

Student Success



Réussite des élèves

**Transitioning and Beyond:
Parent & Student Document**

www.afnorth-is.com/canadian-section/StudentSuccess.htm

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AFNORTH International School Canadian Section



Uniqueness of AFNORTH International School

AFNORTH International School (AIS) finds itself in the unique position of receiving many new Canadian students every year. With a turnover of between 20-30% every year, our children come to us with widely varied backgrounds including:

- Different schooling (French, English, French Immersion, private, religious, secular);
- Different provinces;
- Different school boards; and,
- Different specialized programs.

Of course, this is in addition to the usual differences in students that all schools see in new students such as:

- Different ages;
- Different socio-economic backgrounds; and,
- Different family environments.

To add to our unique circumstances at AIS, most of our students are children of the Canadian Forces with its own unique demands on family. It is estimated that the average military family moves three times more often than the average non-military family. Further, the school accepts enrolment from many of its NATO partners as well as a small percentage of private, international children which makes for a wonderful and diverse elementary school.

Given the unique nature of our school setting, the Canadian Section is limited in its resources. This fact is highlighted in Dependent Education Management's (DEM) policy 200.14.3 in its Overseas Schools Administration Policy and Regulations. Notwithstanding its limitations, the success of students is everybody's concern and our highest priority. Our military members are better able to focus on their missions when they know that their family's needs are being met. It is because of this conviction that DEM and its school principals have embarked on a new initiative called Student Success. This new program will involve the entire school community — administrators & teachers (both past and current), professional and support staff, parents and students.

The Canadian Section's Student Success program is a positive, proactive, and preventative approach which sets students up for social and academic success. Dependent Education Management and AIS have set an ambitious goal: to ensure that all of its students receive a positive and successful learning experience! The Student Success program objectives are to:

- provide opportunities for students to experience success socially, emotionally, and academically;
- provide a smooth and seamless transition for all students from their previous school to AIS;

- provide a positive environment to enable students to be successful leaders and learners;
- provide a safe and caring environment for quality learning and social/emotional growth;
- provide appropriate academic programming for each student based on individual needs and the school's expectations;
- give students the knowledge and skills to adapt to their new country and learning environment;
- provide emotional and academic support as students from AIS move to their new school setting upon return to Canada.



The Canadian Section at AFNORTH International School has a comprehensive website that has been specially designed for its families. You can access the site by going to www.afnorth-is.com/canadian-section



Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum
www.jfcbs.nato.int

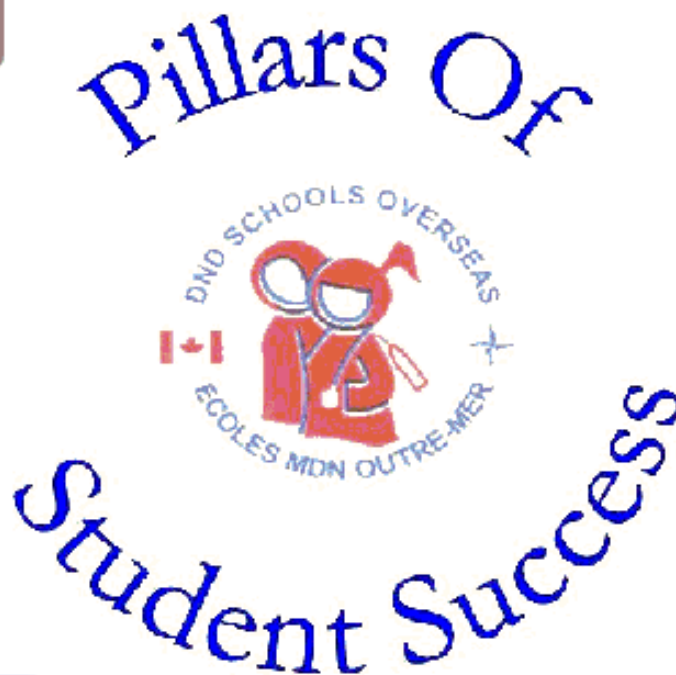


[Canadian Forces Support Unit - Europe](#)

Pillars of Student Success

DND Schools Overseas has highlighted four areas that are essential to its Student Success project. Although the Student Success program will be school-wide, the elementary and secondary sections will each have its own unique features.

1. Transition & Integration
 - a. Reaching Out Across the Sea
 - b. Together – Learning and Caring (TLC)
2. Success
 - a. Student Success School Team
 - Student Monitoring and Interventions
 - b. Mentoring
 - c. Student Credit Recovery
3. Programs, Supports and Opportunities
 - a. Alignment of Student Services
 - b. Closing the Gaps
 - c. Peer Support
4. Building Partnerships
 - a. Parent Support
 - b. Military Support
 - c. After-school Programs



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AFNORTH International Elementary School Canadian Section



Dependent Education Management and AIS have already begun moving forward toward its new Student Success initiative. For the 2008-09 school year, AIS has put in place both a French as a Second Language – Enriched program as well as an Extended French class for grades 7 & 8 as it was clear that students coming from either a Canadian French Immersion program or having an aptitude for language learning were not having their needs met.

Further, as stated in AIS' Elementary School Improvement Plan and its professional development activities, a special emphasis on reading-to-level and mathematics has been in place and showing tremendous progress.

DEM has again made a major financial commitment to this new initiative for the 2009-10 school year. In order to meet its objectives, the Canadian Section will be creating a Student Success Elementary Team (SSET) which will involve:

- English as a Second Language and English Language Arts – Intensive teacher,
- English Learning Support teacher,
- French Learning Support teacher (new),
- French as a Second Language – Enrichment teacher,
- Homeroom teachers (as needed),
- Support staff,
- Principal.

Through meetings and case conferences (including common meeting times), the SSET will assess every student within its section, both Canadian and international, and determine the best course of action in order to ensure optimal learning conditions in all domains (affective, cognitive and physical).

Together – Learning and Caring (TLC)

Our new elementary program, Together – Learning and Caring, is built on the belief that students want to and can help other students succeed. TLC's goal is to provide a structure in which students make real connections with each other. Through this program students learn that people at school care about them and their success. Guided by the SSET, students will help their new peers have a positive transition to AFNORTH and, as research indicates, will enhance their chances of having a successful school experience.

As a result, TLC has two main focus areas:



AIS Elementary School Improvement Goals

1. All students will improve their reading comprehension skills across all curricula.
2. All students (IY1 – M2) will improve their problem-solving and reasoning skills based on the English national levels as measured by the local assessment tool in mathematics.

1. A Student Success Elementary Team (AFNORTH CDN staff) that will ensure that all students are successful,
2. A “TLC Team” that will help their new peers experience and appreciate a positive transition to AFNORTH.

With staff assistance and guidance, the TLC Team program will focus on the following areas:

- Student Leadership
- Orientation
- Transition
- Changing Culture
- Sustainability

The Student TLC Team will be comprised of Canadian and international students from grades IY5 to M2 (grade 3-6) who have proven themselves as energetic, positive and have had great relationships with other students. These chosen key student leaders, as selected by the SSET, will assist new students with transitioning to AFNORTH. They will be trained TLC leaders where they will be given the skills needed to help new students adapt to their new school setting. We will provide a structure in which students will make real connections with each other. It will be a program highlighting the fact that people at school care about them and their success. Ultimately, our students will not only improve their academic performance but enjoy coming to AFNORTH making their time with us second to none.

Student achievement increases with increased duration and intensity of parental involvement. Students with involved parents have:

- Higher test scores and grades
- Better attendance
- More positive attitudes and behaviour
- Higher graduation rates

Programs, Supports & Opportunities – Closing the Gaps

From the moment a student leaves his/her school and home in Canada, he/she is considered “In Transition”. This immediately puts into motion the Canadian Section’s Student Success Elementary Team and all of its available resources in order to ensure a positive experience for the student. The SSET will meet to discuss every student focusing on the following attributes:

- Programming (FSL or FSL-E, literacy skills, mathematics skills, etc.);
- Socializing & inclusion (affective domain);
- Learning Support at all levels (whether it is required or not).
Examples include:
 - Possible requirement of a special reading program,
 - Talented and Gifted program,
 - Math Boosters program,
 - ESL program, etc.
- Homeroom placement;
- Student file received from student’s last school;
- Student Profile;
- On-going communication with the parents as partners;
 - Suggestions for activities (in-school and extra-curricular),
 - How the school operates/functions while informing how to best help the student (i.e.: expectations, routines, homework, lunch, etc.)

Our comprehensive approach is built upon a commitment to teamwork and collaboration where educators, parents, and students work together in designing and implementing a successful transition program.

Recognizing that transitioning is an ongoing process rather than a single event will ensure greater sensitivity to the anxieties accompanying a move to a new school setting resulting in greater success for the student.

Stakeholders

Everyone has a role to play in developing and implementing a Student Success plan. It is a collective undertaking that will capture the essence of the school's unique characteristics ensuring that all of our students enjoy success at all levels and in all domains. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child. The families of the Canadian Forces are no different. The success of the program is contingent on the involvement of many people to ensure that every child's needs are met. Everyone has a role to play in this endeavour:

- students, who must make every effort to learn as much they possibly can;
- parents, who must encourage their children and guide them as they build their life plan;
- teachers, who are entrusted with the primary responsibility for teaching and supporting students and for detecting any sign that a student may be developing a problem which may need special attention;
- professional and support staff, who are responsible for helping students with special difficulties or organizing motivating activities for all students;
- school administrators and DEM, who play a major role in the school and community in getting everybody to work together to attain the goals set out in the success plan.



Student Success Réussite des élèves

**AFNORTH International
Middle/Secondary School
Canadian Section**



Ontario's province-wide "Student Success Program":

The Student Success Program was initiated by the then Minister of Education of Ontario through a memorandum to Directors of Education dated in 2003. One of the principle research studies done on school leaving identifies that Grade 9 students who have failed only 1 course have only a 20% likelihood of finishing High School!

The Student Success Program was initially developed to focus on students at risk in Grades 7 to 12. The Student Success Program is associated with the Ministry's "Learning to 18" initiatives. Legislation was subsequently changed to mandate that students stay in school until 18 years of age or until they receive their High School diploma. As the programs for at-risk students become imbedded in regular practice, the emphasis has shifted to programs that will benefit all students.

The effectiveness of the program is measured by nine indicators: credit accumulation, compulsory credit pass rates; success rates in OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) and OSSLC (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course); Workplace Credit offerings; College Credit offering, Locally Developed Compulsory Credit (LDCC) Course offerings; Co-operative Education Related Course offerings; annual school leaver rate; and the number of grade 7 and 8 students performing at an achievement level of 1 or below.

AFNORTH International Secondary School has a very strong success rate in all of the above areas. Throughout the years, as student needs have changed, course offerings in the areas of College bound students and Co-operative Education related courses have been added, and most recently, a Student Success teacher was hired in 2008-2009 to oversee students at risk as well as students seeking additional credits that require the Independent Learning setting. In this way, our students work with the school Guidance Counselor and Student Success teacher to supplement their classwork with Learning Strategies courses, a wide variety of Independent Learning Courses, course and College/University selection, and on-going tutoring and social support as needed.

The AFNORTH School Improvement Plan also focuses on the emphasis that "failure is not an option" through the "Assessment for Learning" model. In this way, by ensuring that students know where they are going, how they are to get there, and what to do if they don't succeed the first time, each student has ample opportunity to achieve to his/her personal best.

In addition to meeting the educational needs of our students, the Student Success program at AFNORTH focuses on the effects of transitioning on young people. Changing countries and cultures can have a profound effect, both positive and negative, on young people and nowhere is this seen more obviously than in a school setting.

A recent report on Student Mobility developed for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training of Australia makes a number of salient points in this area:

- Points of transition have long been recognized as critical moments in determining well being. It is at these times of shifting from one developmental stage to another that children and young people are most vulnerable, but at the same time are given the opportunity to turn things around and capitalize on potential and promise
- School transition has often been associated in research studies with a lowering in self-esteem and self-efficacy, psychological distress and decreases in academic achievement (Eccles & Buchanan, 1996)
- The 2002 report “Changing Schools” found that the effects of mobility might be seen as negative, neutral or even beneficial, depending on the circumstances of the move.
- Students can be anxious about moving school, and worry about being accepted, making friends, finding their way around, that they will find the new work too hard or that they won’t like their new teachers. Children cope with these anxieties in different ways, some by becoming quiet or withdrawn, others by aggressive behaviour, bragging or showing off.
- There are limitations on what studies into the effects of mobility on academic achievement can tell us due to the complexity of the combined effects of transience, family circumstance and individual characteristics. Some studies suggest that mobility can result in gaps in learning in curriculum areas such as mathematics or literacy, in behaviour problems; emotional disturbances; social problems and feelings of isolation. Other research has found no effects of mobility, while a third group of studies has noted beneficial effects on academic achievement.
- A key finding from research into student mobility is the positive conclusion that where moves are supported by and seen as favourable by the student’s family, potential negative effects of the move are diminished. However, moves associated with low socioeconomic status, family violence, mental illness, or drug use can create additional disadvantage thereby further reducing educational opportunities for these students.

Key Factors for Students

The research done by the Curriculum Corporation, 1998, has identified a number of important factors that impact on the adjustment of mobile students: AFNORTH’s Student Success program works diligently to address these specific areas.

- Establishment of status in their peer groups
- Presentation of adequate enrolment information and facilitation of the transfer of student information
- Placement in classes working at the appropriate ability level
- Maintenance of academic performance and coping with changes in curriculum and year level
- Adjusting to changes in their family situation and personal connections that may have been brought about by the move.

Celebrate the Positive, Build Resilience

Those of us who move see more of the world than those who stay in the same place. Change brings new experiences, new learnings and new challenges to master. Every challenge mastered can be a plank in building a child's confidence so that he or she can survive and thrive in a world that will always change. Resilience is laid down partly by overcoming stress and meeting challenge. A resilient child will, by and large, have a go at new things more readily, persist when things get tough, survive and achieve. Schools play an important role in helping students, especially new students, build resilience.

Going forward at AFNORTH in 2009-2010 (Secondary)

A second Student Success teacher will be assigned to support the Grades 7-8 students in particular, with the additional capacity to address French second language issues with the students.

In keeping with current best practice, AFNORTH strives to promote a positive school culture and appropriate values across the whole school. This facilitates the transition of new students into the school community. We currently implement the use of "buddies" for new students, early intervention meetings with teachers and parents, ongoing assessment and feedback, regular communication and interaction with the community, and a strong family-school connection.

In the coming school year, teachers and identified senior students will be trained in the "Peer-To-Peer" approach to transitioning new students, as well as on-going activities to ensure positive integration of all students within the school. AFNORTH has always held an orientation day for new students, and this will be augmented by the new training.

Middle and High School students will also have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills by assisting newly-arrived, younger Canadians in adjusting to their new milieu. The Student Success program offers all those concerned a unique opportunity to work hand-in-hand to remove obstacles and to create the necessary conditions for all young people to achieve educational success.

In addition to the current Student Success Team and whole school activities destined to reinforce each student's academic and social strengths, it is important to identify those students who might require additional help:

- Students who have experienced six or more changes of schools over their school career.
- Students who have experienced many changes of schools over a one or two year period.
- Students with pre-existing social or behavioural issues requiring support, which may be compounded by the pressures of moving house and changing schools (such as special needs, learning difficulties, unstable housing, parents with mental health, drug or violence issues).

- Early maturing girls and late maturing boys, in particular in transition from primary to secondary school.
- Students with low self esteem.
- Low achieving students.
- Students presenting with aggression, withdrawal, and over talkativeness, which can all be signs of distress in children who have moved. The experience of moving can be similar to death and mourning for a young child (Neuman, 1988).

Checklist of Information to Obtain About Your New School

- School handbook
- School publications or documents (eg: newsletters, notices to parents)
- School start and finish times
- Term dates and non-teaching days (calendar)
- Curriculum
- Ways in which the school fosters interaction between parents and teachers and between families and the school
- Class organization and student placement procedures
- Assessment and reporting methods
- Availability of before and after school care or early morning supervision
- Specialist subjects (Languages Other Than English, sport and physical education)
- Procedures and times for seeing school teachers, counselors or guidance officers
- School cafeteria details
- Elective subjects (secondary)
- School rules and behaviour policy
- Excursions and extra-curricular activities
- Dress policy
- Homework and assignment requirements
- Availability of special support for new students
- Before and after school programs
- Fees/voluntary contributions
- School bus routes and timetable
- What the school might expect from you as a parent

What a Student Transitioning into a New School Must Master

There are five major areas of adjustment for students starting in a new school. The degree and speed with which children are able to learn and assimilate this vast array of information and change will, to a large extent, determine the success of their adaptation to the new school environment.

1) The Formal Institutional Setting

- Learning the physical layout of the school (finding their classroom, the toilets, the cafeteria, bus stop etc);
- Learning the official structures and rules of the school (the principal and vice-principal, school rules, school timetables, consequences of behaviours etc); and
- Learning the way the school functions (whether the school has a “seminar” system, what day an assembly is on, timetables, when the cafeteria operates, what day homework is due, rules and expectations regarding assignments).

2) The Informal School Setting

- Learning new routines (what time school starts and finishes and what time the student needs to get up in the morning and will be home from school, lunch and recess times,

routines associated with getting to and from school such as bus details or how to walk to school, how to order lunch from the cafeteria or not);

- Finding out what services and opportunities are available (how to join a sports team, how the library works); and
- Learning the “unwritten” rules of the schools (whether it is OK to wear hats in class, iPod and cellular phone, appropriate attire, what the different teachers are like).

3) The New Academic Setting

- Differences may exist in curriculum (some secondary subjects may not be available, a different “language other than English” may be taught); • Different terminology may be used (e.g. the year before Year 1 may be referred to by a range of names such as “prep” or “reception” ; programs such as “Reading Recovery” may not be familiar);
- Subject content may be different, taught at a different level of skill development, easier or harder than the student is used to;
- Methods and styles of assessment or evaluation may differ; and
- Teaching methods may be different.

4) The New Social Order

- Losing old friends;
- Making new friends;
- Learning which are the “cool” kids, the “troublesome” kids, whether there are bullies or cliques and who they are;
- What games, topics, bands etc are “in” or “out”;
- Coping with feelings of isolation if new friends are not made quickly.

5) The New Personal and Family Environment

In addition to coping with all the changes in the school environment mentioned previously, children who have moved must also cope with whatever family and personal changes the move may bring. These can include:

- Living with one parent rather than two, or living with different family members;
- Leaving a familiar house, bedroom and environment;
- Leaving a pet behind;
- Losing contact with friends;
- Living further away or closer to extended family;
- Leaving out of school activities such as sport, Guides, dancing etc;
- For older students, leaving a part time job or a boy or girl friend.

The degree to and speed with which children are able to learn and assimilate this vast array of information and change will to a large extent determine the success of their adaptation to the new school environment.

Tips for Families When Moving

- The advantages of moving at the beginning of a new school year are that students can complete end of school year social activities and attend important events such as speech night or prize giving ceremonies which students’ value.
- Notify your current school, in writing, as soon as you know you are moving. Advise your school of the last day your child will be attending, and if known, the name of the new

school. This will allow the school as much time as possible to ensure that your child's file and student information is up to date, or to prepare a report on your child's progress.

- Information such as “my child is working on mathematics enrichment or is reading at a Developmental Reading Assessment level 44” can help the new school enormously in placing your child in the most suitable class.
- Involve your children in the planning and decision-making for the upcoming move as much as possible.
- Some strategies are letting your child pack their own possessions, involving them in choosing where to move (if possible), involving them in choosing the new house, allowing them to set up their own bedrooms etc.
- Moving can also be very difficult for one or both parents (this is normal) and you should ensure that you can access adequate support as well.
- Talk regularly as a family about your feelings about the move, and include your child in discussions about moving and going to a new school from the beginning, to help your child understand what is happening, why and what to expect. Children may experience strong feelings of loss about separation from friends, and may feel isolated to begin with in their new home or school.
- Try to show as much positive attitude about and support of the move as possible, without negating any negative feelings your child may have. Research has shown that negative effects of mobility are reduced when families are positive about the move.
- Provide your child with a camera and allow them to take photos of the house, school, friends or important venues. These can later be made into a scrapbook about the place you are leaving.
- Collect materials for a student portfolio with information about your child for the new school. This assists in placing your child in an appropriate class or year level and it provides a history of your child's schooling and accomplishments
- Provide the current school and your child's friends with details of your departure, when and where you are going.
- If finances permit, allow your child to have a “going away” party with their closest friends, or have a going away party for the whole family. Give your child an address book and ensure that they collect addresses and telephone numbers of their close friends, and even teachers.
- If time permits, ensure that your child is able to attend their last session of out of school activities such as basketball, Little Athletics, Guides or Scouts.
- Try not to make too many changes to family rules and routines before, during and after the move.

- Try to visit your new area and choose the new school before you leave, so that your child has a mental image of the new school they will attend and information about similarities and differences between the old and the new.
- Encourage your child to send letters, emails or postcards to their friends once you have moved.
- To help everyone settle in, try to find new activities to share as a family. Sightseeing and exploring your new town is a great way to get to know the area while sharing family time.
- Inviting children over after school is a good way to help your child make new friends. At the same time, try not to pressure your child into making new friends too quickly. Give them time to get to know a number of children in their new grade and try to work out which friendship group they might best fit into.

The first people who usually notice that a child is not coping with life circumstances are their parents and teachers. When a child moves schools the new teacher might not pick up on a change in a child's demeanour. So it is important for parents to be alert to changes in their child's behaviour following a change of school.



Our Canadian families in the Tri-Community area have access to the Canadian Military Family Resources Centre (CMFRC) in Geilenkirchen.

Their website is: www.europe.forces.gc.ca/org/cmf/ger-all/geilenki-eng.asp