



Al-Sahafa International School
مدرسة الصحافة العالمية

PARENT – STUDENT HANDBOOK ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025



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1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 Welcome Message

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the new academic year at Al-Sahafa International School. As we embark on this exciting journey together, I am pleased to introduce you to our new campus, a place designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and collaboration.

This year promises to be filled with enriching experiences for our students. Our dedicated teachers and staff are eager to provide a supportive and engaging environment, ensuring that each child reaches their full potential.

We believe that education is a partnership, and your involvement is crucial to the success of our community. We encourage you to participate in school events and activities, as your engagement significantly enriches the educational experience for your child.

Together, we can create a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere where every student feels valued and inspired. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. Let's make this year one of growth, discovery, and shared success!

Warm regards,
Mrs. Ola Mourad
School Director

1.2 School Vision

We envision a distinctive atmosphere where students grow as principled and caring individuals, integrating intellectual curiosity, profound knowledge, and genuine compassion. Rooted in the principles of holistic education, our community is dedicated to fostering intrinsic motivation and innovation, serving as the foundation of our commitment to promote academic excellence and nurture enduring life success.

1.3 School Mission

In pursuit of our vision, we are passionate about cultivating an outstanding educational environment. Our community is devoted to nurturing organizational finesse, serving as the foundation of our unwavering commitment to propel academic excellence and cultivate enduring life success. Rooted in this mission, we actively endeavor to foster a vibrant learning community where everyone is empowered to flourish and contribute meaningfully to the world.

1.4 Philosophy of Teaching

At Al-Sahafa International School, our teaching philosophy is deeply rooted in the belief that education goes beyond academic achievement to cultivate principled, compassionate, and innovative individuals. We strive to create a holistic learning environment where intellectual curiosity, personal growth, and ethical values are nurtured in every student.

Guided by our vision, we aim to foster an atmosphere that promotes lifelong learning and personal excellence. We believe that education should inspire students to explore, question, and engage deeply with the world around them, developing not only profound knowledge but also empathy and a sense of responsibility.

In alignment with our mission, our teaching practices emphasize:

- **Student-Centered Learning:** Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning through active engagement, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Holistic Development:** Balancing academic rigor with opportunities for personal and emotional growth, fostering well-rounded individuals prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.
- **Intrinsic Motivation and Innovation:** Cultivating a love of learning by encouraging creativity, curiosity, and a growth mindset, enabling students to innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing world.
- **Community and Global Citizenship:** Embedding values of respect, fairness, and service, empowering students to act as compassionate global citizens.

Through this philosophy, we aim to inspire every student to flourish academically and personally, preparing them to navigate life's challenges with integrity, resilience, and purpose. Our commitment to excellence and nurturing life success ensures that our learners are not only academically capable but also emotionally and ethically grounded individuals ready to make a positive impact on the world.

2. Academic Guidelines

2.1 Curriculum Overview

At Al-Sahafa International School, we implement a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum designed to prepare students for success in college and their future careers.

- **Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** Applied across all grades to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS):** Used for science education, fostering inquiry-based learning and scientific literacy.
- **Arabic Curriculum:**
 - Based on the Ministry of Education standards, incorporating lesson plans and assessments.
 - Enriched with elements to emphasize advanced grammar, text analysis, and creative expression.
- **Islamic Studies Curriculum:**
 - Exclusively follows the Ministry of Education curriculum, providing comprehensive resources and alignment with national standards.

Electives and Specialized Programs

To meet the diverse interests and aspirations of students, the school offers:

- **Elective Courses:**
 - Spanish Language, Italian Language, Business Studies, and AP courses in core subjects like Math and Sciences.
- **Specialized Programs:**
 - SAT preparation courses to support college entry exam success.
 - Advanced French classes to enhance language skills.

This well-rounded curriculum ensures that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for academic excellence and personal growth.

2.2 Assessment and Reporting

Philosophy and Principles of Assessment

Assessment is a cornerstone of the educational experience at Al-Sahafa International School, providing valuable insights into students' progress, personal development, and learning outcomes. It evaluates academic, social, and emotional growth to help students reach their full potential.

Key Principles:

- Assessing all aspects of learning, not just cognitive skills, to promote holistic development.
- Utilizing assessment as a tool for setting personalized learning goals and improving teaching practices.
- Ensuring that assessments support critical thinking, reflection, and lifelong learning.

Goals of Assessment:

Assessments aim to:

- Guide student learning and set achievable targets.
- Provide actionable feedback to support student growth.
- Inform curriculum planning and instructional decisions.
- Monitor progress and evaluate key skills such as critical thinking and inquiry.
- Foster positive attitudes toward learning and build confidence.

Assessment Criteria:

Assessments include both formative and summative methods, measured against clear rubrics to ensure fairness and consistency. Key practices include:

- Providing students with detailed criteria for summative tasks at least one week before deadlines.
- Returning assessed work with feedback within one week.

Assessment in Practice:

- **Formative Assessment:** Conducted during the learning process to provide ongoing feedback, identify strengths and weaknesses, and adjust instruction. Examples include questioning, peer assessments, and reflection activities.
- **Summative Assessment:** Conducted at the end of units to evaluate overall learning. These assessments are aligned with curriculum objectives and shared with students beforehand.

Methods of Assessment:

Assessment methods cater to diverse learning styles and include:

- Projects, experiments, debates, and presentations.
- Roleplays, virtual labs, quizzes, and investigations.
- Concept mapping and other reflective activities.

2.3 Homework Policy

Students will receive daily assignments designed to reinforce classroom learning and develop key skills, including reading, writing, and problem-solving. Homework tasks will be age-appropriate and aim to build foundational academic skills.

The assigned homework is outlined in the cycle plan, which is shared on **Thursday for the upcoming week** to ensure clarity and consistency for both students and parents.

Teachers closely follow up on homework submissions, as they are an integral part of evaluating student growth. All students are expected to complete and submit their homework on time to ensure their academic progress is accurately monitored and supported.

2.4 Assessment Retake Policy (Grades 1-5)

When students are absent and miss an exam due to unforeseen circumstances, the following guidelines ensure fairness and clarity regarding exam retakes for students in Grades 1 to 5:

1. Eligibility

- The absence must be supported by a valid reason with proper documentation.

2. Notification

- Parents must inform the school as soon as possible by email, providing:
 - The date of absence (with the name of the missed assessment).
 - The reason for the absence.
 - Any supporting documents (e.g., medical report, emergency documentation).

3. Contact

- For Grades 2 to 5, email **Miss Maya** at mayakanj@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.
- For Grade 1, email **Miss Samia** at samiakassab@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.

4. Process

- If a valid reason is provided, the school will review it for approval and schedule the exam retake on a fixed date, which will be communicated to the parent in advance.
- If the absence is not supported by a valid reason, the exam retake will be scheduled, but the grade will be recalculated with a 10% deduction.
- If the student is absent on the retake date without a valid reason, the final grade will be calculated based on the average of the remaining assessments, with a 10% deduction applied to the total average.

Frequency of Retakes:

Students are permitted to request up to **three valid retakes** per academic year, provided they have a valid excuse for missing the original assessment. Missing an assignment without a valid excuse will result in a **15% deduction** from the total grade.

3. School Policies and Expectations

3.1 Attendance and Punctuality

Arrival and Dismissal Policy

- **Arrival:** Students are expected to arrive at school by **7:15 a.m.** and be in their classrooms, ready to begin work, by **7:30 a.m.** Students arriving after **8:00 a.m.** will not attend the first period to avoid class disruption.
- **Morning Assembly:** Begins at **7:15 a.m.** Attendance is mandatory for all students. Students are not permitted to enter classrooms before the assembly to leave their bags; bags must remain with them during the assembly.
- **Dismissal:** Students may not leave school before **2:10 p.m.** without a valid excuse. The school must be informed of the excuse by the parent in advance.
- **Release:** Students will only be released to parents, guardians, or regular drivers unless prior notice is provided.
- **Thursday Schedule:** On Thursdays, the school day begins at **7:30 a.m.** and ends at **12:10 p.m.**

Absence Policy

To maintain accurate attendance records and ensure the safety of all students, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Notification Requirement

- Parents must notify the school in advance if their child will be absent via email to:
 - **Miss Maya:** mayakanj@alsahafaschool.edu.sa (Grades 2-12)
 - **Miss Samia:** samiakassab@alsahafaschool.edu.sa (K-1)

2. Details to Include in the Email

- Student's Full Name
- Grade/Section
- Date(s) of Absence
- A valid reason for the absence and any supporting proof.

Consequences of Unexcused Absence

- **3 Days:** Warning letter sent to student and parent/guardian.
- **5 Days:** Second warning letter sent.
- **10 Days:** Meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and school principal.
- **15 Days:** Suspension and transfer to another school.

3.2 Classroom Exit Policy

Students are not permitted to leave their classrooms without prior approval. If a student feels unwell, they must inform their teacher, who will contact the supervisor to provide assistance. Visits to the nurse's clinic will only be arranged by the supervisor.

3.3 Dress Code

School Uniform Policy

- **Daily Uniform:** Must always be kept clean and clearly marked.
- **Footwear:** Closed-toe shoes are required. Sandals, crocs, slippers, high heels, or light-up shoes are not allowed.
- **Sports Uniform:** Must be worn during P.E. sessions. Students are expected to arrive at school wearing the sports uniform on their P.E. days.
- **Uniform Availability:** Both the P.E. uniform and the official school uniform are available for purchase at the school uniform shop.

Students must adhere to this policy at all times unless a special “non-uniform” day is announced by the school administration.

3.4 Code of Conduct

Policy for Student Behavior and Fostering Respect

At Al-Sahafa International School, maintaining a respectful and harmonious environment is a shared responsibility.

Expectations for Student Behavior

1. **Respectful Conduct**
 - Treat teachers, staff, and fellow students with kindness and respect.
 - Refrain from using offensive language, shouting, or engaging in any form of aggression.
2. **Positive Problem-Solving**
 - Address conflicts calmly and respectfully.
 - Seek help from teachers or supervisors when needed to resolve conflicts constructively.
3. **Responsibility and Accountability**
 - Follow classroom rules and school policies at all times.
 - Take responsibility for your actions and understand the consequences of misbehavior.

3.5 Spreading False Information Policy

At Al-Sahafa International School, fostering a respectful and inclusive environment is a priority. In accordance with the **Ministry of Education’s Conduct and Discipline Guidelines**, spreading false information, bullying, harassment, or discrimination is strictly prohibited and will be dealt with firmly.

Policy Guidelines:

1. **Prohibition of Misconduct:**

- Any form of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or spreading false information within the school community is strictly prohibited.

2. **Accountability:**

- Students found spreading false or negative information about others will face disciplinary action in accordance with the Ministry’s regulations.

3. **Reporting Mechanisms:**

- Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, harassment, or discrimination to a teacher, counselor, or administrator.
- Teachers are required to monitor classroom behavior and report when incidents of bullying, harassment, or false information arise.

4. **Education and Awareness:**

- The school administration works to educate students about the importance of respectful communication and the harmful impact of spreading false information.

5. **Support Services:**

- Students affected by bullying or discrimination will receive counseling services for support and guidance.

Consequences for Violations:

In line with the Ministry’s guidelines, violations of this policy will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- **First Violation:** Verbal warning.
 - **Second Violation:** Written warning letter.
 - **Third Violation:** The student will be sent home and may return only after a meeting with their parents and the administration.
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3.6 Bullying Policy

At Al-Sahafa International School, we are dedicated to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all students. Bullying is strictly prohibited, and we adhere to the **Ministry of Education's regulations** when addressing bullying incidents.

Definition of Bullying:

- **Rude Behavior:** Unintentional actions or words that cause hurt and occur once.
- **Mean Behavior:** Intentional actions or words that cause hurt and occur once.
- **Bullying:** Intentional, repeated actions or words that cause hurt, even after being asked to stop or when it's clear the other person is upset.

Zero-Tolerance Policy:

- **Physical Bullying:** Includes hitting, kicking, scratching, or biting.
- **Verbal and Digital Bullying:** Includes hurtful or inappropriate spoken, written, or electronic communication, such as texting, online chatting, or emails.

Handling Incidents:

- Bullying incidents are handled in strict alignment with the **Ministry of Education's guidelines**.
- Students involved will be sent to the principal's office, where their sides of the story will be documented.
- Consequences are determined case-by-case, with measures that may include:
 - Missing recess.
 - In-school or at-home suspension, requiring a meeting with parents before the student's return.
 - Expulsion in severe cases.

Preventative Measures:

- The school actively conducts awareness campaigns to educate students about bullying and promote empathy, kindness, and respect.
- Anti-bullying topics are integrated into the curriculum through discussions, projects, and activities.

4. Health and Safety Guidelines

4.1 Health Guidelines

At Al-Sahafa International School, the health and safety of our students are central to our philosophy, ensuring a secure and supportive environment for learning.

- **Healthy Snacks:** Only healthy snacks are allowed; unhealthy snacks and drinks are strictly prohibited.
 - **Canteen Options:** The school canteen provides a range of nutritious options to encourage healthy eating habits.
 - **On-Site Nurse:** A qualified school nurse is available on campus to manage any medical incidents or emergencies.
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4.2 Safety Guidelines

General Safety:

- Surveillance cameras are installed throughout the campus to maintain a secure environment.
- Staff members are actively on duty during all school hours, including breaks and dismissal times, to ensure student safety.

Playground Safety Rules:

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience on the playground, students must follow these guidelines:

- Play safely and avoid running or engaging in unsafe activities.
- Do not hang, swing, or climb on the basketball pole or other structures not designed for such use.
- Remain in designated areas during recess.
- Stop play immediately and form lines when the bell rings or the whistle is blown.
- Follow teachers' directions and walk quietly into the building in an orderly manner.

CallTech App for Dismissal:

- The **CallTech App** is used for a safe and efficient dismissal process, ensuring a smooth pickup for all students.

Fire Drills and Evacuation Procedures:

- Regular fire drills are conducted to ensure students and staff are prepared for emergencies.
 - Evacuation procedures are clearly communicated and practiced.
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4.3 Tobacco-Free Policy

Al-Sahafa International School adheres strictly to the **Ministry of Education's regulations** regarding the prohibition of tobacco and related products on school premises.

Smoking and Vapor Devices:

- Smoking and the use of electronic vapor devices (e.g., e-cigarettes, hookah pens, vape pens) are strictly prohibited on school property, during school hours, or at school-sponsored activities.

Consequences:

- **First Violation:** Written warning and appropriate intervention measures.
 - **Second Violation:** Escalated consequences, such as suspension.
 - **Repeated Violations:** Potential referral to higher authorities and permanent suspension.
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5. Technology and Device Policy

5.1 Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones are prohibited during the school day.
 - Students must submit their mobile phones to the designated supervisors at the beginning of the school day.
 - Mobile phones will be securely stored and can be retrieved at the end of the school day.
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5.2 Laptops and Tablets

- Laptops and tablets must also be submitted to the supervisors at the start of the school day unless they are required for specific classes.
 - Students may use laptops and tablets only during class when explicitly instructed by the teacher for educational purposes.
 - Devices must be returned to the supervisors immediately after use in class and can be retrieved at the end of the day.
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5.3 Smartboards

- Smartboards are strictly for educational purposes.
 - Students are not allowed to use smartboards unless under the explicit instruction or permission of a teacher.
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5.4 Prohibited Use During Final Exams

- All personal devices, including but not limited to mobile phones, laptops, tablets, and digital watches, are strictly prohibited during final exams.
- Any student found in possession of a prohibited device during exams will face disciplinary action as outlined in the student code of conduct.

6. Communication and Parent Involvement

6.1 Communication Channels by Grade Level

KG to Grade 5

- **General Communication:**
Parents can send direct messages to the teacher, coordinator, or Head of KG & Elementary School, **Mrs. Maissa Barakat**, using **Classlight**.
- **For KG Academic Issues:**
Please contact the KG Coordinator, **Mrs. Doha Arnous**, by email dohaarnous@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.
- **For KG and Grade 1-Related Issues:**
Please contact **Mrs. Samia Kassab** by email at samiakassab@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.
- **For Grades 2 to 5-Related Issues:**
Please contact **Mrs. Maya Kanj** by email at mayakanj@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.

Grades 6 to 12

- **General Communication:**
Please contact **Mrs. Maya Kanj** by email at mayakanj@alsahafaschool.edu.sa.
- **Academic Communication:**
You can reach out to the respective coordinator or the Head of Middle and High School, **Mrs. Noor Wehbe**, via email:
 - Head of Middle and High School: noorwehbe@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - English Coordinator: randaimad@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - French Coordinator: lamahijazi@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - Math Coordinator: wafasrour@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - Science Coordinator: olahussein@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - Arabic Coordinator: somayamaatouk@alsahafaschool.edu.sa
 - Islamic and History/Geography Coordinator: ranachaaban@alsahafaschool.edu.sa

6.2 Contact Information

For any additional inquiries or concerns, please contact the school's administrative office at info@alsahafaschool.edu.sa or call **0112866632**

7. Extracurricular Activities

7.1 Activities Overview

At Al-Sahafa International School, we believe that extracurricular activities play a vital role in enhancing students' overall development. The school offers a wide range of activities to cater to diverse interests and talents, including:

- **Sports:** Football, basketball, volleyball, and more.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Painting, pottery, and creative design.
- **Performing Arts:** Drama, dance, and music clubs.
- **STEM Activities:** Robotics, coding, and science clubs.
- **Community Service:** Opportunities to participate in charity events and environmental projects.

These activities aim to build teamwork, leadership, and communication skills while fostering creativity and personal growth. Participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged to ensure students receive a well-rounded educational experience.