

THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CONAKRY



PARENT AND STUDENT GUIDE

ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010

The American International School of Conakry –
www.iscguinea.org

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CONAKRY

PARENT AND STUDENT GUIDE

ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Guide is designed to provide parents and pupils with the information you need regarding the daily operation of the American International School of Conakry (AISC). The information included is consistent with school board policy. We believe that it is important that both you and your son or daughter read the Guide. Please indicate that you have done so by signing and returning the form on the last page.

Included in the appendices of this document are the daily timetables, the 2009-2010 calendar, a faculty and staff list, and the constitution and by-laws of the association that governs the school.

1.2 Governance of the School

AISC is a private, non-profit international school owned by the parents who enrol their children, an association of member parents. At its annual general meeting, the association of parents elects a board of trustees or school board consisting of 6 voting members. An additional voting member is appointed by the US Embassy in Conakry in exchange for an annual educational grant from the US Department of State. Non-voting members on the board include the school director and a faculty and staff representative. The latter is elected annually by faculty and staff early in the academic year.

1.3 Mission Statement

The American International School of Conakry is a community of learners engaging in discovery and invention, reflection and problem solving. We teach an international curriculum using diverse teaching methods so our international student body will be lifelong learners with the knowledge, creativity, ethical values, and sense of worth necessary to flourish in a rapidly changing global society.

1.4 Curriculum

AISC has completed writing a comprehensive curriculum and this year we will be aligning this curriculum to internationally recognized standards namely the AERO Standards. These standards were developed by international school teachers specifically for international schools. By adopting these standards we will be standardizing our curriculum with many other schools worldwide thus ensuring that the children who transfer from AISC will find little trouble making the transition to the expectations of their new school. More information relating to AERO Standards can be found on the AERO Website; www.projectaero.org

1.5 Membership

AISC is a member of the International Schools Services (ISS), the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE), and the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA).

1.6 Accreditation

AISC is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the school will be implementing the improvement plan that was devised as part of our accreditation process.

1.7 School Configuration

There are two main sections of the school, primary and secondary. Primary includes Nursery through grade 5; secondary grades 6 through 12. The secondary school is further subdivided into the middle school, grades 6, 7, and 8 and the high school, grades 9 through 12. This year, grades 9 through 12 will follow the University of Nebraska High School Program.

1.8 School Administration

The school administration consists of the Director, the Business Manager, and the School Secretary.

2. General Information

2.1 Admission and Grade Placement

AISC has, generally speaking, an open admissions policy. All children aged three through 18 for whom the school can provide an adequate education are eligible for admission. The school cannot provide an adequate learning environment for children with severe learning, cognitive, sensory, and emotional disabilities; those children who are physically handicapped; and high school aged students who are not proficient in English. Initial grade placement is determined primarily by chronological age. Previous educational experience and performance will be taken into consideration in some cases. Initial placement is reviewed one month after admission. Admissions and placement are the responsibility of the Director.

2.2 Admission Procedures

The consideration of applications and the admission of new students proceed as follows:

1. Application package presented to family by School Secretary.
2. Family and applicant interviewed by Director.
3. Completed application form and school records considered by Director.
4. Admission decision made and grade placement determined by Director.
5. Fees and tuition invoices prepared by Accountant.
6. School file begun by Secretary.
7. One month probationary period begun.
8. A one month, initial placement re-considered by Director with information classroom and specialists teachers.
9. Further assessment conducted if necessary.
10. Initial placement confirmed or changed.

2.3 Pupil Withdrawal

Students withdrawing from school shall notify the Director at least ten (10) school days in advance to allow for clearance of records. Records will not be released until all tuition fees and any fines have been paid.

2.4 The School Year

The school year consists of 182 instructional days and up to 6 faculty orientation/preparation and/or professional development days at the beginning or during a school year. There are two semesters of two quarters each.

2.5 The Academic Day

Monday through Thursday, the academic day begins at 8:00 a.m. sharp and ends at 3:00 p.m. All pupils are required to be at school before 8:00 in the morning.

On Friday, school starts at 8:00 a.m. but pupils are dismissed at 12:00 noon.

Every morning at 8:00 a.m., Monday through Friday, all pupils and faculty members attend morning assembly. At assemblies, general notices are given, special announcements are made, birthdays are acknowledged, and house points are announced. Sometimes, other information is presented and pupils perform. Parents and family members are welcome to join us for the morning assembly. Once assembly is over, pupils go directly to their first lesson.

An after school activities program is offered on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursdays. Activities begin at 3:00 p.m. and run until 4:00 p.m.

Pupils should be picked up at the end of their school day, at 3:00 p.m. or, if they are staying for after school activities, at 4:00 p.m.

Daily Timetables

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Monday through Thursday | |
| Morning Assembly & DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) | 08:00 - 08:20 |
| Lesson 1 | 08:20 - 09:05 |
| Lesson 2 | 09:05 - 09:50 |
| Morning Recess | 09:50 - 10:20 |
| Lesson 3 | 10:20 - 11:10 |
| Lesson 4 | 11:10 - 12:00 |
| Lunch Recess | 12:00 - 12:30 |
| Lesson 5 | 12:30 - 01:20 |
| Lesson 6 | 01:20 - 02:10 |
| Lesson 7 | 02:10 - 03:00 |
| Friday | |
| Morning Assembly & DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) | 08:00 - 08:20 |
| Lesson 1 | 08:20- 09:05 |
| Lesson 2 | 09:05- 09:50 |
| Morning Recess | 09:50 - 10:20 |
| Lesson 3 | 10:20 - 11:10 |
| Lesson 4 | 11:10 - 12:00 |

2.6 Dress Code

AISC has no prescribed uniform. However, pupils must dress in a manner appropriate for school with consideration given to the hot and at times of the year wet climate. T-shirts with offensive content are not permitted. Revealing dress by male or female pupils is also not permitted. Pupils inappropriately attired will be removed from class and sent to the School Office. Pupils should dress properly for PE classes and for after school sports. Shorts and running shoes are required.

2.7 Attendance

There is a causal relationship between regular attendance and achievement in school. Pupils who miss school frequently perform less well on assignments and tests. Regular attendance is expected of AISC pupils. All pupils, primary and secondary, are expected to be at school and at assembly at 8:00 a.m. every morning. Absences must be explained in a note from parents/guardians to the primary classroom or secondary homeroom teacher. Prolonged in-attendance, regular tardiness, and failure to produce a written explanation of absence will be reported to the Director.

2.8 Leaving the Campus

The school operates a closed campus. Pupils are not allowed to leave the campus during the academic day without a note from parents or guardians and permission from the Director. Students wishing to travel home with another student must have note signed by their parents and this must be given to the school secretary.

2.9 Books and Other Supplies for Pupils

Textbooks will be loaned to pupils. Pupils must return borrowed books in the same condition in which they were received. The cost of lost or damaged textbooks will be deducted from the textbook deposit fee. Notebooks and materials for Art and Science are also provided. Pupils should bring their own pens, pencils, markers, etc. for writing. Individual teachers may have special supply requests of pupils.

2.10 Food & Drinks

Pupils should bring recess snacks, lunches, and drinks from home, or on Monday – Thursday use the canteen facility to purchase lunch. Lunch cards are available at the front office for 75,000FG or lunch can be purchased on an individual basis at 15,000FG per meal.

Menus for the week will be published in the Gecko News with prices included. Soft drinks are discouraged. Pupils may not leave the campus to buy food and drinks on the street, nor may they ask a school employee to do so. Microwaves are provided in the lunch area for pupils' use.

2.11 Drinking Water

A number of drinking water dispensers are located around the school for pupils' use. Pupils should bring a cup or bottle from home with which to take water from these dispensers.

3. Instruction

3.1 Daily Registration

Daily registration is taken upon return to class from assembly. Pupils not present for registration are considered absent or late. All students, primary and secondary, arriving at school after 8:00 a.m. will be asked to sign in with the School Secretary before proceeding to class. The parents of students who repeatedly fail to meet the 8:00 a.m. starting time will be contacted by the Director.

3.2 Instructional Time

Instructional time is the most important time of the academic day. It must not be jeopardized by late starts and early dismissals, by interruptions, or by other lost time. Times on the daily schedule represent the start and end of classes. Teachers will be proactive in enforcing this timetable with pupils.

3.3 Extra Help to Pupils

Sometimes parents will ask for extra help for their children. Teachers and teacher assistants will offer this extra or remedial instruction within what is normal school practice, some help during or after school, for example. Please note, however, that private tutoring of AISC pupils by AISC faculty is not permitted.

3.4 Homework

At AISC, homework is considered an essential part of the academic program. Homework is an opportunity for pupils to practice and reinforce skills and knowledge learned during the day at school. It is a chance for pupils to complete work started during the day. While pupils are expected to complete all homework set, there are limits. Teachers follow this guideline when assigning homework: A maximum of 10 minutes per grade level per night. For example, a pupil in grade 2 can expect up to 20 minutes of homework per night, a pupil in grade 4 up to 40 minutes. These are somewhat imprecise guidelines. Pupils work at different paces. Teachers may sometimes underestimate the time required for an

assignment. The point is that there should be reasonable limits to homework. If parents have questions or concerns about the homework being assigned, they should contact the classroom or subject teacher.

3.5 Homework Journal

Primary and middle school pupils will be given a homework journal by their classroom or homeroom teachers. As it is assigned, pupils are to record their homework in the journal. The journal will also be used to communicate with parents. Information about pupils' progress and behaviour, assignment and test results, and other news will be passed back and forth between the teacher and the parents in the homework journal. Parents are asked to review the homework journal regularly with their children. Parents, please sign the journal at the end of each week.

3.6 Assessment and Reporting Procedures

The school formally reports to parents on pupils' progress in two ways. At the end of each of the 4 school quarters, written reports are sent home to parents. Parent-teacher conferences are held at the end of the first and third terms.

Informal reports are more frequent. Teachers will communicate verbally, with written notes, and in the homework journal to parents about children's progress. Parents are asked to contact teachers if they have questions. The homework journal is recommended for this.

3.7 Field Trips

Field trips are a part of and support the educational program at the school. When planning field trips, consideration is given to security, safety, and educational value of off-campus trips, as well as the cost to the school and to families. A signed parental authorization form must be on file with the Director before pupils may participate in any field trip.

4. Activities

4.1 House System

All pupils, faculty, and staff are assigned to one of the three school houses: Red House, Yellow House, or Green House. The Houses are named after the colours in the flag of Guinea. Assignment is random. The purposes of the House System are to increase school spirit, to encourage contributions to the school community, to reward students for participation in school activities, and to support the intramural and interscholastic sports and other competitive endeavours of students. In general, students are awarded individual points for contributions to the school. Contributions are defined as exhibiting behaviours consistent with our status as an international school and with the attitudes and values to be fostered by the curricula we employ. Tolerance, understanding, respect, caring, communication in a non-native language, inquiry, risk taking, and reflection are examples of such behaviours. Contributions are also defined as participation in intramural or interscholastic competitions. Points for contribution and participation are awarded singly and by teachers. In intramural competitions, winning teams are awarded 10 house points, participating students are awarded one point each. House points are not awarded for academic success in itself. House point totals are announced at Monday assemblies. The House Trophy is presented to the house with the most points at the closing assembly at the end of each semester. Currently, Green House is the trophy holder. The trophy is in the Office.

4.2 After School Activities Program

After school activities are offered to pupils on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:00 until 4:00 p.m. Teachers and teacher assistants supervise the activities. All school rules apply at after school activities whether they occur on the campus or off.

4.3 Intramural (Inter-House) and Interscholastic Sports

Various intramural sports activities based on house competitions are organized during the academic year. AISC also competes against other schools in boys and girls team sports.

4.4 Drama, Music, and the Arts

Pupils' achievements in the visual and performing arts are celebrated at the December Concert, Art Week, and other events.

4.5 International Week

The AISC community celebrates its diversity and its unity through an International Week held in October. Special events during the week include the Host Country Day, the PTO's International Food Evening, and a Parade of Nations. The International Week Committee and the PTO cooperate in the planning of the Week.

5. The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The school is supported by a Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). The purpose of the PTO is to help teachers, the administration, and the school community in a variety of ways that will improve the school. The PTO is governed by an executive committee. Regular meetings are held. The PTO sponsors a number of events during the school year. Interested parents are encouraged to join the PTO.

6. School Communication

Effective communication within the school community is important. Parents and family members must know what is going on in and outside the classroom. Faculty and administrators must be aware of parents' questions, concerns, and suggestions. The following are means of accomplishing this.

6.1 Within the School

Daily communication within the school will be maintained through announcements at assemblies, other direct communication, and written notices.

6.2 Within the School Community: The Gecko News

Communication within the larger school community is through the school community newsletter, the Gecko News. The newsletter will be published every Friday and sent home that afternoon with every ISC pupil. It contains descriptions of up-coming events, notices and reminders of important dates in the calendar, reports from classes and subject groups, accomplishments by individuals and groups, and other information. Parents and family members are asked to make a point of reading each edition of the Gecko News. If it is not coming home, please contact the school.

6.3 Communication between Teachers and Parents

Teachers and parents are encouraged to have regular and frequent communication. One vehicle for this communication is the homework journal. In addition to a means by which pupils keep track of their homework, assignments, tests, and examinations, the homework journal is designed to offer parents and teachers the opportunity to communicate.

7. Security, Health, and Safety

7.1 Emergency Evacuation/Safe Haven Procedures

The school will review its emergency procedures. Regular drills will be carried out so that all children and adults know what to do in an emergency.

7.2 Accidents and First Aid

In the event of an accident, pupils are taken immediately to the School Office. If the accident requires medical attention, the School Office will take the appropriate steps. Parents will be contacted. The school has a first aid kit with which to treat minor injuries. The first aid kit is in the School Office.

7.3 Pupil Illness

If a pupil is sick and he/she should go home, the School Secretary will make the necessary contacts and arrangements with the pupil's home.

Discipline

8.1 Pupil Discipline: Classroom Management

Classroom teachers are first in encouraging pupils' appropriate behaviours and in discouraging inappropriate behaviours. Teachers are responsible for establishing and enforcing classroom rules and procedures. These govern at least the following classroom activities: general classroom behaviour, beginning of the day and class lesson, transitions and interruptions, use of materials and equipment, group work, and seatwork and teacher-led activities. Especially at the beginning of the school year, but throughout the year as well, teachers will spend time explaining and re-explaining the expectations of pupils during these activities and the consequences of failing to meet expectations. Teachers determine their own consequences. But, certain consequences for inappropriate behaviour are inconsistent with the philosophy of international education and are not used at AISC. These include: writing lines, using grades to discipline, assigning additional homework, the use of physical force, sending pupils out of the classroom unsupervised, the use of threats, yelling at pupils, and the use of sarcasm or comments that can be deemed as derogatory. Consequences used at AISC are fair, logical, instructive, and relevant.

When a teacher's consequences have failed to change behaviour, or misbehaviour warrants immediate higher consequences, the pupil is sent to the Director. Parents will be kept informed.

8.2 Pupil Discipline: Safe and Orderly Environment

The objective of school-wide discipline policies and procedures is to create a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning. All faculty, not just pupils' class or classroom teachers, are responsible for enforcing school-wide rules. Board policy lists prohibitions against substance abuse, dangerous items at school, and fighting or student disrespect. The following is an elaboration.

a. Teasing and Bullying

Teasing and bullying are not tolerated. Both are considered school-wide misbehaviours and are referred immediately to the Director.

The goal of teasing is to make the teased feel ashamed. Depending on the content of the tease, the teased person may feel unworthy or inadequate or unattractive. The difference between relentless and harsh teasing and bullying may be difficult to determine. Both aim to demean the victim. But the two activities differ in one fundamental respect. Teasing is done to provoke shame, to make the victim feel bad, and, if anything, go away or stay away. Bullying is done to inspire fear, to intimidate the victim; it is an act of terrorism. A bully usually wishes the opposite of driving the victim away; he/she often wishes the victim to be available within his/her domain of influence to reinforce the bully's sense of power.

b. Theft

Pupils suspected of taking another's belongings are referred to the Director immediately.

c. Drug Use

Any incident of drug use and/or possession (including alcohol and tobacco) is referred to the Director immediately.

d. Fighting

Fighting is not permitted, but does occur. Children are sent to the Director when it happens.

e. Dress Code

Pupils must dress appropriately and modestly. Offensive T-shirts, mid-rift revealing and spaghetti strap tops are not permitted, for example. Teachers and teacher assistants are vigilant in enforcing the dress code.

f. Cell Phone Guidelines

Pupils may not use cell phones for calls or sending text messages during the school day. Cell phones must be kept switched off in pupils' school bags during the day. If a parent needs to contact a pupil, the parent should telephone the School Office. If a pupil needs to phone a parent, the call must be made from the School Office. If a cell phone is used during the school day, it will be confiscated until the end of the day. Repeated use is reported to the Director.

g. Other Electronic Devices

Pupils are not to use MP3 players and other electronic devices at school.

8.3 Pupil Discipline: Playground Rules

- a. When dismissed for recess or lunch, walk to the playground
- b. Do not throw sand, rocks, sticks, water or other objects.
- c. Use appropriate language.
- d. Do not exclude others from games.
- e. Do not climb trees.
- f. Do not pull leaves or flowers off plants.
- g. Stay on the playground or in the covered area.

8.4 Pupil Discipline: Lunch Area Rules

- a. Walk to the lunch area.
- b. Sit down when eating.
- c. Take turns at the microwaves.
- d. Clean up after yourselves.
- e. Put trash in the garbage containers.

9. Pupil Expectations

The following are expected of AISC pupils:

- a. To come to school prepared to work.
- b. To complete homework and class assignments to the best of his/her ability.
- c. To demonstrate a proper respect for teachers, teacher assistants, and other members of the school staff.
- d. To respect school property and the belongings of others.
- e. To be honest, trustworthy, and truthful.
- f. To respect and be tolerant of the rights, beliefs, and attitudes of fellow classmates.
- g. To be regular and punctual in attendance.
- h. To respect the rights of others to learn without interruption.
- i. To be dressed neatly and appropriately.
- j. To be responsible for not bringing prohibited items.
- k. To keep the school clean, safe, and attractive.
- l. To act in a thoughtful and sensible way around the school.

10. School Equipment

Equipment belonging to the school must not be taken from the campus for the personal use of faculty, staff, and pupils.

11. Closing of School

If because of exceptional circumstances the school must be closed, official notice will be issued by the Director. A decision to close the school is made by the Director in consultation with the Chair of the School Board. Teachers and parents will be notified immediately, depending on the circumstances, by word, telephone, and/or e-mail.

12. Selling Items on Campus

The sale of any items on campus is prohibited unless the school is sponsoring the sale as a part of an authorized school activity or event.

13. Smoke-Free Campus

AISC strives to maintain a smoke-free environment. Faculty, staff, and parents are asked to refrain from smoking while on campus. Students are not permitted to smoke or to be in possession of tobacco products on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities.

APPENDICES

DAILY TIMETABLES

Monday through Thursday

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Morning Assembly & DEAR | 08:00 - 08:20 |
| Lesson 1 | 08:20- 09:05 |
| Lesson 2 | 09:05- 09:50 |
| Morning Recess | 09:50 - 10:20 |
| Lesson 3 | 10:20 - 11:10 |
| Lesson 4 | 11:10 - 12:00 |
| Lunch Recess | 12:00 - 12:30 |
| Lesson 5 | 12:30 - 01:20 |
| Lesson 6 | 01:20 - 02:10 |
| Lesson 7 | 02:10 - 03:00 |

Friday

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Morning Assembly | 08:00 - 08:20 |
| Lesson 1 | 08:20 - 09:05 |
| Lesson 2 | 09:05 - 09:50 |
| Morning Recess | 09:50 - 10:20 |
| Lesson 3 | 10:20 - 11:10 |
| Lesson 4 | 11:10 - 12:00 |

FACULTY AND STAFF 2009-2010

Teachers and Teacher Assistants

Nursery/Pre-School/Kindergarten
Grade 1/2/3, ESL Grades 4/5
Grade 4/5, & Music
Grade 6/7 and MS English/Social Studies/ESL

Grade 8 and MS Math/Science

French, Art 4/5, 6/7/8

PE N-8
IT
Secondary Coordinator/Librarian
Teachers Assistant N-K
Teachers Assistant 4-5

Administrative Office Staff

Director
School Secretary
Business Manager

Princess Weller
Gladina George-Pratt
Samuel George-Pratt
Crystal Reed (Sondra Fischer replacing till
November)
Ann Camara

Fatima Hughes
(Augusta Paugam replacing for maternity
leave Sept-Nov)

Oury Bah
Isa Fofana
Kirsten Stombaugh
Liel Dotan
Jubita Phukan

Greg Hughes
Ruth Walters
Djeina Bah (Dominique Kayirangwa
replacing for maternity leave Sep-Nov)

Support Staff

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Souleymane Bangoura | Maintenance |
| Vincent Sigismund | Custodian |
| Bintu Vandy | Cleaner |
| Amara Kourouma | Cleaner |
| Alimami Camara | Cleaner |
| Fode Camara | Gardener |
| Beven Kamara | Driver |

