



Early Years School Parent Handbook

2019-2020 School Year

**Ms. Wendy Mistruzzi
ES Principal**

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Welcome to the VIS Early Years Program

Thank you for choosing Verdala International School.

We see education as a partnership between school, children and parents. This handbook is designed to provide you with information about the school and its day-to-day routines that are relevant to your child. Please read through the whole document before school starts, and refer back to it throughout the year when required.

If you have questions beyond what is in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher. We look forward to getting to know you and your children during the scholastic year.

Contact Information

In case of an emergency please contact the school on 21375133 or 21374285.

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VIS GUIDING STATEMENTS

VIS VISION

To be the International School of choice, celebrating diversity, empowering and inspiring future generations.

VIS MISSION STATEMENT

At VIS we strive to ensure that all of our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors to our world.

Our Educational Philosophy:

- To prepare our students to be ready for tomorrow's world by encouraging learning through inspirational education using 21st century learning methods.
- To create a unique environment where each student can grow and discover their true potential.
- To promote an enquiring mind with a thirst for knowledge.
- To embrace diversity in our multicultural society.
- We trust that a caring inclusive community will help build a sense of self-worth and a profound respect for others.

Student Profile

We strive to ensure that all our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive & ethical contributors to our world.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

Students at VIS have an understanding of concepts, ideas and issues across a broad range of disciplines with global and local significance.

INQUISITIVE

Students at VIS participate in their learning by exploring a variety of situations with courage and an open mind. They are reflective and appreciate diverse points of view.

ETHICAL

Students at VIS act with integrity and honesty. They demonstrate a strong sense of justice and fairness by respecting individuals, communities and the environment.

CONTRIBUTORS

Students at VIS actively pursue opportunities to contribute responsibly to their local and global communities.

DEFINITION OF LEARNING: LEARNING @ VIS

At VIS, learning involves developing the knowledge, skills and understandings through inquiry-based and transdisciplinary strategies which prepare our lifelong learners for their future challenges. Effective learning occurs in a positive and nurturing environment, fostering a reflective growth mindset. This develops best in a context where students apply problem-solving skills to think critically and creatively in order to collaborate and take responsibility for their own learning.

We promote personal well-being through a balanced education that includes creativity, activity, academic rigour, and a service learning environment.

We provide meaningful learning experiences through an inclusive educational journey which develops transferable skills, resilience, and well-grounded and mindful individuals. We strive to offer varied pathways and opportunities to enable success for all.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

A right is a freedom that is protected. At Verdala Elementary School, students have the following rights:

- To be in a safe school environment, conducive to learning and one that promotes a healthy lifestyle
- To be treated with respect by their peers, teachers and other school employees
- To be protected from physical and verbal violence while on school premises or at school events
- To have enthusiastic, well qualified teachers, always prepared for their lesson and constantly striving to help each child to achieve his/her own full potential
- To be graded fairly
- To receive extra help from their teachers, if requested / needed
- To have supervised access to the outdoor sports facilities during the lunch break
- To be involved in the life of the school community

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

A responsibility is a duty or something you should do. To support the above, students have the following responsibilities:

- to be polite
- to be honest

- to be kind to classmates and other students
- to listen to the teachers
- to follow the school rules
- to come to school prepared to learn
- to always try their best

The School Day

Checklist of items your child will need at the start of the school year

Item	Pre K 1	Pre K 2
A spare set of LABELLED clothes in case of any ‘accidents’. Kindly bring these in a separate LABELLED bag. This will remain in your child’s classroom. If these get sent home, please replace them the next day with a fresh set.	✓	✓
A school backpack that they can carry themselves, big enough to hold an A4 folder, water bottle and lunch boxes.	✓	✓
Reusable water bottle that is spill proof	✓	✓
Appropriate cutlery is needed for their snack/lunch	✓	✓
Separate snack and lunch boxes, CLEARLY LABELLED with your child’s name. Please write Snack/Lunch on each box accordingly.	✓	✓
LARGE BOX of tissues (Kleenex)	✓	✓
Red VIS Field Trip t-shirt	✓	✓
LARGE PACKET of wet wipes	✓	✓
1 packet of FLUSHABLE toilet wipes.	✓	
Yoga mat and blanket for ‘quiet, rest time’	✓	
A sun hat that can be kept at school. (Children will not be allowed to play in the sun without a hat.)	✓	✓

Early Years Timetable

	Pre-K 1 & 2
Arrival to class	8:45
Morning classes	8.45 - 10:00
Snack	10:00 - 10:20
Morning recess	10:20 - 10:40
Morning classes	10:40 - 12:00
Lunch	12:00 - 12:30
Lunch recess *	12:30 - 13:00
Afternoon classes	13:00 - 15:10
Dismissal **	15:10
Bus Departs/ ASA	15:30

* Pre-Kindergarten half day pickup option is 12:30

** Friday dismissal schedule below:

Friday	Pre-K 1 & 2
Dismissal	13:50
After School Activity	14:00
Bus Departs ***	15:30

*** See [Bus Transport section](#)

Bus Transportation

School Transport Guidelines and Transport forms have been sent out through ManageBac. Completed transport forms should be sent to accounts@verdala.org. Bus routes are established at the beginning of the school year and the option of joining this service at another point in the year will depend upon availability.

Due to the young age of our Pre-Kindergarten students, we recommend that Pre-Kindergarten students are brought into school by parents/guardians. Buses may arrive as early as 7.45 a.m. and students are not supervised before 8.20 a.m.

Pre-Kindergarten children are only allowed to use the school transport system if accompanied by an older sibling, from grade 2 upwards. Therefore, please note, should the sibling be absent from school, or picked up early, the Pre-Kindergarten child must be collected by a parent or guardian. (They will **NOT** be allowed to travel unaccompanied).

Students are expected to wear seat belts and listen to the bus driver. Students are not allowed to ride a bus other than their assigned bus, unless it has been authorized through the main office. Behaviour on the bus should comply with the Student Code of Conduct.

Changes to [normal routines](#) should be advised by email before noon

Please note all buses depart at 3:35 or soon after. Those travelling home by bus on Fridays will have to join an ASA, or be picked up. For further details please liaise with the Front Office peelj@verdala.org.

Morning Routines

Parents are encouraged to arrive no earlier than 8:40. However, should you arrive before 8.40, you are requested to supervise your child in the PK playgrounds until the classroom is opened at 8.45.

In the interest of students' safety, students are not permitted to play in the ECC playground before 8:30 or after dismissal at 15:10.

To encourage PK students to become more independent, and settle into the new school environment, parents are asked to leave the premises as swiftly as possible once their child has been dropped off to their class teacher.

Punctuality is essential and is in the best interest of your child; children arriving late to school miss out on the crucial start of the day, where students are greeted, and the scene is set for the day's learning during Morning Meeting. Please be respectful and ensure your child arrives at school to participate in this time. Lateness is recorded and appears on the semester report.

Late comers need to be brought to the classroom door, where the teaching assistant will greet them and take them into the class. This will ensure there will be as little disruption as possible to the class.

If the school bus arrives late, students will NOT be marked late.

No one should be in the classrooms without a VIS staff member present

End of Day Routines

Pre-Kindergarten students are dismissed at 12.30 or 15.10 (10 minutes earlier than the rest of Elementary School), and are to be collected from their rooms at 12.30 or 15:10.

It is essential your homeroom teacher knows your normal end of day routine. Students will be dismissed to either parents, guardians or ASA. If there is a change to your 'normal routine', we ask you to send an email before 12 noon, to your homeroom teacher and elempta@verdala.org to advise the school.

Pre-Kindergarten children are to be collected from their rooms at 12.30 or 15:10.

If a parent is later than 15:30 , the child will be escorted to the Elementary office where the parent will be contacted. The child will remain there until a parent/guardian arrives to collect them.

Alternative Arrangements

If you are unable to pick up your child yourself and need to make alternative arrangements with a friend or helper, it is essential that you inform the class teacher beforehand, including a photo I.D. of whoever will be collecting your child.

Your child will not be dismissed to any person who has not been notified to the teachers or school.

After School Activities

At the beginning of each term, various After School Activities are being offered and are mainly geared towards grades Kindergarten and above. These activities generally run from 3:30-4:30. Some of these activities are organized by the teachers, while others are run by outside experts. Depending on the nature of the activity, there may be an additional charge. Please contact schembrin@verdala.org for full listings and timings for 2019-2020.

Attendance

Families are encouraged to avoid taking vacation time during school days and should be aware that such absences will be Unexcused (see below). The Verdala calendar can be found on <http://www.verdala.org/en/school-calendar> which includes all major School and Public holidays.

VIS Elementary School is committed to making a difference. In order for the children to maximize their learning opportunities, it is essential that your child arrives to class on time and that attendance is regular and follows the school calendar.

Absences

Excused Absences are those which are considered beyond a student's or family's control.

- Medical (when supported by an email from a parent 1 or 2 days' absence, or doctor's note in the case of 3 or more days of absence) This will be recorded on ManageBac as Health (H)
- External procedural requirements which must be completed during school time, e.g. visa paperwork. A parental note must be submitted. This will be recorded as Excused Absence (EA)
- Bereavement leave (EA)
- At the Principal's discretion: reasons beyond parental control (EA)

All other absences will be recorded as Absent (A)

In the case of a family emergency, please email the Elementary Principal directly as well as the class teacher.

Teachers may not be asked to provide additional lessons or make-up work for students who miss school for reasons other than medical.

Please notify an absence through ManageBac, before 9am each day

If a parent/guardian foresees the need for a student to be absent from school for a non-medical reason, the parent/guardian must contact the Elementary Principal well in advance. If, for any unforeseen circumstances, the student will not be able to return to school on time after a school holiday, the parent/guardian must immediately contact the Principal explaining the circumstances along with the expected date of arrival.

Programme of Studies

Creativity, motivation and structure are the key elements of the Verdala Elementary education. Our main goals are to prepare our students to be lifelong learners and global citizens as outlined in our student profile.

The program of studies at Verdala International School strives to meet the needs of its multicultural student body. We feel that a truly international education includes academic, social, and physical components. Our small class size allows flexibility in providing for children with a wide variety of cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds, and also gives our students the opportunity to be active learners.

Early Childhood Centre (ECC)

Verdala's Early Childhood Centre (ECC) was opened by her Excellency Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca President of Malta in 2017. Children who turn 3 before August 31st are eligible to join our Pre-Kindergarten 1 class.

Early Years at Verdala

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) is a warm and welcoming environment where the children engage in a wide variety of creative hands-on and fun learning centers. Our Early Years team encourage children's imagination using the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). The IEYC allows children to express themselves freely through physical and meaningful activities. Social skills, communication and cooperation are the fundamental learning goals for children in Early Years. The Early Years (EY) educators facilitate self-exploration and the learning process, in order for young children to engage in a variety of settings where they have opportunities to explore and discover, whilst building on their curiosity. Every child is unique, and therefore each student is able to learn at their own pace. These influential years are the foundations for later years, exploring the basics of literacy and numeracy.

Importance of Play

Imagination, creativity and expression are essential to learning. Play represents the first natural approach to life by which children explore the world around them and

learn to cooperate with others. Decision making and problem solving strategies are applied, or expected during play, and thus, develop the child's skills to become an independent learner. Creative play also leads to the development of cognitive and emotional skills.

International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC)

“The IEYC is an innovative research-based toolkit, recognising global best practice and the developmental needs of 2-5 year olds. It supports key areas of learning through holistic enquiry and play-based approaches encompassing all curriculum areas including personal, social and emotional development.”

Two to three theme based units are explored throughout the year and are designed to capture children's curiosity in an environment that is teacher initiated, as well as allowing children to explore and express their learning through play. Some of the units include 'This is Me, me and my world', 'Ocean Treasures, Beach and Sea Life' and 'To The Rescue! Superheroes.'

The International Early Years Curriculum focuses on:

- developing vocabulary through relevant themes
- early literacy skills
- basic numeracy skills (number recognition, sequencing, patterning)
- development of fine and gross motor skills through arts, music and movement
- creative and imaginative
- small world play

At VIS, we recognise that learning goes beyond the classroom, so we encourage a close-knit community among the parents, teachers and students. Parents are involved as we work together as a team, enriching the educational lives of the class by sharing thoughts, ideas and experiences.

IEYC Personal Learning Goals

The IEYC Personal Learning Goals underpin each unit - they represent the attributes that children will find essential; they help children to develop those qualities that will enable them to be at ease with the continually changing context of their lives.

Enquiry	Communication	Thoughtfulness	Adaptability
Cooperation	Resilience	Respect	Morality

For more information, visit <https://fieldworkeducation.com/curriculums/early-years>

Numeracy and Literacy

These core subjects are taught through a variety of hands-on learning activities, using many different resources which include, but are not limited to: 'Numicon', counters, 2D/3D shapes, puzzles, games, pattern, sand/water play, songs and rhymes, playdough, books, board games, matching/sorting games etc.

Creative Arts

Creative Arts is all about enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. It provides opportunities and encouragement for sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities. These include art, music, movement and dance which will support development of the children's fine and gross motor skills, with outdoor experiences more prevalent in the cooler months.

Field Trips

Field Trips enrich the educational experience as valuable extensions of classroom learning. As part of our IEYC, we try and select destinations based on connections to our learning experiences in class.

Parents will be notified by the class teacher in advance of the scheduled date for the trip. These trips will include an additional cost for entrance fees, special guides and bus transportation, which are payable online, using a link provided by the organiser.

Parents are requested to purchase an excursion shirt at the beginning of the year. This is a red polo shirt with the school logo and phone number which, for easy identification purposes, all students must wear when they go on a field trip.

Parents may be asked to help out on field trips that require additional supervision. All parent volunteers will need a recent police conduct form in order to help out. Please note that any volunteer parents who are invited to help will be expected to support all students in the class.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment plays a key role in learning at Verdala, helping the student understand themselves as learners. A range of assessment techniques are used by our teachers to provide valuable feedback to the students on their own learning. These techniques also provide feedback to the teacher, allowing them to differentiate their instruction according to the needs within the class and to inform their planning.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

We believe that working closely with parents and guardians is essential, and they are encouraged to become interested and involved in their child's learning. We honour this through regular teacher correspondence with home, our IEYC Celebrations of Learning, and the conferences held throughout the year.

Each semester, parents are invited to attend Parent Teacher Conferences. There is no school for students on these days. Teachers shall share work samples and discuss your child's progress. Parents are limited to one slot (15 minutes) per teacher. Should a parent require more time, this should be arranged with the teacher for a different date.

Reporting

Verdala provides parents with a written report each semester published through ManageBac. It is designed to give you an indication of your child's progress.

The Early Years written report is an assessment of learning, reporting on the learning that has taken place in all areas of the curriculum using:

B = Beginning

D = Developing

I = Independent

Community and Communication

At Verdala International School we place great emphasis on communication. Whilst we value face-to-face communication, we sadly recognize this is not always possible and email may be the most effective means. Whether it's a conversation at the gate, a scheduled meeting or an email, we encourage an open line of communication between home and school.

Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents on a regular basis, through ManageBac. Teachers may write to individual parents to arrange a time to meet or to express any concerns they have regarding a child's progress.

Please advise the Elementary Principal of any home situations, or problems that your child may have, as they can often affect a child's performance and behaviour while at school. With adequate information, we can respond appropriately to your child in each situation. Please help us to help them by keeping us informed.

Any concerns parents may have should first be raised with the class teacher.

ManageBac

One of our goals at Verdala International School is to reduce the amount of paper that we send home. To achieve this, we use ManageBac, facilitating better communication between parents and the school for Principals and HoS weekly bulletins, announcements, report cards and attendance.

<https://verdala.managebac.com/login>

It is important that you are registered on this system, and know your username and login. Access to this site is secure and private. For those of you who are new to ManageBac and need some guidance on how to navigate the site, help can be found here: <https://goo.gl/NvykiH>

Gmail

Gmail (@verdala.org) may be used to deliver personal messages to individuals or small groups.

Social Media

There are various social feeds used by Verdala, however the school's primary means of communication is ManageBac where all essential information will be shared.

- Verdala [Google Calendar](#) is a public school calendar which you are recommended to join. This is updated. In addition to this, see Semester dates.
- Verdala [Facebook](#) is a forum for promoting and celebrating the school's events and successes with the wider community.
- Verdala's [The Fort](#) is the school's newsletter.
- HoS twitter feed: @VISMalta

Only students whose parents have given permission to use their child's photo will appear in any of our media.

In the past some parents have set up closed/private class groups using tools such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Please be respectful to the whole cohort, and get consent from all parents involved first and agree not to share school material or images/video of any children beyond those who gave their consent. These groups are **not** endorsed, nor moderated by Verdala.

Parent Information Meetings (PIM)

Parent Information Meetings are held approximately once a month. These are usually run by the Principal and Coordinators; on occasion teachers may be invited to participate. They range from topics such as curriculum matters, pastoral matters or important issues that may arise.

Code of Conduct

In order to ensure the welfare of all children in the Elementary school, we have compiled a set of standards of behaviour, referred to as the Student's Code of Conduct. Students, staff and parents all share the responsibility for ensuring the following appropriate behaviours are met at all times:

1. **RESPECT** towards learning, oneself, peers, school employees, school property, environment and host country
2. **HONESTY** academic / interpersonal / sports
3. **COLLEGIALITY** and fostering solid interpersonal skills
4. **SAFE** environment: conducive to learning

Bullying of any kind, such as physical, verbal, social or cyber, is not tolerated at Verdala International School

Reported incidents of bullying will result in thorough investigations and appropriate interventions.

Student Contract

Students' rights and responsibilities (Code of Conduct, Dress Code, Behaviour) will be discussed in class at the start of each year.

Parents of students in Pre-Kindergarten will be asked to sign the Code of Conduct form on behalf of their child(ren).

I shall:

- *be polite*
- *be honest*
- *be kind to my classmates and other students*
- *listen to my teachers*
- *follow the school rules*
- *come to school prepared to learn*
- *always try my best*

Elementary School Discipline

There may be occasions when a child's actions require teacher intervention. Generally, this would begin with speaking quietly to the student, explaining the appropriate behaviour for the situation and perhaps some reflection/ thinking time.

It is the policy in Elementary to keep parents informed of any major discipline issues. Should a parent have any questions, the classroom teacher is their first point of contact. If the situation needs to be taken further, they should contact the Elementary Principal.

MEDICAL / EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Each family is required to submit up-to-date Medical and Personal information via a Google Form for each child prior to the start of the school year. It is important that you advise the school if your child suffers from any special medical condition, asthma or severe allergies. **Any medical condition should be supported by a doctor's certificate**

If you are traveling abroad and leaving your children under the guardianship of another, the school must receive the [Parent Overseas Form](#).

Illness

When students become ill at school, their teacher will take them to the clinic to be assessed by the nurse who will take any appropriate action deemed necessary. The school nurse will contact the parents in cases of injury or illness that require further observation at home, or any further intervention from outside health professionals. It could also be the case that parents may be asked to pick up the child from school as soon as possible. A school accident/illness form will be given to the parent.

When your child is ill, it is important that you keep them at home. Having a sick child kept home helps to safeguard the health of all the other students and staff members. If your child has experienced fever, diarrhoea or vomiting, kindly keep them at home for at least 24 hours after these symptoms have cleared up.

Staying Healthy

To offer protection from the sun, Verdala will adopt a '*No Hat, Play in the Shade!*' rule. To stay hydrated, students are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. Please provide your child with a spill-proof water bottle that is clearly labeled with your child's name.

Head Lice

At VIS we are committed to preventing the issue of head lice. A mandatory routine 'whole school' head lice screening takes place. No student/staff member is exempt from the screening. This is carried out by a professional head lice screening company, recommended as per Maltese Government School Head Lice Guidelines.

If a staff member suspects a child may have lice they will be accompanied to the nurse's clinic to confirm if this is the case. If the child is found to have head lice/nits, the parents will be contacted, and the child will be sent home at the end of the school day to be treated. The school nurse may check the child's hair to confirm effective treatment when the child returns to school.

If parents discover that their child has head lice, it is essential that they inform the school nurse immediately. It is imperative that parents start head lice treatment on the same day lice are found. The child may return to school on the following day that treatment is commenced.

See [Head Lice Flow Chart](#)

Accidents

If a minor accident happens at school, the supervising teacher/staff member will accompany the child to the nurse's clinic, or else call the nurse to come to the site of the accident, if that's deemed to be safer. After the appropriate first aid is given, an Accident/Illness form will be filled in by the supervising staff and the nurse, and a copy of the form will be sent home with the child at the end of the day (or within 24 hours of the incident) so that the parents are informed of what happened.

In case of a serious accident or injury during school hours, parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible, and asked to come into school. In the unlikely event of the school being unable to get in touch with either parent, or next of kin listed on the Emergency Information form, the nurse will accompany the child by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical services department. The school nurse will remain with the child until the parent/guardian takes hand over.

Parent emergency details must be kept up to date on ManageBac.
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EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency at school, all children will evacuate the school and assemble in the car park. The Head of School, or most senior member of staff will indicate when it is safe to return to the building.

If however, it may not be possible to return to the School premises, then the School's

“Safe Haven” assembly point Kristu Rxox [Risen Christ] Church will be used. Parents will be contacted by phone and will need to pick up their children as quickly as possible.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Orientation

Before school starts we host two orientation sessions for families new to Verdala.

KG to G5	Wednesday 29th August	9:00am - 11:00am
PK1 & PK2	Thursday 30th August	9:00am - 10:30am

KG-G5 students are encouraged to attend with their parents to meet the Head of School and the Principals, receive a tour of the campus before meeting their new teacher and visiting their new classroom. We host a more intimate orientation for our Pre-Kindergarten families who are encouraged to attend without their children so it is easier to converse and share key information.

Pre-K Syllabus Day

Syllabus Day will be held on Monday 9th September **9:00 - 10:00 am**. On this day you'll receive a presentation by your child's teaching team. This is not a parent teacher conference, but an opportunity for you to gain an insight into what your child's learning journey is to be like here at Verdala this year. Your teacher will share with you information on our curriculum, along with general classroom routines and rituals, planned trips, and class values. As we strive to be ethical and green you will not receive many handouts, as we move towards a paperless presentation where possible.

Class Creation

Grades are regrouped into new classes each year. The purpose of this is to help expand friendships in a transient population such as VIS. It too gives opportunity for teachers to balance ability, learning needs and behaviours. We aim to achieve a good gender balance and set children up for success. Class placements are made by those who have taught your child and best understand the class dynamics, taking into account the social and emotional needs of the year group.

As a school we hold high standards for teaching and learning. Our teaching teams will work very closely together, collaboratively planning and sharing ideas and strategies. Therefore we do not accept teacher requests from parents.

If you have any concerns regarding class placement please first speak with your homeroom teacher.

Security & Visitors

As a measure to improve the security at Verdala, all visitors must sign-in and out at the Elementary Office, where a visitor's badge will be provided. If you are onsite, beyond pickup or drop off we ask that you also collect a visitors badge from the ES Office. Anyone not wearing an ID badge will be challenged as to who they are. As you enter and exit the PK playgrounds, please ensure that you close the gates behind you.

Parent Volunteers

At Verdala all parent/guardian volunteers must have police checks before they have any responsibility for children. If you require help in obtaining a Maltese police check please liaise directly with the Principal's PA elempa@verdala.org.

We are always interested in hearing from those who would like to get involved by volunteering at school for various activities and programs. Parental involvement is important to us and helps develop the sense of community we have at Verdala.

Listed below are just a few of the ways parents can help in the EYs.

- Trip supervision
- Help organizing special days/events
- Helping with class resources (making playdough, cleaning/mending toys/books)

Class Parents

We hope each homeroom will have a 'Class Parent'. The role of the Class Parent is to primarily touch base with the class teacher on a regular basis and plan ahead with them. Whilst the role is flexible, depending on the time the parent can give they

may:

- facilitate class parent get togethers
- identify field trip volunteers fairly, when needed
- help organise class parties/special events with the class teacher

Traditionally, they have collected donations for gifts for the homeroom and specialist teachers.

Class parents are asked to meet at least once with the Principal.

If you are interested in this role, please express interest to your child's class teacher on Syllabus Day. This role can be shared, or done alone. At this event, parents can share their contact information through the Room Parent, as the school cannot share this information due to data protection.

Booster Club

The Booster Club is the social event and fundraising team of our parent community. This is a voluntary Parent Group who organize social events throughout the year, working continually to make Verdala a better school for your children. Do please offer your services to help with the various events organized throughout the year. The contact email address is: visbooster@gmail.com

Early Years Dress Code

Verdala International School does not employ a uniform policy, apart from a red T-shirt worn on field trips. Consideration of appropriate clothing can help a young child develop self-esteem through early independence.

- Easily put on and removed clothing is desirable.
- Shoes should be able to be put on as independently as possible, therefore shoelaces are discouraged.
- In the interest of safety, shoes must be comfortable. **Strictly no flip-flops or slip-ons are allowed.** On P.E. days, please ensure children come to school in trainers, t-shirt, shorts or jogging trousers (in cooler weather).
- Old, comfortable clothes are recommended. Although every care is taken by using aprons for 'messy play/activities', accidents still happen and some dark paints may stain. So please keep 'best clothes' at home. Also avoid WHITES.
- Your child's name should be marked in all items of clothing to aid easy identification, especially on hats, jackets and sweaters.

- During hot days, please apply sunscreen before sending your child to school and provide your child with a sun hat to be used when outside.

In Early Years we plan to enjoy our outdoor environment as much as possible, rain or shine. Please ensure you send your children to school appropriately dressed for the weather, prepared for sun and rain! Note:

To offer protection from the sun, Verdala operates 'No Hat - Play in the Shade'.

House Teams

Each child will belong to a VIS house team (Earth, Air, Water and Fire). You will be able to purchase a House T-shirt for Sports Day and other house team events, if you wish.

Toileting

Children must be toilet trained and out of nappies before starting school.

- Students should be able to use the toilet independently
- Whilst teachers will supervise and offer guidance, children are expected to be able to wipe and clean by themselves after using the toilet.
- If your child has 'soiled' their undergarments/clothes due to a toilet accident, you will be contacted to come and change your child, as teachers are **NOT** permitted to change students.

Snacks and Lunches:

The children will have a supervised mid-morning snack in class. The aim of snack time is for eating to be a sociable and enjoyable experience, with an emphasis on **healthy eating and creation of as little litter as possible.**

- Please send your child's snack in a labelled hygienic lunch box, preferably one that your child can manage to open and close independently.
- Verdala is a **NUT FREE** school. No nuts will be permitted.
- Food is best cut into easily managed portions.

The following items will NOT be allowed and will be sent back home:

- NO chocolate, sweets or cakes are permitted, **except** for birthdays or special occasions.
- NO biscuits, cookies and sugary foods
- Salty and processed foods should be avoided; for example, salami, cheese strings, chips/crisps.
- NO yoghurt drinks or fruit pouches
- NO juice cartons, soft drinks or other drink cartons.
- NO baby bottles
- Nuts of any kind (this includes any nut butter, Nutella and pesto sauce containing nuts)

Please send plenty of water to drink, in an age appropriate, **spill proof** container. **No glass containers or baby bottles** are permitted.

If your child brings yoghurt to school, this must be sent in a reusable, leak proof container that your child can open independently. If a yoghurt comes to school in a plastic pot, this will be returned home for parents to wash and recycle.

It is assumed that the food sent is the correct amount for your child. Any leftover food will be sent home so you may see what your child has eaten.

Remember that children also enjoy variety, and may become bored with the same snack every day.

To encourage fruit eating, we ask each child to bring some fruit, (washed, but not peeled or chopped) every day, to share in the class, during snack time. (Pre-K 1 only)

We do not have a microwave or fridge in the classrooms so please ensure that you provide ice-packs or thermos containers accordingly.

Ideas for healthy and appropriate snacks include: fingers of cheese, mini sandwiches or rolls, raisins or dried apricots, cubes/slices of raw vegetables or salad, savoury crackers, cold pasta/rice, yoghurt etc.,

Birthday Celebrations

At Verdala we believe that celebrating the day of your child's birth is very special and important. If you wish to send in a cake or cupcakes please notify the class teacher and check for any allergies in the class.

Any invitations to events outside of the school will not be delivered by the class teacher unless all children in the class are included.

Toys

Plenty of toys and equipment are provided in the Pre-K classrooms. Therefore it is advised to keep your child's toys at home, as these often distract the children from classroom activities, and are often lost, broken or fought over. Teachers are not responsible for any lost or broken toys. The **ONLY** toys allowed are for Show and Tell or for specific topic related activities, which you will be notified about.

2019-2020 KEY DATES

Please subscribe to the school's Google Calendars, for up-to-date information.

New Student Orientation KG-G5	6th September 2019
Orientation PK1-2	9th September 2019
First Day of School KG - G5	9th September 2019
PK 1- 2 First Day of School	10th September 2019
No School	28th October to November 1st 2019
Half Day	28th November 2019
No School	29th November 2019
No School	13th December 2019
Half Day before Winter Break	18th December 2019
Winter Break	19th December to 5th January 2020
First Day 2020	6th January 2020
No School	10th & 11th February 2020
No School	24th - 28th February 2020
No School	19th March 2020
No School	31st March 2020
No School	6th - 13th April 2020
No School	1st May 2020
No School	1st June 2020
Last Day of School (Half Day)	25th June 2020

CONCLUSION

The early years of school should be positive, enjoyable and fun, in a nurturing learning environment, which provides individual care, encouragement and confidence to your child. In the first few weeks of the school year, the new experiences and routines may be exhausting to a young child. Extra-curricular activities should be kept to a minimum, and early nights and a quiet routine will help your child adapt to the school environment more easily. If, for any reason, you see that your child is becoming over tired (perhaps due to a late or sleepless night) it is acceptable to keep your child at home for a 'rest day'.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please note that some of these questions may not pertain to students in Pre-Kindergarten but are here for your future reference.

What happens in Pre-K 1 after lunch?

After lunch, there is a quiet rest time for the students which may include story time. They then have play time, both with puzzles and games, and with the creative play items inside or outside the classroom.

Can I ask for school work for an extended holiday?

Parents who are taking their children out of school early for holidays or family visits should not expect teachers to provide work for the students to take with them.

What is an example of not being respectful?

- Lack of academic integrity by copying, or cheating
- Distracting others from learning by being late, noisy
- Putting yourself or others in danger
- Bullying or fighting others
- Discriminating or being unfair
- Vandalizing / destructing / disregarding school property / environment
- Littering

What is an example of not being honest?

- Cheating in a game, or copying someone's work without giving credit.
- Behind the back hurtful gossiping, lying, or willful omissions of truth.

Can I wear Jewellery?

In Elementary, necklaces, bracelets, large dangly earrings and rings are potentially hazardous for the children during playtime. Teachers will use their judgment and suggest to students that they remove any potentially dangerous items. So if in doubt, ask a teacher.

Can I bring my music device to school?

Personal music systems and electronic games should not be brought to school.

Why do I need to bring a healthy lunch?

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle.

Sodas do not support a healthy lunch.

Chocolate and sweets are not encouraged in school lunches.

Chewing gum is not permitted at school.

Due to allergies nuts should not be brought into school.
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What is unsafe play?

- Rough games or contact sports in the yard
- Throwing hard balls
- Skateboards, roller blades, shoes with rollers and other similar items in school
- Bringing pets to school unannounced
- Glass or sharp objects in school

Under no circumstances should a child bring in any type of real or pretend weapon.
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What is inappropriate clothing?

- Hats, caps and other headgear worn during class
- Articles of clothing which allow underwear to be visible
- Clothing that shows midriff, even when arms are raised
- Make-up
- High heel shoes, flip-flops or open toed sandals that do not fasten around the ankle are not suitable for outdoor play.

Only students wearing sports shoes will be allowed onto the football pitch.

What Grade should my child be in?

PK1 - children are 3 before August 31st

PK2 - children are 4 before August 31st

KG - children are 5 before August 31st