STAMFORD AMERICAN SCHOOL
HONG KONG

CURRICULUM GUIDE

SECONDARY SCHOOL
GRADES 6–10

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STAMFORD AMERICAN SCHOOL
HONG KONG

COGNITA AND STAMFORD SHARE A COMMON VISION

An Inspiring World of Education: Building self-belief and empowering individuals to succeed.

STAMFORD'S ACADEMIC TEAM WELCOMES YOU

Stamford's faculty and staff extends a warm welcome to all new and returning students as we embark on a new school year. The Secondary School team is made up of about three dozen qualified, experienced and passionate educators whose main goal is to make learning rewarding and impactful. Our teachers have an average of 12 years of teaching experience, two-thirds of them have a master's degree, most have IB experience and everyone is familiar and engaged with the latest progressive best teaching practices.

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OUR TEACHERS

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

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

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

Approximately 15 additional specialist teachers across the subjects of language acquisition (Mandarin and Spanish) physical and health education, and all the arts (drama, music, visual art) also teach students in the Secondary School.

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OUR FRAMEWORK

AMERICAN STANDARDS

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

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

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

Subject Area	Standards and Benchmarks
English, Humanities, Mathematics, Sciences	American Education Reaches Out (AERO) (based on Common Core framework)
Modern Languages (Spanish and Mandarin)	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
Music, Drama, Visual Arts	Massachusetts Arts (MA)
STEM / Innovation	Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
Physical and Health Education	Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) National Health Education Standards (NHES)
Social Emotional Learning	Second Step Program (gr. 6-8) School-Connect (gr. 9-12)

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

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

While academics are indeed important during a student's time at school, we know that life does not consist of just knowledge and skills—young adults need to be able to function socially and emotionally in an evermore complex world. To address this, Stamford embeds a number of things in its curriculum framework to help students build self-confidence, develop communication and collaboration skills, and learn how to think critically. These components either serve as extensions or are interwoven into normal coursework:

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

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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

One way we do this is in our academic unit planning. Each unit of study includes the element 'global citizenship,' which asks the teacher to link the concepts of multilingualism and intercultural understanding to the other aims of the unit. They look at the identified curriculum standards, knowledge and skills, and try to identify natural connections that lend themselves easily to the idea of global citizenship. Teachers are striving to answer the question: What connections can I facilitate to help students understand we are all connected and interdependent?

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

APPROACHES TO LEARNING (ATLs)

Approaches to Learning (ATLs) are a set of 134 academic and affective skills grouped into five areas:

- Communication skills
- Research skills
- Thinking skills
- Social skills
- Self-management 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.

Academic Skills		
Communication	Learning to communicate	How can I communicate my thoughts, feelings and ideas?
Research	Information literacy Media literacy	How can I find, interpret, judge and create information? How can I interact with media to use and create ideas and information?
Thinking	Metacognition - Thinking about my thinking Creative thinking Transfer thinking skills	How do I know what I know? How can create new ideas and consider new perspectives? How can I transfer skills and knowledge from one subject to another?

Affective Skills		
Social	Collaboration skills	How can I work effectively with others?
Self-Management	Taking responsibility for my learning Management of time and materials Managing state of mind (mindfulness, perseverance, emotional management, self-management, self- motivation, resilience) Learning from my mistakes	How do I learn best? How can I manage my time and materials effectively? How can I manage my state of mind? What can I learn from this experience?

ACTION AND SERVICE

All students in grades 6-10 are encouraged to participate in service, creative and active (physical) endeavors. In grades 6-8 the program is less formal and the school usually offers opportunities for students to participate on an optional basis. These can take the form of service opportunities (i.e., Box of Hope, Sunshine Action), after-school sports teams or involvement in the school drama production.

More formally, the **Award for Young People (AYP)** scheme is essentially a framework for students in grade 9 and above that encourages them to be well-rounded, not just focusing on academics only. This directly supports the concept of 'developing the whole child.' The main aims of the **Award for Young People (AYP)** are that students:

- have fun, make friends
- improve self-esteem, build confidence
- gain essential skills and attributes for work and life
- learn resilience, problem-solving, teamwork, communication and drive

Each quarter, students are given guidelines to follow for participation in a range of activities outside of the normal academic school day, and instructions for how to document these experiences. There are five sections of activities students will participate in:

- Service
- Skills
- Physical Recreation
- Expedition
- Residential Project (Gold Level)

All students in Grade 9 will complete the "Bronze" level of the award, and students in Grades 10-12 may optionally choose to pursue the "Silver" and "Gold" levels, with the support of the school.

Community Food Drive, November 17, 2018

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

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, comparison and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

THE SOPHOMORE PROJECT

The Sophomore Project is a culminating experience for students in grade 10 (sophomores), a chance for students to consolidate all the cross-curricular skills they have been honing during the previous recent years. It is an 8-month long project where students choose an area of interest to them, gather necessary background information about the topic, develop a plan to produce a product, create that product, then exhibit or display their project. They will document the entire process with a process journal, reflecting on developments and making suggestions for modifications.

The Sophomore Project encourages students to practice and strengthen their ATL skills, consolidate prior and subject-specific learning and develop an area of personal interest. They will be asked to show that they can organize their time, do basic research, be disciplined and present their findings orally and through writing.

All students will be assigned a teacher-supervisor to help guide them through the process, and there will be a specific set of criteria they work toward, which will form the basis of moderated formal feedback to the student. Students must earn a '4' or higher to be eligible to apply for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Every child receives formal instruction in social-emotional learning (SEL) every week. In grade 6-8, we use the *Second Step* framework, which is a classroom-based program that promotes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills—key skills underlying the principles of the Common Core state standards. Students with these skills are better able to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults and have more coping strategies to manage stressful situations. They are also more likely to benefit from academic instruction. General units of instruction for grades 6-8 include: 1) mindsets and goals, 2) values and relationships, 3) thoughts, emotions and decisions and 4) serious peer conflicts.

In grades 9 and above, we use the *School-Connect* framework. Topics in grade 9 include (but not limited to) building rapport with teachers, using active listening, managing digital tools, cultivating curiosity and grit, and taking effective notes. Topics in grade 10 include: coping with stress, defusing anger, outsmarting media advertising, planning for college and the grade 11/12 course selection process (related to planning for college).

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGLISH

English includes a balanced study of genres and literary texts including a world literature component. Students' interactions with texts generate moral, social, economic, political, cultural and environmental insights. Through their studies, students learn how to form opinions, make decisions and engage in ethical reasoning. The course equips students with linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that help to develop interdisciplinary understanding. Students develop skills in six domains: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting, both independently and with others.

One of the aims of English is to encourage and enable students to use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis and social interaction. It seeks to develop in students the skills involved in critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analyzing literary and non-literary texts. Students learn to explore and analyze aspects of various cultures through literary and non-literary texts. They will explore language through a variety of media and modes, and apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.

American Standards – American Education Reaches Out (AERO)

Key Concepts – communication, connections, creativity, perspective

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – personal narratives, literary essay, research-based information writing

GRADE 7 – writing realistic fiction, writing about reading, the art of argument

GRADE 8 – investigative journalism, analyzing craft and theme in literature, position papers

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Know, understand and interpret	Analyze and evaluate	Communicate

High School topics include

GRADE 9 – visual texts, short stories, literary features, novel study, Shakespeare

GRADE 10 – novel study of U.S. authors, world texts (Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe)

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Know, understand and interpret a variety of texts	Analyze and evaluate ways to use language	Communicate clearly, logically and persuasively

MODERN LANGUAGES (MANDARIN AND SPANISH)

Studying the modern languages of Mandarin and Spanish helps students develop intercultural awareness and international-mindedness by reflecting upon and exploring a range of cultural perspectives. Whether studying at higher or lower levels, being able to communicate in a variety of ways in more than one language is essential to promoting intercultural understanding. The role of language is also valued in the development of critical thinking and global citizenship. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal development and cultural identity, and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development.

One of the aims of modern languages is to gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of a student's mother tongue and cultural heritage. It allows students to develop a respect for and understanding of diverse linguistic and cultural heritages. On a deeper level, they gain an appreciation of a variety of literary and non-literary texts and develop critical and creative techniques for comprehension and construction of meaning. They recognize and use language as a vehicle of thought, reflection, self-expression and learning in other subjects. Modern languages are structured in phases (1-6), and students progress through the phases as their cognition and skills improve.

American Standards – American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Key Concepts – communication, connections, creativity, culture

Phase topics include:

PHASE 1 – introduction to pronunciation and writing, topics of student interest

PHASE 2 – extension of phase 1 with more depth into geography, current events, history

PHASE 3 – interpersonal and cultural contexts, sports, holidays, entertainment, vocabulary

PHASE 4 – short stories, life topics, building vocabulary, grammar, work, media, technology

PHASES 5/6 – reading strategies, authentic sources, academic language, analyze and evaluate

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Comprehending and communicating spoken and visual text	Comprehending and communicating written and visual text	Using language

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Communicate clearly and effectively	Understand and use language interpersonally	Understand and use language with fluency and accuracy

Assessment Objective 4	Assessment Objective 5
Identify, organize and present ideas on a range of topics	Understand, analyze and reflect on written, audio, visual

HUMANITIES

Humanities encourages learners to respect and understand the world around them and equips them with a skill base appropriate for a learner in the 21s t century. Students will inquire into historical, contemporary, geographical, political, 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, test hypotheses and learn to interpret complex information including original source material. They develop their identities as individuals and as responsible members of local and global communities.

One of the aims of humanities is to 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 towards conceptual understandings of the relationships between individuals, societies and the environments in which they live. Ultimately, it 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

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – geography, early humans, natural disasters, culture, time, continuity and change

GRADE 7 – emapping, environmental change, quality of life, ancient China, world religions

GRADE 8 – ecosystems, ancient Americas, Middle Ages, Renaissance, society and identity

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing and understanding	Investigating and communicating patterns	Thinking critically

High School topics include

GRADE 9 – Atlantic trade, absolutism, Age of Enlightenment, industrial revolution, conflict

GRADE 10 – imperialism, The Great War, nationalism, World War II, democracy, globalization

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Demonstrate application and analysis	Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation

Assessment Objective 4
Demonstrate use and application of appropriate skills

SCIENCE

Science and its methods of investigation offer a way of learning that contributes to the development of an analytical and critical way of thinking. Inquiry is at the heart and students are guided 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 in order to make informed judgments in a variety of contexts. Learning science relies on understanding and using the language of science, which involves more than simply learning technical scientific terminology.

One of the aims of science is to help students understand and appreciate science and its implications, and to consider science as a human endeavour with benefits and limitations. Students will cultivate analytical, inquiring and flexible minds that pose questions, solve problems, construct explanations and judge arguments. They will also develop skills to design and perform investigations, evaluate evidence and reach conclusions. Students will build an awareness of the need to effectively collaborate and communicate, as well as apply language skills and knowledge in a variety of real-life contexts.

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

Key Concepts – change, connections, relationships, systems

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – earth's water systems, weather and atmosphere, ecology and ecosystems

GRADE 7 – earth's geology, organisms and adaptations, matter and energy, science ethics

GRADE 8 – cell theory, body systems, reproduction and heredity, solar system, space

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing and understanding	Applying skills and practices	Analyzing and reflecting

High School topics include

GRADE 9 – forces and motion, energy and simple machines, waves and electromagnetism

GRADE 10 – atoms and the elements, radioactivity, thermodynamics, chemical reactions

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Apply and use facts, concepts, methodology and data	Formulate, analyze and evaluate methods and data

Assessment Objective 4
Demonstrate research, experimentation and modelling

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics promotes a powerful universal language, analytical reasoning and problem solving skills that contribute to the development of logical, abstract and critical thinking. Through mathematics, students can learn to make sense of the world and how to carefully analyze and search for patterns and relationships. Mathematics is more than simply learning formulas or rules, but rather, also 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 the study of sciences, engineering and technology.

One of the aims of mathematics is to encourage students to enjoy it and develop a healthy curiosity about the area. Students develop an understanding of the principles and nature of mathematics, as well as logical, critical and creative thinking. Students learn to develop 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 the moral, social and ethical implications arising from mathematics. 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 own 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

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – ratios, rates and percent, algebraic expressions, surface area, intro to statistics

GRADE 7 – operations, algebraic equations, angles, geometry, volume, statistics and probability

GRADE 8 – exponents, linear equations, functions, congruence, statistics and probability

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing and understanding	Investigating and communicating patterns	Applying mathematics

High School topics include

GRADE 9 – reasoning and proof, perimeter/volume/surface, geometry and trigonometry

GRADE 10 – functions, graphs, derivatives, polygons and quadrilaterals, probability, calculus

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Solve real-world problems through appropriate models	Communicate and interpret through terminology
Assessment Objective 4	**Assessment Objective 5**	**Assessment Objective 6**
Use technology accurately, appropriately and efficiently	Demonstrate reasoning through mathematical arguments	Use inquiry approaches to investigate, analyze and test

THE ARTS

‘The Arts’ includes drama, music and visual art.

Drama engages students in an active relationship with theatre and encourages autonomous learning and exploration. It encourages the growth of creative, reflective and communication skills through practical work. Emphasis is placed on the artistic process and the student’s understanding of this process as an essential component to their artistic 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 understanding of how the act of making music is a significant and universal aspect of human expression.

Visual art allows students to experience in 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, contemporary practice and access to technology now give the tools of visual art a very broad palette. Digital technology, time-based art, installation and performance add to traditional practice and bring an extra dimension and meaning to the students’ experience in the visual art.

One of the aims of The Arts is to enable students to develop skills specific to the discipline and then be able to create and present art. Students will engage in a process of creative exploration and self-discovery to make purposeful connections between investigation and practice. By understanding the relationship between art and its contexts, students are able to respond to and reflect on art and ultimately deepen their understanding of art.

American Standards – Massachusetts Arts (MA)

Key Concepts – aesthetics, communication, creativity, identity

Drama topics include:

GRADE 6 – dramatic sequence and structure, drama strategies, signs and symbols, storytelling
GRADE 7 – voice, visual elements of drama, forum theater, play scripts, vocal expression
GRADE 8 – drama in the community, Russian theater, melodrama, physical theater, masks
GRADE 9 – theater production, commedia dell’arte, puppet theater, devising, script writing
GRADE 10 – Greek theater, semiotics, devising techniques, theater theory, Shakespeare

Music topics include:

GRADE 6 – music and advertising, intro to music technology, ad jingle, radio commercial
GRADE 7 – music and animation, history of animation and film, Leitmotifs, aural analysis
GRADE 8 – electronic dance music (EDM), history, technology, compose EDM, notate themes
GRADE 9 – jazz music, baroque and classical period, film music, 20th century music and art
GRADE 10 – Asian world music, aural analysis, romantic period music, music research project

Visual art topics include:

GRADE 6 – design/inquiry cycle, 2D and 3D drawing, self portraits, proportion, sketching, symbolism
GRADE 7 – elements of design: line, value, shape, form, texture, space and color; mixed media
GRADE 8 – principles of art/design, various art movements such as Renaissance, Cubism, Pop Art
GRADE 9 – 2D focus on graphite, colored pencil, charcoal, ink, drawing skills, 3D sculpture, photography
GRADE 10 – color theory and acrylic, abstract ideas and representation, points of view, historical perspectives

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing and understanding	Developing skills and thinking creatively	Reflecting and responding

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Demonstrate application and analysis	Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation

Assessment Objective 4
Select, use and apply skills and techniques

STEMinn

New developments in science/technology/engineering/mathematics/innovation (STEMinn) have given rise to profound changes in society and transformed how we access and process information, adapt to our environment, communicate with others and solve problems. STEMinn challenges students to apply practical and creative thinking skills to solve design problems, encouraging students to explore its role in historical and contemporary contexts. It raises students' awareness of their responsibilities when making design decisions and taking action. STEMinn provides the means and the context to help students become skillful problem solvers who can appreciate the role of technology and can respond critically and resourcefully to real-life changes.

One of the aims of STEMinn is to enable students to enjoy the design process, and to develop knowledge, understanding and skills from different disciplines to design and create solutions to problems using the design cycle. Students will use and apply technology effectively as a means to access, process and communicate information, model and create solutions and to solve problems. They will learn to appreciate past, present and emerging design within cultural, political, social, historical and environmental contexts. STEMinn helps students develop respect for others' viewpoints, appreciate alternative solutions to problems, act with integrity and honesty, and take responsibility for their own actions.

American Standards – Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)

Key Concepts – communication, communities, development, systems

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – digital citizenship, engineering design process, block-based programming

GRADE 7 – engineering and technology, tech integration, multimedia design

GRADE 8 – web technology, scripting languages, computational science, computer modelling

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing, understanding and inquiring	Developing and applying skills	Developing solutions, analyzing and evaluating

High School topics include

GRADE 9 – game design, fashion and digital wearables, society and technology, tech literacy

GRADE 10 – microcontrollers, UNDP sustainable development, bio-technology, Maker Fair

High School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Apply and use facts, concepts, methodology and data	Formulate, analyze and evaluate methods and data

Assessment Objective 4
Demonstrate research, experimentation and modelling

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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 course fosters the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will contribute to a student's balanced and healthy lifestyle. Students will explore a variety of 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 develop a sense of social responsibility.

One of the aims of physical and health education is to have students participate effectively in a variety of physical activities and understand the value of physical activity. Through an inquiry-based approach, students work to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. They collaborate and communicate effectively, build positive relationships and demonstrate social responsibility. They are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences and make modifications for improvement.

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

Key Concepts – change, communication, development, relationships

Middle School topics include:

GRADE 6 – dance, territory/invasion games, adventure challenge, striking and fielding, nutrition

GRADE 7 – gymnastics, throwing and catching, basketball, injury prevention and treatment

GRADE 8 – swimming, net and wall games, Australian football, soccer, development/sexuality

Middle School assessment objectives

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Knowing and understanding	Planning and performing	Reflecting and improving performance

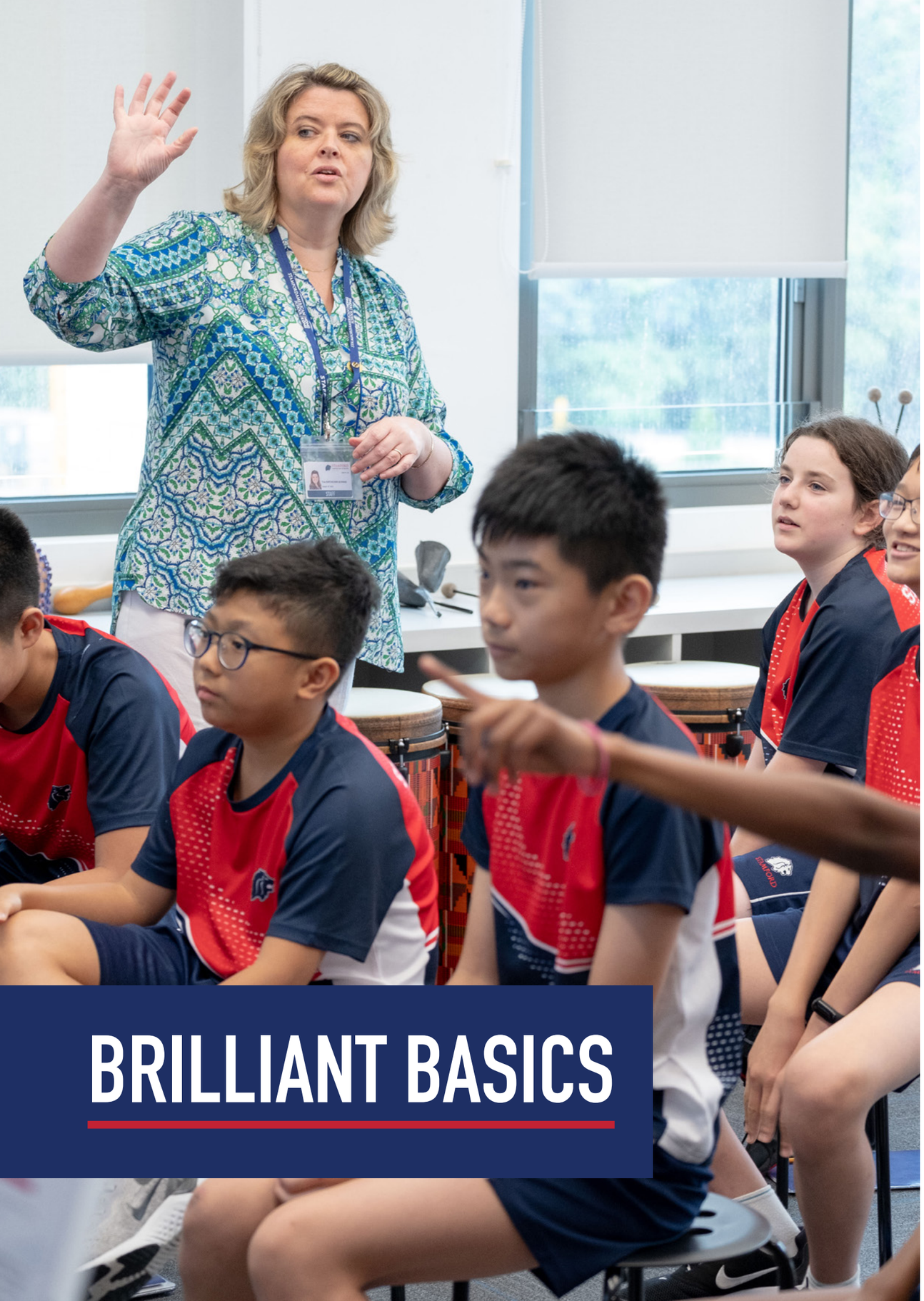
High School topics include

GRADE 9 – badminton, soccer, international games, life fitness, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

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
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding	Plan and perform routines, sessions and events	Reflect and improve on performance



BRILLIANT BASICS

TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

Students arrive at school between 7:10-7:40am. The school day starts with a 10-minute 'Morning Advisory' and then students attend 8 periods. There is a 20-minute morning break and 45-minute lunch/break time mid-day (5A or 5B). Approximately one-half of the teaching blocks are 'double-blocks' (90 minutes) and half are single blocks (45 minutes). Co-curricular activities typically happen for one hour after school.

Period	Duration	Time
Morn Advisory	10 mins	7:45 am - 7:55 am
1	40 mins	7:55 am - 8:35 am
2	40 mins	8:35 am - 9:15 am
Snacks	20 mins	9:15 am - 9:35 am
3	40 mins	9:35 am - 10:15 am
4	40 mins	10:15 am - 10:55 am
5A*	50 mins	10:55 am - 11:45 am
5B*	50 mins	11:45 am - 12:35 pm
6	40 mins	12:35 pm - 1:15 pm
7	40 mins	1:15 pm - 1:55 pm
8	40 mins	1:55 pm - 2:35 pm
Snack	10 mins	2:35 pm - 2:45 pm
CCAs	60 mins	2:55 pm - 3:55 pm

*PERIOD 5 TIME TABLE

Period	Duration	Time	Schedule			
5A	25 mins	10:55 am - 11:20 am	Lunch PP, G1 & 4	Recess G2 & 3	Period 5A G5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10	
	25 mins	11:20 am - 11:45 am	Lunch G2 & 3	Recess PP, G1 & 4		
5B	25 mins	11:45 am - 12:10 pm	Period 5B PP, G1, 2, 3 & 4		Lunch G5 & 7	Recess G6, 8, 9 & 10
	25 mins	12:10 pm - 12:35 pm			Recess G6, 8, 9 & 10	Lunch G5 & 7

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 6 – 70 minutes
GRADE 7 – 80 minutes
GRADE 8 – 90 minutes
GRADE 9 – 100 minutes
GRADE 10 – 110 minutes
GRADES 11-12 – 120 minutes

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 a follows:

7 = excellent performance, significantly exceeding grade level expectations

6 = very good performance, exceeding grade level expectations

5 = good performance, fully meeting grade level expectations

4 = satisfactory performance, occasionally requires support, mostly meeting grade level expectations

3 = mediocre performance, requires significant support, sometimes not meeting grade level expectations

2 = limited performance, below grade level expectations

1 = significantly below grade level expectations

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

In the 'Course Descriptions' section above, 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 strong linkage between learning outcomes and assessment tasks, and between assessment objectives and final progress report mark.

CONCEPT-BASED UNIT PLANNING

Curriculum planning for Grades 6-10 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 are focused on a single concept that serves as the lynchpin for the 'enduring understanding' and 'essential questions' for the unit of study. The sixteen concepts incorporated across all subject areas and all grade levels are:

AESTHETICS	**CHANGE**	**COMMUNICATION**	**COMMUNITIES**
CONNECTIONS	**CREATIVITY**	**CULTURE**	**DEVELOPMENT**
FORM	**GLOBAL INTERACTIONS**	**IDENTITY**	**LOGIC**
PERSPECTIVE	**RELATIONSHIPS**	**TIME, PLACE AND SPACE**	**SYSTEMS**

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 Secondary School course will typically have about 4-6 units of study during an academic year.

COURSE CHOICES

All students in Grades 6-8 study the same subjects; English, a second language (Mandarin or Spanish), humanities, sciences, mathematics, STEMinn, physical and health education, drama, music and visual art. All courses are essentially 'integrated' in nature, meaning that for each grade level a range of topics organized under learning areas are covered. As students progress through the years, the complexity and depth of learning increases, so that students are able to 'scaffold' their learning. The emphasis is on exploring a range of areas every year, so that students never go very long without studying a certain area, such as 'statistics and probability,' 'forces and motion' or 'connections and conflict.'

There are two subjects that are an exception to this integrated approach. 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.

Likewise, for mathematics, 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, meaning a student takes the same course for both Grade 9 and 10. Within each course, the topics are 'integrated' in approach, meaning 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 at the end of Grade 8. They are placed according to a number of factors including: career aspirations, university studies plans, personal interest, ability to access course as evidenced by Stamford progress reports, feedback from teachers.

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)

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

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. This transcript will be submitted to universities during the college application process that happens in Grades 11 and 12 (along with several other things).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

4 CREDITS FOR EACH SUBJECT BELOW

- ENGLISH
- ELECTIVE COURSES

3 CREDITS FOR EACH SUBJECT BELOW

- HUMANITIES
- SCIENCE
- MATHEMATICS

2 CREDITS FOR EACH SUBJECT BELOW

- MODERN LANGUAGES
- THE ARTS (art, drama, music)
- STEM/Innovation
- PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

25 TOTAL MINIMUM DURING GRADES 9-12

BEGINNING TO PREPARE FOR THE IBDP

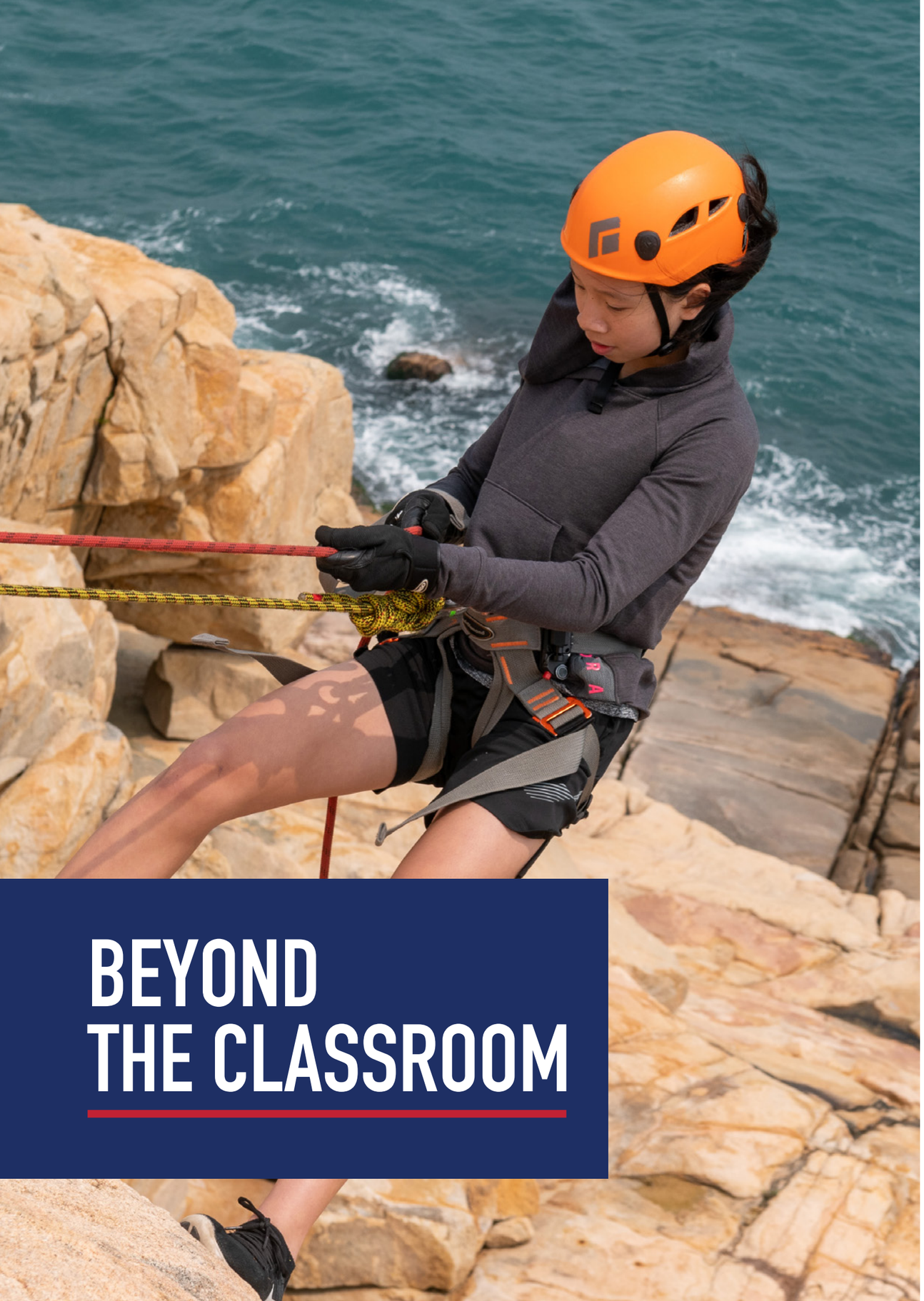
With an eye toward our first cohort of students entering Grade 11 in August 2021, it's useful to start thinking about what an IB learner looks like.

IB learners generally have the following qualities:

- want to challenge yourself against world benchmarks
- enjoys collaborative work practices
- ability to work across different subject areas
- good work ethic and time management skills
- interest in internationalism
- wants success at university, not just 'get in'
- higher order thinking skills
- wants to impact positively on the world
- wants to keep career options open
- see yourself as being a 'lifelong learner'.

Some of the things students in grades 8-10 should be striving for include:

- have perfect or near-perfect school attendance
- demonstrate academic honesty and respectful, safe behavior
- maintain good working relationships with teachers
- develop good note taking and study habits
- devote time almost every day to your studies, be constantly reviewing
- follow the advice of your teachers
- take personal responsibility for your learning
- work hard to develop 'academic literacy' with the assistance of your teachers
- understand that your 'job' is to be a student; do it well
- for the Sophomore Project, follow all the guidelines and do well ('4' or higher).



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

CORNERSTONE PROJECT

All students in Grades 9 and 10 have the unique opportunity to work with world-renowned organizations to find their career aspirations and prepare for universities while earning high school course credit. Students choose one of four organizations per semester, where they are guided by that organization's industry expert and a Stamford faculty advisor. The four opportunities students choose from are:

HONG KONG ART SCHOOL – focus on visual art

OXFAM HONG KONG – focus on student leadership

MIT HONG KONG INNOVATION NODE – focus on innovation and entrepreneurship

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST – focus on journalism

Each semester-long collaboration consists of 12 meeting dates (always periods 6-7-8 on Wednesdays) and results in a culminating project. Ongoing and final performance feedback is blended into the progress reports for the most closely related Stamford course. Cornerstones is an excellent opportunity for students to display project-based learning and provides a standout addition to their portfolios when applying to universities.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CAMPS

All students in grades 6-10 participate in outdoor education camps organized by the school. The current range of locations for grade level trips have students in grades 6-8 staying in the Hong Kong area and students in grades 9 and above traveling elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Locations and timing of the trips are published at the beginning of each school year.

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.

The 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.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/CLUBS

Stamford currently offers about 40 after-school co-curricular activities (CCAs) and clubs in which students can participate. Activities are organized into four different areas: athletics, innovation and technology, the arts and special interest CCAs. The aim of CCAs is to help students build self-awareness on their way to becoming responsible global citizens with a healthy and balanced view of the world.

Just a few examples of activities recently offered include: basketball, hip-hop, gymnastics, swimming, soccer, taekwondo, yoga, coding, digital media, robotics, 3D printing, ceramics, Chinese arts and crafts, Chinese speech and drama, choir, drama production, drawing and painting, string orchestra, chess, creative writing, gardening, and speech and debate.

Students in grades 6-8 are especially encouraged to see CCAs as a good way to have 'action and service' experiences. Likewise, students in grades 9 and 10 can view CCAs as a manageable way to meet *Award for Young People (AYP)* requirements.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Related to 'course choices' mentioned earlier, how do I know for sure I'm going into the right mathematics class?

A: Think of this process as 'we want what's best for you.' Using the factors listed above, the school will do all it can to help step the student through the process. 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 IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)?

A: The main similarity is that all three frameworks encompass a range of courses, ensuring a balanced content approach. 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 and achievement. 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. One other similarity with the three is that all of them include a grade 10 culminating project experience.

Q: Considering the MYP e-assessments and the IGCSE standardized assessments, what external standardized test do you use to ensure or prove that students are being well-prepared for the IB Diploma Programme you will offer later?

A: All students in grades 6-10 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 grade 10.

Q: What should I be doing with my child right now (grades 8-10) to help prepare them for the rigors of the Diploma Programme?

A: Probably 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 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 up through Grade 10 and also any other 'Stamford' courses such as 'Life Skills' and 'Lifetime Fitness.' 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 'integrated' 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 like the SAT and ACT?

A: Yes. Stamford already is a test site for the ACT, although our students won't consider this option until grade 11. Likewise, we will apply for and be ready to offer the Pre-SAT (PSAT) for students in grade 10 and then of course the SAT for grades 11 and 12 later. Schedules and venues will be communicated in due time.

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