



Dear Elementary School Families,

I would like to start off by saying a very warm and welcoming 'Hello' to all new students and families who are joining AISJ for another fantastic school year. My name is John Gaston, and I have the wonderful pleasure of working with all your students as the Counselor here at AISJ. I am originally from Texas, USA and had the profound experience of attending the Jakarta International School, Indonesia for several years in my childhood and adolescence. Growing up and living in another country and attending an international school is what sparked my interest in working and traveling internationally.

I have recently arrived from a two-year Elementary Counselor position at the International Community School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. My wife Amanda and two small children; Knox aged two and Mara aged just nine weeks have accompanied me here to Johannesburg, and we are all very excited to be here. As an elementary counselor, I have the opportunity to work with all students, and I strive everyday day to make sure that I am working towards making all students have a positive school experience. I am so very excited to be here at AISJ in the role of Elementary Counselor and look forward to meeting all of you and your students. I am located in the Elementary Office, and I always welcome parents and students to stop by and share their experiences, challenges, and ideas. I look forward to a great school year.

Starting the 2nd week of school, I will be introducing student "Lunch Bunch" groups for all new students. These groups will take place during your child's regular scheduled lunch time and will consist of me meeting with all the new students by grade level. We will decide on a nice quiet place at lunch to talk about what it is like to be a new student, share our concerns, wants, ideas, and generally get to know one another. We will have our "Lunch Bunch" groups for the first four weeks of school, one day per week at the regularly scheduled lunch time.

Please, if you have any questions, concerns, or would just like to talk, you can reach me at jgaston@aisj-jhb.com or phone me [+27 \(0\) 87 809 1842](tel:+270878091842)

I am attaching some of the practices that allow me to support all of your students, and a brief description of resources that are available in the elementary counseling office.

I look forward to the great start to the school year!

Best,
John Gaston

What does an elementary counselor do?

In short, I work with all students in collaboration with their teachers and or parents to develop healthy perceptions of who the students are while believing in themselves and their abilities in and out of school.

How does this happen?

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Individual and Group counseling sessions
- Lunch groups
- Role Playing
- Classroom Support
- Home/School collaboration
- Behavior Support Plans
- Assessments
- And much more

Help Students:

- Adjust to a new school
- Make friends
- Learn to make good decisions
- Understand appropriate conflict resolution techniques
- Set goals and action plans
- Advocate for themselves
- Understand feelings

Resource List of Counseling Books in the Counseling Office

Parent Topics:

- Parenting Skills
- Disabilities/Challenging Behaviors
- Divorce/Separation
- Moving/Transition/Ex-Pat Child

Student Topics:

- Bullying
- Self-Esteem
- Service Work/Helping
- Friendship
- Feelings
- Moving
- Disabilities
- Sickness
- Anger
- Divorce/Separation
- Stealing
- Truth/Lying
- Safety
- Puberty
- Peer Pressure
- Abuse
- Secrets
- Tattling
- Challenges