

# Welcome to the American International School!

## Points to Ponder when Enrolling a Local Child in an International School

We are delighted that you are interested in learning more about our school as you consider the possibility of enrolling your child at the Walworth Barbour American International School in Israel. Deciding to enroll your child at AIS is a big decision for a family and for AIS also. As an Israeli, life will change significantly and it is important for you, and us, to consider all of the factors before making the change. There will be distinct advantages and also challenges of which you should be aware. It is important that you consider all of them as you and your family make the decision. It is also important for us to assess whether or not it would be a good idea in the long run for your child to be taken out of the national system and placed into a system which is very different.

### **Advantages:**

- Small class sizes
- International student body with students from over 40 countries
- Comprehensive American international education
- Very high level of English Language instruction
- Caring, nurturing environment
- Demanding academic curriculum which prepares students for entrance into universities worldwide
- Rich co-curricular offerings in art, music, drama, sports, and other electives
- Utilization of technology as an instructional tool at all levels.
- Extensive after school and extra-curricular activities
- Dedicated, certified, American trained teachers who have regular professional development and access to current teaching methods.

### **Challenges:**

- Changing the language of instruction
- Different holidays from their Israeli friends and family
- Different calendar and vacations throughout the year
- Monday through Friday school week
- Distance from their native country and mores
- Possible disconnectedness from Israel and Israeli society
- No preparation for the Israeli *Bagrut* examinations
- Academic Hebrew level will be lower than same-age Israeli peers and this may impact the unit the student will be assigned to if going to the IDF
- Students may not be as well prepared for IDF military service as they would by attending an Israeli school
- Transient population can make lasting friendships more difficult
- Students who want to study at an Israeli university with an AIS high school diploma should be prepared that they may need to take a one-year *Mechina* preparatory program at an Israeli university. This year will then make them eligible to apply to an Israeli university.

Admission, enrollment, and annual re-enrollment to AIS are not automatic. The underlying philosophy of the admissions policy is to ensure a quality English language education with an American curriculum. Through a selective admissions procedure, AIS will provide sufficient facilities and educational materials, an appropriate student/teacher ratio, and a balanced mixture of nationalities. This will require the maintenance of an American philosophy, as well as the educational, cultural, and social benefits of a balanced mixture of nationalities. In the case of the admission of a non-native English speaker, because of the difficulty of obtaining some of the information needed (i.e. testing), previous grades and reports may take on added importance when assessing a student's profile. Experience has taught us that, for children changing their language of instruction, significant issues can arise if coupled with learning differences or issues. Therefore, we require a psycho-educational evaluation for all entering Israeli students who will be changing their language of instruction so that we can give you the most complete information available on your child as a learner and on our ability to provide a quality program for your child.

It is important for you and your family to consider all of these factors and for us to do so also. We again welcome you to enter into the process, but want you to clearly be aware of the challenges as well as the advantages.