

SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK

Philosophy

The American International School of Cape Town (AISCT) recognizes the value of physical activity as an important avenue to contribute to the holistic development of every student. As such, the After School Activities (ASA) program is designed to cater for athletic, artistic and altruistic growth. The inclusion of both competitive sports and leisure physical activities aims to supplement the development of physical literacy in Physical Education, and provide opportunities for competition, as well as accommodate maximum participation.

AISCT believes that sports and physical activity not only provides for the refinement of skill but also teaches necessary life skills of teamwork, cooperation, perseverance, unselfishness, commitment, leadership, communication, and self-discipline - all of which have a positive effect on overall growth and learning. It is also the school's conviction that these qualities are equally important for both male and female students. To this end, AISCT's ASA program reflects gender equality in opportunities, funding, celebration, and focus.

**“Sports build good habits, confidence, and discipline.
They make players into community leaders and teach them how to strive for a goal,
handle mistakes, and cherish growth opportunities.”**

Judy Foudy – two times FIFA Women's World Cup Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist.

Participation vs. Competition

AISCT recognizes that not all children have the skill ability, physical size or desire and interest to participate in competitive sports, but that physical activity for every child is vital to their overall health. For that reason, we provide non-competitive physical activity options including team games, dance, and exercise that can be done on an individual basis. The emphasis of this aspect of the program is enjoyment and participation, and while sports participation is not compulsory, we strongly urge all students to participate in at least one physical ASA per term.

For the students who enjoy the challenge and drive of competition, we have school representative teams for our core sports which include: basketball, swimming and tennis in Summer (Term 2 and 3), and cross country, field hockey, netball and soccer in Winter (Term 1 and 4). While there is no skill prerequisite for training in these squads, the strongest available match squad is selected for fixtures. As such, not all players are guaranteed match play. Teams are selected for competition based on the student numbers and league opportunities available that year, as well as: a positive attitude in practice, personal motivation, commitment to training, teamwork, collaboration and cooperation with peers and coaches, good sportsmanship, and physical ability.

There is also a “no pass, no play” principle in effect in the Upper School. This means that a student with a failing grade in any subject at their most recent grading checkpoint is ineligible to represent AISCT in matches until a passing grade is reflected in a subsequent grading checkpoint. During this time students may continue to participate in practices, however, they may attend matches in a spectator capacity only. In the case of sporting tours, eligibility is determined on the cut-off date for travel arrangements, communicated to parents and players in advance.



Commitment

For team sports particularly, attendance, punctuality, and commitment are of utmost importance. Success in these sports codes relies heavily on team effort and interdependence, and therefore AISCT stresses that students who sign up for a sporting code are expected to commit to it for the full duration of the sporting season (both terms).

Students who wish to drop out of a particular code may, with their parents, apply for this with valid reasoning, and in consultation with the coach, the Sports and Activities Director may grant this permission.

Participation is strongly encouraged, and opportunities for involvement, both competitive and recreational, from Grizzly Cub to Senior level exist in the ASA program to support this.

Values & Code of Conduct

AISCT's sports and activities philosophy reflects the three pillars of the school: Respect, Responsibility, and Integrity. Consequently, it is expected that all staff, coaches, students, and parents adhere to the following code of conduct:

SPORTS STAFF & COACHES

- Be punctual and fully prepared prior to the start of the session / match.
- Demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior, dress-code and communication at all times. This includes the use of social media, sharing of personal information, and being a positive representative for the school.
- Give valuable and constructive coaching understanding that all students deserve equal attention and opportunities.
- Wherever possible, AISCT's philosophy is to be inclusive of all students regardless of ability. By accepting a coaching position, you are agreeing to adopt this same philosophy, and to spend a significant portion of coaching focusing on developing / improving individual skills.
- Set an example of good sportsmanship by teaching and modeling respect for players, officials and the rules of the game.
- Ensure your knowledge, skills, and understanding of the game is kept up to date.
- Promote the safety and security of all students, and raise any concerns and/or incidents with the Sports and Activities Director or a member of the sports staff immediately.

All staff are contractually obligated to fulfill a minimum requirement of one afternoon of ASA from 15h00–16h15 per week. As far as possible slots are allocated based on interest, skill and teaching phase. Further information on their role and responsibilities can be found [here](#).

PLAYERS

- Understand that while winning is desirable, it is not the sole purpose of the program.
- Accept that commitment is of utmost importance. This means being punctual, attending all training sessions, and remaining until the end for the session / match, even if your involvement in it has already ended. This will require good planning and time management on your part. If for any unavoidable reason you are unable to do so, this needs to be communicated by parents to the Sports and Activities Director ahead of time so that the coach can be informed as well.
- Respect teammates, opponents, coaches and officials. This includes refraining from engaging in arguments with others and respecting decisions, even ones you may perceive as incorrect. Compliance with this is non-negotiable.
- Demonstrate fair play and good sportsmanship at all times. This includes but is not limited to: contributing to team cohesion, being encouraging and motivating on the field, and thanking opponents and officials for the game afterwards.



- Take responsibility for maintaining your individual fitness and preparedness for performance.
- Exhibit exemplary behavior and manners, and uphold the image and ethos of the school as ambassadors of AISCT. This extends to the correct wearing of school / sports / travel uniform and complying with the general school Code of Conduct.

PARENTS

- Understand and accept that AISCT's ethos is not to win at all costs. It is more important that the players learn the life skills of teamwork, leadership, dealing with challenges and disappointments, developing resilience, maintaining humility, building self-confidence, and managing social interaction.
- Actively encourage participation, effort, commitment, perseverance, and team loyalty.
- Resist the urge to regularly bail your children out when they have not brought their kit, schedule other activities at sports times, or simply don't want to participate. Use the opportunities that present themselves to teach them responsibility and consequences.
- Refrain from giving advice from the sidelines, both out of respect for the coach, and to avoid causing confusion for the players.
- Negative talk to or about any players (home or opposition team), coaches, officials or other spectators will not be tolerated.
- Exercise self-control and maintain perspective: the players are children, not professionals; and a loss is not a tragedy. If you are present for a training program, please observe from a distance, without interfering in the session.
- Show your support for the program, whenever possible, by attending matches, events, and initiatives.

Matches, Transport & Cancellations

AISCT's core sports provide the opportunity to participate in local school leagues. In the summer this includes Western Province (WP) Schools Basketball, Tennis and Athletics as well as an informal independent schools' swimming league. In Winter this includes WP Schools (Field) Hockey, Cross Country and Netball, and an unofficial Cape Town schools' soccer league. Codes without official competition avenues may have internal matches or friendly matches arranged.

All matches are arranged by the Sports and Activities team and communicated to students and parents in advance. Transport to away matches is provided by the school. Students are carried in a school or hired bus, with individual seat belts, by PDP licensed drivers. Transport is also provided back to school after the match, although parents are permitted to collect their children at the match venue if they choose to. In certain individual sports where numbers fluctuate and times vary (for example: cross country) parents may be asked to take their children to competition independently.

While safety is one of the aspects at the forefront of taking students off-campus, it must be said that AISCT's intention and commitment to participate in these competitions includes going to schools and mixing with students of different cultural and socio-economic groups. This experience allows for authentic integration and development of global competency.

Sometimes, due to circumstances beyond our control, matches are canceled at the last minute. As far as possible, this communication is sent out timeously. The rule is that in these cases the match will be replaced with a training session. Any total session cancellation would be communicated to parents via SMS.



Coaching

Research has shown that the success of a coach is based not only on their expertise, but also on the relationship that is present between them and their players. For this reason, the ideal scenario at AISCT is to appoint a suitably qualified staff member as a coach. However, where this is not possible, external specialist coaches are contracted seasonally to coach our teams. These coaches are selected based on qualifications and experience, and undergo police clearance as per all staff. Where applicable, a member of the parent body could be appointed as a coach, however, it is preferable that parents do not coach their own children, and team selections would be overseen by the teacher in charge of the sporting code.

Age Groups

Given the small numbers in each grade, generally, more than one grade is assigned to the highest age group relevant to that phase, i.e:

Age Group	U8/9	U10/11	U12 - U14	U15/16	U19
Grade Guideline	Gr 1 and 2	Gr 3-5	Gr 6-8	Gr 9 and 10	Gr 11 and 12

AISCT believes it is in the best interest of the child to play in their correct age group. This minimizes the risk of injury, allows the child the opportunity to excel, and promotes the growth and strength of that sport and team by providing continuity. For this reason, unless in the case of special events and tours where a mixed team is entered, or where there are insufficient players to field a team, we encourage all students and coaches to adhere to the applicable age group guidelines.

Uniform & Dress Code

While there is no official kit for sports training, the expectation is that students do not play in their formal school uniform, but rather make use of their school PE kit or other similarly appropriate attire for physical activity. Students are to have suitable, supportive footwear and have long hair tied back. As per official match rules, no jewelry or long nails is permitted.

For matches, all students are expected to wear the match kit for their team. In Elementary and Middle School sports this is the full PE uniform (with the appropriate socks, available from the uniform shop). For Upper School, this may include a school-sponsored kit. This kit is signed out on a termly basis by each student, and they are responsible for its timely return or be liable for its replacement.

Tours

AISCT is proud to be a founding member of the Southern Africa International Schools Association (SAISA) sporting league which currently involves pan-African sports tours for Swimming, Basketball, and Soccer. In addition to this, there are occasions where teams may be invited to tournaments in and around South Africa. These tours are optional, and specific teams, often separate to league teams, are selected on the basis of trials. The entry costs to these tournaments are covered by the school, however, travel costs (including airfare, hotels, bussing and visas where applicable) are for each family's individual account. SAISA and most of the invitational tour operate on a homestay accommodation basis where groups of students house with other students of the same age and gender from the host school. This means that participating AISCT students are required to do and reciprocate homestay.

Current SAISA member schools:

1. American International School of Cape Town (AISCT, South Africa)
2. American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ, South Africa)
3. International School of Lusaka (ISL, Zambia)
4. Luanda International School (LIS, Angola)
5. The American International School of Kinshasa (TASOK, DRC)
6. Windhoek International School (WIS, Namibia)



Sports Structure

Sports and Activities Director
Sports Committee
Coaches
Captains, Teachers & Students

The Activities & Athletic Director oversees and constructs the entire ASA program. The Sports Committee is a staff and student group, representative of the different school phases and sports, that contributes to the development of the overall program, and is responsible for the promotion of sports initiatives and events.

All sports or activity related queries, issues, and concerns should be communicated directly with the Sports and Activities Director.

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