



**ESCOLA AMERICANA DE BELO HORIZONTE**

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF BELO HORIZONTE

# **2008-2009 Student/Parent Handbook**

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Dear Students and Parents,

I want to take this opportunity to welcome our students and parents to the 2008-2009 school year and to wish you every success!

EABH offers its students a high quality, academically challenging and well-rounded program. The adoption of the International Baccalaureate Primary and Middle Years Programmes, together with the Advanced Placement course load, is indicative of the challenging program we have for all of our students. This course of study is recognized by colleges and universities around the world as one of the finest preparatory programs for post-secondary study.

EABH is an exciting and dynamic school and with your support and cooperation it will grow to become one of the premier schools in Brazil. Our entire faculty and support staff are here to make your educational experience a great one and we are dedicated to your success. If a student fails, then we fail!

Many improvements were made to the campus facility during the past year that should provide a better education for our students. A new library, a new science lab, new classrooms, administrative offices and a redesigned reception area were constructed. During the recent school vacation, the campus was given a “face-lift” to make the buildings and grounds more attractive to be a place where students, parents and staff can take pride!

We seek your cooperation since this is critical to the success of our programs. This booklet, in addition to serving as a homework agenda, outlines the expectations we have for our students. Thus, it is important that both parents and students read the content in its entirety. I am sure you will find the information helpful and should answer many of the questions you may have about the daily operations of EABH.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teachers, the main office, or me if you have any questions. It is our intention to work closely with you during the coming year to make sure that our EABH students have a productive and successful school year.

On behalf of the EABH faculty, staff and Board of Directors I want to wish you a very successful 2008-2009 school year.

Have a great year!!

Tom Tunny  
Director

# **The American School of Belo Horizonte**

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## **Escola Americana de Belo Horizonte (EABH)**

### **Mission Statement**

The American School of Belo Horizonte prepares students in a well-supported international setting for a fulfilling life as world citizens by developing a desire for lifelong learning and respect for individuals, cultures and the environment.

### **Vision Statement**

Provide an outstanding internationally-focused education in a multilingual environment.

### **Purpose**

EABH will implement a holistic program that is taught primarily in the English language, in addition to fostering a multilingual community.

EABH will foster a secure, nurturing and challenging environment that stimulates the development of intellectual, democratic and social awareness.

EABH will provide individual learning experiences and personalized attention.

EABH will ensure that our students' educational experience is developed in harmony with the local and global community.

EABH will ensure that both students and teachers are actively engaged in assessing student progress as part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills.

EABH will develop internationally-minded students who are committed to becoming responsible leaders of our rapidly changing world.

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## **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**

EABH exists to provide an excellent, internationally-focused education. The following serve as guidelines for the academic policy at EABH.

### **Academic Help**

Teachers are committed to helping students succeed. Please take advantage of opportunities before or after school for individual help and remember to make prior arrangements with the teacher.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are distributed to students approximately one week after the conclusion of each quarter. End of the year report cards are sent home on the last day of school.

### **Homework**

At EABH the teachers and administration strongly believe that homework contributes to the academic success of children. Homework serves as a link between the child, the home and the classroom. Homework fosters positive school attitudes, good study habits, effective time management, and personal responsibility. While recognizing the usefulness of homework, the EABH staff strives to maintain a balance between the students' lives and their homework. Homework may be a daily activity for some students. Students who use their class time responsibly should not experience excessive amounts of homework (see chart below). If students are consistently overwhelmed, parents should contact their teachers.

#### **Average Nightly Homework Guidelines**

<b>Pre K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grades</b>	<b>0 to ½ hour</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades</b>	<b>½ hour to 1 hour</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades</b>	<b>1 hour to 1½ hours</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades</b>	<b>1½ to 2 hours</b>

### **Homework Expectations**

#### Students

- Complete homework assignments neatly and on time.
- Schedule time wisely to meet assignment deadlines.
- Attend school regularly and come prepared.
- Get assignments when absent.
- Make-up work will take priority over any extracurricular activity.

#### Teachers

- Provide checkpoints for long-term assignments.
- Give no more than two major tests on any one day. This does not include vocabulary quizzes or spelling tests, which are usually studied in class as well.

As students move into the higher grades, the test limit may not always be possible.

- Assign work for academic reasons to practice, reinforce and master skills.
- Provide clear directions for assignment, format and due date.

### Parents

- Provide an appropriate place and atmosphere for homework.
- Set aside homework/reading time nightly.
- Contact teacher if time spent on homework is excessive.

## **ACCREDITATIONS/PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

An IB World School (PYP) & IB Candidate School (MYP)

Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

Recognized by the Department of Education of the State of Minas Gerais (*Secretaria de Educação do Estado de Minas Gerais*)

Member of the Association for the Advancement of International Education

Charter Member of the Association of American Schools in Brazil

Member of the Association of American Schools in South America

Member of the College Entrance Examination Board

Recognized by the Office of Overseas Schools of the United States Department of State

## **ADMISSIONS/ENROLLMENT**

The American School of Belo Horizonte admits students from a number of different countries with a variety of educational backgrounds. The placement orientation of the school strives to permit transitions both into and out of school with a minimum of difficulty.

Students entering from northern hemisphere school calendars (graduation in June) are placed in the appropriate grade level according to the past year's grade completion. Students entering from southern hemisphere school calendars (graduation in December) are placed according to the same examinations of knowledge of English, reasoning skills, maturity and ability to learn. In general, the school recommends these students move back one semester in order to minimize academic problems and facilitate adjustment.

## **ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

The school realizes the importance of athletics in providing a well-rounded educational program. Students are encouraged to participate in the athletic program, whether on an intramural or interscholastic level. EABH will attempt to provide as wide a variety of sports as possible, depending upon student interest and availability of coaches and resources. Athletic tournaments are held with other American/international schools in Brazil and South America.

## ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance at school is a critical factor in school success. Students are expected to arrive each day on time, ready to learn. When a student is absent, parents are asked to call the school as soon as possible to report the absence. All authorized absences, except illness, must be approved in advance at the office. An authorized absence will result in no grade reduction, and time will be allocated for missed assignments to be completed – one day for each day of absence. Parents may request homework assignments from the office when reporting a student's absence if the student is absent more than one day. **Teachers require 24-hour notice to gather homework and other assignments.**

Parents/guardians are required to sign students in at the attendance office after 8:10 a.m. All late arrivals are considered unexcused unless the student is signed in by a parent/guardian or approved by an administrator. If a student needs to leave school early for an appointment, the parent/guardian must send written permission with the student to the main office before school begins. Parents/guardians must sign students out at the office before the student may leave.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

### Philosophy/Policy

Taken from the same root word for disciple, discipline is established and maintained at EABH with the intent to "train" or "build into" the lives of students. For this reason the discipline procedures are progressive in nature. EABH employees desire to be fair yet firm, loving but not sentimental, and caring, not just "doing our job."

The kind and amount of discipline will be determined by the teachers, and, if necessary, the administration. Discipline will be administered in light of the individual student's problem and attitude. All discipline will be character-focused and based on traditional principles, i.e. restitution, apologies (public and private), swift punishment, no lingering attitudes, etc. The vast majority of discipline problems are to be dealt with at the classroom level. In order to maintain consistency, teachers convene regularly to discuss standards and school policy concerning discipline.

It is vital for parents and students to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the school and classroom is critical to the learning process. As in all other educational areas of EABH, behavioral expectations for students will be very demanding.

Discipline is best maintained by those on the front line: the classroom teachers. Common sense being the rule, teachers are expected to uphold the spirit of EABH's discipline policy. Only major or serious offenses are referred to the administration. All office referrals require the administration to contact the parents. There are eleven basic behaviors that may lead to a disciplinary referral to the administration:

1. **Disrespect** shown to any staff member. The staff member will be the judge of whether or not disrespect has been shown.
2. **Dishonesty** in any situation while at school.
3. **Rebellion**, i.e. outright disobedience in response to instructions.
4. **Fighting**, i.e. striking in anger with the intention to harm another student.

5. **Harassment:** Each student has a right to come to school and feel safe. If a student is bullying, mobbing, or causing a fellow student to be afraid this will be regarded as unacceptable behavior.
6. **Obscene language or gestures:** Students are expected to use wholesome language at all times.
7. **Habitual disruption** of the educational process. Cell phones and electronic devices are to be used only during lunch and before and after school. Emergency calls should come through the office.
8. **Stealing:** Defined as taking something that does not belong to you, regardless of value, is a serious violation of EABH philosophy and policy. Any student caught stealing will be subject to discipline by the school administration, including the possibility of expulsion. Included in any discipline will be a matter of restitution. Incidents of stealing will be handled on an individual basis, considering the prior behavior record of the involved student or students.
9. **Vandalism:** A student involved in willfully damaging school property may receive a three-day suspension. A second offense may result in a five-day suspension and consideration for expulsion. The student will also be responsible for paying the costs to repair the damage.
10. **Truancy:** A student who "skips" school (is absent without permission) at any time will be considered truant and will be issued an office referral.
11. **Cheating:** As exemplary citizens, EABH students are expected to maintain absolute integrity as members of the student body. All provable incidents of cheating will receive a zero for the paper, quiz, test or assignment as well as an office referral. The following activities will not be tolerated at EABH:
  - **Copying or permitting a fellow student to copy** the homework/classroom/test.
  - **Use of notes or "cheat sheet"** during a test unless permitted by the teacher.
  - **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is any instance, whether intentional or unintentional, where a student includes non-original material in their work without giving credit to the original author. Both intentional and non-intentional plagiarism is considered a form of cheating and is subject to academic and disciplinary consequences.
  - **Looking at or possessing a copy** of an assessment not yet taken.

## **Consequences**

Any student who is a habitual offender of school rules, no matter how small the individual offense, will be subject to suspension and may be considered for expulsion.

EABH does not permit the use of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, profanity, racial slurs, derogatory remarks or gambling at school or any school sponsored activity. In addition, use of drugs or alcohol, sexual immorality, threats of harm to faculty, staff or students during or after school hours and on or off campus will automatically result in suspension from school for up to five days, and the student will be considered for expulsion. When expulsion is considered for any student, his/her behavior record for the school year and the nature of offense will be taken into account. In addition, any student who consistently possesses and shares with others a negative attitude

toward EABH, faculty, or fellow students may be called on to meet in a disciplinary council with parents and administration.

During the visit to the office, the administrator will determine the nature of the discipline. The administrator may require restitution, custodial work, parents' attendance during the school day with their child or other measures consistent with EABH's philosophy.

### Suspension

Suspension from school is a serious step in the discipline procedure of EABH. It is used when other attempts to remediate a problem have been unsuccessful. Suspension may result from repeated violations of school rules or a single serious violation of school rules. The length of suspension is determined by the frequency or severity of the offense, and may be from a half day to five days in duration. After the first three-day suspension, any subsequent suspension will automatically result in consideration for expulsion. Certain offenses may receive automatic suspension without prior attempts at mediation. Any suspension requires parent contact with the administration prior to the student being allowed to return to classes.

### Serious Misconduct

If a student commits an act with such serious consequences that the administration deems it necessary, the office-visit process may be bypassed and **suspension** or **expulsion** proceedings imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct could include acts endangering the lives of other students or staff members, gross violence, vandalism of school facilities, violations of the law, or any act in clear contradiction of EABH's policies. Students may be subject to school discipline for serious misconduct that occurs after school hours.

### Expulsion

The Director will make a recommendation to the EABH Board and the Board will make a final decision based on policies and procedures for student expulsion in effect.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors is composed of seven members of the Association elected from the general membership. Members are elected to four-year terms. The Board of Directors consists of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and three members at large. The Board meets on a monthly basis to discuss policy issues and to review the finances of the school. The Board reports to the Association at a General Meeting, which is held each semester. Association meetings are an essential and integral part of the operation of our school. Parents are expected to attend all Association meetings, which are held in November of each year to elect new members of the Board of Directors and another in May to provide the Association an opportunity to review the budget and vote for approval. Board meetings are held once a month and are open to any member of the Association. Members may be invited to serve on special committees or on special Board projects. Input from parents is welcomed and encouraged.

## **BRAZILIAN PROGRAM**

EABH is officially accredited as a Brazilian school through grade 12 by the Secretary of Education of the State of Minas Gerais. The Brazilian Program is designed to follow a basic curriculum in accordance with the teaching norms established by the state of Minas Gerais. Language, literature, Brazilian history and Brazilian geography are taught in the Portuguese language. Other subject areas are included in the American Program.

## **CLOSED CAMPUS**

Students must stay on the school grounds from the time of arrival until dismissal or until signed out by a parent or guardian. Students are signed out in the main office.

## **DIPLOMAS**

Our students are offered the opportunity of earning two diplomas (the American and the Brazilian) upon graduation from our school. Information concerning each of the diplomas is available in the main office.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students in all grades are required to wear the school uniform at all times. The school uniform includes a jacket and/or sweatshirt. Shoes must be closed toe or sandals with heel straps (no "flip flops" are permitted). Caps and hats may be worn only during outdoor activities. The administration of EABH reserves the right to make final judgment as to the appropriateness of clothing and student jewelry.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Any time it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early from school, the student must present a note to the main office, or a parent must phone the main office prior to the early dismissal. The note/phone call must include:

- The student's full name.
- The date and time of dismissal.
- The specific reason for the dismissal.
- The signature of the parent and telephone number.

REMEMBER, leaving campus between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. is NEVER permitted without a written note or telephone call from parents. This is considered a serious disciplinary violation.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students are permitted to use cell phones and other electronic devices only during their lunch period and before and after school. Any violation of this rule will result in the confiscation of the device

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT/HEALTH INFORMATION**

It is imperative that all parents complete an Emergency Contact Form. This form is provided at the time of registration or re-enrollment. In health emergencies, EABH will use the parent's choice of medical institutions as listed on the Emergency

Contact Form or Vila da Serra Hospital. We are also required to maintain a record of immunizations for each student.

## **ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

EABH offers a comprehensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) program for all grade levels. The goal of this program is to enable students to participate successfully in those classes where English is the language of instruction. The program stresses English language development both in the content areas and as a medium of thought. The program is structured on an individual basis, depending upon a student's background and ability. The aim of the EAL program is to mainstream students into the regular curriculum as soon as possible, depending upon their individual abilities and growth in the language.

The school also offers a Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) program at most grade levels to those students who are non-Portuguese speakers. The goal is to integrate these students into the required Brazilian components of the school's curriculum and to enhance their abilities to communicate in Brazil.

When a student needs to learn both English and Portuguese in addition to their native language, the school will focus first on building fluency in English and later add PAL support.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

A variety of field trips are held during the school year. These trips make it possible for our students to attend special events in the area and to visit local historical sites and attractions. We remind our students that they are representatives of our school and, as such, proper courtesy and behavior are expected at all times.

Permission slips for field trips will be distributed by the teacher responsible for the trip. All students must return a slip signed by a parent in order to participate in the trip.

## **ILLNESS AT SCHOOL**

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he/she must first notify the classroom teacher. The student will then report to the main office. The administrative staff will determine if the student should go home. Parents will be notified of the action taken.

Parents are required to ensure their children stay at home from school and be treated for any illness or condition which is deemed contagious to other students. Such conditions or illnesses include but are not limited to: conjunctivitis, head lice, ring worm, worms, and chicken pox and measles during their contagious phases.

## **LIBRARY**

The school library is located in the main building. It is important that our students respect the rules as established by the librarian and use the library in the proper manner. Students who do not return library books by the end of the year will be assessed a fee.

## **LOST & FOUND**

All unaccounted for school material and articles of clothing found on the school grounds are to be turned in to the main office. Students and parents should contact the main office in the case of lost articles. All items not claimed by the end of the semester will be donated to charity.

## **MEALS**

The school cafeteria is maintained for the convenience of our students and staff. Every attempt is made to provide well-balanced and appetizing meals. A school nutritionist develops the menu and supervises food services.

The maintenance staff and your fellow students will appreciate your cooperation in:

- Depositing all lunch litter in waste containers.
- Returning trays to the proper area.
- Leaving the table and the floor in a clean condition for others.

Private vendors will not be allowed to sell food on school grounds during school hours.

## **MEDICATION AT SCHOOL**

Teachers and aides are not permitted to administer medication unless a copy of the doctor's prescription and/or parental permission are provided in writing. The main office will provide the forms as needed.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

The importance of frequent communication between parents and teachers is both stressed and practiced at the American School of Belo Horizonte. Teachers are available to meet with parents at any mutually convenient time. We do request, for the convenience of both parties, that parents schedule meetings in advance by contacting the school secretary.

Twice each year, at the end of the first quarter and the end of the third quarter, parent/teacher conferences are organized for all EABH parents. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet your child's teachers and to share ideas about academic and social progress. Parents are strongly urged to participate in these important meetings. The dates can be found on the school calendar.

## **PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)**

EABH is proud to have a strong PTA. All parents are encouraged to participate in this association. Inquiries regarding the PTA should be addressed to the main office.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Please note that classes start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Students are not to arrive at school prior to 7:30 a.m. and must be picked up no later than 3:15 p.m. Students are to remain on campus after class hours only if they have written parental permission to be involved in an approved after-school extracurricular or athletic activity. We do not accept any responsibility for students outside of regular school hours, except when engaged in an official school activity or duly signed into the

library or computer laboratory, which remain open until 4:30. Students may not remain unsupervised in the school buildings at any time.

## **SCHOOL PARTIES**

All children are welcome to have birthday parties at school and many do. For this reason we have created some rules about in-school celebrations to ensure academic continuity and safety for all. When planning a party at EABH, please:

- Mutually agree upon a date for the party with your child's primary teacher.
- Schedule parties for 2:00 p.m. or later in the elementary school. In the middle and high school a lunchtime party may be approved. Parties may not be held during class time.
- Provide teachers with completed invitations for all students in the class. Teachers may distribute invitations for parents but it is not their responsibility to fill them out.
- Do not invite students from other elementary classes to ensure continuity and fairness for all (an exception may be made for siblings).
- Plan and set-up your child's party unless you have made alternate plans with their teacher beforehand. If you need to come before 2:00 p.m. to set-up, schedule the time with the teacher to avoid disruptions.

## **SECURITY & SAFETY**

The security and well being of our students and staff is one of our foremost priorities. The school employs guards to help ensure the safety of students while they are at EABH. The main gate to the campus is kept closed at all times and all visitors are screened prior to entrance to school grounds. Students will not be allowed to leave with any individual not known to the staff. If anyone other than the parents or the regular driver is to pick up a student, advance notice must be sent to the main office.

During the course of the school year we will practice security and safety drills. These drills will be announced to students and will be an opportunity to practice those things that will make us safe at EABH.

## **STUDENT CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS**

To meet the varied interests of our student body, EABH attempts to provide a variety of clubs and activities. New groups may be formed during the year depending on student interest.

## **STUDENT DROP-OFF & PICK-UP**

In order to facilitate the safe and efficient arrival and dismissal of students, the following rules must be followed:

- Only official vehicles will be allowed to park in the school grounds.
- Parents and drivers should leave students at the entrance inside the parking lot.
- If a parent desires to walk a child into the school, he/she should park his/her vehicle so that it does not interfere with the regular traffic flow.

The school does not provide bus transportation; however, third-party transportation is available for students. Details concerning costs and contact information may be obtained at the main office.

## **STUDENT ACADEMIC & BEHAVIOR RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

EABH has had great success with an initiative called the Student Recognition Program. We believe that students who work hard and behave in an appropriate manner need to be recognized. This Student Recognition Program will take many forms via the student's teachers and through the school administration.

EABH will recognize quarterly academic achievement by three different honor rolls. To qualify for an honor roll, quarter grades must be Cs or better. The three honor rolls at EABH are:

1. Director's Honor Roll – 3.8-4.0 grade-point average (GPA)
2. Merit Honor Roll – 3.50-3.79 GPA
3. Honorable Mention Honor Roll – 3.0-3.49 GPA

EABH will award academic medals at the end of the year for academic achievement. Gold medals are awarded to students who make the **Director's Honor Roll** three of the four quarters; silver medals are awarded to students earning the **Merit Honor Roll** three of the four quarters; and bronze medals are given to those students making the **Honorable Mention Honor Roll** three of the four quarters. If students earn different Honor Roll eligibilities during the year, the medal designation will be based on the three highest quarterly grade-point averages.

At EABH we believe that students need to involve themselves in their community. Community service at EABH this school year will encourage students to work within the Belo Horizonte community to improve the lives of others. It is not just an opportunity to do something positive but also to learn from the experience, which is why reflection is an integral part of the activity.

Another successful program that will be continued this year is the **Golden Hawk Celebration**. If a student earns an academic medal mentioned above, completes 20 hours of community service, is not absent more than 10% of school days **and** does not have a serious discipline infraction during the year, the student will be eligible to participate in the **Golden Hawk Celebration** at the end of the school year. Like the previous two years, plans are to have a great event that recognizes students' hard work and exemplary performance during the school year.

Think of the **Golden Hawk Celebration** as the **ABCs** while you attend EABH.

### **Academics:**

- All subjects are considered part of the grade, for example art counts the same as math.
- Students must make an Honor Roll three of four quarters to be eligible for a medal.
- Students receiving any Ds or Fs will not be eligible for the Honor Roll during that quarter.

**Behavior:**

- We have high expectations for all students who attend EABH.
- If a student is referred to the office for a serious discipline infraction, he/she will not be eligible for the Golden Hawk Celebration.

**Community Service:**

- Students must complete 20 hours of community service and reflect upon what they learned from the experience to attend the Golden Hawk Celebration.

**STUDENT STUDY TEAM**

Student study teams are organized to assist any student who is having difficulty with the academic program at our school. These teams are composed of the administration and teachers who are involved with the student. The parents are called in frequently to meet with this student study team to exchange ideas and formulate a plan for remediation. You will be informed if we feel that the student study team will be necessary for your son's/daughter's progress.

**SIGNS & POSTERS**

Students must obtain permission from the main office and/or organization sponsor before posting any material. To prevent defacing the building, please use suitable tape. Individuals posting signs are responsible for removing the signs when usefulness has been served. Any unauthorized posters will be removed.

**TELEPHONE**

Students are not permitted to use the school telephones except in the case of an emergency.

**TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are the property of EABH and students are responsible for the care of their books. All books are to be covered with an appropriate book cover. Damaged or lost books are the responsibility of the student to whom they were issued. Any book that is damaged or lost will be paid for by the student at full replacement cost. Under no circumstance should a student write in a textbook with pencil or pen.

**VISITORS**

Visitors are allowed to spend the day at school only under special conditions such as a relative visiting from out of the country or a student who has demonstrated an interest in attending our school. Prior to the proposed visit, you must notify the main office to gain permission for the visit. All visitors must adhere to our school regulations. Visitors must sign in and out at the guardhouse and receive a visitor pass. This courtesy permits the office to recognize all persons in the building who have a legitimate reason for being on school grounds.