



# THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SOFIA



# The American College of Sofia

The American College of Sofia is one of the oldest American educational institutions outside the United States.

It traces its roots directly to a school for boys opened in Philippopolis (now Plovdiv) by American missionaries for the 1860-61 school year and the school for girls opened at Eski Zagra (now Stara Zagora) three years later.

- ACS is an Innovative School accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in the United States, by the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria, and by International Baccalaureate as an IB World School.
- The American College of Sofia offers education for 8th to 12th grade students.
- We have a student population of 954, with 35% international students in the 2022-2023 school year.

NUMBER OF ACS STUDENTS

954

PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS

35%



Established 162 years ago,  
in 2022 ACS celebrates  
30 years since reopening.

# HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS



- We accept students into the International program after Grades 7, 8, 9 and 10 based on previous academic achievements and admission exam results.
- Our students receive an intense academic training in English, which combines knowledge acquisition with application.
- We offer a rich extra-curricular program, which assists students not only to build their academic skills but also to become well-rounded individuals.
- The rigorous academic standards at the college are fostered by the fine combination of Bulgarian and International faculty, professionals with experience and diverse educational practices.
- Interactive methods of progressive education and integrated classroom technology are at the core of our curriculum.
- ACS graduates are critical thinkers and problem solvers able to set clear goals and achieve them. They are engaged in social issues and are able to compete with outstanding students world-wide.





*I must admit that ACS is among the top contributors, after my parents, to my development as a person, and I can frankly say that I have grown into myself here. There have been numerous moments of joy and gloom throughout my time at ACS. Overcoming the challenges put forth, though, is an indescribable achievement. I hope every current and future ACS student will experience such a sense of accomplishment and follow their dreams.*

*Sevgin Bedri, Class of 2012, University of Leicester, Alumnus.*

*It has been 17 years since I graduated so I have had many occasions to ponder and discuss my past. I have discovered that I can gather my experiences at ACS in one truth: This is the place where I learned to think. Before then, I never imagined that people at school cared about what went on inside my head. (Grant it, even at ACS they wisely cared only about a part of what went on inside my head.) Today, as a researcher, I am paid to think. What a privilege this is. It is a life-long journey that started there, at ACS. And I am forever grateful.*

*Daniella Molle, Class of 1997, Professional Development Researcher at University of Wisconsin - Madison*

## TECH-AT SCHOOL

**Each student receives a Google Chromebook for classwork, homework and exams**

# At the College, STUDENTS:

- will be at the center of the learning process;
- will be in small classes – average class size is 19;
- will be a part of our special advisory system that ensures students get guidance and support by trusted adults outside their classes;
- will be able to attend programs for specific interests in particular areas (sports, performing arts, school newspaper, school literary magazine, mathematics team, physics team, etc);
- will have access to programs for continuous work with students who excel in different areas and have distinguished themselves at competitions;
- will have special consultation periods, built into the daily schedule.



Емили Сарджант-Бийзли,  
Президент

# At the College, PARENTS will have the opportunity to:

- maintain frequent communication with teachers and administration through our electronic platforms Engage and Gradelink.
- request and take part in individual parent-teacher meetings both during and outside of the regular conferences.
- be active in the ACS PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and able to contribute to improving the quality of education at ACS by supporting and diversifying the forms of education and extracurricular activities.



# PERSONAL CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

*Students at the College learn to be independent and act responsibly with their work, but at the same time there is also an air of collaboration and strong team spirit.*

*The curriculum is rigorous, but that teaches valuable qualities such as time management, prioritizing tasks and discipline. You learn to learn. It is difficult, but it is what makes the transition to university life easier and is the main reason for our success.*

*Georgi Dumanov, Class of 2014, Yale University, Alumnus*

## At The American College of Sofia:

- We encourage students to think outside the box, develop critical thinking skills, learn how to construct logical arguments, and voice their opinions in a respectful manner.
- We instill perseverance in achieving student goals.
- We promote respect for the community in which we live, teach and study.
- We emphasize the value of academic honesty by teaching students to take responsibility and make sound decisions.







# MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

At ACS Students will:

- Develop and benefit from an academic environment, combining the rich traditions of Bulgarian education and the clear requirements and values of modern-day American educational practices.
- Interact with teachers of different backgrounds and academic experiences.
- Study with other international students, representing different cultures and traditions.
- Learn in an environment where English is the language of instruction.
- Discover new foreign languages.
- Have a chance to participate in international school exchange programs, international competitions, and forums.
- Thrive in a tolerant environment that is respectful of different cultures, identities, opinions, and beliefs.

*We live in an increasingly changing, dynamic and global world. The institutions that we thought were static are now evolving and adapting to meet new challenges and ideas. ACS creates an environment for students to look at these developing social and political landscapes without fear. Students at the college see first-hand how cooperation amongst people from different places with different ideas leads to innovative solutions that include our shared experience and values. Whether in the English classroom comparing the Bulgarian experience to that of the post-colonial Colombia through the works of Gabriel Marquez or in the Physics classroom contemplating our shared existence on these little blue planet students here have the opportunity to apply a macro and interdisciplinary lense of analysis that enriches our lives and understanding. I truly believe the students here today will become the leaders of our tomorrow.*

*Taylor Baldwin, History Teacher*



# POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE PROMOTING QUALITY LEARNING



a beautiful park-like campus  
with classical buildings



a modern cafeteria serving fresh  
and warm options, including  
vegetarian



a fully equipped, 380-seat theater



a modern library with access to a  
number of online encyclopedias



four computer labs  
and three science labs



SCIFI Center - Student  
Computer Innovation and  
Fabrication Institute



180-seat concert hall



a dormitory for students  
from outside of Sofia



multimedia in the classrooms,  
facilitating interactive education



a full size multi-purpose  
gymnasium



indoor and outdoor sports facilities (dance  
studio, fitness center, outdoor basketball  
courts, tennis court and playing fields)



an environment fostering safety and  
promoting a healthy lifestyle



*The American College of Sofia became famous not only because of academic excellence but also due to the extracurricular activities. This was, and still is, a great strength of the College. Back in the days, there were numerous interesting student-initiated clubs. They all played a big part in creating the atmosphere of the College and in building the personality of the students. We got used to relying on ourselves, not on our parents. We had the chance to develop on our own.*

*Petko Bocharov, Class of 1939, Bulgarian translator and journalist*

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION

International students are admitted on a rolling basis (year-round) according to space availability and the College's acceptance of prior official high school records indicating achievement at a level which corresponds to that required of all students at the College.

To be admitted, students need to have a minimum average grade of B or 3 on a scale of 4, for the last 2 years, demonstrate English language proficiency and successfully pass a comprehensive admissions exam.

The exam will measure reading comprehension, verbal reasoning, and mathematic skills. Applicants for the 9th grade are required to achieve at least the average scores in proficiency achieved by Bulgarian students leaving the 8th grade at the College. Applicants for the 10th, 11th, or 12th grades are required to demonstrate significantly higher scores.

Dependent children of United States government employees are admitted with priority, followed by graduates of the eighth grade at the Anglo-American School, Sofia. Other international students are admitted in the order of their application until available spaces are filled. Children of official Bulgarian diplomats who have studied at an international school abroad for at least one academic year are also eligible for admission at the College.

*The IB Diploma Programme at ACS enriched my life in many ways, most crucially through helping me decide on a course for higher education. The IB Economics subject taught at the College introduced me to the most important concepts of the field and allowed me to apply these theoretical ideas to real-world events. The rigorous approach taken along with the high amount of feedback I received made me confident in continuing with the subject at university. Having this understanding of the fundamentals made the transition to higher education much more comfortable, and I still occasionally find myself thinking back to IB Economics concepts to this day.*

*Ivan Yotzov, Class of 2013, University of Warwick, Alumnus*



# IB DIPLOMA PROGRAM

The American College of Sofia is an authorized IB World School and has offered the IB Diploma Programme since 2005. Students not eligible for a Bulgarian National Diploma are admitted into the two-year IB program. They are also given the opportunity to fulfill the requirements for the ACS International Diploma, which is awarded to students independently of the diploma granted by International Baccalaureate (IB).

ACS provides a challenging, college-preparatory curriculum for all IB students and hires teachers who are experts in their subject matter.

The range of courses offered in the IBDP are English A: Literature Higher Level (HL), French B: Standard Level (SL)/Higher Level (HL), Spanish B: SL/HL, German B: SL/HL, French Ab initio SL, Spanish Ab initio SL, German Ab initio SL, Economics SL/HL, History SL/HL, Biology SL/HL, Mathematics: Applications and Interpretations SL/HL and Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches SL/HL, as well as, Mathematics SL/HL and Mathematical Studies SL.

In addition, Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity-Activity-Service (CAS), and the Extended Essay (EE) serve as integral components of the diploma, encouraging students to extend themselves intellectually, while also considering areas of social responsibility. The IBDP programme culminates in May of Year 2 when students sit for their final examinations.

ACS promotes the personal and intellectual development of each student through the IB programme, as outlined by in the IB Learner Profile (IB 2013).

The aim of all IB programmes are to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

→ IB learners strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective.

→ IB World Schools believe these attributes, and other like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.





Our students  
come from  
countries all  
around the globe

# 162

Years since  
establishment

# 36

Average points obtained by candidates who  
passed the IB diploma

*Had I not gone to ACS, I would have never gone to Harvard for my undergraduate degree – an academic, personal, and professional experience that clearly has marked all of my experiences thereafter. Had I not gone to ACS, I would never have formed the lasting friendships and professional relationships I currently cherish and put to good use in my everyday work. Had I not gone to ACS, I probably would have never been able to effectively identify and attract motivated and socially responsible young volunteers for the nonprofit initiatives I got involved in afterwards (indeed, ACS students are still among the best volunteers you can find around!) Had I not gone to ACS, I wouldn't currently be in a position to appreciate the importance of great teachers and great schools in one's life and to lead Teach For Bulgaria with such confidence and belief in our mission“.*

*Eugenia Peeva, Class of 2004, went to Harvard University, founder of Step for Bulgaria Foundation, founder and first CEO of Teach for Bulgaria Foundation.*

# TOP ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AFTER GRADUATION

An average of 98% of ACS graduates apply to universities abroad.

ACS graduates attend the best universities in the world: Princeton University, University of Cambridge, Stanford University, Yale University, University of Oxford, Brown University, Cornell University, London School of Economics, Dartmouth University, Tufts University, Vassar College, and others.

Graduating students that choose to continue their education in the USA are eligible for scholarships that may cover a substantial part of their tuition fee for the full course of their education.

ACS graduates are now successful professionals in Bulgaria and around the world.

A photograph of two young graduates, a woman and a man, smiling and posing for a photo. They are both wearing black graduation caps and gowns with white stoles. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are standing outdoors, with a blurred background.

# 98%

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