

High School Essentials – A Service Learning Class at American International School of Budapest

High School Essentials is a required one-semester course for all Grade 9 students at AISB to help their transition into the academic and social expectations of High School. To this end, the goals are for students to:

- Demonstrate citizenship and teamwork skills necessary in academic and social environments;
- Demonstrate an awareness of the inequities of their society and examine their individual responsibilities as a member of the community;
- Develop an awareness of their learning styles and how they affect their learning;
- Develop a repertoire of studying, test-taking, & note-taking skills, as well as strategies for organization and setting priorities;
- Be aware of High School graduation and university preparatory process and set short and long term academic goals.

The course is divided into five units with complementary skills, including:

Service Learning

- Organizing activities for visits at the Children's Home Project
- Reflecting on the bigger ideas of service learning
- Exploring other Service learning such as Global Issues, Amnesty International, Habitat for Humanity

Students work regularly throughout the semester with a group of children from the Bolyai utca Gyermekotthon (Bolyai street Children's Home) in Budapest's second district. These are children ages 5 -10 in the Hungarian social welfare system that have been placed in this facility by court-order or parent's voluntary decision. With the help of class teachers and the school CAS Coordinator, AISB students learn about the particulars of the Hungarian social welfare system, and discuss and analyze the reasons that countries have these systems in existence.

Students in the class are responsible for planning activities to conduct with the children from the home. They utilize their **interests** and **skills** to decide on which activities and the organization for them. In addition, the students are responsible for organizing a large semester-end party for the children from the home.

In addition to this regular activity, AISB students in the course also learn about the concept of service learning and other AISB service projects and activities.