

The American School of Kinshasa

# Elementary School



## Student Handbook

2017-2018



# WELCOME TO TASOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## A MESSAGE FROM THE TASOK DIRECTOR

Dear TASOK Families,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year at The American School of Kinshasa. We hope that your year of learning ahead is filled with opportunities to wonder, to learn and to challenge yourself. The mission of TASOK empowers students to be reflective, culturally aware and independent thinkers. We look forward to partnering with you to achieve these important skills that you can carry with you beyond your time learning here together.

As we interact with each other, our ultimate goal is that we all respect one another. We are a diverse community of learners from all over the world. As a TASOK student, you have the opportunity to learn new perspectives and gain valuable insights. Welcome new students openly and challenge yourself to make new friends this school year.

Communicating openly is important to us, this handbook is a starting point for understanding more about our school and program. You are also invited at any time to share your thoughts, ideas and to solve problems together with teachers, and with leadership.

Yours in Education, Simon Gillespie



## A MESSAGE FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear TASOK Students and Families,

Bienvenue! TASOK has been an institution of excellence since its first year in 1961. Today, we continue the Condor tradition as we strive to provide best practices in education based on the latest educational research on how individuals learn best. Our program is individualized and inclusive. We are excited to work with each and every TASOK family as we strive to promote academic, personal, social, and emotional growth through our dynamic program. At TASOK, we learn by doing, and students are presented with rigorous yet fun learning experiences that challenge them to think critically, ask questions, and work collaboratively to solve complex problems. We are thrilled that you are ready to take this journey with us. May the 2017-2018 school year be TASOK's best year yet! FLY HIGH CONDORS! GO TASOK!

Sincerely,

Dustin Collins



## TASOK GUIDING STATEMENTS

At TASOK, we believe in:

### *Excellence, Integrity, and Inclusivity*

**Our Mission for Excellence:** The American School of Kinshasa provides dynamic and individualized educational challenges and opportunities that promote diversity and empower each of its students to develop into independent global community leaders.

#### TASOK Learner Profile (based on the IB Learner Profile)

Our learners strive to be:

**INQUIRERS:** We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

**KNOWLEDGEABLE:** We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

**THINKERS:** We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

**COMMUNICATORS:** We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**PRINCIPLED:** We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

**OPEN-MINDED:** We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

**CARING:** We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us

**RISK-TAKERS:** We approach uncertainty with forthright and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

**BALANCED:** We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives-intellectual, physical, and emotional-to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**REFLECTIVE:** We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## TASOK LEARNING PRINCIPLES

*Learning at TASOK is both a personal and social activity.*

Individuals have different starting points and different interests. They will follow different learning pathways and will learn at varying paces. Learners attain understanding through regular reflection, self-assessment, and self-adjustment. In addition, it is often social interaction and collaboration, which stimulates a new direction in thinking. Articulating one's own ideas clearly and allowing our ideas to be challenged leads us to deeper understanding.

*Learning at TASOK engages and recognizes our emotions.*

We commit to engaging students in a positive manner and to creating an emotionally safe learning environment where they are challenged. We provide purposeful and fun learning activities that add joy to the process.

*Learning at TASOK happens through providing authentic and transferable learning experiences.*

We strive for student learning that is authentic and contextual. All learning involves transfer from previous learning and placing students in new situation where they can apply their understanding. We strive to foster our students the ability to make use of their learning in unfamiliar contexts, so they learn to resolve issues independently. We aim to help our students make connections within and across disciplines, leveraging technology when appropriate as a tool to enhance learning, and engaging in the wider community both locally and globally.

*Learning at TASOK require regular, timely, and user-friendly feedback.*

Clear and effective feedback focused on learning goals is necessary in order for individuals to demonstrate progress in learning and achieve high standards of excellence. Learners require opportunities to act on feedback in order to improve without penalty. Feedback focused on progress towards well-articulated standards and outcomes promotes learning.

*Learning at TASOK happens with appropriate facilitation and modeling.*

The facilitation of learning is promoted in a rigorous, fun, and motivating environment where skills, understands, and metacognitive practices are modeled frequently, inquiry-based opportunities are regularly implemented, and higher order thinking skills are developed through effective questioning. Modeling of who we are as thinkers and learners is important so that the process of our thinking is discussed, shared, and made visible.

## COMMUNICATION

### Beliefs About Communication

At TASOK, we believe that a strong home to school connection ultimately benefits the educational experience of our students. We value positive relationships and strive to be a friendly, close-knit and diverse community of learners. Good communication represents detailed information about what is happening at school and at home, ensuring that both sides take responsibility for the development of each student.

As a school, we commit to communicating:

- The academic curriculum and overall school program including teaching methods, concepts and skills to be learned, and resources used.
- Upcoming events, learning within the classroom, daily schedules, classroom routines, expectations, and assessment plans for students.
- Progress in learning for each student including learning habits, areas of strength, and areas of challenge.
- Strategies to help parents provide additional support for learning at home. This may include online websites and resources.
- Opportunities for parents to get involved with the PTC (Parent-Teacher Committee), Parent Workshops, and opportunities to be a classroom volunteer.
- Safety procedures and routines

As a parent we ask you to commit to communicating:

- Updates on your child's life which may directly impact their learning or contribute to the learning that is happening in the classroom
- Growth and development that you have observed in your child
- Absences and guardianship should both parents leave the country
- Questions or concerns that you may need assistance problem-solving

### Methods of Communication

Communication between the school and parents can take many forms:

- Teachers and Administrators are available to meet by appointment. If parents have any questions, ideas, or suggestions regarding their child's progress or the learning program, they are encouraged to discuss them. We suggest that parents arrange the meeting by appointment to ensure that they receive undivided, personal attention.
- Both emails and phone calls are used for sharing information and setting up meetings between parents and teachers and/or Administrators.
- The *TASOK Talk* is sent weekly to all TASOK parents which contains important information of upcoming school events, research-based articles and resources to

support your child at home, and to provide school-wide information and updates about curriculum and developments.

- The school website ([www.tasok.net](http://www.tasok.net)) contains important information about the TASOK experience and important information regarding admissions, student life, school calendars, upcoming events, school lunch, and more. This handbook is also available on the school website.
- Student-Led Conferences are held once during each school year and serve as an opportunity for students to share their learning with their parents and teachers. These conferences encourage students to accept responsibility for their learning and progress, help students recognize and take ownership for the things that interfered with their learning success, teach students the process of goal-setting and self-evaluation, facilitate the development of students' oral communication skills and self-confidence, and further enhance communication between students and parents.
- Parent Teacher Conferences are held once per school year and can also be scheduled throughout the year on an as-needed basis.
- Parent Workshops are offered four times a year which offer interactive learning experiences for parents to engage in the latest educational research and to connect with other parents in the TASOK community. These workshops are offered by the TASOK Leadership team, counselors, and teachers. Book groups will also be offered for parents in collaboration with our counseling department focused on essential topics for parenting.
- Each Elementary School teacher maintains a blog with important class information, homework, assessment plans, learning resources, and lists of school supplies. Students and parents are encouraged to check these blogs daily.
- Progress Reports are sent home with students half-way through each semester. Formal report cards are sent home twice a year after each semester.

### **Change of Contact Information**

It is important that the Administration Office have the most up-to-date information regarding your phone numbers, email address, and emergency contacts. To change your information, please write [registrar@tasok.net](mailto:registrar@tasok.net) or call 0821767106.

### **Guardianship Agreements**

The school must be notified when both parents/guardians travel at the same time. Emergency telephone numbers, local legal guardians and health information must be left at the school should an emergency arise. This information must be communicated via parents and not one's child.

## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

### Overview

Through its design, emphasizing inquiry within multi-dimensional, authentic and experiential learning, the elementary program helps students realize that true learning is unpredictable, and that actively constructing authentic knowledge is more important than finding an easy answer quickly. Asking questions, articulating ideas, and being able to share our journey toward understanding is as important as finding the answer. Recognizing that there can be more than one right answer and more than one path to the answer, is encouraged and highly valued in TASOK's learning community. The program therefore emphasizes rich and holistic, hands-on learning experiences: a program of discovery led by inquiry that remains creative, interactive, and fun.

TASOK Elementary recognizes that the best learning takes place in a context that fosters the well-being of the whole child. Students' positive social and emotional growth requires a safe, nurturing environment, in which children question and explore freely, that incorporates time for free, unstructured and interactive play. The learning environment, coupled with the curriculum works actively to validate each child's own sense of worth of his or her culture, language, and self.

A quality education, above all, helps students to know themselves, and to bring to life their dreams and ideas. The program at TASOK Elementary recognizes children as growing individuals, and honors both who they are and who they will become. Our program invites students to experience and to make sense of the world beyond them. From these experiences, students learn to see themselves as an integral part of a rich and changing world.

### Attendance Guidelines

TASOK Elementary School classes are based on active classroom learning and require a high degree of student participation. Regular daily attendance is necessary for all students to fully benefit from the educational opportunities provided in our Elementary School.

On those days when a student needs to be absent from school, we ask that a parent inform the Administration Office via email by contacting the Elementary School Principal at [dcollins@tasok.net](mailto:dcollins@tasok.net). Given the importance of your child attending classes and given the demands of their classroom duties, the administration does not obligate our teachers to prepare advanced assignments and/or lessons for a planned absence. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with their teacher when they return to school to make up for work missed as a result of any absences.

### **When You Are Tardy to School or Class**

It is an expectation that students arrive on time for their classes. A student who arrives in class after the designated start time is considered late. Students with five or more unexcused tardies in a specific class may be referred to the Elementary School Principal and parents will be notified to create an action plan for successful arrival.

### **Student Visitors**

At times throughout the school year, a student may have a friend or family member visiting them in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Permission can be obtained from the Elementary School Principal to allow the visiting student to attend class for a maximum of one school day. Requests need to be made to the Middle School Principal at least one day in advance.

### **Mix-it-Up Community Block**

Mix-it-Up Community Block occurs once a month and is coupled with a school-wide picnic. Students are placed in mixed-grade groups and will remain with the same group of students throughout the school year. The activities are highly interactive and supportive of individual students' needs and is developed collaboratively with the Elementary School Principal, Counselor, and Teachers.

Purposes of the program include:

- To establish trust student-to student and student-to-adult that can extend into classes and become school-wide
- Teach social skills necessary for students to build positive relationships with peers and adults, so they can enjoy responsible independence
- Make school meaningful and pleasurable-relevant to life outside of school, connected to what is interesting and important to young children
- Prepare students to learn-ease the passage from home to school, from purely social interactions to social and academic ones combines, from fear and self-doubt to efficacy and confidence

### **Student Agendas**

Each TASOK Elementary School student is issued an agenda at the beginning of the year. Students are expected to bring their agenda to school every day. Parents are encouraged to check their students' agendas daily, and at the elementary level, will have an opportunity to communicate with their child's teacher via the agenda.



## **School Supplies**

TASOK will provide, free of charge, all textbooks, novels, and research material, as well as library material and computer programs for school computers. In addition, students are provided all supplies such as paper, notebooks, folders, crayons, etc as requested by your child's teacher. Families should provide a water bottle, lunch box, a hat for sun protection, insect repellent, and sunscreen.

## **Homework**

At TASOK Elementary School, homework is an integral part of the curriculum planned by teachers to closely correlate with classroom instruction. The following homework principles guide our program:

- The amount of time spent on homework is important. Times will vary according to the student's needs and skills.
- Homework assignments are purposeful and designed to reinforce classroom instruction, correlate with class work, and extend student learning beyond the classroom.
- Teachers will work together with parents and students upon request to answer questions and concerns regarding homework.
- If a student is continually overburdened with homework assignments, the parent may request a meeting with teachers and the administration to determine the best course of action.
- Parental communication with students about their learning is strongly encouraged. However, completion and submission of homework is the responsibility of the student.
- Students who habitually do not complete their homework will be required to develop an action plan of completion in collaboration with their teacher and parents. Failure to do so will result in mark of IE which means insufficient evidence.

In addition, it is highly recommended that students take the opportunity to read for pleasure each day in their first or second language, either independently or with an adult. A teacher may also choose to assign specific reading and/or writing tasks as part of homework.

## **Assemblies**

Elementary School Assemblies will take place once a month. The assemblies are designed for the sharing of learning, student performances, announcements, group activities, and school spirit cheers. They are aimed at building community and promoting school spirit. These assemblies may also serve as a whole school extension of a Community Block.

## **Elementary School After School Activities**

In addition to the regular daily class schedule, TASOK offers an After School Activities Program for students in grades K-5. Various activities are available in which students may choose to participate. Activities are divided into three sessions, and students will have an opportunity to sign up prior to the start of each session's activities. Students are highly encouraged to participate and to commit to after school activities. Activities take place on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3:25 p.m. to 4:25 p.m.

## **Remaining on Campus**

Students need permission to stay on campus after 3:10 p.m. Permission is gained through signing up and participating in an after school activity (ASA) or sport that takes place after school, or by securing adult supervision to stay on campus.

Students who are waiting on their drivers must follow the following procedures:

1. Between 3:10 and 3:25, students need to remain on the sidewalk area for transport home.
2. Any remaining students must report to the library at 3:25 until they are picked up by an adult.
3. If students remain in the library at 4:25 p.m., they will be escorted to the Administration Building, and their parents will be called.

## **Elementary School Student Council**

Students in grades 3, 4, or 5 have the opportunity to sign up as a member of the Elementary Student Council (STUCO). Elementary STUCO presents a unique opportunity for young students to learn organization, leadership, and teamwork skills through school and community projects and special events. Elementary STUCO is also responsible for managing and running the Elementary Sidewalk Sales.

## **Elementary School Events**

The Elementary School holds several events throughout the school year as socializing with others and a school spirit are highly prioritized. A variety of activities take place throughout the school year:

- Elementary School Swim Parties
- ES Condor Retreat
- Spirit Week
- Congo Week Activities

- Guest Speakers
- Leadership Retreats
- Service Learning Opportunities through the Service Learning Club
- Celebration of the Arts Concerts
- TASOK Musical
- End of the Year Awards Celebration
- Grade 5 End-of Year Activities: Moving Up Ceremony and HS Transition Days

### **Service Learning at TASOK**

The service learning program at TASOK aims to build and nurture partnerships with local and global organizations that empower communities by engaging the TASOK community in contextual, authentic, and hands-on service learning experiences and projects. The Service Learning curriculum is integrated into the core curriculum using the five stages of Service Learning: investigation, preparation/planning, action, reflection, and demonstration. There are opportunities for teachers and students to participate in and lead Service Learning experiences and workshops throughout the school year.

## HOW THE SCHOOL WORKS

### Academic Program

The core academic subject areas at TASOK Elementary School are Language Arts (reading, writing, and word study), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In addition, students in grades K-5 attend special classes two times a week for forty minutes each. These classes include Art, Music, and Physical Education. French and EAL classes meet four times a week for forty minutes.

Preschool students have Art, Music, and Physical Education once a week for forty minutes. More information regarding the specific curriculum can be located in the Elementary Course Overview books available online at [www.tasok.net](http://www.tasok.net)

### Daily Schedule

The regular school day for grades K-5 runs from:

- 8:00 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
- Wednesday is an Early Release Day; school is in session from 8:00 a.m. to 1:20 p.m.

The regular daily schedule is as follows:

8:00 School Starts

10:15-10:30 Recess

11:20-11:45 Recess

11:45-12:20 Lunch

1:55-2:15 Recess

3:10 Dismissal (Every day except Wednesdays)

\*Please note that instructional blocks are scheduled in between the times above.

\*The Preschool day runs from 8:00-12:30 daily. On Wednesdays, Preschool students who are siblings of TASOK students may stay after until the 1:20 dismissal of K-5 students. This is only reserved for TASOK siblings.

## **Elementary School Counselor**

TASOK's mission for excellence includes promoting personal development amongst its students. In educating the whole child, TASOK also offers services to help support students' social and emotional wellbeing Kindergarten to Grade 12. The school counselor helps students succeed academically, personally and socially through education and exploration in the following ways:

*Classroom Guidance:* The school counselor provides guidance lessons for students and collaborates with teachers to present lessons and discussions on various topics and themes.

*Individual Counseling:* The school counselor meets with individual students to talk about problems, situations, how to make choices, provide support, and to problem-solve.

*Group Counseling:* The school counseling sets up groups of children to work on social skills, dealing with feelings of anger or fear, problem solving, transitions from or to a school, conflict resolution, friendship and relational skills, and related topics.

*Parent Support:* Parents are seen as important partners in helping children feel and be successful. Part of that approach is to ensure our parents also feel supported in ways that allow them to reach out for support from the counselor.

*Referral for Outside Resources:* Your counselor maintains a list of professionals for students, families and faculty in an event of a concern beyond the school counseling services.

*Child Protection:* Protecting children and ensuring that they are safe emotionally and physically is an upmost concern for our school. Your counselor and the school Director are the point people to receive and process any reports in these areas of child protection.

## **Learning Support Services**

The mission of The American School of Kinshasa (TASOK) is to foster the growth of our diverse student body through providing a challenging and individualized education experience, promoting personal development, and facilitating community engagement. With the TASOK mission in mind our learning support program provides structures and systems to allow all students to be successful and to access an education that is customized to meet their learning needs. Our inclusive education enriches our entire school community. Understanding and embracing students' learning differences, we firmly believe that all of our students can learn and be successful here at TASOK. We serve a range of students' mild to moderate learning needs through individualized plans. We understand the complexity of providing support for students' with varying observed or identified learning needs, but we are confident to offer the services, resources, and accommodations that are needed.

We accept students with learning differences and mild to moderate learning disabilities as long as we are confident in our ability to meet their needs. It is important to understand the context of Kinshasa and the limitations of availability of additional services that a student may need in English and meeting international standards. This includes lack of educational psychologist services, some medical services, speech and language therapy, psychiatric counseling services and occupational therapy.

Our focus on student learning occurs through a collaborative approach. A preschool - grade 12 school on one school campus, provides a fertile environment for teachers to share best practices, and support one another to meet students' learning needs. The isolation of external resources, given our geographic location, further lends to a community of trust and sharing amongst our faculty. Students accepted into the Learning Support program will have their needs addressed and documented in an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Learning Support services are delivered within the regular classroom setting to the greatest extent possible with co-teaching and resource room support as needed. In some cases a shadow teacher is required to assist in the delivery of services. Currently we have two qualified Learning Support teachers (one who supports students in the Elementary School, and one who supports students in Middle/High School). There is a supplementary charge for Learning Support Services for those students identified by the Student Services Team as needing support and in collaboration with parents and teachers.

Parents of students with identified learning needs are invited to submit an application form and any relevant assessment reports or evaluations that clarify their child's educational needs. Learning support plans (such as an IEP) from the previous school must also be included. The school may request further assessment information, may need to interview the parent and/or the student, and may contact the previous school. The school uses all available information to decide whether the needs of the student can be accommodated within the current program. Students currently enrolled at TASOK can be referred to the Student Services Team by their classroom teacher at any time after informing the parent. Once the referral is reviewed, the Student Services Team will make a recommendation that can include formal Learning Support services. For additional information regarding our Learning Support Program, please consult the Learning Support Guidelines, Procedures, and Policies on the school website.

### **English as an Additional Language Services**

As indicated in TASOK's Language Policy (available at [www.tasok.net](http://www.tasok.net)), in the middle school, English as an Additional Language (EAL) is a support program designed to address the individual learning needs of TASOK's English Language Learners. English is the language of instruction at TASOK and mainstream classes provide a meaningful context for English Language Learners' language acquisition.

The English as an Additional Language course focuses on developing the four domains of English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The EAL teacher supports grade-level content with push-in and pull-out support blocks. EAL students attend EAL classes instead of French because EAL reinforces and supports core-content material. It does not have a curriculum of its' own, and therefore is not a graded course. Student progress is tracked and assessed throughout the school year by the EAL teacher in conjunction with core-content teachers.

Students are assessed on their ability to meet grade-level standards. Together, core-content teachers and the EAL teacher use differentiation techniques and scaffolding to help EAL students access grade-level content. Students exiting EAL will have a mean score of 5 across all four language domains on the WIDA MODEL assessment, and recommendations from core-content and EAL teachers. There is a supplemental charge for the EAL program.

## TASOK ASSESSMENT POLICY

TASOK views assessment and reporting as a systematic collection, review, and use of information undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning. It allows us to identify what students know, understand, value, and can do at various stages of the learning process.

TASOK encourages all teachers to use assessment practices that are student-centered and consistent with curricular learning goals. The school expects that these assessment tasks help our diverse student population make judgments about their learning, incorporate varying learning styles, accommodate specific student learning needs, and provide students with feedback on their learning on a regular and consistent basis.

### Purposes of Assessment

#### For students

- Gives the opportunity to demonstrate learning
- Gives the opportunity to understand their own progress and plan the next stages of their own learning
- Gives the opportunity to understand, set, and achieve learning goals

#### For teachers

- To determine degrees of prior knowledge before connecting new learning
- To identify and support learning differences and learning styles
- To plan, monitor, and adapt our curriculum, our teaching, and our assessment practices

#### For parents

- Provides the opportunity to be partners in the learning process
- Provides accurate information on their children's progress
- Provides accurate information on their children's strengths and areas in need of support

### Principles of Assessment

At TASOK, we ground our thinking in the following principles of effective assessment.

- Improves student learning. Assessments at our school set out to measure intended learning outcomes. Assessments are implemented as tools of learning and for learning.
- Recognizes learning differences. Understanding that students vary greatly in interests, aptitudes, and development, our assessment tasks offer opportunities for all students to demonstrate their skills and understanding.
- Is valid, reliable, and consistent. Our teachers aim for assessments to directly and regularly measure what they are intended to measure.
- Is fair and ethical. Our assessments measure what students have learned. They are presented in a manner that takes into account sociocultural differences among students, does not infringe on students individual rights and freedom of expression, takes into account all students learning needs, considers the environment students are learning in, and holds all students equally accountable.



- Is administered in a variety of ways. A single assessment instrument does not give all of the information that we seek regarding student learning. For this reason, our teachers use a variety of assessment tools aligned to the specific information they seek and differentiate according to students' needs.
- Is authentic and contextual. Our assessments emphasize the importance of understanding and applying the acquired knowledge and skills in real world situations.
- Involves feedback and reflection. Our assessment tools allow students to get detailed feedback on their performance. Students are given time to reflect on the learning while teachers consistently use assessment results to reflect on their practice.
- Is ongoing. Student learning is best fostered when assessment involves a linked series of activities and opportunities over time. Our teachers monitor student progress regularly as students strive to meet the intended learning outcomes of each unit.

## **Recording Learning**

At TASOK, we believe that grades should reflect the level of understanding and achievement towards determined standards and that learning habits (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) should be included separately. Therefore, the TASOK grade will consist of two separate *Grading Categories: Academic Descriptors and Learning Habit Descriptors*.

## **Academic Descriptors for Grades K-5**

Students are evaluated in relation to the content standards for academics. This includes the acquisition of new information and skills, the ability to apply what they know, and the ability to communicate it. Students are recorded with the terms: challenged by standard (CS), approaching standard (AS), meets standards (MS), and exceeds standard (ES).

## **Learning Habits**

*Organization* - time management, preparation, strategies for learning, goal setting

- On time for class and ready to learn
- Follows up thoroughly after absence
- Prepared with all materials
- Hands in complete assignments and homework
- Hands in assignments and homework on time

*Engagement* - participation and involvement in learning, reflection

- Attentive and actively engaged in learning activities and discussions
- Listens carefully to instructions and feedback
- Prioritizes responsibilities and uses class time wisely
- Collaborates well with others

- Participates positively and makes valuable contributions
- Is respectful to individuals, the class, and guidelines

*Initiative*- working cooperatively, respecting others, shared decision making, taking action

- Sets goals and strives to achieve them
- Displays confidence to positively take on new challenges
- Demonstrates honesty and integrity in learning
- Pursues inquiry and curiosity within learning
- Asks for assistance when challenged with work
- Reflects on learning and takes action to improve

4	Consistently Observed
3	Usually Observed
2	Sometimes Observed
1	Rarely Observed

### **Late Submission of Assessments**

Dealing with non-submitted and late work will be considered consistently across all subjects and grade levels. Teachers should insist that all work is submitted on time and is representative of the student's best ability. If students do not submit work on time the students should be strongly encouraged to do the work within a reasonable time frame. Non-submission of work will be temporarily recorded as *insufficient evidence* and marked as *missing* in the achievement category. Therefore no zeros are to be used in the calculation of summative assessments.

If students do not submit the work by the original deadline then the following guidelines should be used:

- The teacher should meet with the student and devise a reasonable timeline or corrective plan for when the work will be submitted.
- *Insufficient Evidence* (IE) should be recorded in the achievement grade and students should be allowed to submit the work with a clear corrective plan in place.
- Late work or non-submission of work is reflected in the learning habits category and report comments. In addition, for repeated behavior, parents must be notified.
- A teacher should consult with administration when a student does not submit the work after this level of support has been provided. At this stage a determination will be made in regards to the implications of *insufficient evidence* for this assessment and the final grade for the student is calculated.

### **Reassessment**

Reassessment should focus on those achievement categories where students do not demonstrate proficiency. If a student has not demonstrated sufficient understanding on an

assessment task, where possible, the student should be given opportunity to demonstrate their understanding within a reasonable time frame without penalty. The teacher should conference with the student, give initial feedback, and create a plan for reassessment. A reassessment does not have to be a duplication of the original assessment, but should be similar in nature and task. There are some external and summative assessments that cannot be reassessed but students must be made aware before the assessments that there is no reassessment possible.

### **Progress Reports and Report Cards**

The TASOK academic calendar is divided into two semesters. Students will receive progress reports at the mid-term of each semester noting their strengths and areas for improvement. Report cards are issued at the end of each semester.

### **Student-Led Conferences**

Student-Led Conferences occur one time each year. These conferences provide an opportunity for students to share their learning with their parents and teachers. The goals of a student-led conference include the following:

- To encourage student to accept responsibility for their learning and progress.
- To help students recognize and take ownership for the things that interfered with their learning success
- To teach students the process of self-evaluation
- To facilitate the development of students' oral communication skills and self-confidence
- To enhance communication between students and parents

## The Elementary Library

The goal of the Elementary Library at TASOK is to ensure that students and teachers can find leveled books from all genres, use computers to further research, and serve as a comfortable space for reading, thinking, and learning. Students will be encouraged to visit the library weekly by their classroom teacher to check out and return library books during the day. The library is also open to students and teachers before and after school and during recess. There are no overdue charges; however, if a book is lost or damaged, a replacement cost will be charged that will include the price of the books and its shipping and processing.

Students also have the opportunity to check out children's educational magazines. In addition to over 5,000 fiction and nonfiction books, the Elementary Library houses the Scholastic Book Room, which contains 5,460 leveled books in sets of 6 for guided reading and literature circle use in the classroom. These books are organized into 26 levels and are designed to meet the individual reading needs of each elementary student.

## Electronic Equipment

Electronic equipment is not permitted in the classrooms (including but not limited to cell phones and iPads unless the teacher gives explicit approval. There may be times that students may be able to use their personal devices to complete school work. We also understand that most parents feel more secure if their child has a cell phone at all times. Please note that cell phones must be turned off during class time unless permitted by the classroom teacher. TASOK is not liable for lost or stolen electronic equipment which is brought to school for non-academic reasons.

## Health and Safety

All TASOK students must submit a completed TASOK Student Health Record form for each school year. Proof of Yellow Fever vaccination is required for admission to TASOK. With regards to illness, parents are expected to inform the office if their **child is ill and will be absent from school**. Students must be fever-free (<100.4F or 38C) for 24 hours, without the use of medication (Tylenol/Paracetamol) before returning to school. In addition, if a student has a contagious illness (such as chicken pox, meningitis, pink eye, strep throat, etc.), it is essential to inform the school nurse so that other parents can be alerted to watch for symptoms.

The school nurse may administer appropriate over-the-counter medications as needed if parental permission has been granted on the Health Record form. If an accident or sudden illness or emergency occurs at school, TASOK will make every effort to make family contact. For this reason, it is essential that parents keep the office informed of any and all changes to

home, business, or emergency contact numbers. Parents are expected to pick up their phone during the day.

Allergies and Asthma section and Missing School for Medical Appointments section?

## **Safety and Security**

TASOK has a comprehensive safety and security plan in place with established guidelines and policies for students and staff to follow in preparing for, or in the event of an emergency. The primary objective of the safety and security plan is to provide for the safety, protection, and welfare of the students, staff, and property of The American School of Kinshasa.

TASOK uses a color coded system for the different emergency response procedures (evacuation of buildings, get indoors, go to safe room, return to homeroom). These drills are practiced with students at different times in the year. Each teacher has a crisis response folder with the procedures and practices clearly articulated.

Communication is important, and it is vital that TASOK has the most up to date parent contact information. We use a system for sending out emails and SMS messages and have phone trees in place should the need arise.

To access campus vehicles need a current year car sticker and a TASOK Identification card for all adults accessing campus (parents, and family employees). These can be obtained from the main administration building.

Parents will be invited at the start of each year to attend a security briefing by the TASOK Director and is available at anytime to discuss our safety and security plan in more detail.

## **Lunch Service**

TASOK Elementary students have the opportunity to either bring their lunch from home or purchase food from our food service providers. With this service, students in grades K-5 can choose between a hot lunch or cold lunch option. Lunch cards can be purchased from the child's classroom teacher for 25 dollars. These cards are housed at school. The cost of the child's lunch choice will be deducted from the card when it is ordered. A menu with prices is published on the school website. Parents will be notified by the classroom teacher when a new lunch card is needed. A prompt response from the parents is necessary.

The lunch service is not available for Preschool students who should bring their lunch from home daily.

## **Personal Property, Lost and Found**

"Lost property" means any unattended, abandoned, misplaced, or forgotten items-including, but not limited to, electronic equipment, cash, jewelry, books, clothing, or personal identification items. TASOK assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the care and/or protection of any personal belongings left unattended on TASOK property or for loss, under any circumstances. Members of the TASOK community are expected to turn in "lost" items and materials may be claimed from the Lost and Found box located in the Administration Office.

## **Food, Drinks, and Chewing Gum**

Students are encouraged to bring **healthy** snacks from home (ex. Fruit slices, pretzels, raisins, cheese, yogurt, vegetable slices, etc.). The school day is long and children need to maintain their energy and concentration levels during the day. The students have a snack time as part of the morning recess and can have an additional snack before they start after school activities. We recommend that students bring nutritious items which can be easily consumed during the day. We also require students to carry a water bottle at all times in order to stay hydrated. TASOK Elementary does not allow the consumption of soft drinks, chocolate, and candy as snack choices. In addition, chewing gum is not permitted on the elementary campus at any time.

## **INSECT REPELLENT**

Families are encouraged to put insect repellent on their child in the morning before school and send in a bottle to be housed in the classroom.

## **SUN PROTECTION**

Families are strongly encouraged to send in sunscreen for their child to use at school. Families are also strongly encouraged to send in a hat for their child to keep at school to wear on the school playground during the school day.

## STUDENT RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPECTATIONS

### **Student Behavior Code**

Every student has the right to be educated in a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment that promotes academic progress, and every educator has the right to teach in an atmosphere free from disruption and obstacles that impede learning. Together, students and teachers, with the support of parents, administrators, counselors, and school staff, are responsible for creating an atmosphere that is safe, inclusive, and adhering to the school expectations outlined in the handbook.

At TASOK Middle School, we know that in order to manage behavior effectively, educators need to consider not just the behavior itself, but also, the underlying causes of the behavior. We also recognize that a progressive discipline approach promotes positive student behavior through strategies that include using prevention programs, early and ongoing interventions and supports, reporting serious student incidents, and responding to incidents of inappropriate and disrespectful behavior when they occur. When educators focus only on what the student is doing and try to eliminate the behavior, they often find that another inappropriate behavior arises in its place, because the underlying need has not been met.

In order to maintain a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment that promotes academic progress, we pledge to provide students with clear consequences for their actions while also working collaboratively with them to improve their behavior by using a range of interventions strategies that are developmentally and socio-emotionally appropriate. We aim to include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behavior while helping students to make better choices.

### **Bullying Policy**

A school that is physically and emotionally safe for all students and promotes good citizenship, increases student attendance and engagement, and supports academic achievement. To protect the rights of all students, TASOK prohibits acts of bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence. Bullying or harassment, like other forms of aggressive and violent behaviors, interferes with both a school's ability to educate its students and a student's ability to learn. All administrators, faculty, staff, parents, and students are expected to refuse to tolerate bullying and harassment and to demonstrate behavior that is respectful and civil. It is especially important for adults to model these behaviors (even when disciplining) in order to provide positive examples.

## Academic Honesty

The purpose of the academic honesty policy is to inform our community about how TASOK approaches academic honesty and academic misconduct and why we feel it essential to the learning of our students. Our Mission for Excellence guides this policy: *The American School of Kinshasa strives to empower students to become reflective, culturally aware, and independent thinkers who will go on to enrich the global community.* For the full academic policy document, please consult the school website.

### **Academic Honesty is defined as:**

- Honoring the work of others

- Honoring your own work

- Honoring your own academic development by using your own words, ideas and work, if you use the words, ideas and work of others to guide your learning, you will acknowledge that you have used them.

### **Academic Misconduct is defined as:**

- Taking the work or words of others and passing them off as your own.

- Taking an unfair advantage during an assessment

Developing academic honesty skills takes time and teachers are expected to spend the time teaching students about academic honesty.

TASOK will follow the guidelines set out by MLA (Modern Language Association). Teachers are expected to know and understand MLA guidelines, and high school teachers are expected to teach these guidelines to students throughout the year. Teacher in elementary and middle school are encouraged to adapt the conventions of MLA so that students are still citing but how and what they are doing is developmentally appropriate.

Prior to any assessment or activity, it is the responsibility of teachers to go over expectations, procedures, and applicable definitions.

### *Procedures for Reporting, Recording, and Monitoring in Elementary*

First incident –The student and the teacher discuss the issues and ways to avoid it. Academic honesty is reviewed and its importance is discussed. If deemed necessary, the student may be required to redo the work to learn how to avoid misconduct and show academic honesty. The teacher keeps a record of the incident and, if applicable, the evidence.

Second incident –The student, teacher and parents discuss the issue and ways to avoid it. Academic honesty is reviewed and its importance is discussed. If deemed necessary, the student may be required to redo the work to learn how to avoid misconduct and show academic honesty. The parents are informed. The teacher keeps a record of the incident and, if applicable, the evidence.

Third incident – The student and principal meet and academic honesty is reviewed and its importance is discussed. The parents are asked to attend a meeting with the teacher, student and principal. In the



meeting, all incidents are discussed and a plan of action to avoid further misconduct and promote academic honesty is put in place. The teacher and principal keep a record of the incident and, if applicable, the evidence.

### **Playground Expectations**

- Snacks can be consumed by students at recess time. Students must finish their snacks and put their snack items and trash in the designated areas before they can begin to play.
- The recess bell will ring allowing students five minutes to put the play equipment away, and line up in their designated areas. Teachers on supervision duty will be responsible for ensuring that students are lined up properly according to grade level and dismiss students back to their classes.
- Students must obtain permission from the supervising teacher on duty to leave the playground area. This includes asking to go to the nurse, the bathroom, or to return back to the classroom. Students are NOT permitted to return back to the classroom to get a water bottle. It is an expectation that students will bring their water bottles to the playground with them.

### **Lunchtime Expectations**

Students in grades Preschool, Kindergarten, 1, and 2 eat lunch in their classroom with their classroom teacher. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 eat in the elementary cafeteria. During lunch time, students are expected to abide by the following rules:

- Walk at all times.
- Remain quiet in line when receiving a lunch tray.
- Raise your hand and receive permission before leaving your seat.
- Playing with food, throwing food, or touching someone else's food is not permitted.
- Carry your water bottle with you at all times.
- Clean up your area after you are finished eating your lunch.
- Line up quietly at the conclusion of the lunch period and wait for dismissal.

### **Unacceptable Behaviors**

The following are unacceptable behaviors:

- Bullying, either in person or in written form such as cyber-bullying.
- Defiance of authority/insubordination
- Disruption of instruction
- Endangering the safety of others

- Extortion
- Fighting or assault
- Hazing or initiations
- Inappropriate language/classroom behavior
- Threatening or intimidating behaviors (i.e. harassment, verbal abuse, humiliation, ridicule, etc.)
- Participating in group behaviors that intimidate or threaten physical or psychological harm against others
- Theft

### **Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviors**

Depending on the nature and the gravity of the choice and the age of the student, any or all of the following may result:

- Warning to the student (including where appropriate the consequences of a second or subsequent violation)
- Loss of privileges
- Meeting with the student's parents or legal guardians
- Counseling of the student involved

When student conduct is seriously misaligned to expectations, or when violations persist in spite of counseling and/or warning of the student and parents concerned, the principal of the school may place the student on disciplinary probation.

In all cases where a student is given disciplinary probation, the student and parents must be informed in writing both of the reason for the probation and the terms of that probation. When the principal thinks it is necessary and appropriate, the student will be recommended for counseling. Disciplinary probation may include restrictions on participation in co-curricular activities and/or the requirement that some class time be spent in supervised study to strengthen the students' internalization of the rule(s) violated. All instance of disciplinary probation must include reference to the consequences of any further violation of the rules of student conduct, and this must be shared in writing with the student and parents concerned.

Disregarding rules and regulations in this handbook may result in suspension. The student is responsible, during the period of suspension, for obtaining and completing the assignments given during the period of absence from class.

In cases where the violation is of sufficient magnitude and/or if the offense takes place in the context of a history of violations or other school policies and rules, the director may expel the student. Decisions regarding probation and suspension are made by the principal.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**TASOK Reception: 0818846619**

### ADMINISTRATION

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### STUDENT SUPPORT

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Note: To view individual teacher websites to get updated information regarding schedules, learning outcomes and highlights, homework, and assessment plans, please visit [http://www.tasok.net/?page\\_id=2237](http://www.tasok.net/?page_id=2237)

