

SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK



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PHILOSOPHY

The American International School of Cape Town (AISCT) recognizes physical activity as a vital avenue for the holistic development of every student. The After-School Activities (ASA) program is designed to foster athletic, artistic, and altruistic growth, ensuring that all students have opportunities to engage in activities that nurture both their physical and character development. By offering a balanced mix of competitive sports and leisure activities, the program aims to complement the development of physical literacy and promote broad participation.

AISCT believes that sport and physical activity are not only essential for skill refinement but are also crucial in building character and citizenship. Through participation, students learn life skills such as teamwork, cooperation, perseverance, unselfishness, commitment, leadership, communication, and self-discipline, all of which contribute positively to their overall growth and learning. The school is committed to ensuring that these qualities are equally nurtured in all students, regardless of gender, ability, or background. To this end, AISCT’s ASA program upholds principles of inclusivity and equity, reflecting our dedication to providing equal opportunities in participation, funding, celebration, and focus for all students.

“Sports build good habits, confidence, and discipline.

They make players into community leaders and teach them how to strive for a goal, handle mistakes, and cherish growth opportunities.”

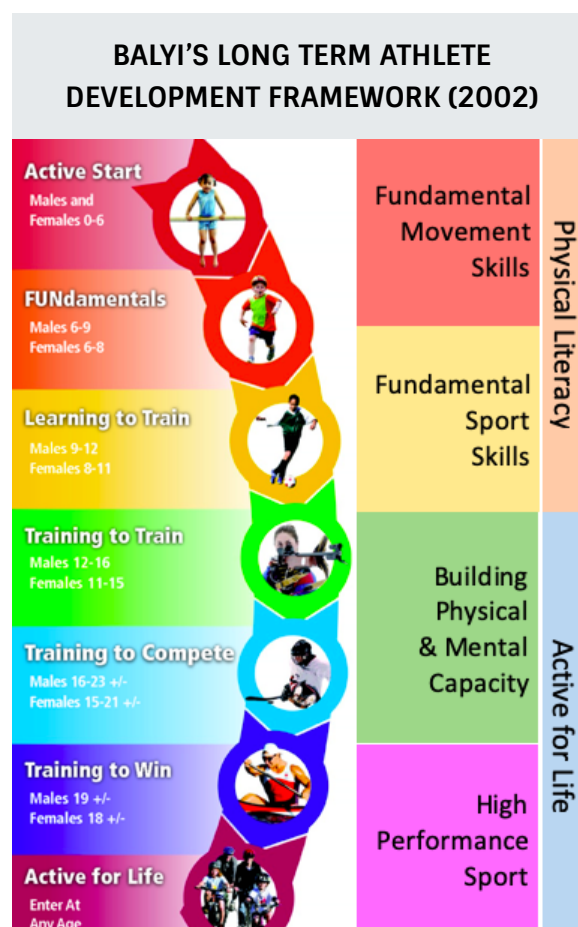
JUDY FOUDY - TWO TIMES FIFA WOMEN’S WORLD CUP CHAMPION AND OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST

PARTICIPATION VERSUS COMPETITION

AISCT recognizes that while not all children possess the same skill level, physical ability, size, or interest in competitive sports, physical activity is essential for every child’s overall health and well-being. To support this, we offer non-competitive physical activity options, including team games, dance, and individual exercises. The emphasis of this aspect of our program is on enjoyment and participation, fostering a lifelong appreciation for physical activity. While sports participation is not compulsory, we strongly encourage all students to engage in at least one physical after-school activity per term to support their physical and mental health.

AISCT is committed to the principles outlined in Balyi’s Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework, designed to guide individual development and tailor training to be age-appropriate.

Elementary School: The focus is on developing physical literacy through the introduction and refinement of fundamental movement skills and transferable



fundamental sports skills. Younger students are encouraged to participate in a range of sports without a strong emphasis on competition.

Middle School: The focus shifts to building students' physical and mental capacity by training them to train. This involves improving personal performance and fitness through regular, focused training sessions, preparing them for more intense competition.

High School: Students are trained to compete, applying their skills and tactics in authentic, pressured situations.

COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Competition is available through school representative teams in our core sports which include basketball, cross country, netball, soccer, swimming, and volleyball. While there is no skill prerequisite for joining these squads, the strongest available match squad is selected for fixtures. This means that not all players are guaranteed match play. Teams are selected for competition based on student numbers, age group, league opportunities, and the following criteria: positive attitude in practice, personal motivation, commitment to training, teamwork, collaboration and cooperation with peers and coaches, good sportsmanship, and physical ability.

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

A "no pass, no play" policy is enforced in Middle School and High School. Students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower at their most recent grading checkpoint are ineligible to represent AISCT in matches until they achieve a passing grade at a subsequent checkpoint. During this time, students may continue to participate in practices but may only attend matches as spectators.

COMMITMENT

In team sports, attendance, punctuality, and dedication are crucial. Success in these sports relies on teamwork and collective effort, and AISCT expects students who sign up for a sport to fully commit for the entire season (both terms). This commitment includes full attendance at practices and matches, timely communication if absences are necessary, and a positive attitude throughout the season. If a student wishes to withdraw from a sport, this may be done only after consulting with the parents and providing valid reasons, which may include health concerns, academic pressures, or unforeseen personal circumstances. The final decision will be made in consultation with the coach and the Sports and Activities Director. Requests to withdraw should be submitted as early as possible to minimize disruption to the team.

AISCT strongly encourages participation in sports, whether competitive or recreational. The ASA Program offers opportunities for involvement at all levels from Grizzly Cubs to seniors, ensuring that every student can find a way to be part of the community, develop skills, and enjoy the benefits of physical activity.

EXEMPTION FOR HIGH LEVEL ATHLETES

AISCT recognizes that some students participate in high level sports programs outside of school, which may occasionally conflict with school team commitments. High level sports programs are defined as semi-professional, senior club, provincial, or national level participation. Students involved in these programs may apply for a special exemption, allowing them to remain part of the school team even if their attendance at practices is limited.

To apply for this exemption, students must submit a request detailing their external commitments and the specific conflicts with the school program. The Sports and Activities Director and Head of School will review each request on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as the student's level of involvement, the impact on the school team, and the student's overall commitment to AISCT's values.

While exempted from certain practice requirements, students who receive this exemption are still expected to contribute positively to the team by maintaining communication with coaches, attending practices whenever possible, and demonstrating leadership and sportsmanship during competitions.

VALUES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

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

COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

- Be punctual and fully prepared before the start of each session or match. This includes having all necessary equipment ready, pre-planning drills or activities, and reviewing the session plan to ensure a smooth and efficient practice or game.
- Demonstrate professional and appropriate behavior, dress code, and communication at all times. This extends to interactions with students, colleagues, and parents, as well as the use of social media and the sharing of personal information. As representatives of the school, sports staff and coaches are expected to uphold its values and maintain a positive public image.
- Provide valuable and constructive coaching to all students, ensuring that each individual receives equal attention and opportunities to learn and grow. Constructive feedback should focus on both strengths and areas for improvement with the aim of fostering each student's development and confidence.
- Support AISCT's philosophy to be inclusive of all students, regardless of ability. By accepting a coaching position, coaches agree to uphold this philosophy and dedicate a significant portion of coaching time—at least 50%—to developing and improving individual skills. This focus on skill development is key to building a strong foundation for all participants.
- Set an example of good sportsmanship by teaching and modeling respect for players, officials, and the rules of the game, and actively discouraging and addressing any behavior that contradicts these values. Coaches should also educate players on what constitutes good sportsmanship, such as showing respect for opponents and accepting decisions by officials gracefully.
- Ensure that their knowledge, skills, and understanding of the game are kept up-to-date by engaging in ongoing professional development, such as attending workshops, obtaining certifications, or participating in relevant training sessions. AISCT encourages continuous learning and offers support for coaches seeking to enhance their expertise.
- Prioritize the safety and security of all students. Any concerns or incidents should be reported immediately to the Sports and Activities Director or a designated member of the sports staff. If the Director is unavailable, the report should be made to a member of the school admin team. Coaches should be aware of the types of incidents that require reporting, including injuries, bullying, or any other safety concerns.

NB: All staff are contractually obligated to fulfill a minimum requirement of one afternoon after-school activity per week.

Slot allocations are based on staff interest, skill, and teaching phase, but conflicts will be resolved in a fair and transparent manner. Additionally, all staff and coaches must be trained in basic first aid, have police clearance, and sign the school's Child Protection Policy.

PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- **Respect:** Understand that while winning is desirable, it is not the sole purpose of the program. Respect teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials at all times. This includes refraining from engaging in arguments and accepting decisions, even those you may perceive as incorrect. Compliance with this is non-negotiable.
- **Responsibility:** Accept that commitment is of utmost importance. This means being punctual, attending all training sessions, and remaining until the end of the session or match, even if your involvement has already ended. This requires good planning and time management. If, for any unavoidable reason, you are unable to attend, this needs to be communicated by your parents to the Sports and Activities Director ahead of time so that the coach can be informed.
- **Integrity:** Demonstrate fair play and good sportsmanship at all times. This includes contributing to team cohesion, being encouraging and motivating on the field, and thanking opponents and officials after the game. Take responsibility for maintaining your individual fitness and preparedness for performance. Exhibit exemplary behavior and manners and uphold the image and ethos of AISCT as ambassadors of the school. This extends to the correct wearing of school/sports/travel uniforms and complying with the general school Code of Conduct and applicable policies.

PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT:

- **Respect:** Understand and accept that AISCT's ethos is not to win at all costs and that each development phase has a different primary focus. It is more important that players learn life skills such as teamwork, leadership, resilience, and management of social interactions than simply winning. Refrain from giving advice from the sidelines, out of respect for the coach, and to avoid causing confusion for the players. Negative talk to or about any players, coaches, officials, or other spectators will not be tolerated. Exercise self-control and maintain perspective: the players are children, not professionals; a loss is not a tragedy.
- **Responsibility:** Actively encourage participation, effort, commitment, perseverance, and team loyalty. Resist the urge to bail your children out when they forget their kit, schedule other activities during sports times, or simply do not want to participate. Use these opportunities to teach responsibility and consequences. Respect sports training and match times by not scheduling other activities for your children during these periods.
- **Integrity:** Show your support for the program by attending matches, events, and initiatives whenever possible. If present for a training session, please observe from a distance without interfering. Understand that by supporting the program, you contribute to a positive experience for all involved.

MATCHES, TRANSPORT, AND CANCELLATIONS

AISCT's core sports offer students the opportunity to participate in local school leagues and tournaments. For sports without official competition avenues, internal or friendly matches may be arranged. All matches are organized by the Sports and Activities team and communicated to students and parents in advance via the SchoolsBuddy platform. Transport to away matches is provided by the school. Students are transported in a school or hired bus equipped with individual seat belts and driven by PDP-licensed drivers. For certain individual sports where numbers fluctuate and times vary (for example, cross country), parents may be asked to transport their children to competitions independently.

After the match, transport back to school is also provided, although parents are permitted to collect their children at the match venue if they choose to do so. Parents and guardians are responsible for notifying the school in advance if they plan to collect their child directly from the match venue. Any students not collected by the time the school bus is ready to depart will be transported back to school, and parents will be notified to collect them from there. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to use ridesharing services such as Uber to return home, as this policy ensures their safety and well-being. While safety is a top priority when taking students off-campus, AISCT is also committed to providing opportunities for students to interact with peers from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Participating in these competitions fosters authentic integration and the development of global competency.

Occasionally, matches may be canceled at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. We strive to communicate such cancellations as promptly as possible. In such cases, the match will typically be replaced with a training session. Similarly, inclement weather usually does not cancel a session, as coaches and staff are prepared with indoor rain contingency programs. Should a session need to be canceled entirely, parents will be informed via SMS and/or email.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY AND SELECTION

Research underscores that coaches' success is determined not only by their expertise but also by the quality of the relationship they build with their players. Therefore, we prioritize the involvement of suitably qualified staff members in roles such as coach, assistant coach, or team manager. When external specialist coaches are contracted on a seasonal basis, they are selected based on their qualifications and experience and must undergo police clearance, consistent with all school staff. During away fixtures, external coaches are always accompanied by a school staff member, such as a driver or team manager, to ensure student safety and compliance with school protocols.

Teams are selected based on a fair assessment of students' skills, attitude, attendance, commitment, and teamwork. While we aim to involve as many students as possible, we also maintain the competitive integrity of each sport. Thus, students who do not meet the selection criteria for a competitive team may be encouraged to join a recreational team or another ASA activity to continue developing their skills in a supportive environment.

ADDITIONAL INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond competitive sports, AISCT offers additional avenues for students to explore their interests and passions. The ASA program includes a variety of clubs, activities, and arts programs that allow students to develop new skills, pursue hobbies, and connect with peers who share similar interests. Whether a student is interested in drama, dance, music, robotics, or community service, AISCT provides opportunities to get involved and make the most of their school experience.

AGE GROUPS

AISCT believes that it is in the best interest of children to participate in their correct age group for sports activities. Adhering to appropriate age groupings minimizes the risk of injury, allows students to excel within their peer group, and promotes the overall growth and strength of both the sport and the team by providing continuity. The age group is determined by the age the child turns within the calendar year. For example, if a student turns 10 between January 1 and December 31 of that year, they will be classified as U10.

To support this, AISCT encourages all students and coaches to strictly follow the applicable age group guidelines, except in specific circumstances. These exceptions may include special events and tours where a mixed team is entered or cases where there are insufficient players to field a team in a particular age group. It is important to note that due to our alignment with a northern hemisphere calendar, many of the students we compete against, while in the same grade level, are often older and physically larger than our students. Whenever possible, we strive to mitigate these differences when scheduling fixtures to ensure safe and fair competition. Given the smaller numbers in each grade, it is common practice at AISCT to assign multiple grades to the highest age group relevant to that phase as follows:

AGE GROUP	U9	U11	U13/14	U16	U19/Open
APPROXIMATE GRADE GUIDELINE	Gr 2 and 3	Gr 4 and 5	Gr 6 to 8	Gr 9 and 10	Gr 11 and 12

(Term 4 and the following Term 1 are considered the same season. Despite the grade change that occurs between these terms, students will remain in the same team because their age group does not change.)

UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE

While there is no official kit required for sports training, students are expected to change out of their formal school uniform and wear their school PE kit or other similarly appropriate, school-acceptable sports attire. School-acceptable attire includes items that are comfortable, allow full range of motion, and meet the school's standards of modesty and appropriateness. Suitable, supportive footwear must be worn at all times, and students with long hair are required to tie it back for safety. As per official match rules, no jewelry (except for small stud earrings) or long nails are permitted during training or matches.

For matches, all students are expected to wear the designated match kit for their team and do so with pride. In Elementary and Middle School, this is the full PE uniform, including the appropriate socks available from the Uniform Shop. For Upper School teams, this may include a school-sponsored kit. These kits are signed out on a termly basis, and students are responsible for their care and timely return at the end of the term. Failure to return the kit in good condition may result in a replacement fee being charged.

In cases of students having cultural or religious considerations regarding attire, they are encouraged to discuss appropriate accommodations with the Sports and Activities Director. Non-compliance with the uniform and dress code may result in students being excluded from participation in training sessions or matches.

TOURS

AISCT is proud to be a founding member of the Southern Africa International Schools Association (SAISA) sporting league, which offers our students the opportunity to represent our school in pan-African sports tours for basketball, soccer, swimming, and volleyball. In addition to these league tours, AISCT teams may also be invited to tournaments within South Africa. Participation in these tours is optional, with specific teams selected based on performance in trials.

The SAISA league includes the following participating schools:

- American International School of Cape Town (AISCT, South Africa)
- American International School of Johannesburg (AISJ, South Africa)
- American School of Antananarivo (ASA, Madagascar)
- Bishop Mackenzie International School (BMIS, Malawi)
- International School of Lusaka (ISL, Zambia)
- Luanda International School (LIS, Angola)
- The American International School of Kinshasa (TASOK, DRC)
- Windhoek International School (WIS, Namibia)

The school covers the entry costs for these tournaments; however, travel-related expenses, including airfare, accommodation, transportation, and visas where applicable, are the responsibility of each participating family. To assist families, the school facilitates all bookings and planning, but parents are responsible for providing support and making timely payments.

Selection for tour teams is based on a combination of athletic skill, sportsmanship, and commitment demonstrated during the trial process. Students selected for tours are expected to uphold AISCT's values, maintain academic standards, and adhere to a code of conduct throughout the tour.

AISCT prioritizes student safety and has comprehensive risk management protocols in place for all tours. These include thorough supervision, emergency procedures, and a clear communication plan with parents. Parents will receive detailed information about each tour, including itineraries, costs, and deadlines, well in advance to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for all involved.

CONCLUSION

The AISCT Sports and Activities Handbook serves as a guide to our programs, expectations, and values. We hope this document provides clarity and inspiration for all students, parents, coaches, and staff involved in the ASA program.

All stakeholders are encouraged to actively participate in promoting sports initiatives and events, as well as to provide feedback on the status and success of the program. Feedback mechanisms are in place to facilitate ongoing dialogue, including regular surveys, open forums, and direct communication channels.

For any sports or activity-related queries, issues, or concerns, stakeholders are encouraged to reach out directly to the Sports and Activities Director, who is committed to addressing them promptly and effectively.

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