



مدرسة الشارقة الأمريكية الدولية
Sharjah American International School



Lower Elementary Parent – Student Handbook 2019-2020



Table of Contents

Welcome Letter from Director of Early Years

Mission and Vision

Community Policies

- ❖ Attendance and Punctuality
- ❖ Bus Policy
- ❖ Designated Pick-Up Person Policy
- ❖ Class Assignment
- ❖ Birthday
- ❖ Uniform
- ❖ Healthy Eating
- ❖ Non-discrimination

Behavior Guidance Policies

- ❖ Positive Discipline Statement
- ❖ Anti-Bullying
- ❖ Hero Point

Parent Complaints

Welcome to the Lower Elementary Wing at Sharjah American International School-Dubai Campus!

As a department, we are looking forward to an enriching and rewarding school year. Our objective is to create an environment in which your child can develop and flourish academically, emotionally, and socially. This will be accomplished through various types of teaching practices from in classroom centers to out of classroom exploration labs.

Lower Elementary is one of the most important times in your children's Elementary years, as it is when they gain confidence as learners and begin creating good study habits and learning behavior. In the Lower Elementary wing our priority is to work alongside your children to help them become confident learners through positive guidance and student/teacher feedback sessions. To help build good study habits, we begin to introduce nightly homework and mid-semester/end of semester Check for Proficiencies (our age appropriate exams). Enabling your child to become a confident learner requires us (parent and KG team) to work together. To ensure that our best practices policies are followed and the impact on our students is effective, we kindly request that you read through our handbook as a family.

If this is your second year or your first year joining our wing we know that through the strength of the parent-teacher partnership your child will have a successful year in our Lower Elementary program.

I thank you in advance for reading through our handbook and supporting our set policies by role modeling them for your child.

Warmest Regards,

Ms. Nicole Cavanaugh and Lower Elementary Team

SAIS-D Mission Statement

To provide an internationally recognized American curriculum based on Common Core State Standards/CCSS, New Generation Science Standards/NGSS, and the California State Education Framework. SAIS-D strives for excellence and innovation in education and is committed to preparing students, both academically and socially, to be creative problem solvers and career and college ready. SAIS-D appreciates the cultural diversity of its multilingual community and instills a culture of mutual understanding and international mindedness that empowers students to be passionate, innovative, and productive citizens in an ever-changing global society while embracing the cultural values, beliefs and aspirations of the UAE.

SAIS-D Vision

Vision: As a member of the SAIS Group of schools, our Vision is to be well recognized internationally and fully trusted locally.

We will be well recognized internationally for:

Delivering measurable and benchmarked outcomes

1. Maintaining active status of affiliations and accreditation with American and internationally recognized school accreditation associations
2. Striving to be effective members of the Global Community
3. Preparing students to be creative innovators and responsible entrepreneurs
4. Respecting the diversity of the school community

We will be fully trusted locally for:

1. Complying with all legislations and operational requirements set for licensed private international schools in Dubai
2. Being a valued member of the local community
3. Building constructive and effective partnerships with all stakeholders
4. Delivering holistic education services to all students
5. Preparing students for prestigious higher education opportunities and securing admissions to colleges and universities worldwide
6. Supporting our teachers and staff members with adequate professional development opportunities
7. Preserving the UAE local identity and culture throughout all school practices and policies
8. Considering the multilingual nature of the school community at most where almost all students are English Language Learners

Lower Elementary Community Policies

Attendance and Punctuality Policies:

Punctuality: To ensure the academic needs of your student are met, it is imperative that your child is present at school at 7:40am. Drop off is between 7:25-7:40am. In case a student is **late (comes after 7:45)**, the teacher **will not** allow him/her into the class unless you have checked in with the Lower Elementary supervisor and will be recorded as late in our school system. Students who are repeatedly late will be reported to the Director of Early Years. The Director of Early Years will then contact the family and request that the parents come to the school to meet and explore ways on how the family can ensure that their child will be on time to school every day.

Students that arrive before 7:15 must be supervised by a family member, students that arrive after 7:15 maybe dropped off in designated early room with a grade 1 assistant. Students are NEVER to be left alone in a classroom. We appreciate you adhering to this very important safety matter.

Our school day ends at 2:20 Sunday to Thursday. Sunday-Thursday late fees will apply at 2:40. Chronic lateness will require a meeting with the Director of Early Years.

Early Dismissal: The Lower Elementary Supervisor and Director of Early will be notified if a parent is asking for their child to leave school before the set end of day time. They have the right to review each case and approve/not approve early leave based on information provided by the family. It is preferred that families discuss early dismissal before the day of request.

Attendance: If your child becomes ill and will be absent please inform the school. When the child returns to school please provide a medical report so we can ensure that your child is ready to be back in school. All other absences, those that do not relate to your child being ill, must be approved by the Director of Early Years. Those unapproved will be recorded in our system as unexcused absences.

Please note: After students exceed 20 days of school absence, the Vice Principal will recommend to the Principal that this student's placement not be continued for the upcoming year. The school will provide a final "excessive absence letter" to be signed in the office of the Vice Principal.

Bus Policy

For our families that use our school transport services it is important that families communicate with the Lower Elementary teacher if their child is using the bus and what bus number, at the beginning of enrollment. If at any time changes occur, the family is required to communicate the change to the Lower Elementary supervisor. As a department we are not responsible for changes that are made and not communicated to the Lower Elementary supervisor.

Designated Pick Up Person Policy

To ensure the safety of your child please introduce to the teacher the person who will be picking up your child everyday: (father, mother, driver, nanny or any other family member). We will not release your child to anybody that you have not already cleared with the teacher. If your pick up plan changes please **inform the teacher and**

the KG supervisor as we can't release the child to an unknown person. Pick up parent/ guardian needs to have the parent's/ guardian's School ID card at all times.

Class Assignment

It is the academic goal of the Lower Elementary department to create a diversified learning environment for all our learners. This goal takes priority when creating our class lists. Parents are welcome to request for teachers they may be interested in, however our above stated goal will be the priority. As a department we do not guarantee the request of the parents. As the year progresses if the Lower Elementary leadership team recognize that a student's academic needs are not being met within 3 weeks of enrollment, we will meet with the families and our Student Support Services department to decide the best course of action for the child.

Birthday Policy

We recognize the importance of celebrating your child's birthday; however we also want to ensure that birthday celebrations do not take time away from our academic goals. Therefore when a child has his/ her a very special day, families are invited into the classroom at the end of the day to sing Happy Birthday and if the family chooses to share a gift with child's classmates, we require non-food items. Example: fun pencils, stickers, balloons, hats, etc. All food or Birthday food items will not be allowed in the Lower Elementary wing. We thank you in advance for adhering and understanding the importance of our Birthday Policy.

In addition, please note that no member of the Lower Elementary team will be responsible for handing out Birthday invitations to the students.

We thank you in advance for adhering and understanding the importance of our Birthday Policy.

Uniform Policy

- All students are expected to wear their school uniform everyday with black shoes and white socks.
- Girls can wear only white polo under their school uniform with white leggings or short white pants.
- Please provide extra clothes for your child in case of accidents, spills, etc..... Don't forget: write his/her name on them please.
- Sports shoes are to be worn on the PE day only.

Please label all your child's clothes, bag, water bottle and lunch box.

Healthy Eating Policy

- Meal times are a social learning time where students sit down with their friends quietly and enjoy their food.
- Please send with your child enough food and snacks for two meals. We ask that when packing your child's lunch you only provide healthy options to promote healthy habits as well as encourage good dental hygiene.

- The following list: *Chocolate, sweets, candies, lollipops, chips, and soda* are not allowed. Please avoid packing fried foods and chocolate sandwiches.
- We will encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day, please provide water and a refillable water container.
- We will have a water dispenser available positioned within the school for any refillable bottles to be topped up, as required.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

SAIS-Dubai along with the Lower Elementary Department has a commitment to maintaining an educational environment where racism and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender identity, disability, marital or civic union status, homelessness or age, are not tolerated.

SAIS-Dubai prohibits discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation, of/against any of its students, as such conduct is contrary to the mission of the school and its commitment to equal opportunity in education.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. It is prohibited by SAIS-Dubai and violates the law of the UAE. For purposes of this policy, “school” includes school – sponsored events, trips, sports events, and similar events connected with school. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about discrimination or harassment, or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint, is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

SAIS-Dubai takes allegations of discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that harassing conduct which violates the law and this policy, has occurred, SAIS-Dubai will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate, which may include school-related discipline (refer to code of conduct).

SAIS-Dubai also prohibits bullying, as set forth in the Bullying Policy section in the school’s code of conduct.

Definitions:

“**Discrimination**” is defined as treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study in the school because of an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students, because of his/her membership in a protected class.

“**Harassment**” is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age. Discrimination and or harassment include, but are not limited to:

Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group based upon the criteria listed above.

Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above because of one of the criteria listed above.

Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment for an individual or group described above.

Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group (as described above) to participate in or benefit from a school program or activity at SAIS-Dubai; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Harassment can be communicated in any form, including verbally, in writing, or electronically via the Internet, cell phones, and text messaging, social media or in any other way that shows disrespect to others based on race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age.

What constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristics on which the harassment is based.

“**Hate Crime**” is defined as a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another’s property.

“**Retaliation**” is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this policy or the ***UAE law***, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

The definitions of discrimination and harassment are broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to either male or female students may constitute discrimination and/or harassment

Reporting Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, Hate Crimes and Retaliation

If any student believes, in good faith, that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the Supervisor, Head of School, Director of Early Years, Vice Principal, or the Principal. This may be done orally or in writing. Teachers or other staff members who observe incidents of harassment involving students, or are in receipt of a complaint from a student, shall report such incidents immediately to the Supervisor, Head of School, Director of Early Years, Vice Principal, or the Principal.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the Schools' policy of promoting an educational setting free from discrimination and harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended to limit the Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the School deems unacceptable.

The School Management will work with the individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment; including conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint. Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.

For more detail information we kindly ask that you refer to the SAIS-D student handbook that covers all the schools at SAIS-D. In the KG Wing all cases will be handled in an age-appropriate matter and will fit within our positive discipline policy.

Behavior Guidance Policies

Positive Discipline Policy

The Lower Elementary team consistently emphasizes basic respect for the individual student. Our students are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. Students learn by exploring, experimenting, and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, and appropriate assertiveness. Students learn self-control and how the world works in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the student's struggle toward independence. Students are accepted as they are — development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways.

In our approach:

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the student, and they are clarified for students so they understand what is expected of them.
- A “yes” environment is created, which enhances and encourages student's positive behavior.
- Teachers model appropriate behavior.
- Teachers encourage student's efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- Students are given alternatives, which enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower students to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving are encouraged.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval.
- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a student is a “bad” girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Retaliating or doing to the student what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

Enforcing our guidelines within our Lower Elementary Community:

As mentioned in our above positive discipline policy it is our goal to provide your child with natural and logical consequences when they are struggling to stay within the set guidelines of our community. The following steps will take place for behavior that is either extreme or excessive:

- If a student physically harms another student or staff member, the offender will be sent to the supervisor’s office, where she will help guide the student on what actions the child should have taken or if in the situation again how they can handle themselves appropriately. The offender’s family will be called and a formal incident report will occur for all cases of physical harm. If the student repeats the behavior more than two times, the school counselor and the Director of Early Years will be informed and will meet with the student to help provide them with tools to help them make better decisions. If there is no improvement the family will be called in to the school, to meet with the supervisor, school counselor, and the Director of Early Years. Further action will be decided as a partnership between the school and the family.
- *Excessive not listening, name calling, inappropriate language, or disregard for the safety guidelines will also be reported to the wing supervisor. The wing supervisor will provide the student with a warning the first time, second time will be a call home to the family, third time Director of Early Years will meet with the child, and fourth the family will be called in to meet with the Supervisor, Direct of Early Years, and the school counselor. Further action will be decided as a partnership between the school and the family.

*Excessive is defined as more than three warnings from the classroom teacher or Lower Elementary staff.

Anti-Bullying

Introduction

Bullying is unwanted **negative behavior** by a student or group of students, with the intention of causing harm, involving an observed or perceived power imbalance. These behaviors occur between peers and are **repeated. Bullying can be done one-to-one or by a group.** Bullying is often considered part of growing up, but bullying can be damaging and result in a life-long diminish in a person’s quality of life as bullying may lead to

very serious outcomes including death. The bullied child may isolate himself/herself, lose confidence, disassociate with friends, and lose interest in school. It is important to eliminate bullying in schools.

A bullying incident, including cyber bullying, will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

There may be occasions when a student's behavior warrants a response under the school's child protection procedures rather than the school's disciplinary procedures.

When incidents of bullying are made aware of, the school will internally investigate the situation.

SAIS-Dubai promotes a safe environment with zero tolerance for acts of bullying. The *Designated Safeguarding Committee (DSC) provides educational initiatives promoting positive behaviors and interactions. When instances of bullying occur, the DSC will utilize appropriate interventions with the possibility of developing behavior plans for students involved. In some cases, students will receive counseling and parents will be notified. Such intervention will involve continued monitoring to eliminate reoccurrence.

Types of Bullying

Verbal Bullying: threatening to cause harm, name calling, Teasing, harsh criticism, spreading rumours, taunting.

Social Bullying: refusing social interaction, rude hand gestures, social isolation, leaving someone out.

Physical Bullying: hitting, tripping/pushing, throwing or taking someone's belongings.

Cyber bullying: Using digital devices and online tools such as social media to insult or threaten, blackmail, damage the reputation of someone.

Players

Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders

Bullying involves multiple players. Bullies, victims, and bystanders all play important roles in contributing to bullying—and each can help make bullying stop. Since bullying is primarily learned, it can also be “unlearned”—or conditions can be changed so that it is not learned in the first place.

Bullies . . . *select* and systematically train their victims to comply with their demands. They seek active encouragement, passive acceptance, or silence from bystanders. ***But***, bullies can be stopped when victims and bystanders learn and apply new ways to stand up against bullying. Bullies can also learn how to make friends and get what they want by helping, rather than hurting, others.

Victims . . . *reward* the bully by yielding control and showing signs of intimidation. They often fail to gain support from bystanders and avoid reporting the bullying. ***But***, victims can learn to defeat the bully by responding assertively, rallying support from bystanders, or reporting the bullying to adults.

Bystanders . . . play an important and pivotal role in promoting or preventing bullying. Often without realizing it, they may exacerbate a situation by providing an audience, maintaining silence, actively encouraging, or joining in. **But**, bystanders can neutralize or stop the bullying by aiding the victim, drawing support from other bystanders, or obtaining help from adults.

School Support - How does SAIS-Dubai Support Students?

Effective bullying prevention starts with changing the beliefs and behaviors of individuals, and learning effective bullying prevention strategies. But lasting change requires the creation of an environment where *everyone* understands that bullying is unacceptable, harmful, and preventable—and where everyone takes responsibility for stopping it.

Strategies present a stepwise approach to engaging staff and children in bullying prevention, ensuring consistency of messages, and creating an environment where all children feel safe.

Messages provide a set of statements to use as a starting point for talking with children about bullying prevention.

SAIS-Dubai Administration recognizes the importance of supporting students, academically, emotionally, and spiritually. The Administration supports the implementation of effective child protection practices and creates a child-safe organization.

Prevention offers concrete suggestions for helping children differentiate between acceptable and harmful behaviors and builds the skills necessary for effective bullying prevention.

Intervention offers strategies for responding effectively when an incident occurs—things to do and say to stop the incident and ensure that the children involved are safe.

Follow-up offers guidance on what to do after the incident. It includes separate guidance for addressing the needs of the bully, victim, and bystander.

Talking with children offers specific language you can use when talking about bullying.

SAIS's Student Support Services (SSS) also consists of Counsellors / Social Workers who assist with the care and protection of students.

- **Provide advice on the Child Protection Policy as it applies to individual cases**
- **Provide advice on mandatory reporting of child abuse**
- **Provide Child Protection Training Sessions for all Staff**
- **Provide intervention plans to students**
- **Empower Students and Parents through awareness** it is the duty and responsibility of all SAIS staff to be role models and exemplify appropriate behaviors and interactions. SAIS empowers students by utilizing an integrated dual curriculum which enables students to build emotional character traits including confidence and independence. Daily focus is placed on student personal development. Through

education, students become empowered to make better choices, understand their rights, and become productive members of a global society.

SAIS-Dubai will provide **parental awareness** on various topics throughout the year.

***The Designated Safeguarding Committee (DSC)**

Members

The DSC will consist of students and staff members (Homeroom Teacher, Hallway Supervisor, Counselor, Head of School and the Vice Principal).

The student members need to show responsibility, integrity and maturity. They have to set an example to other students on how to act, therefore they must be aware of their own words and actions as they are representing the school at all times.

Policies and Responsibilities

The DSC will be known throughout the school and have a designated area where they can gather and do work which will also act as a safe environment for other students to go to in case they need the assistance of one of the members.

They will be given training by the Counselors / Social Workers on how to respond to reports of bullying, how to act if they witness any bullying and when to ask for intervention on a certain case.

Hero Points

When Lower Elementary students succeed in showing that they can demonstrate positive behavior and community guidelines, they will receive a HERO point from a staff member. Points are given on a small ticket that indicates the school value the student has displayed. (Respect, Independent Learner, Responsible and Safe, Active Member in the Community)

Teachers will help the students keep track of their HERO points so they can be redeemed for Awarding Certificates or prizes at our Hero Point Store!

Redeeming the Points

Students can redeem points at any time during the school year; points cannot be transferred to another academic year. Points are redeemed at the bookstore weekly or monthly if applicable with the teacher or teacher assistant.

Parent Complaints Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set clear guidelines and flowchart to ensure that parent' concerns and complaints are dealt with in a professional and systematic approach that reflects an effective distributed leadership structure.

Students and/or their guardians are expected to follow the steps below in case of raising any concerns or complaints

- 1) Students and/or their guardians can communicate with the hallway supervisor in case of any concern that involves academic, pastoral care, health and safety, or support.
Hallway supervisor will document the reported complaints/concerns; start an investigation process, contact with concerned staff member(s) and reply to students/guardians within two working days. Should the concern not be resolved; students/guardians can take their concerns to the line manager (step 2).
- 2) Students and/or their guardians can communicate with the Director of Early Years, in case of any unresolved concerns or complaints which have already been discussed with the hallway supervisor and the feedback was found to be unacceptable by parents/guardians, the Director of Early Years will follow up and address the concerns/complaints, communicate with concerned staff members and respond back to the parents/guardians within two working days. Should the step (2) process not provide practical resolution(s), parents/guardians can go to step (3).
- 3) +Students and/or their guardians can communicate to the Vice Principal in case there is any concern that involves pastoral care, health and safety, or Student Support.

If the problem is not resolved, students and/or their guardians can go to step (4).

- 4) Students and/or their guardians can communicate to the Principal if their complaint is not addressed.
Parents are NOT allowed to directly communicate/ contact teachers without arranging a meeting in the presence of the hallway Supervisor, the Director of Early Years or any Senior Leader.