genres, literary texts, and non-literary text types. Students generate moral, social, economic, cultural, and environmental insights through their interactions with different texts. Students learn how to support opinions with evidence, make decisions, and engage in ethical reasoning. The course equips students with the linguistic, analytical, and communicative skills that are needed for thorough textual analysis.

American Standards – American Education Reaches Out (AERO)

Key Concepts – Communication, Connections, Creativity, Perspective, Form

High School Topics Include:

- **Grade 9** Literary and Non-literary Textual Analysis Across Contexts and Genres
- **Grade 10** Literary and Non-literary Textual Analysis Across Contexts and Genres

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Read & Interpret Texts	Analyze and evaluate ways to use language	Organize Ideas	Communication

Grades 11-12 (US High School Diploma and IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students continue their study of Language A through the US Diploma Pathway or the IB Diploma Programme. Courses offered include IB English and/or Mandarin A: Language and Literature (HL/SL) and English and/or Mandarin A: Language and Literature, depending on student interest and academic pathway. These courses develop advanced skills in textual analysis, comparative study, and independent literary research, culminating in both internal assessments and/or external IB assessments.

Language Acquisition

Language B: English, Chinese, Spanish; Language Ab Initio: Mandarin, Spanish

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
English Language Acquisition 9	English Language Acquisition 10	English B 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	English B 11 & 12
Chinese Language Acquisition 9	Chinese Language Acquisition 10	Mandarin B 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Mandarin B 11 & 12
Spanish Language Acquisition 9	Spanish Language Acquisition 10	Spanish B 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Spanish B 11 & 12
		Mandarin ab initio 11 & 12 (SL)	Mandarin ab initio 11 & 12
		Spanish ab initio 11 & 12 (SL)	Spanish ab initio 11 & 12

Language B is a Language Acquisition course that enables students to develop language skills and cultural understanding necessary to communicate effectively in English, Mandarin or Spanish and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

Focusing on vocabulary and grammar enhances language proficiency, while literary analysis and writing skills nurture the ability to engage with diverse texts. Oral communication practice builds confidence for presentations and discussions. Additionally, the course’s emphasis on interdisciplinary connections and engagement with global issues ensures that students are not only well-prepared for the thematic units in the IB Diploma Programme but also equipped to navigate a globalized world. Regular assessments and feedback help students understand expectations and reflect on their learning, setting a strong foundation for future success.

High School Topics Include:

- **Grade 9** Friendship, Happiness and Fulfillment, Migration, Bilingualism and Multilingualism
- **Grade 10** Identities, Human Ingenuity, Sharing the Planet, Social Organization, Experiences, Novel Study

Types of Assessment

- Oral Presentations
- Written Assignments
- Reading Comprehension Tasks
- Listening Comprehension Tasks
- Interactive Tasks

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing

Phase Descriptors

- **Emergent:** Communicate using isolated, memorized words and phrases on predictable everyday topics.
- **Capable:** Able to create with the language to express personal meaning on familiar daily topics; ask simple questions.
- **Proficient:** Can effectively engage in conversations using concrete narration and description across major time frames; handle unexpected social situations; communicate clearly with native speakers. everyday topics.

Grades 11-12 (US High School Diploma and IB Diploma Programme)

Language Acquisition students in Grades 11 and 12 may continue through the US High School Diploma or the IB Diploma Programme via English, Mandarin or Spanish B (HL/SL), which develops advanced communicative competence across the five themes: Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organization, and Sharing the Planet.

The language ab initio course is a language acquisition course for students with no prior experience of the target language, or for those students with very limited previous experience.

Students develop the ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works. Communication is evidenced through receptive, productive and interactive skills across a range of contexts and purposes that are appropriate to the level of the course.

The language ab initio syllabus is organized into five prescribed themes: identities, experiences, human ingenuity, social organization and sharing the planet. The language ab initio syllabus prescribes four topics for each of the five prescribed themes for a total of 20 topics that must be addressed in the language ab initio course.

Humanities

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
Humanities 9	Humanities 10	Business Management 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Business Management 11 & 12
		Economics 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Economics 11 & 12
		History 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	History 11 & 12
		Psychology 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Psychology 11 & 12
		Environmental Systems & Societies 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Environmental Systems & Societies 11 & 12

Humanities encourage learners to respect and understand the world around them and equip them with 21st-century skills. Students will explore the historical, contemporary, global politics, social, economic, religious, technological, and cultural contexts that impact our world. This encourages learners to consider local, regional, and global contexts. Students collect, describe, and analyze data used in studies of societies. Students test hypotheses and learn to interpret complex information, including source material. They develop their identities as individuals and as responsible members of local and global communities.

Humanities help students appreciate human and environmental commonalities and diversity. They learn to understand the interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies, and the environment and also how to identify and develop concern for the well-being of human communities and the natural environment. They develop inquiry skills that lead toward conceptual understandings of the relationships between individuals, societies, and the environments in which they live. Ultimately, Humanities helps students learn how to act as responsible citizens of local and global communities.

American Standards – American Education Reaches Out (AERO)

Key Concepts – Change, Global Interactions, Systems, Time, Place and Space

High School Topics Include:

- Grade 9** Identity, Industrialization, Urban Environments, Global Conflict
- Grade 10** Two Interdisciplinary units with lens of Economics, Geography, History, Politics and Psychology

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Knowing & Understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking Critically

Grades 11-12 (US High School Diploma and IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students pursue Humanities through Individuals and Societies courses, which may include History (HL/SL), Economics (HL/SL), Business Management (HL/SL), Psychology (HL/SL) and Environmental Systems and Societies (HL/SL). These courses develop advanced research, analytical, and evaluative skills in preparation for IB external assessments and/or internal assessments.

Science

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
Integrated Science 9	Integrated Science 10	Biology 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Biology 11 & 12
		Chemistry 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Chemistry 11 & 12
		Computer Science 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Computer Science 11 & 12
		Design Technology 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Design Technology 11 & 12
		Physics 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Physics 11 & 12
		Environmental Systems & Societies 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Environmental Systems & Societies 11 & 12

Science and its methods of investigation offer a way of learning that contributes to developing an analytical and critical way of thinking. Inquiry allows students to independently and collaboratively investigate issues through research, observation, and experimentation. Students explore the connections between science and discover the tensions and dependencies between science and morality, ethics, culture, economics, politics, and the environment. Students develop the ability to demonstrate critical-thinking skills to analyze and evaluate information to make informed judgments in various contexts. Learning science relies on understanding and using the language of science, which involves more than simply learning technical, scientific terminology.

Science helps students understand and appreciate science and its implications and consider it a human endeavor with benefits and limitations. Students will cultivate analytical, inquiring, and flexible minds that pose questions, solve problems, construct explanations and judge arguments. They will design and perform investigations, evaluate evidence and reach conclusions.

American Standards – Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS/AERO/CC)

Key Concepts – Change, Connections, Relationships, Systems

High School Topics Include:

- Grade 9** Atoms and Waves, Sound and Light, Matter and Physical Change, Chemical Change, Ecology
- Grade 10** Position and Movement, Forces, Stoichiometry and Molarity, Genetics, Inheritance

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Make inquiries and design experiments	Process data and evaluate conclusions	Reflect on the impacts of science

Grades 11-12 (US High School Diploma and IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students pursue science through IB Sciences courses, which may include Biology (HL/SL), Chemistry (HL/SL), Physics (HL/SL), and Environmental Systems and Societies (HL/SL). These courses involve rigorous internal assessments (Individual Investigation) and external examinations.

Mathematics

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
Applied Mathematics 9	Applied Mathematics 10	Mathematics: Applications and Interpretations 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Mathematics: Applications and Interpretations 11 & 12
Pure Mathematics 9	Pure Mathematics 10	Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches 11 & 12

Mathematics promotes a powerful universal language, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving skills that contribute to developing logical, abstract, and critical thinking. Through mathematics, students can learn to make sense of the world and analyze and search for patterns and relationships. Mathematics is more than simply teaching formulas or rules but is a means for new knowledge to be applied to situations outside the classroom. It helps students develop problem-solving techniques and provides the foundation for studying sciences, engineering, and technology.

Mathematics at Stamford encourages students to enjoy and develop a healthy curiosity for the subject. Students develop an understanding of the principles and nature of mathematics, as well as logical, critical, and creative thinking. Students learn to build powers of generalization and abstraction and the ability to apply and transfer skills to a wide range of real-life situations. They come to appreciate mathematics’s moral, social and ethical implications. Students will see the international dimension in mathematics through an awareness of the universality of mathematics and its multicultural perspectives. They develop the ability to reflect critically upon their work and the work of others. And ultimately, students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to pursue further studies in mathematics.

American Standards – American Education Reaches Out (AERO)

Key Concepts – Form, Logic, Perspective, Relationships

High School Topics Include:

- Grade 9** Algebraic Expansion and Factorization; Exponents and Radicals; Linear Functions; Systems of Linear Equations and Inequalities; Right-Angled Trigonometry; Statistics and Probability
- Grade 10** Formulas and Functions; Quadratic Equations and Functions; Non-Right-Angled Trigonometry; Circle Theorems; Sequences and Series; Statistics and Probability

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Knowing & Understanding	Investigating Patterns	Communicating	Applying Mathematics in Real-Life Contexts

Grades 11-12 (IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students continue mathematics through IB Mathematics courses:

- Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches (HL/SL), or
- Mathematics: Applications and Interpretation (HL/SL).

Course selection is guided by students’ mathematical background, university aspirations, and career interests.

The Arts: Drama, Music, and Visual Art 🎵

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
Drama 9	Drama 10	Theatre 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Theatre 11 & 12
Music 9	Music 10	Music 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Music 11 & 12
Visual Arts 9	Visual Arts 10	Visual Arts 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Visual Arts 11 & 12

At Stamford American, students select one of three available subjects—Music, Drama and Visual Arts—to prepare them to specialize further in the IB Diploma Programme.

- Students are not just graded on their final product; they are assessed heavily on their creative process. We require teachers to assess all four criteria at least twice a year. A short-term rotation simply does not afford students the time required to demonstrate learning in all four criteria;
- Grade 9 and Grade 10 are designed to prepare students for the rigorous demands of the IB Diploma Programme (DP). High-level DP arts courses require deep technical skills, critical analysis, and sustained focus. If a student spends G9 and G10 continuously jumping between 10-week blocks of music, drama, and visual art, they will lack the specialized foundation needed to succeed in a DP-level studio, theater, or music lab.
- Central to IB art philosophy is the concept of continuous growth. Artistry is viewed as a cycle of trial, error, and reflection. A full-year structure gives students the time and mental bandwidth needed to develop an authentic creative voice, make mistakes, pivot, and document their evolution over months rather than weeks.

Drama engages students in an active relationship with theater and encourages autonomous learning and exploration. It promotes the growth of creative, reflective, and communication skills through practical work. There is an emphasis on the artistic process and the student's understanding of it as an essential component of their creative development through continuous investigation, planning, goal setting, rehearsing, performing, reflection and evaluation.

Music gives students access to musical experiences that allow for the development of thinking skills, intuitive skills, practical abilities, communication, and the ability to relate to others. Engagement with existing and emerging music from the local community and from around the world allows students to understand the significance of music to the cultures of the world and, by engaging in practical work, to develop an understanding of how the act of making music is a significant and universal aspect of human expression.

Visual art allows students to experience a wide range of visual art activities, both traditional and contemporary. While traditional practices such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, and architecture have historically provided cultural records, modern approaches and access to technology now give the tools of visual art an extensive palette. Digital technology, time-based art, installation, and performance add to traditional practice and bring an extra dimension and meaning to the student's experience in visual art.

The arts enable students to develop skills specifically related to the discipline of creating and presenting art. Students will engage in creative exploration and self-discovery making purposeful connections between investigation and practice. By understanding the relationship between art and its contexts, students can respond to and reflect on art and ultimately deepen their understanding of the subject.

American Standards – Massachusetts Arts (MA)

Key Concepts – Aesthetics, Communication, Creativity, Identity

Drama Topics Include:

- **Grade 9** Duologues, Verbatim Theatre, Intro to Shakespeare, Musical Theater
- **Grade 10** Greek Theater, Brecht, Site Specific Methods, Physical Theatre

Music Topics Include:

- **Grade 9** Indian Classical Music, Romantic Period, 21st Century Music, Game Design
- **Grade 10** Contemporary Music and Plagiarism, Chinese Drumming, 20th Century Music, Creative Music Technology

Visual Art Topics Include:

- **Grade 9** Be Well Inquiry, Portraiture, Ceramics, Special Project
- **Grade 10** Connections, Light/Dark, Structures, Past and Present

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Planning, Developing & Creating	Reflecting / Evaluating

Grades 11-12 (IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students may continue their arts education through IB Arts courses, including Theatre (HL/SL), Music (HL/SL), and Visual Arts (HL/SL). These courses involve the development of a substantial body of creative work, critical reflection, and both internal and external IB assessments.

STEMinn (Group IV - Science)

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
STEMinn 9	STEMinn 10	Computer Science 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Computer Science 11 & 12
		Design Technology 11 & 12 (SL/HL)	Design Technology 11 & 12

The STEMinn program combines sustainability, technology, engineering, making and innovation to elevate students into skilled problem solvers ready to tackle global issues. At its core, students leverage skills in digital technology and physical tools to design and engineer solutions that are sustainable and socially responsible.

Through both hands-on and digital projects, students gain future-proof skills in problem-solving and analytical thinking to drive success in any engineering-design field. The high school STEMinn program builds on foundational skills developed in earlier years, elevating students to solve more challenging and nuanced problems while developing stronger technical and soft skills. Students passionate about STEMinn may choose Computer Science and/or Design Technology in the IB Diploma Programme. The STEMinn program builds a strong portfolio of innovative projects and in-demand skills to foster graduates who are attractive to universities and equipped to achieve beyond graduation.

American Standards – NGSS Engineering Design Standards / International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

Key Concepts – Communication, Communities, Development, Systems

High School Topics Include:

- Grade 9** Circuit Boarding, Manufacturing and Resistant Materials, Computer Programming, Web Development
- Grade 10** CAD Modeling and Product Design, Computer Science and Machine Learning, Advanced Topics

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Inquiring and Analysing	Developing Ideas	Creating the Solution	Evaluating

Grades 11–12 (IB Diploma Programme)

In Grades 11 and 12, students may pursue Computer Science (HL/SL) or Design Technology (HL/SL) through the IB Diploma Programme, building on the skills and portfolio developed in the STEMinn program. These courses involve significant design projects, programming tasks, and both internal and external IB assessments.

Physical and health Education

Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11 & 12	
		DP Programme	Stamford Courses
Physical & Health Education 9	Physical & Health Education 10	Sports, Exercise & Health Science 11 & 12 (SL/HL) Planned for AY 27-28	Sports, Exercise & Health Science 11 & 12 Planned for AY 27-28

Physical and Health Education helps students understand and appreciate the value of being physically active and develop the motivation for making healthy life choices. The subject fosters the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to a student's balanced and healthy lifestyle. Students will explore various concepts that help foster an awareness of physical development and health perspectives, empowering them to make informed decisions and promoting positive social interaction. Physical and health education helps students appreciate and respect the ideas of others and develop effective collaboration and communication skills. This subject area also offers many opportunities to build positive interpersonal relationships that can help students to create a sense of social responsibility.

Through a concept inquiry-based approach, Physical and Health Education helps students to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

American Standards – Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) / National Health Education Standards (NHES)

Key Concepts – Health Literacy, Change, Communication, Development, Relationships

High School Topics Include:

- Grade 9** Invasion Games, Swimming, Health (Relationship and Sex Education), Health Fitness and Performance, Net Games, Alternative Games
- Grade 10** Water Polo, International Games, Basketball, Soccer, Personal and Community Health

High School Assessment Objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment Objective 4
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Plan and perform routines, sessions and events	Applying & Performing	Reflect and improve on performance

Grades 11–12 (IB Diploma Programme)

Physical and Health Education remains an integral part of student life in Grades 11 and 12 through the CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) program. Students are encouraged to pursue physical activity as part of their CAS Activity strand, maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle throughout the demands of the IB Diploma Programme.

Being reviewed as a future offering is the IB DP Sports, Exercise & Health Science (HL/SL). It is an academically rigorous course offered as part of the **Group 4 Sciences** curriculum. Rather than being a practical physical education class, it is a formal experimental science that integrates anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, psychology, and nutrition.



BRILLIANT
BASICS

Typical School Day

Sample Weekly Timetable (Grades 9-10)

The timetable below is representative of a typical school day for students in Grades 9 and 10. Students in Grades 11 and 12 follow an IB Diploma Programme timetable structured around their six chosen subject groups, Theory of Knowledge, and CAS commitments.

Period	Time	Duration	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Period 1	7:45 am - 9:05 am	80 min	PE & Health	Mandarin	Math	STEMInn	Science
	9:05 am - 9:25 am	20 min	Snack Time				
Period 2	9:25 am - 10:45 am	80 min	English	STEMInn	Humanities	Mandarin	English
	10:45 am - 10:50 am	5 min	Transition				
Period 3	10:50 am - 12:10 pm	80 min	Mandarin	Science	PE & Health	English	Math
G9/10	12:10 pm - 12:45 pm	35 min	Lunch				
	12:45 pm - 13:20 pm	35 min	SEL	Study Hall	Corner-stones	SEL	Assembly
	13:20 pm - 13:25 pm	5 min	Transition to Block 4				
Period 4	13:25 pm - 14:45pm	80 min	Science	Math	Corner-stones	Drama	Humanities

Sample Weekly Timetable (Grades 11-12)

Period	Time	Duration	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Period 1	7:45 am - 9:05 am	80 min	Chinese B	Design Tech	Design Tech	Math	Economics
	9:05 am - 9:25 am	20 min	Snack Time				
Period 2	9:25 am - 10:45 am	80 min	English A	Economics	History	English A	History
	10:45 am - 10:50 am	5 min	Transition				
Period 3	10:50 am - 12:10 pm	80 min	Study Hall	Chinese B	Chinese B	Study Hall	Design Tech
G11/12	12:10 pm - 12:15 pm	5 min	Transition to Flex				
	12:15 pm - 12:50 pm	35 min	Study Hall	Careers	EE	CAS	Study Hall
	12:50 pm - 13:25 pm	35 min	Lunch				
Period 4	13:25 pm - 14:45pm	80 min	Economics	Math	TOK	History	English A

Co-curricular activities typically happen for one hour after school.

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 (taking into account any accommodations) 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

Teachers clearly communicate to students the guidelines, expectations and use of assessment objectives for homework or coursework. When appropriate, clear exemplars can be used.

Outlined below are the general time guidelines for homework responsibilities per night for all subjects total taught in a day:

Grade 9 100 minutes	Grade 10 110 minutes	Grade 11-12 120 minutes
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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. Achievement is reported on a 7-point scale and feedback is also given for overall effort and progress made in a course.

The grading scale is as follows:

Grade	General Grade Descriptors
7	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
6	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates an extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
5	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates a secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
4	Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
3	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasional significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
2*	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
1*	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

* Credit is not awarded for courses with a grade of 1 or 2.

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.

In the ‘Course Descriptions’ section, each course includes a set of ‘assessment objectives,’ which can be thought of as areas of learning. When a teacher identifies learning outcomes for the unit of study, they are linked to one of these assessment objectives. In this way, teachers can ensure there is a strong link between learning outcomes and assessment tasks, and between assessment objectives and final progress report marks.

Concept-based Unit Planning

Curriculum planning for Grades 9–10 at Stamford is based on the Understanding by Design® framework, which emphasizes identifying what is intended to be explicitly taught and assessed first (American standards), and then designing a unit of study with those goals in mind. There is a strong focus on developing deep understanding and also the ability to transfer that understanding to new and interesting situations. Key primary resources for each course (textbooks) are merely resources, not curriculum.

The basis of all curricular planning at Stamford is built on the structure of a ‘unit.’ A unit of study is what provides the structure for a cohesive, comprehensive, multi-week series of lessons coalesced around a single ‘concept.’ At Stamford, every single unit in all grade levels is focused on a single concept that serves as the lynchpin for the ‘enduring understanding’ and ‘essential questions’ for the unit of study.

By building units of study around these 16 concepts, it is possible for students to come away with a higher level of understanding, not just topics and knowledge. Each High School course will typically have about 4–6 units of study during an academic year.

In Grades 11–12, curriculum planning follows the IB Diploma Programme framework, guided by IB subject-specific guides. Each IB course is structured around its own set of learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and internal and external assessment components.

Leveled Courses

Language

In second language studies (language acquisition) of either Mandarin or Spanish, students are placed in cohorts of students who are at a similar level. Because of the nature of language studies, this is the best way to organize students for these classes.

Math

Beginning in Grade 9, students are placed in one of two courses: ‘Applied Mathematics’ or ‘Pure Mathematics.’ Both of these courses are two-year courses (Grade 9 & 10). Students cover topics from all five math areas: operations/algebra, real and complex number systems (functions), geometry/trigonometry, statistics/probability and calculus. The Applied Math course has more of a focus on real and complex numbers (functions) and statistics/probability. The Pure Math course has more of a focus on geometry/trigonometry and calculus.

For mathematics, students and parents will be led through a course selection process by Stamford’s academic team. They are placed according to a number of factors including: career aspirations, university studies plans, personal interest, ability to access courses as evidenced by Stamford progress reports, and feedback from teachers.

Language and Math Pathways at Stamford

Dimension	Languages - Default Pathways	Mathematics - Recommended Pathways
Student choice & placement	Students may choose their language of study but not the level. They are expected to follow the options specified in the default pathways. Students may appeal the school’s placement decision; however, the default pathways remain the expected route.	Stamford teachers provide pathway recommendations. Students are encouraged to follow these recommendations, but those who wish to pursue a different pathway may discuss their options with their mathematics teacher.
School and IB policy	The default pathways reflect IB-mandated policies. If the required process is not followed, the school may be considered responsible for “academic maladministration” by the IBO.	There is no IB-mandated pathway policy. However, students should understand their current level, as selecting a mathematics course that is too challenging presents the greatest risk of failing the Diploma Programme (DP).
Teacher role and evidence	Teachers will communicate the appropriate pathway options in accordance with the school’s default pathways and IB guidance.	Teachers base recommendations on their knowledge of each student, classroom evidence, consultation with the mathematics department, and the IB’s pathway guidance.
Pathway guidance	Students should use the school’s default language pathways.	Applied Mathematics provides strong preparation for Mathematics: Applications and Interpretation (AI), while Pure Mathematics provides strong preparation for Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches (AA).
Communication timeline	Subject teachers will inform students of their language pathways in January.	Subject teachers will inform students of their mathematics pathways in January.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

In addition to normal Stamford American progress reports, all students in Grades 9 and 10 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 your child’s report card and parent-teacher communication provide.

The MAP assessment is an external, standardized, adaptive computerized test in the three subject areas of reading, mathematics and science 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.



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Cornerstones Program

The Cornerstones Program offers Grade 9 and 10 students 15 hours of real-world experience, integrating one work-related experience into the Stamford high school diploma while the second semester is focused on Research Readiness and the Sophomore Project. Students work with industry experts for project-based learning, mentorship, and networking opportunities. The program culminates in a showcased project each year and quarterly progress reports, giving students skills and confidence for university applications and future careers.

This transformative program challenges students to think critically and creatively, gain a unique perspective on their passions and interests, and develop essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and communication, unlocking their full potential for success in Grades 11 and 12.

Program	Description
Art Ambassadorship	An 11-week program that builds skills in art interpretation and communication. Students develop analytical thinking and storytelling abilities, learning to engage audiences with purposeful language, and produce a 2D art catalog with written content and interactive prompts
Fashion Design and Sustainability	An immersive program exploring sustainable fashion and industry innovation. Through field trips, expert talks, and hands-on collaboration, students develop a sustainable fashion brand and produce a professional website mockup, applying real-world concepts and solutions.
Hospitality, Food & Beverage	A comprehensive introduction to the food and beverage industry, covering marketing, operations, entrepreneurship, customer relations, and sustainability. Students explore diverse career paths and industry connections before applying their learning in a “Hell’s Kitchen” capstone project, taking on the role of strategists to turn around a struggling restaurant.
Law and Legal	An introduction to the legal system and its diverse career pathways, including corporate, criminal, and environmental law. Students explore key concepts, landmark cases, and professional roles through debates, legal research, and mock trials, with field trips to legal institutions bringing the profession to life.
Filmmaking & Storytelling	A hands-on introduction to video production, covering storytelling, cinematography, sound, editing, and performance. Working in teams, students build practical filmmaking skills and industry insight, culminating in a capstone project where they produce a high-quality brand advertisement.
Biotechnology	An introduction to biotechnology and its real-world applications, covering key concepts, major innovations, and topics such as drug development. Through field visits, expert engagement, and hands-on experiences, students consolidate their learning through group presentations and interactive activities.
E-Sports and Gaming	A hands-on exploration of the esports industry, covering competitive gaming, tournament operations, event planning, marketing, and livestream production. Across 11 sessions, students design and deliver a full e-sports event and create digital content, culminating in a student-led tournament that builds teamwork, creativity, and leadership skills.

Program	Description
Impact Entrepreneur	A practical program focused on validating business ideas and turning opportunities into viable ventures. Students build brand systems, develop customer acquisition strategies, and create business models rooted in real market demand — combining strategic thinking with hands-on execution.
Circular Design Innovator	A design program inspired by Stamford's 10th Anniversary, focused on circular design principles. Students transform retired tramway materials into meaningful commemorative products, then develop, validate, and present their work to stakeholders.
Digital Humanities & Data Engineering	An exploration of digital humanities applied to Hong Kong's cultural heritage. Students use data analysis, interactive design, and digital storytelling to create technology-driven experiences that bring local cultural narratives to life for the community.
Future Urban Designing	A practical architecture program where students transform real-world observations of a Kowloon landmark into a virtual 3D model using Blender. Through site analysis, measurement, and 3D construction, students produce a detailed, exhibition-ready streetscape model.
Brand Strategist	A design program centered on the school's 10th anniversary, where students develop a complete brand concept for a commemorative tram. From brand narrative and design principles to 3D modeling and hand-painted advertisement, students bring their concept to life from idea to final execution.

The Sophomore Project

The Sophomore Project is a culminating experience for students in Grade 10 (Sophomores), an essential preparation for the diploma options at Stamford. The project is an 8-month-long project where students choose an area of interest to them, research, develop a plan to produce a product, create that product, then hold a final exhibition. Students document the experience in a process journal and report. This project combines the learning and skills and pushes students to the next level with support from an assigned teacher-mentor. The mentor will help guide them through the process, skills, and evaluation criteria.

Outdoor Program

All high school students participate in outdoor education camps organized by the school. Students in Grade 9 and above travel to locations in China and Southeast Asia. Locations and timing of the trips are published at the beginning of each school year on the school website.

The aim of the camps is to provide a model of holistic, field-based learning in the effort to develop leaders who are ecologically literate, compassionate, and engaged global citizens. Research shows that well-designed, field-based experiences can produce learning which transfers from the field to students' home environments. Through immersive and often challenging field study experiences, students develop leadership traits, compassion for others and communication skills useful in today's world.

Outdoor education camps are seen as an extension of the normal school curriculum, oftentimes with elements that support what is taught in the traditional classroom.

Assistantship Program (Grades 11 & 12 ONLY)

The Assistant Program is a credit-bearing elective for motivated students in Grades 11 and 12 who contribute meaningfully to school life through an authentic school-based role. Students work alongside faculty and staff in one of 13 assistantship areas spanning academic, arts, athletics, technology, administration, and community areas. Positions change annually and are published on the Student Bulletin.

The course develops professional skills, leadership, self-direction, cross-cultural competence, responsibility, and reflective practice. Students complete assigned projects, reflection journals, blog entries, and an end-of-year survey. Prerequisite: Teacher recommendation; Principal approval required. This course is graded on a Pass/Fail basis and does not contribute to the student's GPA. Students may earn 0.5 credit for a semester or 1 credit for a full year. It supports the US High School Diploma pathway through supervised experiential learning, documented reflection, and meaningful contribution to the school community.

American Standards – CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) / ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education)

Key Concepts – Responsibility, Reflection, Initiative, Service, Identity

- Grade 11 & 12

Authentic school-based service;
professional conduct and work ethic;
initiative and self-direction;
leadership and collaboration;
communication across cultures;
digital and workplace competencies;
structured reflection through journals and blog entries;
assigned projects;
and end-of-year evaluation.

Student-led Clubs and Cocurricular Activities

Stamford currently offers approximately 50 after-school co-curricular activities (CCAs) and clubs for students to participate in. These activities are organized into four main areas: athletics, innovation and technology, the arts, and special interest CCAs. The purpose of CCAs is to help students build self-awareness, skills, and confidence. Stamford promotes sportsmanship and leadership through various activities and school teams.

Recent activities include a range of sports teams, robotics, digital media, ceramics, Chinese arts and crafts, drama productions, choir, string orchestra, and Model United Nations. High school students are welcome to create their own student-led clubs or interest groups, and are encouraged to view CCAs as meaningful contributions to their CAS portfolio.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do students choose between applied and pure math?

A: The first consideration is what is best for the student. Two important factors to consider will be career-university aspirations and actual mathematics ability. There will need to be some honest heart-to-heart conversations in some cases, to reconcile reality with options.

Q: How does your American-framework-style education compare to the MYP and the IGCSE?

A: All three include a range of courses, ensuring a balanced content approach. One other similarity with the three is that all of them include a grade 10 culminating project experience. Both the MYP and IGCSE have a strong academic achievement exams-based element to their program, whereas Stamford's approach is more focused on growth strategies (MAP exams) and less on student ranking. The IGCSE does not include components of holistic education, but the MYP and Stamford's approaches do. These include elements of: global citizenship, Approaches to Learning, Action and Service, Learning Profile attributes and social-emotional education.

Q: What external standardized test does Stamford use to ensure students are well-prepared for the IB Diploma Programme?

A: All students in Grades 9–10 take the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam twice a year, at the beginning and end of the school year. While the primary purpose of this exam is to inform teaching and learning, with a focus on growth targets, the data (RIT scores) are statistically sound and can be used as a barometer for student achievement as well. Used in concert with other student-specific longitudinal data the school collects, we can show a complete picture of a student's academic standing at the end of each grade.

Q: What should families be doing to support their child in high school?

A: The best thing you can do is simply be involved in your child's learning. This means having conversations with them at the dinner table about their school day, briefly reviewing their homework with them as regularly as you can, staying in contact with key teachers and encouraging conversations in English using increasingly sophisticated language. One of the most important predictors of success is their reading comprehension and writing abilities. These things alone will benefit almost all other subject areas regardless of content and concepts being discussed. Let your child know you are on their side and there to support them.

Q: How do Stamford's AERO (Common Core) standards prepare students for the Diploma Programme?

A: AERO standards are used by teachers to design all courses in Grades 9 and 10 and also any other 'Stamford' courses such as 'Computer Science' and 'Sport for Life.' Diploma Programme courses do not use AERO standards and instead use a set of very specific IB-directed learning outcomes. In actuality, the DP learning outcomes look and sound very similar to AERO standards, but they are specific to each course. In contrast, AERO standards cover an entire discipline or subject area. In that regard, they are perfectly suited to the nature of our courses in Grades 9 and 10.

Q: What kinds of ongoing professional development do teachers participate in?

A: Ongoing training and support is multifaceted:

- formal external in-person training workshops
- formal internal workshops with other Stamford teachers
- online, multi-week training modules
- school-sponsored training workshops
- normal ongoing collaboration with on-site colleagues
- targeted training and support offered by curriculum coordinator.

Q: Does Stamford offer standardized tests?

A: We offer PSAT for all Grade 11 students and the school is a registered SAT exam center.



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