



American International School of Zagreb

Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools  
Authorized by the International Baccalaureate

# **AISZ Board Policy Manual**

May 2021



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## 1. The School

### 1.1 Legal Status

#### 1.11 Charter

The American International School of Zagreb is a non-profit, private day school serving the needs of the children of the Zagreb community who would benefit from such an institution with instruction in the English language, international in character, and based on American educational philosophy and methods, as established in the *Charter*.

The American International School of Zagreb operates under the legal status of the Bilateral Agreement between the governments of the United States of American and the Republic of Croatia, signed in 2001 in Zagreb, Croatia.

#### 1.12 By-laws

The By-Laws stipulate the composition and structure of the School Board and set forth its authority and responsibilities.

### 1.2 Program Parameters

#### 1.21 Mission

*We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.*

#### 1.22 Vision

*Experiencing the Future, Today.*

#### 1.23 Philosophy

AISZ encourages the development of sound and productive relationships between and amongst all members of the school community.

#### 1.24 Religious and Political Neutrality

AISZ maintains the posture of neutrality on all matters relating to religion and politics. The School will not proselytize a specific religious belief but will advance students' knowledge and understanding of the role that religion plays in the social, cultural, and historical development of civilization.

### 1.3 Governance

The governance of the school shall be exercised by a School Board, as set forth in the *Charter* and *By-Laws*.

### 1.4 Accreditation



AISZ will maintain accredited status with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

### 1.5 Non-discrimination Policy

AISZ does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, national origin, race, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

Any employee or student of the School who discriminates against another employee or student is subject to discipline.

The Director shall ensure that this policy is observed, enforced, and promoted, and establish a process to investigate complaints promptly and take corrective and/or disciplinary action as necessary.

### 1.6 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In fulfilling our mission, AISZ is dedicated to creating systems that value the unique contributions of all students and staff to our school and fully engage all members of our school community in achieving our vision. We commit to explicitly embedding a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in our organizational and learning culture. The Director is responsible for ensuring that our school culture embodies practices honoring and demonstrating diversity (the collective mix of differences and similarities amongst individuals within our community), equity (equitable access to success across our school's programs), and inclusion (an environment in which all individuals feel a sense of belonging) in our diverse community.

Any established breach will be regarded as a breach of the Student Code of Conduct or Faculty Code of Professional Conduct as appropriate.

These values are encapsulated in AISZ Diversity Charter and supported by *The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights* and *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. AISZ also subscribes to tenants of the European Union and Croatian Diversity Charters.

## 2. School Board

### 2.1 Powers and Duties of the Board of Directors

The Board acts in accordance with its responsibilities to the members of the AISZ Community and the U.S. Embassy in Croatia. Specifically:

- The school and Board conduct operations in accordance with the AISZ *Charter, By-Laws, and Bi-Lateral Agreement* between the governments of the Republic of Croatia and the United States.
- The school and Board conduct affairs acknowledging a special relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Croatia.

### 2.11 Guiding Principles



Decisions and actions taken by Board and administration are directed by the following guiding principles:

Our Mission Statement:

*We develop skills and character for futures rich with promise.*

Our Vision Statement:

*Experiencing the Future, Today.*

## 2.12 Board Member Responsibilities

All members of the School Board shall:

- Be motivated primarily by an earnest desire to serve AISZ and the children it educates.
- Maintain a student focus in all decision-making.
- Be accountable for the financial well-being of AISZ.
- Be responsible to AISZ rather than any individual group or agenda.
- Establish, in partnership with the Director, priorities and policies for AISZ, which are consistent with the Mission.
- Recognize that legal authority rests with the Board, not any individual member.
- Honor majority decisions once made.

The AISZ Board has primary responsibility for:

- Undertaking and monitoring on-going strategic planning.
- Establishing and communicating priorities and policies to provide the strategic direction of AISZ.
- Maintaining fiduciary oversight by ensuring the long-term stability and success of AISZ.
- Ensuring legal compliance.
- Setting broad policy.
- Serving as an advocate of AISZ and its mission.
- Monitoring the implementation of AISZ policies.
- Evaluating AISZ's effectiveness in achieving its mission.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Board itself.
- Hiring, establishing terms of appointment, and termination of contract of the Director.

## 2.13 Board Member Conflict of Interest/Code of Conduct

Members of the Board agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct and must annually sign the Board Member Code of Conduct at their first Board meeting of the school year:

- Respect the confidentiality of privileged information, which comes before the Board and not discuss confidential matters of the Board outside meetings of the Board or Board committees.
- Respect the authority of the Director of AISZ to implement the policies of the Board.



- Consider all viewpoints and listen to the opinions of other Board members and other parties before making final decisions.
- Communicate honestly and share with other Board members information relating to matters with which the Board is or should be concerned.
- Treat other Board members with respect and consideration.
- Avoid any conflict of interest.
- Avoid raising individual concerns or matters unless Board policy implications are involved;
- Endeavor to attend all Board meetings.
- Strive to make all decisions by consensus and support all decisions recognizing that the Board is one unit.
- Facilitate efficient Board actions and deliberations by devoting due time, thought and study to the duties and responsibilities to the position.
- Understand and act in accordance with the roles and guiding principles of the Board.

#### 2.14 Board Powers under Emergency Conditions

In exceptional circumstances where it is deemed inadvisable or unfeasible for a quorum of the Board members to assemble physically, the use of video technology will suffice to fulfill meeting requirements, including deliberation of both agenda and non-agenda items and approval of decisions, as per in-person protocols. The Chair is authorized to determine when such “virtual” meetings are warranted. Quorum and voting requirements remain the same for “virtual” meetings.

### 2.2 Strategic Governance

AISZ will implement and periodically review the strategic plan and goals. To this end:

- The Board will undertake and monitor ongoing strategic planning.
- The Board will develop plans to achieve the School’s integrated strategic, financial, and facilities goals.
- The Board will evaluate the school’s effectiveness in achieving the School’s mission and meeting its goals.

#### 2.21 Board Goals

In order to promote ongoing effective governance, the Board will adopt Board goals for the operational and strategic work of the Board, develop action plans accordingly, assess the results, and adjust as needed.

#### 2.22 Board Policy /Policy Development

The American International School of Zagreb (AISZ) School Board develops and periodically reviews policies with the aim of ensuring that programs and activities are consistent with the school’s mission and vision. The Board, as outlined in this Policy Statement sets the broad parameters that direct the actions of the administration and school staff. To this end:





- ❑ Policy at the AISZ is defined as the setting of direction for the school in a way that orients actions by the administration, staff and Board. Policy should be broad enough to indicate the line of action that needs to be taken but narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.
- ❑ The Board and administration have adopted an approach of “ends and means,” where the ends are the concern of the Board and the means are the concern of the administration.

The Board establishes, documents and follows procedures for revising policies included in the AISZ Board Policy Manual. Revisions to this Policy Manual will require a vote of 5 of 7 Board members.

### 2.23 Board Calendar

The Board will maintain an up-to-date Board calendar.

## 2.3 Board Development

Each member of the Board will participate in Board development programs in accordance with the Board’s adopted practices, as they may be updated from time to time.

### 2.31 Selection of Board Members

The selection of the Board’s seven voting members and relevant eligibility and terms of office conditions are stipulated in the *By-Laws*.

The Board reserves the right to remove a member of the Board when there is just cause. Just cause will be interpreted as any action or association of a Board member, which places the integrity, and well-being of the school, the faculty, the students, the Board, or individual Board members at risk.

### 2.32 Orientation, Retreats, & Appraisal

The ongoing development of the capacity of the Board is of great importance. In recognition of that need, the Chair and Director shall ensure planning and execution of orientation of new Board members, an annual “retreat” of the full Board, and a summative self-appraisal process of the Board, on which basis subsequent Board goals are based.

Each new Board member shall receive a copy of the *Charter, Bi-Lateral Agreement, Bylaws, and Policy Manual* promptly upon being elected or appointed to the Board.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO BOARD MEMBERS:

Most recent Strategic Plan

Most recent Accreditation Report

The most recent audit of the school



The most recent annual financial report of the school  
Board Essential Agreement (for signature)

The Board will conduct a self-evaluation of its work twice annually (January and June).

Board Protocols (Board Handbook)

The Board Handbook serves to provide operational guidance for the work of the Board. All Board members are expected to be familiar with the protocols so described. Authority to amend that Handbook rests with the Board and can be done as needed by a simple majority vote.

### **3. Administration**

#### 3.1 Director-Board Relationship

The Board will maintain a co-operative and effective working relationship with the Director.

The Board believes that the establishment of policy is the function of a School Board and that the execution of policy should be the function of the Director and school staff.

#### 3.2 Director's Responsibilities

The Board will develop and maintain a clear, written description of the duties and responsibilities of the Director.

Delegation by the Board of its executive powers to the Director provides freedom for the Director to manage the school within the scope of Board policy and allows the Board to devote its time and effort to strategic planning, policy-making, and appraisal functions.

The Board holds the Director responsible for the administration of its policies, the execution of Board decisions, all operational functions of the school program, and for keeping the Board informed about school operations and issues.

The Board encourages the Director to take an active and creative role in the initiation of new processes and procedures to achieve the mission/vision and educational goals of AISZ.

#### 3.21 Administrative Regulations

A set of Administrative Regulations stipulating procedures and guidelines for the implementation of Board Policy shall be maintained by the Director. The Board reserves the right to review such regulations at its discretion, but it shall revise or veto such regulations only when, in the Board's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Board. The Board will be provided with links to all regulations issued by the administration.

#### 3.22 Administration in Absence of Policy



The Director is responsible for the administration of the School in accordance with Board policies. When circumstances require immediate action, but existing policies provide no guidelines, and there is no time to consult either the full Board or the Chair, the Director is empowered to take appropriate action. The Director shall report such action to the Board at the earliest opportunity.

### 3.3 Director's Contract

The Board shall execute a decision regarding the renewal of the Director's Contract and associated terms and conditions in a timely way such as to ensure due process for all parties and allow for effective transition should the contract not be renewed. Guidelines for contract renewal, non-renewal, and termination are stipulated in the Director's Contract.

### 3.4 Director's Evaluation

One of the Board's chief responsibilities is nurturing and promoting the professional development of the Director. One fundamental component of that process is the review of the Director's performance.

The evaluation process is meant to be growth- and improvement-focused. The tools used in that process should be developed collaboratively by the Board and Director, based on a clear mutual understanding of expectations, including those established in the Job Description, Board-approved annual goals, and other documented goals that might arise during the school year.

The Board will maintain a written procedure on the evaluation of the Director and evaluate the Director on an annual basis; the Board will work with the Director to set his/her goals for each School year no later than the November Board meeting, conduct a mid-year assessment in January and prepare a written evaluation report in May.

## **4. Finances**

### 4.1 Financial Policy

#### 4.11 Fiscal Authority

All financial authority is vested in the Board, supported by the Finance Committee. No financial transactions may be executed on behalf of the School unless approved by the Board or by an individual to whom the Board has delegated authority, such as the Director and Business and Operations Manager.

Specific guidance regarding that delegated authority is established in the AISZ Business Office Procedures Manual.

#### 4.12 Finance Plan

AISZ maintains financial planning and resource allocation procedures that ensure that the school and programs are sustained by secure financial management.



#### 4.13 Annual Budget

The Board adopts an annual school fees schedule for the next fiscal year no later than March of the year previous. The Finance Committee reviews the Budget by March of the previous year. The final budget is adopted in September of the current year once enrollment and admissions settle. Revisions to the budget and fees are considered periodically.

The Administration communicates a written summary of the adopted budget to the members of the AISZ Community.

#### 4.14 Reserves

The school maintains a special account designated as the Operating Reserve Fund, which is reviewed annually, for purposes of covering twenty-five percent of the school's annual operating expenses in the event of an emergency.

The school maintains a Capital Reserve Fund, for purposes including, but not limited to: financing major construction work, servicing principal and interest payments of the loan in case of a sudden short-fall in the school's operating income, and the application of bridge financing for capital expenditure purposes. For the term of any loan obligation, the goal is to reach and maintain a minimum of 50% of the annual debt service requirement (principal and interest).

#### 4.15 School Investment Program

The Board authorizes an investment program where the primary objective is to provide safety and liquidity of capital in order to support the School's programs. The investment program will be administered by the Finance Committee in accordance with guidelines established in the Business Office Procedures Manual.

#### 4.16 Aid and Grants

Decisions to accept funds from government foundations or private sources are made by the Board. Such grants must comply with the conditions and requirements stipulated in the Business Office Procedures Manual.

#### 4.17 Fundraising/Institutional Advancement/Gifts

The Board decides on the solicitation of funds in the name of the school.

The Board may establish a fund-generating program to provide for the security and prosperity of the school, for purposes including financial aid, facilities enhancement, and future growth.

#### 4.2 Tuition, Fees, and Other Revenue



As a non-profit entity, the School seeks to take in as revenue funds sufficient only to meet all appropriate operating and capital expenses to support the mission of the School and to provide prudent reserves for future needs.

Accordingly, tuition will be set annually by the Board upon recommendation of the Finance Committee. Protocols for developing that recommendation are stipulated in the Business Office Procedures Manual.

#### 4.21 Tuition and Fee Refunds

The School does not reimburse any tuition payment for a current semester because of a student's absences, withdrawal, suspension or expulsion. However, first semester payments will be reimbursed if the School is notified of a transfer before the school starts.

Capital assessment and application fees are not refundable.

Tuition is due in full for any quarter in which a student has attended or started School. For any quarter unattended, 50% of the full tuition for that quarter is due. In the event of forced closure of the School for any reason, tuition for the remainder of the year will be refunded to the parent or guardian on a prorated basis after all other financial obligations of the School have been met.

In no event shall any fees other than tuition be refunded or prorated.

#### Long-Term School Closure

In the event whereby the school is forced to close and is not re-opened in sufficient time to provide a minimum school year (as defined by the Board), the Board will decide if and how much of the paid tuition the school will refund to parents/sponsoring organizations who have paid 100% of their children's tuition. Should a minimum school year be offered as defined by the Board, no refund will be given to parents/sponsoring organizations. This does not apply to situations where the Virtual Learning Program has been implemented.

#### 4.3 Student Scholarships and Tuition/Fee Waivers

The school may provide financial assistance to eligible families. Both new and current students not related to AISZ Faculty may apply for assistance not exceeding 50% of the Tuition. Amounts less than requested amounts may be granted. The sum of all financial assistance (excluding Scholarship) provided by the School shall be set by the Board each year, upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, not to exceed 12% of the operating budget less depreciation. Board members are not eligible for financial assistance (see Bylaws IV.E.4 and 5).

The Croatian Young Leaders Scholarship program is open for Croatian and dual citizen High School students only who are currently attending Croatian School in Croatia. The conditions of Scholarship eligibility are stipulated in the Business Office Procedures Manual and advertised on the school website.

#### 4.4 Business Office Accounting and Reporting



Monthly financial reports are produced and reviewed by the Board and administration.

#### 4.41 Financial Audit

An independent firm on an annual basis audits all books and records of the school.

#### 4.5 Business Office Procedures Manual

The Finance Committee annually reviews school financial procedures, which are documented in the Business Office Procedures Manual, bringing to the Board's attention significant changes in procedures.

### **5. Operations**

#### 5.1 Facilities

School buildings and grounds at AISZ should offer the best possible environment for learning and teaching. Health, safety, and "educational suitability" will be at the forefront of all facilities' evaluation and planning. The care, custody, and safekeeping of the School's buildings and grounds are the responsibility of the Director.

#### 5.2 Safety and Security

A safe, healthful working environment for AISZ employees and students is necessary for both the well-being of all and to ensure optimal conditions for learning. Accordingly, the Director shall ensure systems are in place that promote the safety and wellbeing of all personnel, including promulgating guidelines, training, implementation, and prevention/ follow-up to all incidents, injuries, and accidents.

Standards and protocols for such measures are prescribed in Administrative Regulations and published in handbooks and manuals as appropriate.

The school prohibits carrying, bringing, using, or possessing a dangerous weapon in any part of the school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity by any individual without explicit authorization by the Director.

#### 5.3 Emergency Policies

##### 5.31 Emergency Procedures Manual

The Director shall maintain an up-to-date Emergency Procedures Manual and ensure the implementation of all regulations and practices therein. The Director will notify the Board of any significant changes to that Manual annually and as they are needed.

##### 5.32 Crisis Response

###### 5.321 Force Majeure



In the event of civil disobedience, war, strike, terrorist actions, natural calamity, or threats thereof, or in case of force majeure due to any other events, the school may be forced to close or limit access to its premises.

In the case of temporary closure, the School, to the greatest extent possible, will continue to deliver its programs virtually until such time as it can reconvene.

The Director shall ensure adequate plans and resources are in place, in accordance with the School's Risk Management Plan.

#### 5.322 School Closure/Dissolution

In emergency situations, it may be advisable to close the school. In such cases, the Director shall recommend to the Chair that the school be closed, either through early dismissal or for one day. If closure for more than one day is warranted, the Chair shall survey the full Board and then make a decision. If closure is anticipated to extend more than three days, the full Board will make the decision. Over and above this protocol, should a situation arise that poses danger to the safety and wellbeing of students and staff and the Director is not able to contact the Chair, s/he is authorized to close the school for up to one day.

#### School Closure: Continuation of Salary and Benefits

If the School is to be temporarily or permanently closed by order of the Board or as a result of a Force Majeure situation, employees will be entitled to termination benefits in accordance with the terms of their contracts. In the event of temporary closure, employees will continue to receive their salaries as long as they are on contract/employment with the School. In the event of permanent school closure employees on a continuing contract will be compensated as stipulated in the Croatian Labor Law and Reduction in Force Policy.

Employees on a current contract, not continuing for the following school year, will be compensated for six months or for the remainder of the current school year, whichever is the lesser of the two.

In the case of a permanent closure of the School, the School will fulfill its obligations to the best of its ability.

#### 5.4 Operational Support Services

##### 5.41 Transportation Program

AISZ contracts with an independent local bus company to provide transportation to students to and from the AISZ. Transportation is the responsibility of the parents and is coordinated directly between parents and the bus company.

##### 5.42 Food Services

Food service management is organized by an external company through which students may order lunch.



### 5.43 Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of all employees and students are of the utmost importance. Accordingly, the School shall establish and maintains a safe and secure environment that promotes the good health of staff and students.

The Health Office will maintain a Health Services Manual providing standards and guidelines for ensuring the health and wellbeing of all employees and students, updated annually and communicated, as appropriate, to the school community in the Parent and Student Handbook and the Faculty and Staff Handbook.

### 5.5 Risk management

Recognizing that AISZ, like all schools, is subject to risks that could negatively impact its long-term viability and operation, and in order to enable the Board to fulfill its responsibility to ensure the long-term viability of the school, the Director will maintain a systematic approach to risk management as follows:

- a. The Director will produce an annual Risk Management Report for approval by the Board.
- b. The Risk Management Report will be based on an assessment of impact and likelihood of occurrence for all significant risks and articulate the appropriate mitigation strategy.

### 5.51 Insurance

The School shall maintain adequate levels of insurance for losses through fire, theft, accidents, liability, and other risks as the Board sees fit. The Director in consultation with the Finance Committee shall determine the appropriate levels and annually review all coverage with the Finance Committee.

### 5.6 Tobacco, Nicotine, Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse

#### Use of Alcohol and Tobacco

AISZ is a smoke-free, nicotine-free, and electronic cigarette-free campus. In the interest of the health of the school community, the use of nicotine products is forbidden on the campus. In addition, the School prohibits the consumption of alcohol on campus by students. Consumption of alcohol is only permitted for adults with the consent of the administration. As a rule, alcohol consumption is not permitted while school is in session and/or in the presence of students.

#### Substance Abuse

Substance abuse by students and employees of AISZ is inconsistent with a healthy lifestyle and the goals of the School. Substance abuse may result in disciplinary action.

The Director shall communicate the School's Tobacco, Nicotine, Alcohol, and Drug Use and Abuse policies, expectations, and protocols in the relevant Handbooks.





## 5.7 Data Storage and Security

The collection, analysis, and utilization of data is a vital aspect of school operations and planning, however, given the fast-changing nature of digital technology and increasing vulnerabilities, that data must be handled with care. Accordingly, the Director shall ensure that the School maintains appropriate storage, access, and use of data in accordance with best practice and GDPR protocols.

## 5.8 Acceptable Use of Technology

The appropriate use of technology is vital to fulfilling the School's Mission, and the School is committed to ensuring that technology is employed ethically and constructively. The Director will maintain, communicate, and ensure compliance by faculty, staff, and students, with the School's "Acceptable Use of Technology Guidelines." Failure to follow these guidelines can result in loss of privileges, disciplinary action, or legal action depending on the offense.

# 6. Personnel

## 6.1 Staffing Philosophy

AISZ will maintain and continuously review an organizational staffing plan, which best promotes high achievement for all students. Qualifications, Professional Responsibilities, and Dispositions required by our Faculty are in the Staff Handbook and posted on the school website.

### 6.11 Equal Opportunity

AISZ does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, national origin, race, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation in employment practices and proactively supports Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

## 6.2 Job Classifications

### 6.21 Qualifications and Job Descriptions

AISZ faculty and staff rights and responsibilities are prescribed in the Job Description, Human Resources Manual, and Faculty and Staff Handbooks.

## 6.3 Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Assignment

The Director will recruit and retain international and local staff members who consistently support, promote and apply the mission of AISZ.

## 6.4 Contracts/Terms and Conditions of Employment

Contract protocols and terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with the guidelines and standards stipulated in the Faculty Handbook.



#### 6.41 Compensation and Benefits

Procedures for changes to the salary and benefits offered by the School are detailed in the Business Office Manual and Faculty Handbook and are reviewed by the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees.

#### 6.42 Professional Development

AISZ will maintain an effective professional development program.

#### 6.43 Supervision and Evaluation of Personnel

AISZ will maintain standards for effective faculty and support staff and a process for evaluating performance.

#### 6.44 Personnel Records

Employee personnel records shall be maintained as directed by the Director and described in the Human Resources Manual.

An individual's personnel file is open to review by the faculty or staff member by appointment. The employee retains the option of appending a statement to any supplemental documents maintained in this file. The employee may request that an item be added or discarded from his file. The decision rests with the Director.

#### 6.45 Suspension/Termination

The contracts of faculty and staff members may not be renewed, or faculty or staff members may be suspended or dismissed from their positions, in accordance with the applicable contractual clauses and policies of the School Board, aligned with Croatian legal requirements.

#### 6.46 Staff Complaints and Grievances

Members of the school community shall attempt to handle complaints and grievances with the appropriate authority at the level closest to the problem.

The Director is the final arbiter within the school in the resolution of formal grievances and complaints unless the grievance is filed against the Director, at which time the established grievance procedure will be followed. This procedure is contained in the AISZ Faculty and Staff Handbook.

#### 6.47 Reduction in Workforce (RIF)

In the event of a significant drop in student population or other serious impacts on the budget,



the school may need to reduce staffing under the Reduction in Force policy contained in the AISZ Faculty and Staff Handbook. This decision must be approved by the Board. Proposals under the RIF are drawn up by the leadership team. These roles are applicable to foreign hires while Local Hires will be redundant according to Croatian Labour Law. Recommendations of any reduction in force must be submitted by the Director to the Board for final approval.

This policy does not supersede or supplement any other policies or clauses regarding contract termination. The intent and spirit of this policy is to allow the school to initiate a reduction in force due to the elimination of consolidation of programs based on student and community needs and circumstances.

### 6.5 Harassment Policy

AISZ will not tolerate harassment by any member of the community, student, teacher, administrator, parent, school or contractual staff, or visitor on the premises or at events sponsored by the school.

The Director shall take the following steps to enact this policy:

- Publish and disseminate a clear definition of harassment and bullying.
- Ensure that the educational program includes information about harassment and bullying as appropriate.
- Promulgate and enact an effective reporting and investigation/follow-up protocol in the event of suspected or alleged harassment or bullying.
- Establish, communicate, and enforce appropriate consequences for proven cases of harassment or bullying, including addressing knowingly false accusations.

### 6.6 Whistleblower Policy

The School encourages employees to report unethical or illegal conduct of any type and ensures that there will be no retaliation for reporting pursuant to the established protocol. The protocol for reporting and addressing alleged unethical or illegal conduct is described in the Human Resources Manual.

### 6.7 Human Resource Protocols (Human Resources Manual/Staff-Faculty Handbook)

AISZ is committed to ensuring that employees are fully aware of standards and protocols regarding their employment. The Director shall maintain and promulgate appropriate Handbooks and Manuals describing expectations and rights and responsibilities of employees, aligned with school policy. Employees are required to review their relevant Handbook and abide by the guidelines therein.

## 7. Instruction

### 7.1 Educational Philosophy



The American International School of Zagreb offers an academically rigorous international curriculum from Early Childhood to Grade 12. We offer an accredited, coherent, balanced, and personally engaging learning environment, based on current research and best practice that has as its foundation built on expertise, extraordinary care, and “the pursuit of ‘the imagined’”. To this end:

- All AISZ programs, including curriculum, are consistent with the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the school.
- AISZ students are viewed as individuals and as such benefit from, to the extent possible, differentiated programming to maximize their potential.
- The school’s program deliberately encourages students’ physical, social and emotional growth in addition to intellectual growth.

#### 7.11 Learning Assets

- We are researchers: curious, courageous, resourceful.
- We are thinkers: open-minded, flexible, persistent.
- We are collaborators: empathetic, compassionate, reliable.
- We are self-managers: resilient, responsible, reflective.
- We are communicators: confident, responsive, respectful.

#### 7.12 Learning Principles

We define learning as a process that leads to a sustained and demonstrable consolidation or extension of conceptual understanding, competencies, and character.

- We can all learn and have a right to do so.
- Learning is a personal and social, as well as an emotional and cognitive activity.
- Learning environments have a significant impact on our learning.
- Transfer of learning happens best in rich and relevant contexts.
- Common learning cultures need to construct common meaning through a common learning language.

#### 7.13 Instructional Standards

AISZ has developed a professional growth model that provides the basis for instructional standards. The AISZ Faculty Professional Growth Plan includes standards that address and relate directly to the AISZ Strategic Plan. This model provides a shared definition of the work teachers do with students and colleagues and informs teachers’ work throughout the year.

#### 7.2 School Calendar

The school year will consist of between 176-180 student contact days. One virtual learning day is the equivalent of a face-to-face day. As student conferences are an essential part of learning and involve active engagement of the students, parents, and faculty, conference days are considered



contact days.

7.3 Curriculum and Instruction  
7.31 Curriculum Development

AISZ will maintain a curriculum that is:

- Documented.
- Standards-based.
- Guaranteed and viable.
- Designed to address the diverse needs of all AISZ learners.

7.32 Instructional Methods and Techniques

We embed our goal of developing exceptional international citizens at the center of all that we do. We use conceptual understandings of the human condition to explore the specific and interconnectedness of disciplined academic thought and practice.

We believe that the future of each of our students is rich with promise and opportunity. We want our students to capitalize on these emerging opportunities by enhancing the skills that have been identified as the critical survival skills of the 21st Century and optimizing personalized, student-centered learning.

We understand that every one of us learns differently and has different strengths and areas for growth. We have different interests and experiences, dreams, and goals. We believe that we all can learn at a high level and have a right to do so. By increasing personalization and individualizing instruction, we put the interests of students at the center of their learning. This way we can facilitate students' own efforts to achieve their maximum potential and pursue their dreams.

7.33 Student Impact Goals

- Expertise: Every student will become an expert in his or her own learning.
- Extraordinary Care: Every student is known, advocated for, and supported.
- The Imagined: Every student personalizes learning and pursues dreams.

7.34 Material Selection/Controversial Issues

Access to quality instructional materials is a key component of the AISZ learning experience and shall be the responsibility of the Director, as delegated as s/he sees fit.

There may be times when controversial or potentially controversial academic material, books, information, artwork, or subject matter is brought to the attention of the Administration. In such instances, the Director is responsible for making a decision about the use of the material in due consideration of both the principles of academic freedom and cultural sensitivity.



### 7.35 Academic Freedom

AISZ believes that academic freedom is a necessary condition for the successful practice of the academic profession and is fundamental to the mission of the school.

The Board supports the Director in his/her efforts to protect teachers from censorship or undue restraint that interferes with their obligation to fulfill their classroom duties in a manner consistent with the School's goals and philosophy.

### 7.36 Technology Use

The appropriate use of technologies to enhance the educational experience of our students is vital to ensuring instruction is effective and efficient.

The Director shall ensure that the use of technology is deliberately planned, coordinated, implemented, and evaluated across all sectors of the school. Protocols for the selection and employment of software, hardware, training and instruction, and security as well as standards for technology use at AISZ shall be established in the IT and Technology Procedures Manual, to be approved by the Director annually.

### 7.37 Continuity of Learning: Virtual School

In the event of temporary or long-term closure of the School or withdrawal of a substantial number of students due to force majeure, AISZ will provide continuing education through a "virtual school," utilizing faculty and staff supported by technology as appropriate.

Guidelines for the AISZ Virtual School will be published in the Community Handbook including:

- Student eligibility, differentiated by grade level for participation.
- Conditions under which the AISZ Virtual School will be inaugurated.
- Guidelines for its operation.
- Clarification of the standards and performance requirements.
- Protocols for internal accountability and recording/reporting student achievement.
- Duration parameters.

The Director will ensure that preparations are made and resources required are identified for the success of the AISZ Virtual School, should it be needed, by the start of the school year.

## 7.4 Student Support Services

### 7.41 Learning Support Program

As outlined in the AISZ Student Support Services Handbook, caring for the academic, emotional, moral, and physical learning needs of a group of children is complex. For this reason, we are firmly committed to a collaborative and holistic team approach to problem identification and the design of interventions that will enhance student learning.



The Student Support Team (SST) successfully serves a managed number of students representing a range of learning differences with mild, moderate, and exceptionally able learning profiles. Service delivery is based on a tiered, Response to Intervention (RTI) approach through push-in or pull-out, small group or individualized support. The SST monitors progress using classroom and standardized data points.

There may be times when students, after admission, are identified as benefitting from support. At this point, an intervention plan is developed. At times, a referral for a full educational evaluation may be made with the goal of helping students to successfully access the learning program at AISZ through structured support services.

AISZ strives to serve students' needs to the extent of the resources available. At this time, the school is unable to diagnose students or to provide long-term remediation and therapeutic treatment plans. If a child's needs reach a level beyond our service capabilities, the school may refer and recommend for outside educational evaluations, remediation programs, consultations and therapeutic services at extra cost to the family or may recommend a different learning program altogether.

#### 7.42 English as an Additional Language Program

The EAL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Program at AISZ is designed to assist students to reach a level of English proficiency necessary for all academic work.

During the admissions process, all children whose mother tongue is not English are identified. Students applying for PreKindergarten through Grade 5 are admitted regardless of English-language proficiency. Beginning in Grade 6, students' English language proficiency is assessed during the admission process and an admission decision is made based upon their ability to access the curriculum.

On-going assessments are used to determine the language support needed to help students access grade-level content, as well as when their English language proficiency is adequate for exiting the EAL program.

#### 7.5 Class Size

Optimal class size limits are set by the Director in consultation with the Board.

#### 7.6 Activities Program

For a student to reach his or her individual potential, our school will focus on nurturing each student's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being. Being resilient, learning and implementing coping and stress management strategies, and managing time effectively, come more readily when children feel safe and secure. Balance, therefore, is essential to our lives, so diverse learning environments and a comprehensive program of after-school activities enhance our total school experience. Participating in our after-school and sports activities is strongly encouraged as it promotes a healthy lifestyle and also builds friendships. Being physically fit and



active assists all learning as well as lifestyle. Creativity is enhanced through the fine and performing arts program.

The Director shall develop and promote a variety of grade-level appropriate after-school activities for AISZ students.

### 7.7 Graduation Requirements

Graduation requirements are aligned with accredited academic credits determined by the school and certified by the Director and leadership team. All graduation requirements must be met in order to receive an AISZ diploma. For transferring high school students, the academic record must include necessary credits in each academic domain to allow for completion of requirements prior to graduation. In extraordinary circumstances, the Director may waive a subject credit requirement in recognition of prior and demonstrable learning.

In addition to the requirements for an AISZ diploma, students may matriculate into the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Grade 11 and receive an IB Diploma if they meet the necessary qualifications and exam results.

## **8. Students**

### 8.1 Admissions

AISZ will accept children without discrimination on the basis of gender, national origin, race, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

AISZ will admit students based on its evaluation of the potential of the applicant to benefit from the educational services available at AISZ and the School's capacity to meet the educational needs of the applicant.

In order to maintain an international balance in the school, there will be no more than 30% of any nationality in the student body.

### 8.11 Placement of Students

New students come to AISZ from a variety of educational experiences, including grade-level placement that may or may not conform to the AISZ model. Accordingly, the Director shall place students in the most appropriate grade level at AISZ.

### 8.2 Student Rights and Responsibilities

AISZ expects that all its students shall adhere to the school's values. All parents and students shall be informed of their rights and responsibilities through parent and student handbooks, stipulating the school's expectations and protocols.

We believe in all of our students and that the futures our students have before them are filled with remarkable opportunities. Learning at the American International School of Zagreb prepares





capable and empathetic students with the skills, competency, and character to be equipped for an ever-changing and dynamic future where the large majority of employment opportunities have yet to be invented. We believe that the attributes of a successful international citizen are empathy, the making of ethical choices, a service-minded attitude to others, a concern for our environment and resources, a commitment to integrity, and the personal resilience to learn from disappointments and failures.

#### 8.21 Student Conduct

##### 8.211 Student Discipline, Suspension, and Expulsion

The Board delegates to the Director the articulation of standards of student conduct, the inculcating of such values in the lives of AISZ students, the application of discipline-based on them, and the determination of appropriate sanctions, which may include counseling as well as disciplinary measures such as suspension or expulsion.

#### 8.22 Tobacco, Nicotine, Alcohol and Drug Use

AISZ maintains a smoke/nicotine/vaping-free, drug-free and alcohol-free environment for students on campus and at all school events held off-campus.

#### 8.3 Student Welfare and Safety

##### 8.31 Child Safeguarding

AISZ promotes the values of respect, integrity, compassion, and responsibility. The AISZ Child Safeguarding Policy seeks to protect the student, the family, and the AISZ community. It ensures that the right of a child to protection and access to confidential support systems is available to all students.

All faculty and staff at the American International School of Zagreb are mandated to report their concerns about the well-being of any student. Reporting and follow-up of all suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures described in the policy and procedures.

Protocols and guidelines for child protection are published in the AISZ Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

#### 8.4 Student Life

Students at AISZ spend their school day in a vibrant, stimulating, multicultural campus. In sustaining this student life culture, the Director shall ensure that the School offers a variety of opportunities for students to engage socially, practice leadership, experience teamwork, and develop their creative talents.

### **9. Community/External Relations**

#### 9.1 Communications



AISZ recognizes the need for effective communication within the school community. Accordingly, the Board has established the following guidelines:

- ❑ The Director is responsible for establishing and implementing communication protocols within the school, including proactive communications from the school to the community and a procedure for handling questions and comments from students and parents.
- ❑ In all cases, operational matters should be discussed and problems solved by those immediately concerned and be taken to higher authority only when adequate satisfaction cannot be obtained otherwise.
- ❑ Should the issue still not be addressed to the community member's satisfaction, the matter may be directed to the Director. If still unresolved, the community member may then register his/her concern in writing with the Board. Any Board review of operational concerns will be focused on ensuring that policy and regulations were adhered to.
- ❑ Questions about school policy should be directed to the Director who will consult with the Board as necessary. Decisions will be referred back to the Director for reply or action. Board members' authority exists only in the Board acting as a whole. Individual board members will not become involved with administrative matters related to students or teachers.

## 9.2 Community Relations

### 9.21 Outreach to Community/Government

Positive relations with the community and governmental agencies contribute to the ability of the School to fulfill its mission. In that regard, the Board will ensure that policies established promote good relations and the Director will ensure that operational practices make that a reality.

In particular, the School will specifically endeavor to maintain strong and positive relations with the government and people of Croatia as well as with the US Embassy and other mutually beneficial organizations.

### 9.22 Media Involvement

The Director and a designated Board member if applicable, are the only members of the school authorized to talk directly to the media in case of crisis. Any other public relations media involvement by staff must have the authorization of the Director. Student involvement in public relations activity must have the authorization of the Director and written authorization of the students' parents.

### 9.23 Marketing and Development

AISZ will establish and maintain a marketing and development policy consistent with the mission. To this end:

- ❑ The Board and School will effectively communicate the diversity, value and academic standards of the school.



- The School will maintain an up-to-date marketing plan.
- AISZ will actively work toward attracting students to the School.

#### 9.24 Community Use of Facilities

The campus and its facilities are available for rental after normal School hours, and on weekends, holidays, and vacation periods. It is available during school hours if the use is deemed as practical, positive, and for the good of the School (bake sales, sales of books, etc.).

The School will normally assess a fee for the use of its facilities.

The use of AISZ facilities shall be regulated through the Director's office in collaboration with the Business Office.

### 9.3 Parent Involvement

#### 9.31 Parent-Teacher Association

AISZ values the contributions of its parents and authorizes the establishment of a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) whose purposes are to:

- Bring the school community together.
- Promote the values of the school.
- Support parents.
- Raise funds for events or resources that augment the curriculum.

The PTA is authorized to establish Bylaws and procedures based on the AISZ PTA By-Laws, which are approved by the Board.

#### 9.32 Parent Information

Communicating to parents the many aspects of AISZ occurs in many ways, prime among them, the compilation of guidelines, protocols, and procedures into a handbook distributed to all parents upon enrolment and updated annually. The Director is responsible for circulating a Community Handbook.

#### 9.33 Parent Responsibilities and Interactions

At AISZ, we value the relationships within our school and our community. These relationships strengthen our school further and foster a positive and supportive environment for our students and their families. We believe that these relationships must be based on honesty and integrity.

We also value the participation of all parents and guardians in day-to-day life at AISZ and in the many different learning, sports and community activities and events. The Parent Code of Conduct contained in the Community Handbook supports our intention to provide a welcoming, respectful, open and safe environment for all of our AISZ community members.



Parents are obliged to adhere to all of the School's Internal Regulations, such as this Parent Code of Conduct and the Community Handbook.