



Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

Pre-Primary to Grade 5



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COGNITA AND STAMFORD SHARE A COMMON VISION

Thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our leadership team warmly welcomes you to Stamford American School Hong Kong. We are education professionals experienced in international education and the latest progressive teaching practices.



Andrew Noakes
Head of School
andrew.noakes@sais.edu.hk



Rae Lang
Elementary School
Principal
rae.lang@sais.edu.hk



Angela Strunks
Elementary School
Assistant Principal
angela.strunks@sais.edu.hk



Daniel Goddard
Elementary School Assistant
Principal (Wellbeing)
daniel.goddard@sais.edu.hk

OUR TEACHERS

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

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

At specific times during the year, parents receive formal feedback on their children's progress through report cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Teachers also keep parents informed of class progress throughout the year. You can contact your child's teachers anytime by email with questions, comments, or concerns.

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



**OUR
FRAMEWORK**

AMERICAN STANDARDS

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

- **Academic standards** that 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.

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)
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">• National Core Arts Standards
STEM / Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
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

These standards underpin every unit of study in which a student participates.

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

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

- **Global citizenship**
- **Service learning**
- **Learning dispositions**
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Global citizenship involves international-mindedness and intercultural understanding. Our goal is for students to have an informed world perspective, care about humanity’s future, and understand our complex global society. This means considering multiple perspectives, weighing options, and taking action.

We do this through academic planning. Every unit includes global citizenship, weaving global-mindedness and understanding into all inquiries. Teachers and students explore how we are all connected and interdependent.

Opportunities for global citizenship arise daily — during student council, when discussing resources, or in the canteen while learning about different cultures. Each grade studies the Sustainable Development Goals, ending with the Grade 5 Global Goals Showcase. The opportunities for engagement are vast.

LEARNING DISPOSITIONS

Metacognition — the process of “thinking about thinking” — is deeply embedded in our learning culture. We explicitly teach and foster critical thinking, reflective reasoning, and analytical skills through three core practices:



Our transdisciplinary approach and core approaches to learning are essential in helping students learn how to learn. While explicitly taught in every unit of instruction, metacognitive and critical thinking skills are also organically reinforced across co-curricular experiences — from outdoor education camps and athletic competitions to after-school activities and performing arts.

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.



Organization skills

Manage time and tasks effectively and use technology well.



Creative thinking

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

SERVICE LEARNING

As part of developing globally minded individuals, we seek to engage our students in service learning to help broaden their awareness of both local and global issues. Working with the Parent School Association (PSA) and local and international charitable organizations, we provide opportunities for student learning. This can take different forms based on grade level and the units of inquiry students are exploring, providing a deeper, richer and more engaging learning experience for our students.

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

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

6 Our Framework

Our Framework 7

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

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

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

4 core topics

- **Skills for learning**
This unit deals with skills to become respectful learners by learning to listen, focus attention, follow directions, using self-talk to focus and maintain attention, being assertive and planning for learning.
- **Empathy**
Being able to recognize and name their own feelings will help learners to figure out how other people feel. Caring about how someone else feels helps learners to develop compassion, thus being able to show care and concern.
- **Emotion management**
The role of emotions and how to handle strong feelings such as anger and worry are discussed and self-regulation strategies are explored. With these skills, students find positive ways when facing challenges or difficulties, and ultimately are more equipped to make and maintain friendships and future academic rigor.
- **Problem solving**
Being calm and using words to describe problems enables students to think of and implement different solutions. This unit explores concepts such as playing fairly, handling name-calling, dealing with negative peer pressure, seeking help, dealing with gossip and taking responsibility for your actions.

The program also offers children practical strategies to cope with situations such as bullying; this means also supporting their peers by being responsible bystanders. In addition to the four core topics the program also focuses on two additional units.

2 additional units

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



OUR
PROGRAM



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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



Oral communication



Written communication



Visual communication

These communication strands are organized into sub-strands, which include listening and speaking, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting—all of which are interactive elements of the program. Literacy learning is supported by the Common Core and AERO Standards in Language Arts, through the Science of Reading and in-depth units of study, to foster a rich classroom literacy environment including classroom books, and an extensive collection of inquiry themed reading books.

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

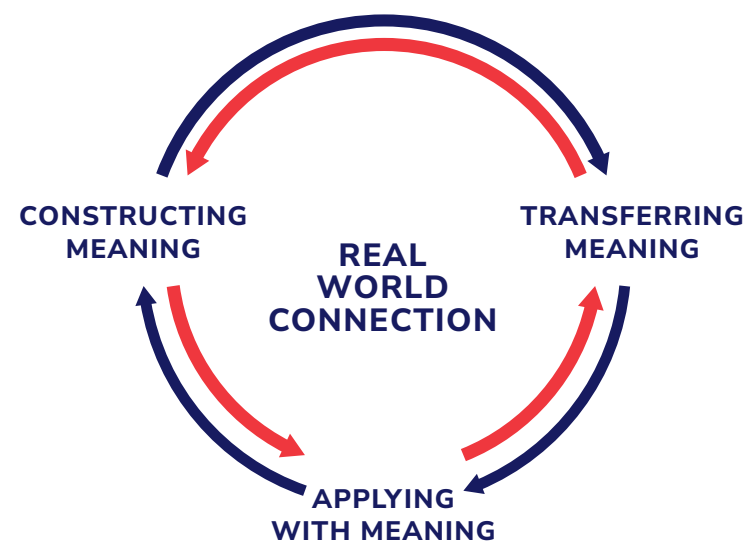
These integrated elements of the curriculum are also woven into the specialized disciplines in which all Stamford students engage. These include daily foreign language instruction (Mandarin or Spanish), Visual and Performing Arts (Drama, Music and Visual Arts) and Physical Education. Overall, this design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



MATHEMATICS

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

- Number Sense and Operations (NSO)
- Quantitative and Spatial Interpretation (QSI)
- Algebraic Thinking (AT)



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

INQUIRY/STEMINN

Our innovative concept-based inquiry STEMinn program is designed to create opportunities for students to develop the core skills needed for success in STEM subjects such as science, technology, engineering, math and social studies. These subjects are fully integrated into our Units of Inquiry and are aligned with applicable transdisciplinary themes for authentic applications. In addition to focused study on the core strands of sciences, including life, earth and physical sciences, students

gain an overall understanding of how scientists think and work within the scientific community. Our curriculum is anchored by the 3 dimensions of the NGSS/AERO Science Standards: Cross-Cutting Concepts, Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Science and Engineering Practices. Likewise, our social studies curriculum is anchored in AERO Common Core Standards, which allows students to gain an overall understanding of human commonality, diversity, and how multiple perspectives can be applied to the human condition.

Pre-Primary	Grade 1	Grade 2
1. Me and my community Inquiry: Understanding our roles and responsibilities and how this affects my community STEMinn: Using my senses to investigate how forces affect movement around me	1. Communities in our world Inquiry: Exploring our roles and responsibilities in their communities STEMinn: Solving problems with the help of the scientific method to make responsible and healthy choices	1. Living together: Systems and stories Inquiry: Exploring global citizenship and its roles in understanding world cultures STEMinn: Building a cultural showcase to demonstrate how parts come together to complete a whole
2. Plants and animals Inquiry: Studying how living things affect each other and their environments STEMinn: Understanding what plants and animals need to survive	2. Our living world Inquiry: Investigating how plant and animal adaptations help humans solve problems STEMinn: Mimicking special plant and animal traits to create tools and techniques to improve human lives	2. Exploring change: Matter, methods, and meaning Inquiry: Investigating how different properties of matter affect the way things work STEMinn: Applying the scientific method to demonstrate how changes to the natural world affect the design world
3. Cultures and heroes Inquiry: Understanding that physical and social attributes of an environment affect cultures STEMinn: Using tools to measure local weather patterns and determine how cultures affect societal norms related to natural conditions	3. Protecting our world Inquiry: Investigating the causes of environmental issues and its effects on our planet STEMinn: Developing solutions through the problem solving cycle to protect our world from human activity	3. Voices for nature: Habitats and relationships Inquiry: Climate and terrain of different habitats can show off how and why plants and animals have adapted over time. Many kinds of animals and plants survive and thrive in different ecosystems STEMinn: Investigating how diversity of life is accomplished through animal behaviors and adaptations
4. Caring for our planet Inquiry: Investigating how our actions can make a difference for sustainability (3Rs) STEMinn: Exploring ways to repurpose and upcycle solutions to reduce impact on our environment	4. Our rotating world Inquiry: Understanding how the Earth is affected by the Sun and Moon STEMinn: Using our observations to predict and determine patterns	4. Patterns of power: Earth in motion Inquiry: Earth consists of landforms and bodies of water that maintain us, many of these are formed by fast and slow earth changes STEMinn: Conducting experiments to observe fast and slow changes and determining solutions to address the changes

DESIGNING TRANSDISCIPLINARY UNITS

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

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<p>1. New perspectives</p> <p>Inquiry: Understanding different forces, how they cause movement</p> <p>STEMinn: Engineering design process to investigate how natural and human-made systems interact and respond to forces</p>	<p>1. Structure and functions</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating conditions that help us learn</p> <p>STEMinn: Understanding how structures function to support growth, development and survival of living things</p>	<p>1. Connections matter</p> <p>Inquiry: Understanding how the past influences the present and future</p> <p>STEMinn: Investigating the origins of particles, the way they work and its place in our current world</p>
<p>2. Social advocacy</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating the rights, roles and responsibilities within a society and how they meet needs</p> <p>STEMinn: Identifying problems in society and using the engineering design process to create solutions</p>	<p>2. Earth processes</p> <p>Inquiry: Exploring changes over time to determine natural history through geology</p> <p>STEMinn: Investigating fossils and evidence of landform changes due to human activity</p>	<p>2. Ecocultures</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating the evolution of cultures and their effects on the natural world</p> <p>STEMinn: Comparing effects of cultures' influences on our sources of nourishment and the natural world</p>
<p>3. Species survival</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating adaptations and how they allow groups of animals to better survive in their environment</p> <p>STEMinn: Design solutions to limit the environmental impacts humans have on animals and ecosystems</p>	<p>3. Energy</p> <p>Inquiry: Determining how energy can be transferred, stored and used to change our world</p> <p>STEMinn: Investigating various forms of energy and its impact on the natural and manufactured world</p>	<p>3. Global sustainability</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating the social and physical aspects of the world on a global scale</p> <p>STEMinn: Exploring how human activity has impacted the globe in various issues</p>
<p>4. Ancient civilizations</p> <p>Inquiry: Comparing the cultures, contributions, and geographic locations of ancient civilizations, and how they change throughout time</p> <p>STEMinn: Analyzing artifacts and fossils to better understand what came before</p>	<p>4. Earth's systems and natural resources</p> <p>Inquiry: Investigating how global issues affect renewable and non-renewable energy sources</p> <p>STEMinn: Comparing conservation efforts that affect decisions related to resource use</p>	<p>4. Space, the gift of curiosity</p> <p>Inquiry: Understanding the impacts of technologies on society and costly explorations</p> <p>STEMinn: Applying technology to investigate science principles related to our Earth amongst the stars</p>



LEARNING THROUGH INNOVATION

Innovation at Stamford focuses on reimagining the educational experience, leveraging today’s technology to enhance student engagement and learning. The integration of technology across all curriculum areas provides opportunities for students to investigate, create, communicate, collaborate and organize, while remaining responsible for their own learning and actions. In turn, students achieve a deeper understanding of its relevance and applicability to their everyday lives. Student learning and engagement are also enhanced by digitally connecting with peers and experts from every corner of the globe. Through the use of technology, students develop their own learning styles, pace and preferences and apply strategies for critical and creative thinking, engage in inquiry, make connections and apply new understandings and skills in different contexts. Throughout the curriculum, teachers model and develop students’ understanding of global citizenship, aligned with Common Sense Media in both physical and digital environments.

iPads, and Extended realities (XR: Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Mixed Reality) are among the many technological tools used for teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum. The use of digital devices enhances research skills, critical thinking, problem solving, processing and presenting skills, efficiency, organization and collaboration.

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

ENGLISH/MANDARIN BILINGUAL PROGRAM

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

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

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

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

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

With dedicated resources, your homeroom teacher and the teaching assistant will be the designated specialists to support your child’s English development across subjects for the whole year. In addition each grade level has specialised EAL teachers who provide support inside the classroom. These faculty are trained to provide highly personalized learning tailored to language ability, helping students gain the confidence to access the full curriculum.

ACCELERATED LANGUAGE PROGRAM (ALP)

The ALP is designed to support the development of students’ English proficiency in a full-time homeroom setting. The ALP is offered in Grades 3 to 5.

Students in the ALP homeroom are delivered the same grade-level curriculum, using our Stamford concept-based inquiry approach and English in the Mainstream scaffolding.

STUDENT SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

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





SPECIALIST TEACHING AREAS

MANDARIN

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

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

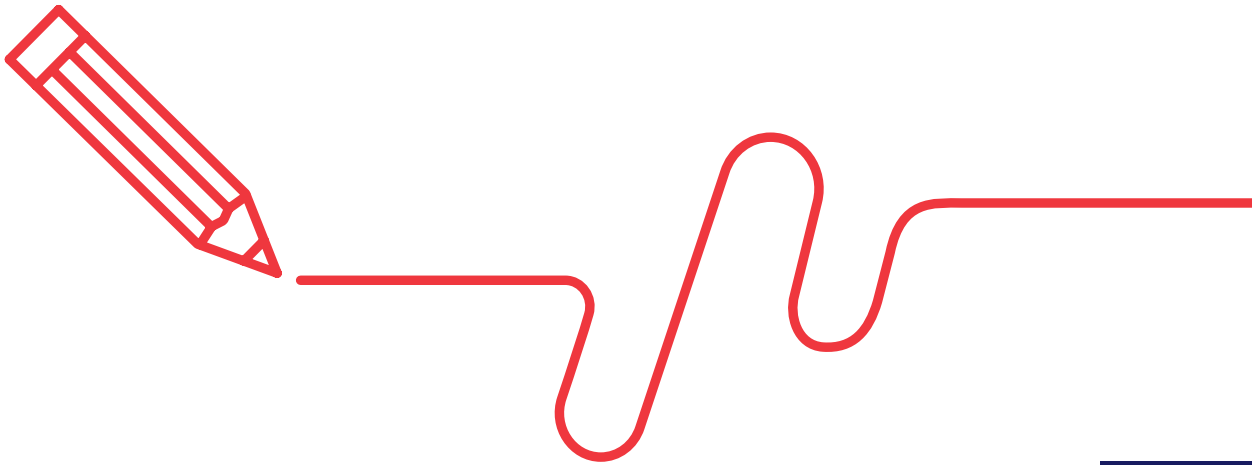
SPANISH

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

Aims of the program

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

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



ART

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



DRAMA

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



MUSIC

At Stamford American School Hong Kong, music is at the heart of our students' educational journey — from the earliest years through to an **IB** learning experience in High School. Our program is experiential by design: students learn music by doing it, through singing, playing instruments, moving, and creating. Every lesson is shaped by three internationally respected methodologies: Kodály for note-reading and aural skills, Dalcroze Eurythmics for rhythm and expression through movement, and Orff-Schulwerk for hands-on playing, improvisation, and ensemble work — together nurturing genuine musicianship at every stage of development.

In Elementary and Middle School, our curriculum is aligned with the **National Core Arts Standards**, guiding students through four interconnected practices: Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Students compose and improvise, perform with growing confidence, listen analytically, and connect music to the wider world. Classroom instruments include recorders, ukuleles, xylophones, African drums such as tubanos and djembes, and a broad range of percussion — giving students hands-on experience across a diverse palette of sounds and traditions.

Our after-school program offerings of choirs, productions and concerts enrich our classroom work. We host concerts, productions, and showcase arts appreciation day each year to celebrate their musical journey.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

In PE, students learn the language of movement. They explore how their bodies move, how movement can communicate ideas, and how physical activity can support a healthy and balanced life. Through a wide range of experiences, students develop skills, confidence, cooperation, and an understanding of what they can do now and how they can continue to improve. They learn to make thoughtful choices, reflect on their progress, and recognize that movement connects to many parts of everyday learning.

The areas of learning are arranged into five strands:

- **Individual Pursuits** develops fundamental movement skills and the body's capacity for movement through activities such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, and swimming. Students explore techniques, rules, and the purposes of different activities, including track and field. They consider how practice, focus, and feedback can improve performance. Measuring distance, time, and progress also creates natural links to mathematics, while learning about muscles, bones, and movement connects with science.
- **Movement Composition** helps students link and refine movements to create expressive sequences. Through gymnastics, dance, parkour, and other activities, they explore balance, rhythm, space, shape, and energy. Movement can respond to music, images, stories, or other stimuli and can communicate feelings, emotions, and ideas. Students make creative choices, explain their intentions, and reflect on how effectively their movements communicate.
- **Games** help students understand how space, rules, skills, and strategies shape different types of games. They learn to make decisions, work with teammates, and adapt their actions as situations change. Students explore fairness and cooperation, modify existing games, and create new ones for particular purposes or groups. These experiences encourage them to think about how communities work together and how clear agreements help everyone participate.
- **Adventure Challenges** provide tasks that require physical skills, communication, and critical thinking. Individuals and groups work together to solve problems, manage risks, and achieve shared goals. Students learn that different ideas and strengths can contribute to a successful solution. They plan, test, revise, and reflect on their approaches, developing perseverance and a growing understanding of their role in a team.
- **Health-related Fitness** introduces students to the importance of regular physical activity and personal wellbeing. They learn how exercise affects energy, breathing, heart rate, and mood, and consider how healthy choices support everyday life. Students begin to explore how the body works as a system, connecting their learning in PE with science and developing a deeper understanding of fitness, health, and personal responsibility.



STRUCTURE

TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

Students arrive at school between 7:10-7:40 am. The school day starts with a 10-minute ‘Morning Advisory’ at 7:45 am, followed by a 20-minute morning break at 9:15. Throughout the day, students attend 9 periods, one of which is for lunch and recess. Approximately one-half of the teaching blocks are ‘double-blocks’ (85 minutes) and half are single blocks (40-45 minutes). Co-curricular activities typically take place for 1 hour after school.

Period	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morn Advisory	7:45 am - 7:55 am					
1	7:55 am - 8:35 am	InquirySTEM	Math	InquirySTEM	PE	Assembly
2	8:40 am - 9:20 am	InquirySTEM	Math	InquirySTEM	PE	SEL
Snack	9:20 am - 9:40 am	Snack				
3	9:40 am - 10:20 am	Math	InquirySTEM	Drama	InquirySTEM	STEMinn Lab
4	10:25 am - 11:05 am	ModLang	ModLang	Math	Math	Math
5	11:10 am - 11:50 am	Lunch				
6	11:55 am - 12:35 pm	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts
7	12:40 pm - 1:20pm	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	EngLangArts
8	1:25 pm - 2:05 pm	Music	Visual Art	ModLang	ModLang	ModLang
9	2:10 pm - 2:50 pm	Music	Visual Art	EngLangArts	EngLangArts	InquirySTEM
CCAs	2:55 pm - 3:55pm					

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

HOMEWORK

Homework provides the opportunity to practice, extend and consolidate learning in class and develops students’ planning and organizational abilities to support their learning. Homework should be relevant to classroom learning, appropriate to the individual student’s learning abilities and purposeful—not homework for the sake of homework.

Homework should have a purpose. It may be to:

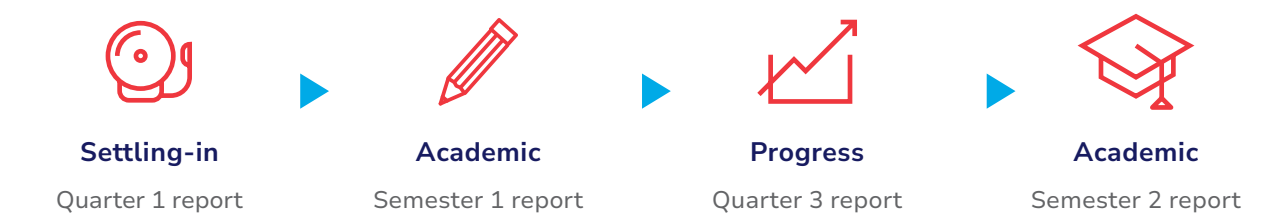
- Prepare students for the upcoming class work
- Be an extension of the lesson to practice or revise skills already developed
- Encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively
- Occasionally finish off incomplete class work
- Transfer new skills or concepts to new situations
- Extend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

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



PROGRESS REPORTS

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.



Our Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 reports take a **holistic approach** to the foundations of student learning. We believe that a child needs to feel safe and integrated in the classroom community to build confidence in the classroom learning environment. This confidence empowers students to learn from their mistakes, builds resilience, and challenges their thinking.

Our Settling-In Achievement Descriptors consider the students settling into classroom routines, community building, making social connections and how they approach learning (non-academic).

Achievement	Descriptor
Emerging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student is proactively working toward meeting classroom expectations and benefits from frequent support to develop understanding and classroom routines.• Continued encouragement and targeted support will help build greater confidence and consistency in the classroom community.
Beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student is beginning to understand classroom community expectations and requires ongoing support to develop foundational skills.• With targeted support and consistent encouragement, they are working toward greater classroom involvement with progress in routines and community building.
Getting started	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student is getting started with understanding the expectations in a classroom community and requires consistent support to build foundational skills.• With sustained intervention and encouragement, they are working toward developing greater confidence and reediness to proactively participate in the classroom community.

Achievement	Descriptor
Exemplary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student demonstrates exceptional understanding of classroom routines and consistently engages in proactive behavior that supports community building and positive peer interactions.• They show a high level of independence and contribute meaningfully to the classroom community.
Advancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student consistently demonstrates a strong understanding of classroom routines and often goes beyond expectations.• They are thoughtful toward peers, show growing independence, and take responsibility for their actions and classroom participation.
Strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student demonstrates a strong understanding of classroom routines and consistently meets expectations.• They are an active participant in the classroom, follow routines reliably, and interact positively with peers. Their confidence in collaborative group settings continues to grow.
Achieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student is developing a solid understanding of classroom routines and actively contributes to the classroom community.• With occasional support and guidance, they are building confidence and consistency in meeting expectations across classroom routines and social settings.



Our Semester 1 and Semester 2 reports take an **academic scholarship** approach to student learning. We report on how students access the curriculum through informed data-driven analysis. Our grades are based on summative and formative assessments.

Current progress is reported on a 7-point scale and the grading as follows:

Our Academic Grade Descriptors consider your child’s academic language development as well as their academic achievement.

- 7** = Student demonstrates **exceptional understanding and application of grade-level concepts, consistently performing well beyond expectations.** Their work reflects advanced thinking, creativity, and a high level of independence.
- 6** = Student consistently **demonstrates strong understanding of grade-level concepts and often applies skills beyond expectations.** Their work shows thoughtful effort, growing independence, and a solid grasp of more advanced ideas.
- 5** = Student demonstrates a **solid understanding of grade-level concepts and consistently meets expectations.** Their work shows steady progress, reliable effort, and growing confidence in applying learned skills.
- 4** = Student is **developing a sound understanding of grade-level concepts and generally meets expectations with occasional support.** Continued guidance helps strengthen their confidence and consistency in applying skills across learning tasks.
- 3** = Student is **emerging as a learner and is working toward meeting grade-level expectations.** They benefit from frequent support to deepen their understanding and apply skills with increasing confidence. Continued encouragement and targeted instruction will help strengthen their consistency and independence in learning.
- 2** = Student is **beginning to engage in classroom learning and is currently performing below grade-level expectations.** They benefit from ongoing support to further develop foundational skills. With targeted instruction and consistent encouragement, they are making progress toward deeper understanding and growth in key learning areas.

UNDERSTANDING ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Academic language is the formal language used in school across all subjects. It includes:

- Specialized vocabulary
- Structured communication (written and spoken)
- Grammar and conventions used in lessons, assignments, and discussions

Why it matters:

Developing academic language is key to accessing the curriculum. Some students- especially English Language Learners - need additional time and support to develop these skills. Progress in academic language directly supports growth in academic performance.

Research shows that language development develops in two phases.

1

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
This is basic everyday social language, this develops within **six months to two years**

2

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
This is academic language, this takes **five to seven years** to proficiently develop

Social fluency and academic language are not equal, academic proficiency is required to fully access the curriculum. Grades reflect both content understanding and academic language development. Comments will specifically address language progress.

Stamford grading is learning-outcomes-related, not norm-referenced. This means individual student performance is compared to pre-developed, communicated expectations, which may take 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; instead, they are determined using a “best-fit” approach. Using best-fit requires professional judgment on the part of the teacher, and multiple, varied examples of student performance always support such judgments.

CONCEPT-BASED UNIT PLANNING

Our STEMinn units are transdisciplinary through Concept Based Inquiry, with each grade completing 4 units per year. Being transdisciplinary enables students to transfer concepts across many subject areas, with a focus on conceptual understanding and how it links across different curriculum areas and ideas. This approach allows students to form generalizations, which are applied across multiple contexts to deepen learning.

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

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)

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

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



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



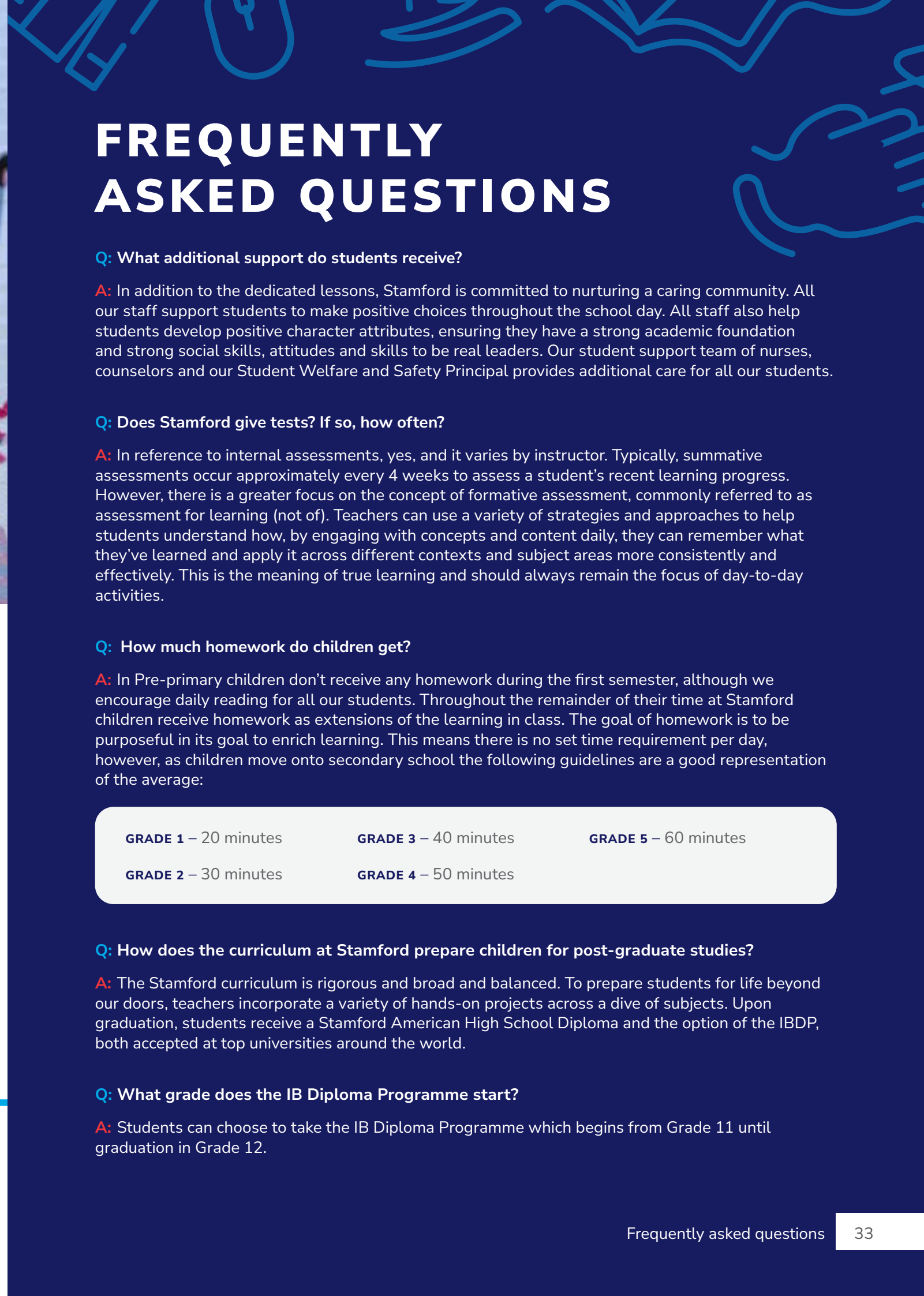
OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Students in Pre-primary to Grade 1 participate in an outdoor education program, during which they go on one to two excursions. These half-day excursions include visits to local ecological parks, beaches, and mountain trails, where students learn a deeper appreciation for nature and participate in a variety of planned activities, such as science scavenger hunts, wildlife/nature cataloging, games, and interactive games. This program not only challenges children outside of the classroom but also develops the foundational skills for the Outdoor Education Camps.

From Grade 2 to 5, in addition to half-day excursions & field trips, students participate in Outdoor Education Camps. For our Grade 3 to 5 students, they have progressively longer overnight camps.

Outdoor camps aim to support holistic education, where students engage in field-based learning to develop leaders who are ecologically literate, compassionate and engaged global citizens. Through camp experiences, students develop leadership traits, resilience, compassion for others and communication skills, allowing them to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

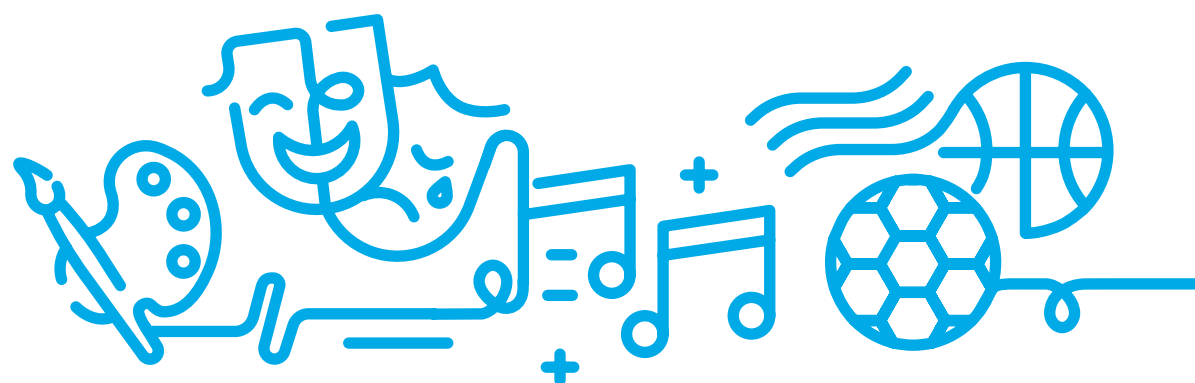
Outdoor education camps are an extension of, and link to, the school curriculum. Our locations are camps in the Hong Kong area and are age- and stage-appropriate, both in location and in the range of activities.



CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/CLUBS

Stamford currently offers over 90 after-school co-curricular activities (CCAs) and clubs in which students can participate. Through our extensive CCA offerings, students have an opportunity to pursue a passion, or explore something new, which could ultimately led to a passion. We encourage our students to participate in CCAs, as a way to create a healthy and well balanced lifestyle and view of the world.

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



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q:** What additional support do students receive?
- A:** In addition to the dedicated lessons, Stamford is committed to nurturing a caring community. All our staff support students to make positive choices throughout the school day. All staff also help students develop positive character attributes, ensuring they have a strong academic foundation and strong social skills, attitudes and skills to be real leaders. Our student support team of nurses, counselors and our Student Welfare and Safety Principal provides additional care for all our students.
- Q:** Does Stamford give tests? If so, how often?
- A:** In reference to internal assessments, yes, and it varies by instructor. Typically, summative assessments occur approximately every 4 weeks to assess a student's recent learning progress. However, there is a greater focus on the concept of formative assessment, commonly referred to as assessment for learning (not of). Teachers can use a variety of strategies and approaches to help students understand how, by engaging with concepts and content daily, they can remember what they've learned and apply it across different contexts and subject areas more consistently and effectively. This is the meaning of true learning and should always remain the focus of day-to-day activities.
- Q:** How much homework do children get?
- A:** In Pre-primary children don't receive any homework during the first semester, although we encourage daily reading for all our students. Throughout the remainder of their time at Stamford children receive homework as extensions of the learning in class. The goal of homework is to be purposeful in its goal to enrich learning. This means there is no set time requirement per day, however, as children move onto secondary school the following guidelines are a good representation of the average:
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| GRADE 1 – 20 minutes | GRADE 3 – 40 minutes | GRADE 5 – 60 minutes |
| GRADE 2 – 30 minutes | GRADE 4 – 50 minutes | |
- Q:** How does the curriculum at Stamford prepare children for post-graduate studies?
- A:** The Stamford curriculum is rigorous and broad and balanced. To prepare students for life beyond our doors, teachers incorporate a variety of hands-on projects across a dive of subjects. Upon graduation, students receive a Stamford American High School Diploma and the option of the IBDP, both accepted at top universities around the world.
- Q:** What grade does the IB Diploma Programme start?
- A:** Students can choose to take the IB Diploma Programme which begins from Grade 11 until graduation in Grade 12.



Stamford American
SCHOOL HONG KONG

Ho Man Tin Campus

25 Man Fuk Road,
Ho Man Tin, Kowloon

T: +852 3467 4500

E: schooloffice@sais.edu.hk

West Kowloon Campus

G/F to 2/F, Imperial Cullinan,
10 Hoi Fai Road, Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon

Admissions Office

T: +852 2500 8688

E: admissions@sais.edu.hk

www.sais.edu.hk

