EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK

Pre-K through Kindergarten
2026-2027 School Year



HONESTY • RESPECT • RESPONSIBILITY • KINDNESS

The American School of Doha

Identity Statement

The American School of Doha is the premier educational leader in the dynamic and tradition-rich country of Qatar. We provide a rigorous standards-based, internationally enriched American curriculum in a non-profit, U.S. accredited, PreK - 12 college preparatory school. ASD is the hub of a multicultural community where we celebrate the whole Learner through diverse experiences.

Mission

ASD nurtures each Learner's unique academic and personal identity; challenged and enriched through Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, Critical Thinking and active Character and Citizenship development.

Vision

Empowering Learners to discover their passions, develop talents, and positively impact our world.

Values

Honesty • Respect • Responsibility • Kindness

Honesty

Honesty at ASD is defined as: Being truthful to ourselves and others. Honesty is expected from each person at ASD. We can display honesty in a variety of ways. This includes telling the truth, being open and transparent in our communication, respecting confidentiality when others confide in us, admitting our mistakes, apologizing when necessary and being accountable and consistent in our words and actions. Honesty additionally includes recognizing the impact that our daily choices have on the environment.

Respect

Respect at ASD is defined as: Treating ourselves, others and the environment with care. There are many ways our Learners can show respect. This might include inviting and honoring each person's voice and perspective, treating people with the dignity they are entitled to, supporting sustainability efforts, maintaining our classrooms and campus, arriving on time, being prepared, and following through with the commitments we make.

Responsibility

Responsibility at ASD is defined as: Honest reflection and ownership of our words and actions. Responsibility is about behaving ethically. Ethical behavior shows up in the way we interact with others and the environment: the decisions we make; the action we take or don't take; how we choose to behave in alignment with ASD's core values; and the action we take to reduce our carbon footprint. Responsibility is not only behaving ethically but also following safety, behavior and other ASD rules outlined.

Kindness

Kindness at ASD is defined through the following statement: We take care of each other. Taking care of each other means that we honor and celebrate all the unique identities that exist at ASD. Kindness can be shown in many ways. Kindness might be noticing and responding to the needs of others, showing empathy, acknowledging people for their individual talents, or peacefully and respectfully resolving differences. Kindness is also recognizing the Earth we share and taking care of it. Kindness is cultivated in a community where we are actively responsible, honest, and respectful towards each other and the environment.

Welcome to the Early Childhood Program

A Message from the Lower Elementary School Leadership

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Early Childhood program at the American School of Doha. Whether this is your first year with us or you are returning for another year in Pre-K4 or Kindergarten, we are glad you are here.

This handbook is a resource for your family as you navigate the year ahead. Inside, you will find information about our program's philosophy and approach to learning, how we communicate with families, health and safety policies, and the rhythms of daily school life. We encourage you to read through it and reach out with any questions.

Our program is built on the belief that young children learn best through play, inquiry, and genuine connection with caring adults and peers. We take that belief seriously in how we design our classrooms, our daily schedules, and our partnerships with families. You know your child better than anyone. We look forward to learning from you as much as we hope you will learn from us.

Sincerely,

TRACEY REED
Lower Elementary School Principal

ABBY KASKY
Early Childhood Coordinator





Contents

EC PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT 6

Curriculum 7
Assessment 8
Resting/Quiet Time 8
Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures 8
Social and Emotional Development 8
Separation and Transition 8
Counseling Program 9
Home-School Communications 9
Seesaw 9
Email 10
Visitors and Volunteering 10
Reporting and Conferences 10
Attendance Policy 10
Attendance Expectations 10
Planned Absences and Illness 10
Our Partnership 10
When Children Will Be Sent Home from School 11
Cold 11
Cough 11
Fever 11
Returning to School After Sickness 11
Medication 11
Immunizations 11
Toileting 11
School Supplies 12
Dress for Students 12
Sack and Lunch 12
Nut-Free Procedures 12

Birthdays 12
Lost and Found 12
Absent Students 12
All Other Absences 12
Leaving School Early/Arriving Late 12
Late Attendance (Tardy) 12

ORGANIZATION CONTACTING 13

School Calendar School Hours 13





EC PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

We believe in children's capacity to construct meaning, ask genuine questions, and lead their own learning. In our Early Childhood program, inquiry is not a strategy we impose on children; it is the way young children naturally engage with the world, and our role is to honor and extend it.

Play is the primary vehicle for learning in the early years. Through play, children develop language, test ideas, build relationships, and make sense of their experiences. We design our environments, our schedules, and our teaching practices around this understanding. Learning here is active, relational, and rooted in what children are actually curious about.

We are guided by a Reggio-inspired philosophy that views the environment as a teacher in itself, documentation as a form of assessment and communication, and collaboration among children, teachers, and families as essential to a child's growth. We believe that reflecting on the process of learning, rather than focusing solely on its products, gives us the most honest and complete picture of each child's development.

Every child brings a unique set of experiences, languages, and ways of knowing. Our program is designed to reflect and honor that diversity, and to ensure that each child sees themselves as a capable and valued member of our community.



Curriculum Framework

Play and The Environment

In Pre-K3 and Pre-K4, children learn through a play-based curriculum that centers on their curiosity, interests, and relationships in daily life. Our classrooms are designed to invite exploration: children move through materials, ideas, and experiences with the support of teachers who observe carefully, ask thoughtful questions, and create conditions for learning to deepen.

We think of the environment as a third teacher. The way a space is arranged, the materials available, and the invitations we set out all communicate something to children about what is valued and what is possible here. Teachers intentionally curate the environment, returning to and reshaping it based on what they observe.

Inquiry and Exploration

The day includes both guided and open-ended learning experiences. During guided time, teachers design focused opportunities around specific learning goals, introducing materials, modeling skills, and supporting purposeful conversation. During open choice time, children set their own direction, following their interests and building at their own pace. Teachers use what they observe during open choice to inform the next guided experience, creating a continuous loop between child interest and intentional teaching.

Outdoor Learning and Messy Play

Outdoor learning, messy and sensory play, and opportunities for physical movement are not extras in our program; they are central to how young children develop. Children need to dig, build, pour, climb, and create on a large scale. We protect time for this throughout the day.

Standards-Based Curriculum

Kindergarten at ASD uses a playful, standards-based curriculum that builds academic skills while preserving the inquiry-driven spirit of our Early Childhood program. Children engage in structured literacy and math learning blocks each day, with content delivered in developmentally appropriate ways and integrated across the day wherever possible.

Reading, writing, and phonics are taught using a structured literacy model. As the year progresses, children move gradually toward greater independence and ownership of their learning. Math is taught during a dedicated daily lesson and woven into other parts of the day as well.

Play and Inquiry

Play remains a cornerstone of the Kindergarten experience. Children learn through hands-on investigation, collaborative projects, and open-ended exploration alongside more structured skill-building. Our goal is for children to feel confident, engaged, and genuinely curious, not pressured to perform.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor time remains a cornerstone of the Kindergarten experience. Students have three dedicated times for time outside, as long as the weather permits.



Assessment

Assessment is a natural, ongoing, and essential part of daily learning. Students are observed in various situations, and various assessment strategies are used. The teacher observes the children to:

- Build up a clear picture of the child and his or her interests
- Identify what and how the child is thinking and learning
- Assess the effectiveness of the environment on the child's learning
- Assess the child's progress and development and identify next steps

Resting/Quiet Time

We have incorporated a quiet time daily to support our youngest learners. This time allows children to transition purposefully and calmly between the morning and afternoon, providing a physical, mental, and emotional pause before re-engaging with the day. Quiet time looks different depending on a child's developmental stage and individual needs. Please send a small blanket or towel in a washable pillowcase for your child to use during rest time.

In Pre-K3 and Pre-K4, children use the bathroom and wash their hands before settling onto their mats. The classroom is dimmed and quiet, sometimes with soft music or a story. All children rest quietly for around 15 minutes, giving those who need sleep the natural opportunity to fall asleep. Children who do not sleep are offered calm, quiet activities for the remainder of the time. This shared quiet time supports the group's rhythm and helps children's nervous systems slow down before the afternoon ahead.

In KG, students will have time to read, write, draw, work on a puzzle, or do other quiet work briefly to help transition to the afternoon learning block.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Drop-off begins at 7:40 a.m. each morning. Please enter through Gate 6 to access our EC classrooms. Parents are invited to drop off their children in their classrooms by 8:00 a.m. to begin the day.

EC dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. During the first two weeks of school, all Pre-K 3 and 4 students are dismissed at 12:30 p.m. to support a gradual transition to the full-day schedule. KG students are dismissed at 12:30 during the first week of school, then at 3:00 during the second week of school.

If your child's dismissal arrangement changes on a given day, please notify the LES office as early in the day as possible. Please do not send a last-minute email to the teacher, as they may not be able to check their email while with students. For time-sensitive changes, call the LES office directly.

Our ASD values of respect, responsibility, kindness, and honesty guide how we share our spaces during dismissal, just as they do throughout the school day. Families are asked to move promptly toward the exit once their child has been collected, keeping hallways clear for supervision. Courtyards are not available for unsupervised use after school. Eating in hallways is not permitted, and all learning spaces and student displays should be treated with care. Families waiting for traffic, after-school activities, or Hydra are welcome in the library, the MPR, or the Coffee Beanery.

Social and Emotional Development

Our Early Childhood program recognizes that conflict, big feelings, and social challenges are a natural and essential part of children's development from ages three through six. These early years are when children begin to learn how to share space, express emotions, and solve problems with the support of caring adults. Our teachers guide children through these moments with strategies woven into stories, play, art, and daily routines, and with more direct teaching when a situation calls for it.

We focus on accountability and helping children make things right, rather than assigning blame. When challenges arise, we work closely with families to ensure consistency between home and school, and to support each child in feeling safe, understood, and capable. In some situations, we may involve additional team members, such as specialists or counselors, to ensure the best possible support. We are partners with you in this work.

Separation and Transition

Beginning school or a new year involves real adjustments for young children and their families. Some children walk in on the first day and never look back. Others need days or even weeks to feel fully settled. Both are within the normal range for this age group, and our team is experienced in supporting children through this process.

During the early weeks of school, our teachers focus above all else on helping children feel safe and known. We establish predictable routines from day one, introduce materials gradually, and give children time to find their footing before asking much of them academically. Relationships come first.

If your child is having a difficult time at drop-off, the most helpful thing you can do is keep your goodbye brief and warm. A long farewell, however loving, often increases a child's anxiety rather than easing it. Our teachers will make sure your child is cared for and will reach out if a concern persists. Children who are struggling to separate typically settle within a short time of a parent's departure, and we will always let you know if that is not the case.

If you have concerns about your child's adjustment at any point in the year, please reach out to your child's teacher.

Counseling Program

We believe that children learn best when they feel safe, connected, and capable of navigating the social world around them. Our counseling program is designed to support those conditions across the Early Childhood program.

Our school counselors work collaboratively with students, families, teachers, and administrators to foster a positive and inclusive school environment. Their work with students includes direct classroom lessons focused on social skills, friendship, and conflict resolution, as well as small-group skill-building opportunities for children who would benefit from additional support. Counselors also provide transition support at key moments in the school year, including the beginning of the year and any significant changes a child may experience.

Families are an important part of this work. Counselors are available to consult with parents, offer guidance on supporting children at home, and connect families with appropriate resources when needed. If you have a concern about your child's social or emotional well-being, your first step is to reach out to your child's teacher, who will involve the counselor as appropriate. You are also welcome to contact the counseling team directly.

Our counselors work closely with teachers and specialists to ensure that children with identified concerns receive coordinated, thoughtful support. An effective referral and follow-up process is in place to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

Home-School Communications

The foundation of a strong home-school partnership is the relationship between your family and your child's classroom teacher. When questions or concerns arise, we ask that you begin there. Your child's teacher knows your child best and is your most direct and informed point of contact.

If a concern remains unresolved after contacting the classroom teacher, your next step is to reach out to the Early Childhood Coordinator or the school counselor, depending on the nature of the concern. Both are experienced in working alongside families and teachers to think through challenges and identify next steps.

Should you feel that a concern still needs further attention, you are welcome to contact the Lower Elementary School Principal. And if needed, the final point of escalation is the Director.

We ask that families follow this sequence not as a formality, but because it reflects genuine respect for every member of our community. Moving through the appropriate steps gives each person the opportunity to be informed and involved, and it is almost always the fastest path to a real resolution.

Seesaw

The primary form of communication with parents about the school program is via Seesaw.

Your child's teacher will email you with information about how to set up and subscribe to Seesaw.

Seesaw provides both relevant announcements and documentation of your child's learning journey.

<u>Announcements:</u>
Through the announcements function, you will receive frequent updates about what is happening in class; it is important that parents read these announcements, as this will help keep you informed about learning, events being organized, and materials you may need to send in.

<u>Journal:</u>
A digital portfolio (journal) will be developed for each child through Seesaw. A portfolio celebrates a child's growth and development over the year and highlights each child as unique, capable, and competent in all areas. The construction of the portfolio reflects the early childhood philosophy.



Email

Email is used for individual communication about your child between the teacher and parents. Please feel welcome to contact the teacher by email with information, questions, and concerns about your child. Email is also used for occasional whole-division communications, such as letters from the Principal or Director. Please be sure to call the office with time-sensitive information (such as a change in dismissal), as our teachers do not always get to their email while they are with the children.

Visitors and Volunteering

We welcome family involvement in our program. Parent engagement looks different at the Early Childhood level than in older grades, and we are thoughtful about when and how adults are present in classrooms to protect the learning environment for children.

At the start of the year, details about volunteer opportunities, classroom visit protocols, and family engagement events will be shared through Seesaw and at Back-to-School Night. All visitors to campus must enter with their Dragon Card and follow ASD's visitor procedures. If you are interested in being involved in your child's classroom or in a division event, please reach out to your child's teacher to discuss what is available.

Reporting and Conferences

In Pre-K3, Pre-K4, and KG, you will receive a narrative report detailing your child's growth and progress twice a year, in January and June. The reports reflect what your child has learned, the progress made, and what areas require further development.

Hopes and Dreams Conferences
These take place once a year at the beginning of the year. This allows parents to meet the teacher and share specific information about their child.

Parent-Teacher Conferences
These take place once a year. The first Parent-Teacher Conference, held during the first semester of the year, discusses your child's adjustment to school.

Stay and Play Conferences (Pre - K 3 and Pre - K 4) and Student-Led Conferences (KG)
These conferences take place during the second semester. Your child can share their favorite materials, provocations, and creations in the classroom, sharing how their curiosity, creativity, and confidence have grown through the year.

Additional meetings can be scheduled with your child's teacher as needed.

Attendance Policy

At the American School of Doha, every school day provides meaningful opportunities for children to learn, play, build friendships, and grow. Regular attendance helps our youngest learners develop a sense of belonging, establish routines, build confidence, and strengthen the foundational skills that support their development.

We recognize that illnesses, family emergencies, and unexpected circumstances sometimes make absences unavoidable. Our goal is to partner with families to support consistent attendance while prioritizing each child's health and well-being.

Attendance Expectations

ASD's Elementary School attendance policy allows no more than 25 absences over both semesters. We encourage families to plan travel during scheduled school holidays whenever possible.

Arriving at school on time is equally important, as it allows children to settle into their morning routines, connect with teachers and friends, and begin their day feeling confident and ready to learn.
As absences approach this number, we will connect with families to better understand individual circumstances and work together to support regular attendance. Continued excessive absences may require a meeting with school administration and could affect continued enrollment.

Consistent attendance also allows teachers to observe and document children's learning and development. When attendance is significantly limited, there may be insufficient evidence to accurately report on a child's progress.

Planned Absences and Illness

For planned extended absences, families are asked to complete the Pre-Arranged Absence Form and communicate with their child's teacher in advance.

When children are unwell, we encourage families to allow sufficient time for rest and recovery before returning to school.

Our Partnership

Early Childhood learning is built on relationships, play, exploration, and shared experiences that cannot always be replicated outside the classroom. By working together to support regular attendance, we help every child feel connected, confident, and ready to learn.

Every child is a valued member of our learning community, and when they are away, they are missed.



When Children Will Be Sent Home from School

Our school staff serves as the link between parents and children. When a child complains of illness, it is the responsibility of the school nurse to note and communicate common symptoms, such as fever, vomiting, and diarrhea to parents. The school is not equipped to care for an ill or injured student for an indefinite amount of time. Parents are responsible for picking up their child in a timely manner once the school has notified them. If parents cannot come when notified, they must inform the nurse who they are allowing to act on their behalf to pick up their child.



Cold

Keep children home with a colored nasal discharge, fever, bad cough, headache, nausea, vomiting, or if the child is too tired or uncomfortable to function at school.

Cough

A child must remain home if he/she has a dry/productive persistent, barking and hacking cough or cannot practice respiratory etiquette (turning away from others and covering their mouth).

Fever

Children must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medicine) before returning to school. They must stay home if they have the following symptoms:
Mouth: 37.5 C/99.6 °F or higher
Ear: 37.8 C/100°F and higher

Returning to School After Sickness

If the child has been home sick for any of the above-mentioned illnesses, they must be either cleared by a doctor or free from vomiting, fever, or sickness for 24 hours without medication. If your child is absent for three days or more, please visit the doctor for a medical clearance note.

Medication

Where possible, medication should be given at home. If necessary, the school nurse may administer medication at school with written permission from the parents.

Immunizations

All students must be up to date with the required immunizations. The school nurse will contact parents when a student requires further vaccines. Parents must provide the updated immunization record with the completed immunizations to the school nurse.

Toileting

Children must be toilet-trained and not wear diapers/pull-ups to attend ASD. A child is considered toilet-trained when he or she can complete the following steps with minimal assistance:

- Know when he/she needs to use the bathroom
- Alert the teacher or get to the bathroom on his/her own
- Know how to get his/her pants and underpants off and on
- Clean his/her private parts with paper
- Put all toilet paper in the bowl/bin
- Flush the toilet
- Wash their hands

We understand that young children have occasional accidents, particularly during transition times, such as when a child begins school. A child who has had an accident needs to know when he/she has had an accident, alert the teacher, and clean and change his/her clothes with minimal assistance. The school does not keep extra clothing, and parents are responsible for providing spare clothing that the child may need throughout the day.

If staff believe a child is not toilet trained, the teacher will arrange to discuss the matter with parents; the child may need to stay home until he/she is fully toilet trained. An indication of this need may be a student having daily accidents over a period of time or needing pull-ups during nap time.

School Supplies

A supply list for each grade level is shared in Sahifa at the end and the beginning of each school year. Additionally, items that should be brought to school daily are as follows:

- a reusable water bottle (labeled clearly with the child's name)
- a non-wheeled backpack large enough for their daily folder
- a nourishing snack and lunch

Dress for Students

Clothing should be comfortable, keeping in mind that children will be involved in play, which may be messy. We recommend that students wear suitable footwear and clothing that does not restrict or obstruct movement for active play, such as sneakers/trainers/runners.

In Pre-K and KG, we recognize that students often cannot tie their shoes independently. Therefore, we ask that children wear shoes with Velcro or no-tie laces. In KG, students should come to school dressed in their PE kit and athletic shoes on PE days.

Snacks and Lunch

Two breaks will be set aside for eating within the daily schedule. Please ensure your child comes to school daily with enough food and drink to cover the time he/she is at school, as the school does not provide food.

Children should bring refillable bottles to school with their names marked on them. Water is available to refill the bottles throughout the day. Students are encouraged to stay hydrated and can drink water whenever they need to.

Due to space limitations and health and safety concerns, children's snacks and lunches cannot be stored in the classroom refrigerator or heated in a microwave.

We emphasize healthy food and drink so children have balanced energy to learn and play throughout the day.

Nut-Free Procedures

Our Early Childhood classrooms are nut-free environments. Many children at this age have not been to school or been exposed to nuts, so parents are asked not to send any foods that contain nuts to school with their children.

Birthdays

Children may celebrate their birthdays at school by sharing treats with their peers. Parents are highly encouraged to send the treats first thing in the morning with their child.

Birthday and gift bags are prohibited and will not be distributed to students. Any bags sent to school will be returned home with the student.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located in the cafeteria. Please label all items and check periodically for your child's missing items. Items not claimed within a school semester will be donated.

Absent Students

Parents must notify the teacher for the first two days of illness and copy the LES office by email. If a student is out sick for 3 or more days, please provide a doctor's note clearing them to return to school.

All Other Absences

Extended absences should be arranged using the Student Absence Notification Form. Please know we expect that student absences will not exceed 15% or approximately 25 days of school annually. As students approach this number, families will be sent reminder letters, they could be invited to meet with the administration to brainstorm ideas for better attendance, and they could eventually be asked to reapply or lose their enrollment seat. Additionally, if a student has excessive absences and the teacher does not have sufficient evidence to grade fairly, they will receive Insufficient Evidence (IE) grades on their report card.

Leaving School Early/Arriving Late

Students who leave early or arrive late during the school day must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and have a pass from the Elementary Office.

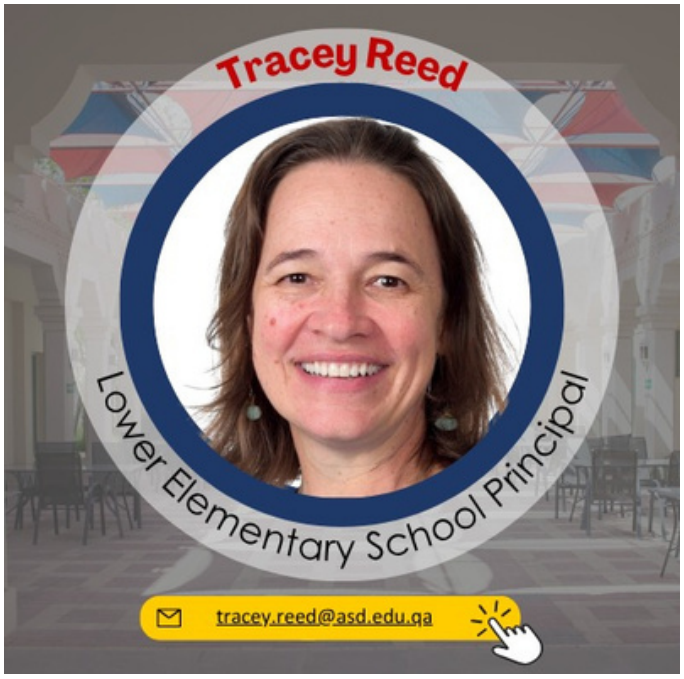
Late Attendance (Tardy)

Punctual arrival at school is important for a smooth transition to the day. Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. A student is considered tardy at 8:05 a.m. Students arriving late must obtain a tardy pass from the Elementary School Office.



ORGANIZATION

Important Contacts







CONTACTING

If you need to contact your child's teacher during the school day with a time-sensitive request or message, please leave a message with the EC office receptionist.

School Calendar

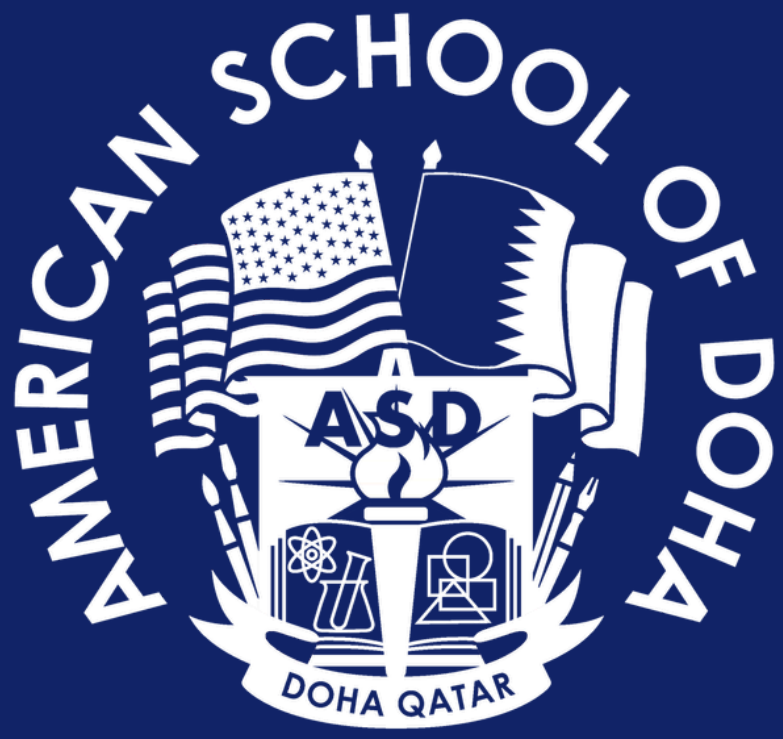
SY 2026-2027 School Calendar

The Lower Elementary School Pre K3 - G2 is a nut-free campus. Please make sure you pack nut-free products to guarantee the wellbeing of all of our students.

NURSE INFORMATION

Josephine Bou Akar
josephine.bouakar@asd.edu.qa

Nursing Department
nurses@asd.edu.qa



Connect With Us
asd.sch.qa
+974 4459 1511

#ASDoha