



**IB Primary Years Programme  
Parent Handbook**

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**Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,**

The purpose of this booklet is to enable you to better understand the PYP framework and the courses we proudly offer at the IST. You will find an overview of the main aspects of the PYP in this document and we hope that the information inside will help you better understand the curriculum of Primary Years Programme.

IB aim of PYP

This program aligns with the IST mission and vision and empowers students to inquire into a wide range of issues and ideas of significance locally, nationally and globally. Aligning with our strategic plan, the PYP helps students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers.

PYP enable students the opportunity to:

- Learn by doing, connecting the classroom to the larger world
- Learn in an inquiry based classroom
- Explore global and local issues and encourage action
- Build confidence in managing their own learning

We welcome any feedback about the usefulness of this booklet, please contact me with any suggestions or comments.

All the best,

Director,

Mr. Olavi Otepalu

### **What is an IB Education?**

It is a non-profit educational and non-governmental (NGO) organization that was established in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland. The IBO offers four Programmes of international education for students aged 3 –19 years:

- The Primary Years Programme (PYP) for 3–12-year-olds.
- The Middle Years Programme (MYP) for 11–16-year-olds.
- The Diploma Programme (DP) for 16–19-year-olds.
- The Career-related Programme (CP), also for 16–19-year-olds.

### **IB Mission Statement**

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## Learner Profiles



## IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is 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.

As IB learners we strive to be:

### INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

### KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

### THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

### COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

### PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

### OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

### CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

### RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

### BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

### REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

## **IST Mission Statement**

IST mission is to support the holistic development of every individual to become responsible global citizens and independent life-long learners by providing a rigorous inquiry and multicultural learning environment.

## **Our Promise**

To foster a desire for lifelong learning through academic rigor and a network of global citizens. To create a global community that values inquiry, critical and creative thinking, open and entrepreneurial mindedness, and acts with tolerance and compassion.

## **IST Vision Statement**

A cohesive community of students in grades 1-12, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni.

An outstanding faculty that is continually embracing best pedagogical practices.

Enhanced knowledge and skills in math, science, and technology— preparing students for a changing technological future.

Students who strive to become entrepreneurial leaders in their desired fields.



## IST – Primary Years Programme.

At the International School of Tallinn, we follow the International Baccalaureate curriculum, which enables students to be inquiring, caring, life-long learners. IB World Schools share a common philosophy – a commitment to improve the teaching and learning of a diverse and inclusive community by delivering challenging, high quality programmes of international education that share a powerful vision.

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed for students aged three to twelve years. The PYP focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. The PYP is a transformative experience for the students, teachers and the whole school community. The programme at IST is aimed at students from EYP 1 – PYP 5.

Our curriculum focuses on connecting abstract concepts to the real world. Theoretical proficiency is scaffolded with practical exercises to gain experiential learning, and supplemented with reflection time for self-evaluation. Students are supported in developing 21st century skills, using a constructivist approach where students build on prior knowledge. Such an educational approach enables students to make connections between subjects and help transfer their contextual knowledge in their day to day lives making learning fun, effective, and exciting. The PYP strives for a balance between the search for understanding, the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, the development of positive attitudes and the opportunity for positive action. In terms of achieving this balance, the PYP emphasizes components of the written, taught and assessed curriculum.



# PYP CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

## The Written Curriculum

The most significant and distinctive feature of the IB Primary Years Programme is the six trans disciplinary themes. These themes are about issues that have meaning for, and are important to, all of us. They offer a balance between learning about or through the subject areas and learning beyond them. The six themes of global significance create a trans-disciplinary framework that allows students to “step up” beyond the confines of learning within subject areas.

They are:

**Who we are:** An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; and what it means to be human.

**Where we are in time and place:** An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; and the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

**How we express ourselves:** An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

**How the world works:** An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; and the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.

**How we organize ourselves:** An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.

**Sharing the planet:** An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

The programme puts great emphasis on learning through these trans-disciplinary themes. All students in Grades 1-5 address every theme each academic year and Early Years students aged 3 to 5, will engage explicitly with four of the themes within a year. The themes, also importantly, provide the opportunity to incorporate local and global issues into the curriculum.

In addition to the trans disciplinary themes, the traditional subject disciplines retain a role in the IB Primary Years Programme. The specified subjects include languages, mathematics, social studies, arts, science, personal, social and physical education.

## The Taught Curriculum

The six trans-disciplinary themes help teachers to develop units of inquiry which are in-depth investigations into important ideas that require a high level of involvement on the part of the students. These inquiries are substantial, in-depth and usually last for several weeks. Since these ideas are related to the world beyond the school but are also an important part of their lives, the students see the relevance of the content and connect with it in ways that are engaging and challenging. Students who learn in this way begin to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as learners and become actively involved with their learning. Students discover that a unit of inquiry will involve them in exploration of an important idea, and that the teacher will be supporting their inquiries and collecting evidence of how well they understand that idea. They will expect to be able to work in a variety of ways, including on their own and in groups, to allow them to learn to their best advantage.

### Concepts:

What do we want students to understand?

The following key concepts are used to support and structure the inquiries. The exploration of concepts leads to a deeper understanding and allows students to transfer knowledge learned in one area of the curriculum to another. The concepts are: form, function, causation, change, connection, perspective and responsibility.

<b>FORM</b> <i>What is it like?</i>	<b>FUNCTION</b> <i>How does it work?</i>	<b>CAUSATION</b> <i>Why is it like it is?</i>	<b>CHANGE</b> <i>How is it changing?</i>
The understanding that everything has a form with recognizable features that can be observed, identified, described and categorized.	The understanding that everything has a purpose, a role or a way of behaving that can be investigated.	The understanding that things do not just happen, that there are causal relationships at work, and that actions have consequences.	The understanding that change is the process of movement from one state to another. It is universal and inevitable.
<b>CONNECTION</b> <i>How is it connected to other things?</i>	<b>PERSPECTIVE</b> <i>What are the points of view?</i>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> <i>What is our responsibility?</i>	
The understanding that we live in a world of interacting systems in which the actions of any individual element affect others.	The understanding that knowledge is moderated by perspectives; different perspectives lead to different interpretations, understandings and findings; perspectives may be individual, group, cultural or disciplinary.	The understanding that people make choices based on their understandings, and the actions they take as a result do make a difference.	

### Related Concepts:

Each concept has suggested key concepts that are specifically related to promote inquiry. These have been assigned by the IB and are used to help develop units of inquiry.

## Approaches to learning (ATL)

What do we want students to be able to do and to feel, value and demonstrate? Throughout their learning in the Primary School, students acquire and apply a set of skills which are valuable not only for the learning that goes on within a classroom but also for life outside school. The five sets of trans-disciplinary skills we particularly focus upon and seek to develop with our students are thinking, social, communication, self-management and research skills.



## Agency in the PYP

Agency is the power to take meaningful and intentional action and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of the individual, supporting voice, choice and ownership for everyone in the learning community. Whilst inquiry is a pedagogical approach, agency relates to the educational philosophy underpinning the enhanced PYP. A commitment to agency in the enhanced PYP will create a culture within the learning community where students co-construct and self-adjust their learning experiences, building self-efficacy, a greater sense of learning ownership and contributing to their social, emotional and cognitive growth. The learning community will play a vital role in supporting and nurturing student agency in the PYP. Relationships with students will be strengthened; learning partners will listen, respect and respond while the student makes choices and adjustments, and takes ownership and risks.

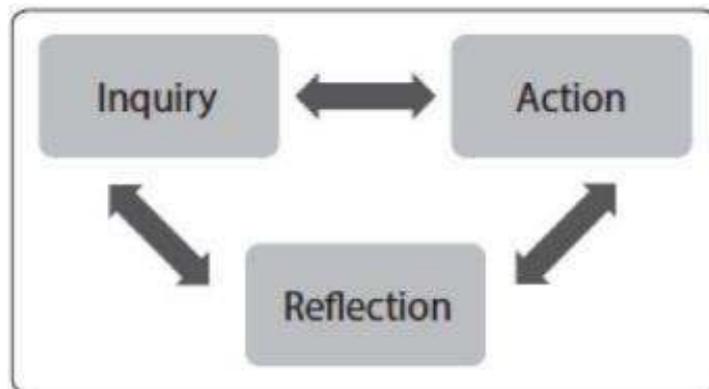
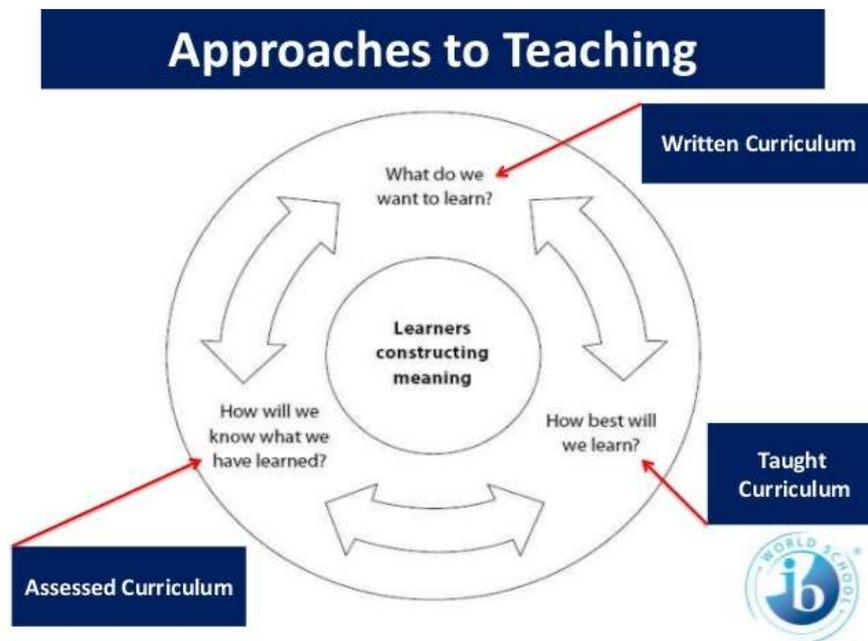


### Samples of Taking Action

1. Purposeful fund-raising, initiated by students or modelled by adults
2. Finding resources for their own study independently
3. Saving energy practices at home
4. Environmentally friendly actions of saving water, papers, etc to contribute to reducing the effect of environmental problems
5. Involving in community service: educating other people, promoting positive actions, etc
6. Creating or producing a work/project based on the experience they learnt at school
7. Showing positive attitudes toward differences; respect, tolerance and appreciating others
8. More responsible and independent in doing projects

**Approaches to Teaching:**

The 3 components of the PYP curriculum cycle:  
The three components of the PYP curriculum cycle (written, taught and assessed) are embodied in Approaches to Teaching. The design of the Programme of Inquiry allows students to learn in authentic ways, with emphasis on inquiry and experiences. It reinforces the PYP pedagogy of authentic learning that is inquiry-based and conceptually driven



## The Assessed Curriculum: ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, reflecting and acting on evidence of student learning to inform teaching. Students actively engage in assessing and reflecting on their learning and act on feedback from peers to further their learning. Learning goals and success criteria are co-constructed and clearly communicated. In an IB PYP classroom, both learning outcomes and the learning process are assessed.

An effective assessment is authentic, clear and specific, varied, collaborative and interactive, caters to an individual's progress rather than their performance in relation to others. It provides detailed feedback for students to reflect on and move forward in their learning journey.

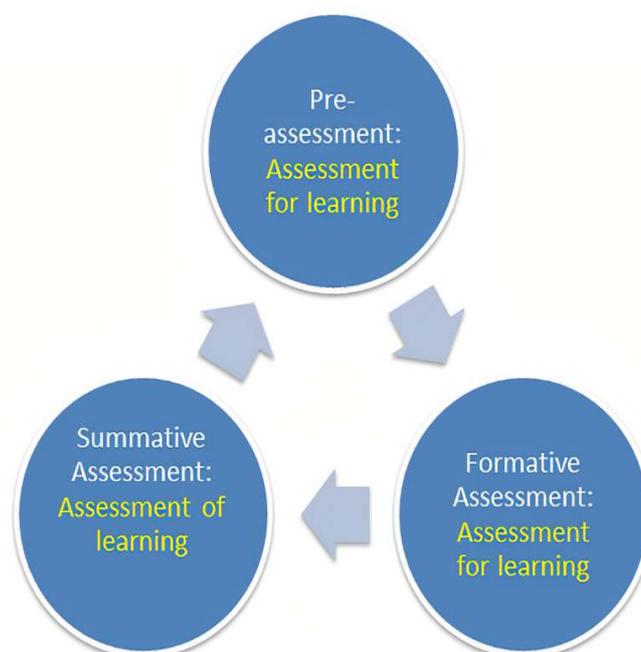
PYP assessments has four dimensions: monitoring, documenting, measuring, and reporting. Each dimension has its own importance and value. Assessing the students' prior knowledge and experiences as well as monitoring their achievement will enable teachers to plan and refine their teaching accordingly.

Assessment at the International School of Tallinn is conducted in order to:

- Build up a clear picture of the student and his or her interests
- Identify what and how the student is thinking and learning
- Assess the effectiveness of the environment on the student's learning
- Extend the student's learning.

At the International School of Tallinn, we promote the use of a range of assessment tools and strategies that are designed to give a clear picture of a student's prior knowledge and progress.

Examples of these include anecdotal records, checklists, portfolios, continuums and rubrics. Each student will be assessed by homeroom teachers and specialist teachers.



## **Ongoing ASSESSMENT**

Throughout daily activities teachers and students collect evidence of what students understand and can do. This enables:

- Direct feedback into the learning process
- Helps plan future activities
- What students already understand
- Need to learn
- What learning methods are most effective for individual students.

## **Formative Assessment**

- Occurs in and outside of the classroom through a variety of methods: observations, quizzes, discussions, practice tasks, evaluation and review, and so forth.
- Is used on a regular basis to measure and assist the progress of the student
- Is used to highlight the progress of the student
- To identify his/her strengths and areas for growth and improvement.

## **Summative Assessment**

- Provides overall evidence of the student's achievements, skills, knowledge and understandings.
- Usually takes place at the end of a unit or term to show the level of achievement of the student in relation to a Unit's specific objectives.
- Samples of students' work are collected at various stages in a Unit and kept as evidence of learning in their Portfolio.

## Recording

At the International School of Tallinn, our PYP educators use a range of methods and approaches to gather information about student learning. They record this information using a variety of tools and strategies.

- **Observations:**

All students are observed regularly, with the teacher focusing on various aspects including whole group to individual participation. Student interactions, general classroom behavior, student responses, application of concepts and development of skills etc. are continually monitored.

- **Performance Assessments:**

All assessments are goal-oriented with pre-established success criteria. Assessments provide authentic and significant challenges and realworld problems for the students to delve into. These tasks are generally openended and students have the choice to approach these problems in more than one way. Audio, video and narrative records are often used for this kind of assessment.

- **Process-focused assessments:**

The development of student skills are observed and recorded regularly. Collation of multiple observations and synthesizing evidences from different contexts help teachers to provide continuous feedback to students. These assessments focus on the effectiveness of the research conducted, the development of skills, student behaviours in different contexts, with synthesis of evidence.

- **Selected Responses:**

These assessments consist of uni-dimensional exercise. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment.

- **Open-ended Tasks:**

In these tasks, students are presented with a stimulus and asked to share their ideas and thoughts. These could be a brief written answer, diagrams, solutions etc. These tasks, along with their success criteria will be co-constructed with the students and shared in their portfolios.

## Reporting

At IST we follow Semester system. Each student's progress is documented on a centralised management system to which parents and students have online access (Toddle). Feedback on assessments is posted on Toddle at the end of each Unit. IST issues reports in which all the teachers include achievement levels at the end of each semester.

In the PYP, reporting on student growth and learning is an essential part of the programme. International School of Tallinn adopts a variety of reporting strategies to keep the students, the teachers and the parents in loop for the holistic development of the child.

Some of the reporting strategies are mentioned below:

- Student Portfolios

This is a personalized folder consisting of the highlights of student achievement throughout the primary school. During the year, students and teachers gather examples of work that show progression in learning in all areas. The students, parents and teachers have the opportunity to view the portfolio on Toddle. Such portfolios are memorable collection of every student and a great resource to track progress of the child.

- Report Cards

These formal documents are distributed at the end of each Semester, and report on student achievement and areas of growth in all subject areas. The homeroom teacher crafts an individualized summary of the child's overall performance for the Semester.

- Parent-teacher Conferences

These meetings between teacher and parent(s) are meant as a time to touch base, share classroom observations, and to collaboratively discuss goals for the year ahead. Parents are invited to meet with the homeroom teacher and bring questions and comments in preparation for the conversations. The curriculum and the child's overall performance are discussed and then revised accordingly as per mutual suggestions.

- Student-led Conferences

Arranged through the homeroom teachers in the PYP, student-led conferences are a unique time for PYP students to walk their parents or guardians through what they have been learning at school, and to highlight their personal growth, challenges and achievements. Students will guide their parents or guardians through elements of their work indicating their successes and room for growth; often, goals are set for the future.

**Homework:**

Providing any amount of homework is either too much or not enough for certain families. We strive for a balance through the provision of open-ended tasks, reinforcement of class themes, extension opportunities, or optional exercises. No negative consequences are implemented onto students due to in-completion. Homework's purpose should be clear to all: student, teacher and parent. Please communicate to your child's teacher if this is not the case.

The only non-negotiable expectation in regard to homework in PYP is daily reading. All students in Grades 1-5 are expected to read every day. Reading is a key area of development that supports all areas of Language learning. In Early Years we would like parents to find time every day to read to their child.



## **Learning Management System at IST**

### Toddle

We use Toddle throughout the PYP as our online learning platform. It is accessed by students, teachers and parents alike. Toddle allows students and parents to:

- monitor and track assessments.
- track a student's academic progress by subject throughout the year.
- access a student's school report at each of our reporting points.
- view and update student Portfolio's

Toddle allows students, parents and teachers to communicate effectively on the progress that is being made in all PYP subjects. Teachers monitor and record attendance daily. If your child is sick or has an appointment of any sort please register the absence via the Toddle platform.

It has the benefit of being a single online site that is used to store all PYP related materials and is used across the entire school. Parents/Teachers can download the Toddle App on their phones for convenience.

**Further Information:**

Much of this information is extracted from the IB subject guides From Principles into Practice and the PYP and MYP: Assessment. For more information about how the programme is structured, the aims and philosophy of the programme and the assessment process, visit the IB website

References:

IBO.org

Al Rayan School, Sharjah

Aarhus International School, Denmark

Shristi International School, India

Kuwait Bilingual School, Kuwait

Genesee Academy, United States

Trondheim International School, Norway

KIS International school, Thailand

Lady Andal School, India

King Abdulaziz School, Saudi Arabia

Google Images