



Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG



MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

Grade 6 to Grade 8



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COGNITA AND STAMFORD SHARE A COMMON VISION

Thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Stamford's Academic 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



Chris Llewellyn
Middle School Principal



Hannah Casey
Middle School Assistant Principal
(Student Welfare)



Sean Miller
Middle School Assistant Principal
(Academic)



**OUR
FRAMEWORK**

FUTURE-FOCUSED TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION

Academic achievement remains central to a Stamford American education. At the same time, preparing students for an evolving and increasingly interconnected world requires more than subject knowledge alone. Our curriculum intentionally develops the personal, interpersonal, and leadership capabilities students need to navigate challenge, contribute positively to others, and shape their futures with confidence.

As supported by the World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2025, which identifies analytical thinking, resilience, flexibility, leadership, social influence, and creative thinking among the capabilities employers value most highly. As technology continues to reshape work, students will increasingly need to combine technological understanding with empathy, adaptability, collaboration, curiosity, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

Through everyday classroom learning, dedicated programmes, and authentic experiences, students develop:	Leadership and agency Taking initiative, making thoughtful decisions, setting goals, and recognising their ability to influence positive change.
Communication and collaboration Listening actively, expressing ideas clearly, working productively with others, and valuing diverse perspectives.	Resilience and adaptability Responding constructively to setbacks, managing uncertainty, learning from feedback, and persevering through challenge.
Critical and creative thinking Asking meaningful questions, evaluating information, solving complex problems, and generating original ideas.	Self-awareness and wellbeing Understanding emotions, managing learning and relationships, and building healthy habits for long-term wellbeing.
Ethical and global responsibility Acting with integrity, empathy, and respect while considering the impact of choices on local and global communities.	Service and purposeful action Applying learning beyond the classroom to contribute to others and address real-world needs.

These capabilities are embedded within subject learning and strengthened through International-Mindedness, Approaches to Learning, Action and Service, our core values, and Social-Emotional Learning. Together, they help students become adaptable, compassionate, and capable young people who are prepared not only for future study and work, but also for meaningful participation and leadership in a changing world.

The American standards

A high-quality curriculum brings together multiple, connected elements to create a coherent and engaging learning experience for every student. At Stamford American, curriculum development is an ongoing process of reflection, review, and innovation, ensuring that teaching and learning remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive to students’ needs.

Stamford American’s curriculum brings together:

- **Academic standards** that define essential knowledge, skills, and progression
- **Key concepts and enduring understandings** that help students make connections
- **Inquiry and guiding questions** that encourage curiosity and deeper thinking
- **Authentic learning experiences** that connect learning to meaningful contexts
- **Learning skills** that develop communication, collaboration, research, thinking, and self-management
- **Global and interdisciplinary perspectives** that connect learning across subjects, cultures, and communities
- **Purposeful teaching practices** that support inquiry, differentiation, reflection, and student agency
- **Responsive teaching** that recognises the strengths and needs of individual learners

At the heart of Stamford American’s curriculum are rigorous, well-established American standards. These standards provide a clear foundation for learning, support consistency and progression across year levels, and ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills needed for future academic success.

Subject area	Standards and Benchmarks
English, Humanities, Mathematics, Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Education Reaches Out (AERO) (based on Common Core framework)
Modern Languages (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 and Health 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

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- **Critical and creative thinking**
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- **Self-awareness and wellbeing**
Understanding emotions, managing learning and relationships, and building healthy habits for long-term wellbeing.
- **Ethical and global responsibility**
Acting with integrity, empathy, and respect while considering the impact of choices on local and global communities.
- **Service and purposeful action**
Applying learning beyond the classroom to contribute to others and address real-world needs.

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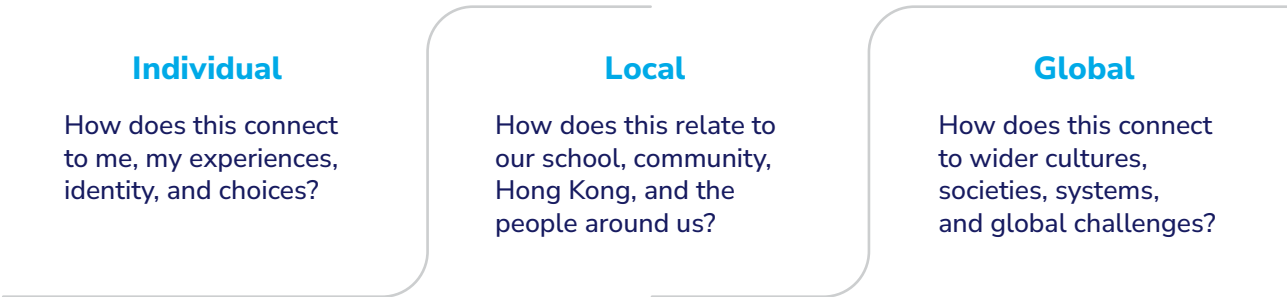
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International-mindedness

Learning becomes more meaningful when students can connect what they learn to themselves, their communities, and the wider world. At Stamford American School Hong Kong, global contexts provide a lens for creating relevant, authentic learning experiences and assessments.

Across the curriculum, students explore ideas and issues through three interconnected perspectives:



By examining learning through these different lenses, students encounter diverse perspectives, recognise connections between the local and global, and apply their knowledge and skills to authentic questions, problems, and situations.

These contexts help move learning beyond the classroom, giving students opportunities to understand why their learning matters and how they can use it meaningfully in the world around them.

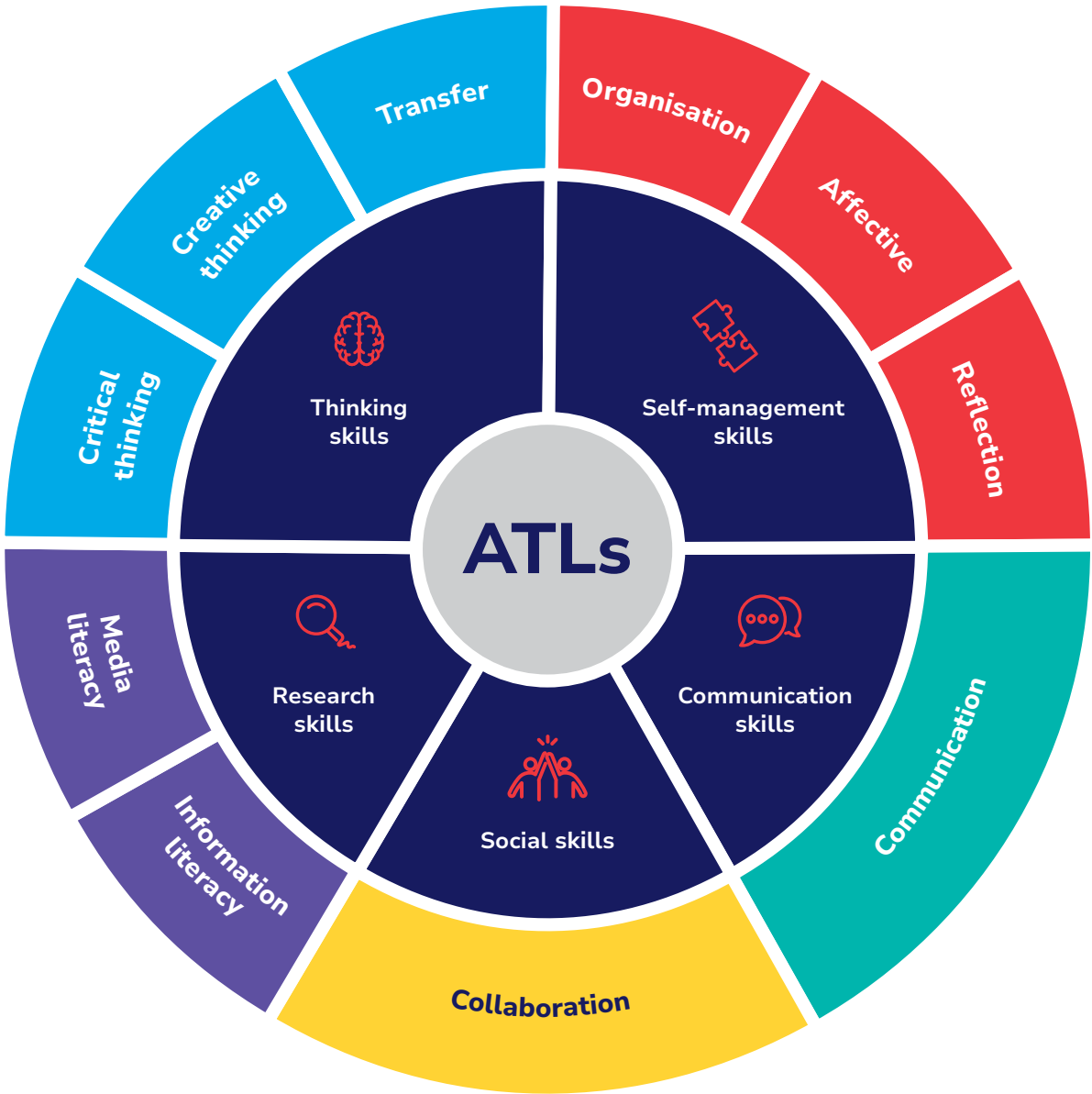
Approaches to Learning (ATLs)

Approaches to Learning (ATLs) are transferable academic, personal, and interpersonal skills that equip students to learn with increasing independence, confidence, and purpose. They provide an important foundation for future-focused education, helping students respond thoughtfully to challenge, work effectively with others, and apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.

ATLs are developed across five interconnected areas:



These skills are intentionally embedded across every unit of study and explicitly taught and assessed through Social-Emotional Learning. Students also develop them authentically through co-curricular experiences, including outdoor education, after-school activities, sports competitions, and performing arts.



Together, these experiences help students become adaptable, reflective, and capable lifelong learners, prepared to contribute with confidence in school, work, and the wider world.



OUR PROGRAM

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUBJECT AREAS AND COURSES

Subject area	Grade 6 - Grade 8
Language and Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">English Language and LiteratureMandarin Language and Literature
Language Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mandarin Language Acquisition (phases)Spanish Language Acquisition (phases)English Language Acquisition (phases)
Individuals and Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrated Humanities
Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrated Sciences
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Math
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual Arts
Performing Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">MusicDrama
STEM /Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">STEM / Innovation

Social-Emotional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a core part of Stamford American's future-focused education. Through dedicated weekly instruction, students develop the self-awareness, resilience, relationships, and sense of purpose needed to thrive academically, personally, and in an increasingly complex world.

When students feel safe, supported, and connected to their community, they are better positioned to engage confidently in learning, respond constructively to challenge, and contribute positively to others. Research consistently links strong social-emotional skills with improved academic outcomes, wellbeing, and long-term success.

In Grades 6–8, Stamford uses the Wayfinder framework to connect students’ learning with the real world and prepare them to navigate their futures with confidence.

Wayfinder’s research-informed Core Skills help students develop:

6 Wayfinder Core Skills

- **Self-awareness**
Recognising strengths, emotions, values, and areas for growth
- **Adaptability**
Responding flexibly to change, uncertainty, and setbacks
- **Empathy**
Understanding and valuing the experiences and perspectives of others

- **Collaboration**
Building positive relationships and working effectively within teams
- **Agency**
Taking ownership of choices, goals, and learning
- **Purpose**
Connecting personal strengths and interests to meaningful contribution

Together, these skills help students become reflective, compassionate, and capable young people who can lead themselves, support others, and approach future opportunities with confidence and integrity.

Which of the 6 Wayfinder Core Skills do you feel most clearly represents Stamford’s commitment to future-focused learning?



ASSESSMENT

Assessment at Stamford American School Hong Kong is an integral part of teaching and learning. It is designed to measure student understanding, provide meaningful feedback, inform teaching, and support continued growth. Students demonstrate their learning through a range of assessment experiences that assess not only what they know, but how effectively they can understand, apply, communicate, and transfer their learning.

Assessment is standards-aligned and criterion-referenced. Student achievement is evaluated against clearly defined learning expectations and assessment criteria rather than compared with the performance of other students. Learning goals, success criteria, and rubrics are communicated so students understand what they are working towards and how they can improve.

Our Approach to Assessment

Across the curriculum, assessment is designed to:

- Align with academic standards, learning outcomes, and assessment objectives
- Assess both knowledge and transferable skills
- Provide authentic opportunities to apply learning to meaningful individual, local, and global contexts
- Use multiple and varied forms of evidence to develop a comprehensive picture of student learning
- Incorporate formative assessment and feedback throughout the learning process
- Provide opportunities for reflection, revision, and growth
- Use teacher professional judgement to determine the level that best represents a student's demonstrated achievement

Achievement is therefore not determined by simply averaging scores. Teachers consider patterns and consistency across multiple pieces of evidence and use a **best-fit approach** to determine the level that most accurately represents a student's current achievement.

Reporting Student Achievement

Progress reports are provided four times each year and are intended to support constructive conversations between students, families, and teachers about achievement, progress, strengths, and areas for continued growth.

Achievement is reported using a seven-point scale:

- 7** = Exceptional achievement
- 6** = Excellent achievement
- 5** = Strong achievement
- 4** = Satisfactory achievement
- 3** = Developing achievement
- 2** = Limited achievement
- 1** = Very limited achievement

Each course identifies clear assessment objectives, representing important areas of learning within the subject. Unit learning outcomes and assessment tasks are intentionally aligned with these objectives, creating a clear connection between what students learn, how they demonstrate their learning, and how achievement is reported.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

In addition to Stamford American progress reports, students complete the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment twice each year, typically at the beginning and end of the school year. MAP provides valuable diagnostic information that helps teachers understand each student's current achievement levels, identify areas of strength and need, and monitor growth over time.

MAP is one part of a broader, future-focused approach to assessment. Its purpose is to inform teaching and support each student's next steps in learning, enabling teachers to personalise instruction, set meaningful goals, and respond to changing learning needs. It is not a summative assessment and is not used to determine grades, course placement, or a student's best-fit grade level.

MAP results are considered alongside a wider range of evidence through Stamford American's Student Success Tracking documentation. This enables teachers to build a complete and evolving picture of each student's academic progress, learning needs, strengths, wellbeing, engagement, and next steps.

By bringing together MAP data, classroom assessment, student work, progress reports, and ongoing communication with students and families, Student Success Tracking supports timely, personalised planning and intervention. This ensures that each student is appropriately supported and challenged as they grow in confidence, capability, and independence.

MAP is an external, standardised, computer-adaptive assessment in reading, mathematics, and science. Because the assessment adapts to a student's responses, it can provide teachers with useful information about individual learning needs and growth. The MAP assessment used at Stamford aligns with the American AERO/Common Core Plus standards frameworks that inform curriculum planning and instruction.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How does Stamford's American-framework education compare with the MYP and IGCSE?

A: All three pathways offer broad, academically rigorous programmes designed to prepare students for further study. Stamford's American-framework curriculum is distinguished by its emphasis on standards-based learning, student growth, and the development of future-focused capabilities alongside strong subject knowledge.

Like the MYP, Stamford places value on transformational development through International-Mindedness, Approaches to Learning, Action and Service, Learner Profile attributes, and Social-Emotional Learning. These experiences help students develop leadership, resilience, collaboration, agency, and a sense of purpose, while building the academic foundations needed for success in Grade 11 and the IB Diploma Programme.

Stamford also uses assessment to support learning rather than to rank students. Progress is understood through multiple sources of evidence, including classroom performance, teacher feedback, student work, progress reports, and diagnostic growth data. This enables teachers to respond to each student's needs and support meaningful progress over time. Above all, students benefit from knowing that home and school are working together: celebrating effort, treating mistakes as opportunities to learn, and maintaining high expectations alongside care and encouragement.

Q: What external assessment does Stamford use?

A: Students in Grades 6–10 complete the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment twice each year, usually at the beginning and end of the school year. MAP is an external, computer-adaptive diagnostic assessment in reading, mathematics, and science that provides useful information about a student's current achievement and growth.

MAP is not a summative assessment, is not used to assign grades, and does not determine course placement or a student's best-fit grade level. Instead, teachers use MAP information to identify strengths, recognise areas for development, set appropriate learning goals, and personalise support and challenge.

MAP data is considered through Stamford's Student Success Tracking documentation, alongside classroom assessments, student work, progress reports, teacher observations, wellbeing and engagement indicators, and communication with students and families. This creates a complete and evolving picture of each student's progress and readiness for future learning, including the IB Diploma Programme.

Q: How can families help?

A: The most valuable support families can offer is consistent interest in their child's learning and wellbeing. Regular conversations about school experiences, challenges, goals, friendships, and achievements help students feel supported and encourage them to take increasing ownership of their learning.

Families can also support future readiness by encouraging students to read widely, communicate thoughtfully, manage their time, persevere through challenge, and seek help when needed. Strong reading comprehension, writing, critical thinking, and self-management skills support achievement across all subjects and prepare students for the increasing independence of the Diploma Programme.

Above all, students benefit from knowing that home and school are working together: celebrating effort, treating mistakes as opportunities to learn, and maintaining high expectations alongside care and encouragement.

Q: How do AERO standards prepare students?

A: AERO/Common Core Plus standards provide the academic foundation for Stamford courses through Grade 10, including integrated subject courses and Stamford-developed courses such as Computer Science and Sport for Life. They set clear expectations for the knowledge, skills, and conceptual understanding students should develop as they progress.

The IB Diploma Programme uses its own subject-specific learning outcomes. However, there is strong alignment in the emphasis on rigorous disciplinary knowledge, inquiry, analysis, communication, and the application of learning in new contexts. Stamford's standards-based curriculum therefore supports a coherent transition into the Diploma Programme while also developing the independence, adaptability, and reflective habits students need to succeed beyond school.





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