



Elementary School Parent Handbook- KG - G5

2019-2020 School Year

**Ms. Wendy Mistruzzi
ES Principal**

Contents

WELCOME TO VIS	5
VIS GUIDING STATEMENTS	5
VIS VISION	5
VIS MISSION STATEMENT	5
STUDENT PROFILE	6
LEARNING @ VIS	6
STUDENTS' RIGHTS	7
STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES	7
THE SCHOOL DAY	8
TIMETABLE	8
MORNING ROUTINES	9
END OF DAY ROUTINES	9
AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	10
BREAK AND LUNCH	10
ATTENDANCE	11
Excused and Unexcused Absences	11
Excused Absence	11
Unexcused Absence	12
Lateness	12
ASSEMBLIES	12
PROGRAMME OF STUDIES	13
INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY CURRICULUM	13
IPC Learning Goals	13
Personal Learning Goals	14
International Learning Goals	14
Subject Learning Goals	14
Thematic Units	15
IPC learning process	15
MATHEMATICS, LANGUAGE ARTS & SINGLE SUBJECTS	16
Mathematics	16
Language Arts	17
Single Subject Teachers	17

Art	17
Music	17
English as an Additional Language	18
Spanish	18
DRAMA (G2 - 5)	18
Library/ICT	19
Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE)	19
Physical Education (PE)	20
Physical Education Requirements	21
TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL	22
HOME LEARNING	22
FIELD TRIPS	22
ASSESSMENT & REPORTING	23
STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT	24
REPORTING	25
CONFERENCES	25
Scheduled Parent Teacher Conference	26
COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION	27
MANAGEBAC	27
GMAIL	27
SOCIAL MEDIA	27
PARENT INFORMATION MEETINGS	28
CODE OF CONDUCT	29
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE	31
MEDICAL/ EMERGENCY INFORMATION	31
ILLNESS	32
STAYING HEALTHY	32
HEAD LICE	32
ACCIDENTS	33
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	34
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW	34
ORIENTATION	34
MEET THE TEACHER (SYLLABUS DAY)	35
CLASS CREATION	35
SECURITY & VISITORS	35

PARENT VOLUNTEERS	36
CLASS PARENTS	36
BOOSTER CLUB	37
ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE	37
P.E. Clothing	38
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS	38
BUS TRANSPORTATION	38
STUDENT SUPPLIES	39
2019-2020 Key Dates	39
APPENDIX - ES Staffing	41
Frequently Asked Questions	44

WELCOME TO VIS

On behalf of the Elementary Staff, I would like to welcome you to Verdala International School. Our international team looks forward to working closely with you and your children as they progress through their learning journey.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information about the school and the day-to-day routines in the Elementary section. We hope the contents page and the links within help you find what you are looking for. Should you have any questions beyond what is in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact us. I look forward to getting to know you and your children over the next weeks and months.

Kind regards,
Wendy Mistruzzi
Elementary School Principal
viselem@verdala

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

See [Code of Conduct](#)

THE SCHOOL DAY

TIMETABLE

	KG-G5
Arrival/ Play time	8:20-8:35
Registration	8:35 - 8:45
Morning classes	8:45 - 10:05
Morning break*	10:05 - 10:35
Morning classes	10:35 - 11:55
Lunch break **	11:55 - 12:55
Afternoon classes	13:00 - 15:20
Dismissal ***	15:20
Bus Departs/ ASA (After School Activities)	15:30

* Break time includes 15 minutes playing and 15 minutes for snack.

**Lunch time includes 30 minutes for playing and 30 minutes for lunch and reading.

***Friday arrangements below:

Friday	KG-G5
Dismissal	14:00
ASA	14:00
Bus Departs ***	15:30

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

MORNING ROUTINES

To avoid congestion in the car park, the school is operating staggered start and dismissal times. Please support us with this in keeping within these times. A kiss and drop routine will be in place from 8:15-8:40. If you are intending to stay beyond these times, we encourage you to use the Park and Ride carpark which is only a 5 minute walk from school.

Elementary school begins at 8:40 with registration. Students should arrive at school **no earlier than 8:20** when teachers are present to provide supervision, and **before 8:40** when classes start. During this time, children have supervised play until the music plays. Parents are encouraged to leave the older children at the gate, rather than accompanying them into the playground. Students arriving on the School Bus will be escorted to the playground where they will be supervised.

Please do not plan to arrive before 8:20 when students will be supervised in the Elementary playground.

When students arrive, their school Bags are to be left outside the classrooms or against the veranda wall, under the windows while they play. The morning song comes on at 8:35, G1-G5 children line up in the ES playground. Kindergarten children line up in the PreKindergarten 1 play area where they are met and escorted directly to their classrooms by their teachers.

No children should be in the classrooms without a teacher present.

END OF DAY ROUTINES

It is essential your homeroom teacher knows your normal end of day routine. Students will be dismissed to either parents, After School Activities or School Bus. If there is a change to your 'normal routine', we ask you to send an email before 12 noon, to your homeroom and elempa@verdala.org to advise the school. School bus arrangements are made with the HS front office reception@verdala.org. See [Bus Transportation](#).

Change in routine (A brief clear statement is all we require)

I.e. Sandra in 2G is off Bus 22 - going home with father, Tim on 12/Sept/2017.

Elementary students are dismissed at 15:20 (G1-G5 from the Elementary playground, KG from the KG playground by the ECC building).

On rainy days, KG should be collected from the ECC classrooms and G1-G5 students from the ES ground floor corridors.

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.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (ASA)

At the beginning of the year, students will receive information about the various After School Activities being offered. 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.

BREAK AND LUNCH

Parents must provide students with a packed lunch (microwaves not available) and a snack. It is possible for parents to purchase a lunch from the tuck shop located in High School and bring it to the child. Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks and lunches – no chocolate, sweets or sodas. **Chewing gum is strictly forbidden.**

Please note that we are a nut free school.

All students must have a water bottle which should be clearly marked with their name. Students are allowed to keep water bottles with them on their desks in class and are encouraged to drink on a regular basis. At each end of the hallways there are places for the students to fill their bottles.

The school provides the students with class activity balls, jump ropes, and areas for various games. Students are allowed to bring their own equipment with them to school but it must be clearly marked with their names. Please do not allow children to bring expensive items to school.

More details can be found in the section **Frequently Asked Questions** at the end of the handbook.

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.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences can be Excused or Unexcused.

Where a student's recorded unexcused absences exceed the rate of 10 per semester or 18 per year, we will consider whether the child should proceed to the next Grade level. This will be taken by the Principal in conjunction with the Head of School.

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.

Excused Absence

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

- Medical (when supported by a parent note for 1 or 2 days' absence, or doctor's note in the case of 3 or more days of absence)

- External procedural requirements which must be completed during school time, e.g. Visa paperwork. A parental note must be submitted.
- Bereavement leave.
- Participation in an externally organised event, e.g. a sports competition, music recital / exam.
- At the Principal's discretion: other similar reasons beyond the parental control.

Please note that these may be recorded using various categories in ManageBac.

All other absences will be recorded as Unexcused.

In the case of a family emergency, please email the Elementary Principal directly. Where possible and when appropriate, reasonable effort will be made to provide work for students who must miss school for medical reasons.

Unexcused Absence

In the Elementary School, the style of teaching depends on student participation, hands-on activities, and group work, along with teacher directed lessons. For students to progress, it is important that they attend school for all designated school calendar days. Therefore, holidays should be arranged within the designated holiday periods.

You are expected to honour the school calendar, as students miss valuable discussions, explanations and activities that cannot be made up or replaced.

Teachers may not be asked to provide additional lessons or make-up work for students who miss school for reasons other than illness. Missed work will be put aside for the students to complete on their return.

Lateness

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. Please be respectful and ensure your child arrives at school to participate in this time. Lateness is recorded and appears on the semester report.

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

ASSEMBLIES

In Elementary, assemblies are held to build a sense of community. The

responsibility of these is shared between the Grades and the Principal. Generally these assemblies are held in front of the Elementary School, with students sitting in the shade of the building. Throughout the year, there will be several themed assemblies (Pet Day, Carnival), and whole school assemblies that parents are welcome to attend.

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.

INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY CURRICULUM

The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is one of the fastest-growing curriculum choices in the world today, implemented in over 2000 schools in more than 90 countries (International Schools, UK state schools and academies, Dutch national schools, Special Education Schools, Shell School and British Schools of America). It is a comprehensive curriculum for 5-12 year olds, made up of over 130 exciting, engaging and globally relevant thematic units of learning, which are designed around a clear process of learning and with specific learning goals for subject, personal and international learning.

The IPC extends knowledge, skills and understanding, develops personal attributes and supports an international perspective in a way that responds to revised ideas about learning. For more detailed information please visit: [IPC Fieldworks website](#)

IPC Learning Goals

The IPC Learning Goals are divided into three focus areas: Personal Learning Goals, International Learning Goals, and Subject Learning Goals.

Personal Learning Goals

The IPC Personal Learning Goals underpin each unit - they represent the attributes

that we believe children will find essential in the 21st Century. 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

International Learning Goals

The IPC's International Learning Goals help children begin the move towards an increasingly sophisticated national, international, global and intercultural perspective and develop a sense of 'international mindedness'.

Each unit has embedded within it, across the different subjects, learning-focused activities that help children start developing a global awareness and gain an increasing sense of themselves, their community and the world around them, as well as inspiring positive action and engagement with global issues.

Subject Learning Goals

The IPC **Subject Learning Goals** are the foundation on which the IPC was built. The learning goals cover the knowledge, skills and understandings that children will develop.

Knowledge	Skills	Understanding
What children will know	What children will be able to do	What children will understand

Taught and assessed over two year 'Mileposts', subject goals are explored and met throughout a range of exciting units. This structure allows children the freedom to guide their own learning journey and immerse themselves in curriculum areas fully without being tied to a specific subject based timetable. IPC units are carefully chosen to compliment each other whilst ensuring full coverage and effective balance of the following subjects:

Science	History	Geography	IT
Technology	Art	P.E.	Music
International Studies	Social Studies	PSHE	Spanish

Thematic Units

Our units are organised around a theme, which helps children to see how subjects are both 'independent' and 'interdependent' enabling them to see 'the big picture' of their learning, make connections through and across different subjects, and talk about a theme from multiple perspectives.



The IPC units of learning have been developed around a process which supports the ways in which children learn best from the ages of 5-12 years. It is important that children don't just experience the structure and process of the IPC, but also that they understand why they are learning in this way.

IPC learning process

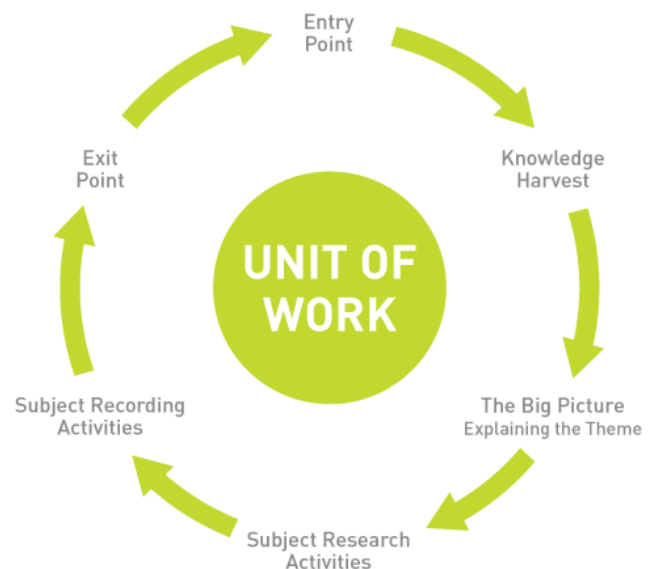
There is a distinct learning process with every IPC unit, providing a structured approach to make sure that children's learning experiences are as stimulating and rigorous as possible.

The Entry Point is an exciting and memorable event that launches every IPC unit. The aim of the entry point is to get children thinking about, and engaged with, the learning that's to follow.

The Knowledge Harvest provides teachers with the chance to find out what children already know about the theme and helps them to personalise the unit by finding out what children want to learn in order to tailor their lessons accordingly. It reinforces connections between existing and new learning and allows children to take ownership of their learning.

Explaining the Theme provides teachers, children and parents with the big picture of the unit before it launches so that connections between subjects and concepts can be facilitated.

The Big Picture provides teachers with subject-based background information and research which links to the learning contained within each unit.



Research Activities: Each subject area has planned research activities which are designed to make sure that children can access information in a way that is appropriate to them, drawing on a wide range of learning approaches such as role play, digital learning, library research and so on. IPC research activities are experiential and exploratory. Some are collaborative; others are designed to develop individual enquiry and resilience, and therefore help to embed and develop the IPC Personal Goals.

Recording Activities: The recording activities enable children to process and present the information they have gained in their research activities through a range of approaches which tap into their different strengths and interests, and enable them to get better at other ways of recording. This might involve learning through digital recording, drama, musical compositions, maps, graphs, experiments, artwork and so on.

Exit Point: The exit point completes every unit. It helps children to draw on their prior learning, reminding them of all the connections between subjects that they have made, and creates time and opportunities to build their understanding of their learning, and to reflect on this individually and as a group. The exit point is an excellent chance to engage with parents, guardians and carers and involve them in celebrating the learning that has been achieved.

MATHEMATICS, LANGUAGE ARTS & SINGLE SUBJECTS

Mathematics

Verdala is informed by new research ideas on mathematics learning and student mindsets that can transform students' experiences with math. Our curriculum defines our standards, and our resources include hands-on manipulatives, Investigations, Mathletics, Abacus resources and MyMaths. We understand that in order to make Math accessible, our students need to understand, be numeracy fluent, competent in reasoning and problem solving. Evaluating and reasoning are connected skills. Our Math sessions are differentiated to our students' learning needs, with elements of instruction and procedures or through guided inquiry. Engagement is at the core of all mathematical teaching, looking for opportunity to apply learning, or connect to the real world. However, we also recognise Math can be purely fun too. At Verdala we understand that math talk is important and therefore so too is vocabulary, as well as the process of reflection.

Language Arts

Language Arts is broken down into the categories of Listening & Speaking, Reading for Information, Reading Literature, Language Awareness and Writing. In the early Elementary years, the focus is building the foundations for Language Arts which includes: phonemic awareness, letter formation, and beginning reading skills. As the students mature, the learning goals will include spelling patterns, writing in different genres and reading appropriate levelled texts.

The goal is to develop the children's ability to use their speaking, listening and writing as a means of communication and their reading as a means of research and pleasure.

Our IPC units are full of opportunities for children to practise each of these. When carrying out their work, children read to find out information, write a range of stories, poems and nonfiction in a variety of styles and use speaking and listening to work in groups and as a way of reporting on the work they have done.

Single Subject Teachers

While the majority of the curriculum is taught by class teachers, children have the opportunity to work with specialists in Art, Music, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Information Technology (IT), Library, PE, PSHE, Drama and Spanish. Please refer to the list of staff members in the Appendix.

Art

Our approach to Art in the VIS Elementary is one of enquiries, experience, connection and understanding. Our aim is to strengthen and encourage visual learners while discovering and creating art forms. Our classes allow us to experiment with artist's techniques and try our own. We set out to explore artists' intentions, which give us confidence to be curious. We allow space to experience art and develop skills to support its understanding. Through processes and connections we aim to bring value to the impact of art in everyday life, historically and in our contemporary context.

Music

Our approach to Music at VIS Elementary is one of understanding and appreciating music as a form of art. Our aim is to encourage the children to experiment with, create and perform music and movement by using different sound sources. We also set out to explore the musician's intentions and aim to bring value to the impact of music in everyday life, both historically and in our contemporary context.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

English language support is provided for those students who would benefit from additional help to develop their proficiency in the four language domains: speaking, listening, reading and writing. While classroom teachers share in the responsibility for educating EAL students, the specialist has specific training in the field of English language learning and will assist students according to their language development needs. Placement within the program is made through the collaborative input and assessment of the Principal, parents, classroom teachers and EAL specialist. Students exit from the additional support when they have achieved a level of English proficiency that allows them to work comfortably and successfully within the classroom.

Spanish

Non English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are taught Spanish from Kindergarten to Grade 5. This course is an introduction to language acquisition. By the end of Grade 5, a student who has been at Verdala from Kinder to Grade 5 is expected to achieve a foundational level in Spanish (e.g. being able to request and provide basic information about everyday topics; being able to talk about routine everyday activities; being able to express simple opinions, preferences and feelings)

Students are taught in their class groups and are differentiated as far as possible within the limitations of our staff.

The main aims of the programme are:

- to develop positive attitudes towards foreign language learning.
- to make children aware of the multilingual and multicultural world we live in.
- to provide children with the basic skills needed to communicate in Spanish.

Assessment is carried out on a weekly basis through classroom interactions, teacher observations, questioning, quizzes and projects. Assessment is also differentiated.

The Spanish teachers who teach Grade 5 and Grade 6 work in close collaboration to ensure continuity across the Elementary and Middle School Spanish programmes.

Drama (G2 - 5)

In the IPC, Drama is not referred to in the specific units but as part of Language Arts. Keeping this in mind, one of the main goals of the drama programme is to

help the students gain confidence when presenting in front of others. For the younger students, this includes being able to make simple dramatic presentations to each other as they adopt different roles, often as part of storytelling. As they get older, students are expected to be able to perform a scripted play, as well as improvise. Throughout the years, children learn to make use of their voice, language choices, posture, movement and facial expression to enhance their own performances. Another aspect of the Drama programme is to teach the students how to respond to presentations from simply stating what they liked or disliked, to being able to evaluate the effectiveness of their own performance and that of others.

Students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 take **Performing Arts** which is a combination of Music and Drama.

Library/ICT

Students have Library sessions once a week with the Librarian/EdTech Teacher. They are encouraged to browse for, and select, two suitable books to borrow and take home for a week. Children should bring library books to school on scheduled library days so that the books can be returned or renewed each week. It is suggested that children in the upper grades (Grades 3, 4 and 5) take at least one fiction and one non-fiction book. Children in the lower grades (K, 1 and 2) should take any two books of their choice.

During Library sessions, the students will also be learning about parts of books, different genres, the dewey decimal system and some research techniques. Along with the class teachers, the Librarian/EdTech teacher will guide the students on how to complete bibliographies.

ICT lessons will take place once a week with the Librarian/EdTech Teacher for KG-G5. From G3 upwards, the students are given a Google account for educational and school use only. The focus of the lessons will be on keyboarding skills, Google classroom and research skills.

Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE)

In PSHE at Verdala International School, we follow the curriculum and guidelines outlined by the PSHE Association (PSHE Education Programme of Study Key Stages 1-5), UK. It is the third edition of the PSHE Association's programme of study for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and follows the 2014

In PSHE we cover a wide-range of key concepts, skills and attributes within three broad and overarching themes, which are: 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships' and 'Living in the Wider World'. The idea is to help contribute toward preparing each student for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they will meet with in life. The Key Stages are aligned to the students' age group and grade, thereby the three core themes overlap, but are also aligned to be adaptable to the age group. The overarching themes are structured into a number of further defined, detailed, concrete concepts that are to be covered with the students, e.g. Core theme: *Health and Wellbeing, Key Stage 1, 'What is meant by a healthy lifestyle?'*.

The decision to pursue and adopt the PSHE Association UK Curriculum was one which incorporated the understanding that Verdala International School will have a curriculum and syllabus that follows and links throughout the Elementary, Middle School and High School years. At this point, the Elementary and Middle School PSHE teachers work together to outline and link the PSHE curriculum from Elementary into Middle school. Moreover, towards the end of Grade 5 we partner with the Middle School PSHE teacher, as part of supporting the students' transition to Middle school. Towards the end of the Grade 5 scholastic year, there is a part of the curriculum which covers the topic of *puberty*, one which is covered with sensitivity and understanding, at which point we make room for students to ask questions important to them about changes to their body.

A variety of resources are used; such as charts (picture charts), worksheets, excerpts from books or book readings, videos from Youtube or other sites (which will be linked accordingly), as well as presentations prepared by the teacher. The students are evaluated on their participation, performance during presentations, group and teamwork, as well as skills such as helping others.

Physical Education (PE)

Quality physical education programs at VIS both the Elementary and Secondary levels promote the physical growth and development of all students contributing to their general health and wellness and focus on preparing the students to lead an active and productive lifestyle.

Our PE curriculum is ongoing and designed to achieve the goal that upon graduation students will have the necessary skills, ability and knowledge to:

- Develop motor skills and skills that allow for safe, successful and satisfying participation in physical activities. Become familiar with various sports and

lifetime activities and acquire the desire to pursue them.

- Engage in a physically active lifestyle: maintain physical, social, and emotional health by practicing healthy behaviors and goal setting.
- Become confident, self-assured, independent, and self-controlled through effective communication, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills, cooperate with others, become accepting and respectful of individual and cultural differences.
- Reinforce knowledge learned in other subject areas such as science, math and social studies. Become knowledgeable about health and wellness and how to access health resources.

Physical Education requirements:

Wearing athletic clothing that is appropriate for physical activity allows children to experience movement through our full range of motion. This can help them to develop additional confidence in physical activity settings. It also keeps them safe by preventing injuries that may result in us having to miss out on opportunities to be active.

Each student is required to dress out in the proper sport kit, which includes:

- Proper sport shoes and socks (tennis shoes or sneakers) Soft-soled shoes, sandals, crocs are not allowed for physical education classes.
- T-shirt, shorts and a hat (hot weather)
- Sweatshirt and sweatpants, light wind stopper or raincoat (cold or rainy weather).
- Jeans or other tight fitting trousers are not appropriate, nor are dresses or skirts.
- For safety reasons it is essential that all long hair should be tied back or a hair bend should be used during PE as it often gets in the way.
- Students are not permitted to wear any jewelry for their PE lessons. This includes, but is not limited to: dangling earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, rings, etc. Teachers will use their judgment and suggest to students that they remove any potentially dangerous items. We consider that this poses a risk of injury, loss or theft. Students should not bring any valuables to PE lessons.
- Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to PE class, and have access to the reverse osmosis drink dispensers throughout the day. Other drinks are not permitted for health reasons. Students are monitored at all times and encouraged to take water breaks when necessary. Teachers are aware of the issues caused by the heat and will be considerate of this.

TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

As an academic year draws to a close, Middle School plans its way forward to welcome our Grade 5 Elementary students. Grade 5 Parents are invited to attend an orientation tour with the Middle School Principal. You will receive information on this nearer the time, through ManageBac.

In Elementary, we spend time discussing this important transition with our Grade 5 students. We also facilitate an open forum led by Grade 6 students for the Grade 5 students. Elementary students can bring forward questions about Middle School while Grade 6 students describe their experience, challenges and bring forth advice on how to succeed.

HOME LEARNING

At Verdala we value the benefits of daily reading for a minimum of 20 minutes per night. This includes being read to, reading aloud, independent reading and book discussions. Optional tasks that promote the IPC personal goals and approaches to learning, may be shared with students offering them the opportunity to make choices based on interests and passions. Beyond this, home learning is differentiated, and may be set when there is a specific learning need identified.

We wish to promote a balanced lifestyle and student well-being and therefore encourage our students to spend time as a family, as well as participate in play, after school activities, clubs, engage with their heritage language and make connections with the wider Maltese community.

The purpose of home learning in Elementary is to:

- provide practice and consolidation (i.e. Mathematics, daily reading)
- prepare for future learning (i.e. survey parents, collect material for class)
- address a specific learning need
- develop self-discipline, good habits and time management

Home learning should not be stressful. If your child has any difficulties over homework, speak with your child's teacher.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips enrich the educational experience as valuable extensions of classroom learning. As part of our IPC, we study our "Home" and "Host" countries. We select destinations based on connections to our IPC, Math and Language unit, considering

age appropriateness.

Parents will be notified by the teacher in charge of the trip, well in advance of the scheduled date for the trip. Starting this academic year, the cost for entrance fees, special guides and bus transportation are included in the school fees. However, for special trips, such as overnight stays, there may be additional costs.

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to complete a permission form for field trips, including walks in the community. Teachers will still inform you of any excursions off campus.

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

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

Assessment plays a key role in learning at Verdala, helping students 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.

Self and peer assessments allow students to begin to take personal responsibility for their learning, to reflect on their own learning and identify areas of strength and need.

The IPC programme supports teachers in assessing, and children in self-assessing their progress with key skills from the IPC Learning Goals. It provides:

- specific skills assessment for Mileposts 1, 2 and 3
- a system that provides learning advice
- a rubric (success criteria) for teachers and children
- tracking through beginning, developing and mastering

Key vocabulary that you will hear:

Teachers' rubrics: these are essentially, success criteria. They help teachers observe and record the stage at which children are learning in terms of

‘beginning’, ‘developing’ and ‘mastering’ (across the different mileposts).

Children’s rubrics: child-friendly versions of the above, in age appropriate language, for children to use when self and peer-assessing.

Learning advice: specific learning activities and advice, which can be used in class and shared with parents, that helps children to move from one stage to the next with their learning. This forms the final part of the feedback loop - feeding forwards to next steps and improvements in learning.

STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT

Assessment of Learning is also important at Verdala to measure, record and report on a student's growth and level of achievement in regards to specific learning expectations. Verdala Elementary School conducts Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®) assessments. MAP® is one tool, used by hundreds of international schools around the world that helps determine a child’s instructional level of learning.

Students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 take these online assessments in the areas of Reading, Language, and Mathematics, three times a year to help track academic growth. To be fair to the children, we only conduct these assessments in the morning sessions. For this reason MAP® assessments may run from one-to-two weeks.

Homeroom teachers speak with the children ahead of these assessments, reminding them to try their best and not to worry. Each class takes part in a student preparation lesson where they are shown what the assessments will look like, with opportunity to ask questions and discuss any concerns with the proctor. These computer tests are unique in that the questions are dynamically generated, adapting to be appropriate for each child’s level of learning. In that, there will always be questions they do not know - and the teachers will reassure them that this is OK. We understand that some students may be nervous for various reasons and the data may not be an accurate indicator of their capabilities.

MAP® is one piece of a very large puzzle and this data alone will not tell us everything. The information gathered by MAP® is currently for the school, used to guide planning and benchmarking.

REPORTING

Verdala provides parents with a written report twice a year, published through ManageBac.

The Elementary written report is an Assessment of Learning, reporting on the learning that has taken place in all areas of the curriculum using:

B= Beginning to work on a skill.

D= Developing that skill.

M= Mastering that skill.

It is designed to give you an indication of where your child is at, sharing a target of their next step. Verdala teachers report against key learning goals. In IPC, these assessments are a summative judgement made against a rubric, following a number of engagements. These may include: observations, written or oral assignments, creative activities, or small end of unit tests or quizzes. No grade is made up of any one dominant task and there are no exams in the Elementary School.

It is our philosophy to give students every opportunity to succeed and thus build up their self-confidence. We encourage children to try again, and attempt to correct mistakes. It is important to understand that the IPC mileposts cover two years' of learning, and children are not expected to achieve mastery of a skill until late in the second year. Grade Milepost Correlation is as follows:

Early Childhood:	3 - 5 years	Pre-Kindergarten 1 & 2
Milepost One:	5 - 7 years	Kindergarten & Grade 1
Milepost Two:	7 - 9 years	Grades 2 & 3
Milepost Three:	9 - 12 years	Grades 4 & 5

We are an inclusive school and recognise that all children are unique. Students therefore shall receive different levels of support and may experience differentiated material to suit their individual learning needs.

CONFERENCES

We believe that working closely with parents and guardians is essential. Children whose parents encourage them to be interested in their school work do better than those who do not. We honour this through regular teacher correspondence with home, our IPC Celebrations of Learning and the conferences held throughout the

year.

If at any time during the year you have a question or concern about your child's education, please do not wait for a scheduled event, but contact the teacher to set up a scheduled time to meet. Please note, it is very difficult for teachers to meet with parents who drop in during the day for an unscheduled meeting. If the question or concern cannot be resolved, then the Elementary Principal can be consulted.

Scheduled Parent Teacher Conference

Twice a year, you will be asked to attend a Parent Teacher Conference. These are non-school days, so childcare should be arranged. These conferences are an opportunity to partner with you. We know that both parents and teachers can have a profound positive effect on the lives of our children. Teachers shall share work samples and individualised learning targets.

To book a time slots to conference with your child's teachers, we use a system called SchoolSoft. Parents visit <https://verdala.schoolsoft.com> and use their same login details as in previous years. Those who are new to the school, need to look for the section '**NOT REGISTERED?**' and create a new parent account by clicking '[REGISTER NOW](#)'.

One week before the conference date, the booking system will open and you will be able to choose your time slots. We urge you to book early in order to avoid disappointment.

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.

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/NvvkiH>

EMAIL

Gmail (@verdala.org) may be used to deliver personal messages to individuals or small groups. At the end of this handbook, you will find a list of the Elementary teacher emails.

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. The link is on the school's website.
- 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 monthly 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. The topics may include: curriculum, pastoral matters or burning issues.

CODE OF CONDUCT (under review)

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

The students are regarded as representing Verdala from the moment they either arrive on campus or arrive at their bus stop. Behaviour at these times must reflect that expected of a Verdala member, which is the following:

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

1. RESPECT

- a. Respect towards learning is shown through:
 - i. Growth mindset (learn from our mistakes)
 - ii. Integrity (doing the right thing, even when no one is looking)
 - iii. Coming prepared to learn and giving your best
- b. Respect towards oneself is defined by:
 - i. personal health and hygiene
 - ii. keeping safe (reporting promptly bullying, harassment, unfair treatment)
 - iii. adhering to the dress code
- c. Respect towards peers is shown through:
 - i. being polite, and active listening
 - ii. acknowledging cultural / social differences
 - iii. keeping others safe (reporting promptly bullying, harassment, unfair treatment)
- d. Respect towards school employees is shown through:
 - i. being polite, and active listening
- e. Respect for the host country is shown through:
 - i. being polite
 - ii. acknowledging cultural / social differences
 - iii. abiding by the laws of the host country
 - iv. adhering to the dress code
 - v. respect for school property/environment

- vi. appreciate what we have and help take care of our environment
- vii. help keep our environment safe, clean and tidy
- viii. recycling as much as possible

2. **HONESTY** academic / interpersonal / sport

- a. be truthful
- b. be kind, or say nothing
- c. 'win gracefully, lose with dignity' Michelle Obama

3. **COLLEGIALITY** and fostering solid interpersonal skills

- a. show team spirit - and value it!
- b. include others
- c. offer to help others, when appropriate
- d. be kind to each other

Invitations to events outside of the school will not be delivered in school unless all children in the class are invited, such as birthday parties

4. **SAFE** environment, conducive to learning

- a. look out for one another
- b. be gentle with your words and actions
- c. use your words such as, *"Stop it I don't like it. If you don't stop I'm going to ask a teacher for help."*
- d. make safe choices i.e. *use pedestrian crossing. cross with an adult*

Bullying of any kind - physical, verbal, social, 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 by the homeroom teachers at the start of each year. Class essential agreements are often used to help focus students commitments to their responsibilities.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 5 will be asked to sign the following to indicate that they have understood the behaviour guidelines for all Elementary students:

For Elementary students to sign:

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

The philosophy in Elementary is to foster a safe learning environment where behaviour expectations are clearly outlined for students with positive reinforcement. However, 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. If a child causes a problem, they will be asked to solve it. If they cannot solve the problem or choose not to, the teacher or principal will intervene, depending on the situation and the persons involved.

It is the policy in Elementary to keep parents informed of any 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. This will be emailed out to you. Please advise the school if your child suffers from any special medical condition, asthma or severe allergies.

Any medical condition should be supported by a medical doctor's certificate.

If you are 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 send them over to the nurse's clinic. The nurse will assess the child, and take any appropriate action deemed necessary. The school nurse will contact the parents in any case of injury or illness that may 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. Such contact will be done via a phone call, a school accident/illness form handed over through the student, or via email.

When your child exhibits signs of illness, it is important that you keep them at home. A sick child requires a lot of energy to aid the body in its recovery process. Rest will help conserve such required energy for a quicker recovery. Having a sick child kept home also helps to safeguard the health of all the other students and staff members.

When your child experiences fever, diarrhoea or vomiting, kindly keep your child at home for at least 24 hours after cessation of these symptoms. We trust you understand that these are symptoms of contagious illnesses, and keeping these illnesses isolated contributes to protecting the health of the whole school community.

STAYING HEALTHY

We live in a hot climate and should keep ourselves safe and healthy. To offer protection from the sun, Verdala has a **'No Hat - Play in the Shade'** rule.

Drinking water and brain function are integrally linked. Lack of water to the brain can cause numerous symptoms including problems with focus, memory, fatigue and even anger. To stay hydrated, students are also encouraged to drink water throughout the day. They are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to PE class.

Please label your water bottle, with surname and class.

HEAD LICE

When dealing with the issue of head lice, at VIS, we stress the importance for everyone in our community to work hand in hand. It is therefore essential if parents discover that their child has head lice, that they immediately inform the

school nurse, via an email, so that she can evaluate if there is a need to send a friendly reminder to other parents so as to check their children for head lice. Parents are responsible to start head lice treatment on the same day that lice are found. The child may return to school on the following day that treatment is commenced.

If a staff member notices that a child is constantly scratching their head, the child will be accompanied to the nurse's clinic to confirm if they have head lice/nits. 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 for head lice. The child may return to school the day following commencement of treatment, and the school nurse may check the child's hair to confirm effective treatment.

At VIS we are committed to safeguard our community from the problem of head lice, so in approximately the first week of October, a routine 'whole school' head lice screening will take place. This all school practice is mandatory, and no student/staff member is exempt from the screening.

This routine standard practice will be carried out by a professional head lice screening company, that is recommended as per Maltese Government School Head Lice Guidelines.

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.

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 Rxoxt [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	Friday 6th September	9:00am - 11:00am
PK1 & PK2	Monday 9th September	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.

MEET THE TEACHER (SYLLABUS DAY)

Meet The Teacher (Formerly known as Syllabus Day) is in the first weeks of school. 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. Since 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 is 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.

The Elementary team work hard to consider all perspectives for child placements. Children are asked to identify 3 friends they work well with and would like to be in their class for the next academic year. We will do our best to honour at least one. If we cannot, we will inform you before classes are announced through ManageBac, in August.

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.

In the past, the Elementary School has enjoyed hosting returning or visiting children. These children have come with their families to holiday in Malta and visit their friends who are currently attending Verdala. However, due to the abuse of this privilege and the fact that many of our classes are full, we no longer feel able to accommodate visiting children during school hours. While visitors will still be welcome to come and see their friend's classroom at the end of the day or join us for the lunch period by prior arrangement with the Principal, they will no longer be able to join in daytime class activities.

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 Elementary School.

- Reading with students
- Trip supervision
- Help organizing special days/ events

CLASS PARENTS

We hope each homeroom will have a 'Class Parent'. 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
- coordinate support for voluntary roles such as reading parents
- help organise winter and end of year party with the class teacher

Traditionally, they have collected donations for gifts for the homeroom and specialist teachers. Class parents are asked to meet as a group at least once with the Principal.

If you are interested in this role, please express interest to your child's class teacher prior to 'Meet The Teacher' that is held in the first weeks of school (formerly known as Syllabus Day). This role can be shared, or done alone. At this event, parents can share their contact information through the Class Parent, as the

school cannot share this information due to data protection.

All volunteers require police checks before working with children.

BOOSTER CLUB

The Booster Club is the social event and fundraising arm 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

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

Verdala International School does not employ a uniform policy, apart from a red T-shirt worn on field trips by Elementary students. Please ensure that all jackets / sweaters are labeled with your child's name.

We ask that their attire is appropriate for the school setting. Boys and girls are expected to wear well fitting, comfortable clothes. Shorts and skirts need to be of a reasonable length, mid-thigh. Messages on garments must be tasteful, sensitive to and appropriate for a positive school environment. Students dressed inappropriately in Elementary, will be approached by a teacher who will have a quiet word with them. If the style of clothing continues, the Elementary Principal will become involved.

In Elementary 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!

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

Students will only have indoor play if stormy conditions (high winds, heavy rain or lightning) are present.

If it is drizzling, they will still play outside, so a light jacket is needed.

Please see Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) in the Appendix.

P.E. Clothing

In the P.E. information section, you will find details regarding the clothing required for P.E. classes. Students should wear trainers that either tie or have Velcro fasteners or sport sandals. Soft soled shoes are not allowed for Physical Education classes.

Also, students will only be allowed onto the football pitch at break time when they are wearing sports shoes.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

At Verdala Elementary School we believe that celebrating the day of your child's birth is very special and important. As we encourage children to be independent; please send a birthday snack that the child can serve him/herself such as cupcakes, or cookies (nut-free) along with the necessary paper plates, napkins, etc. If you want to join the celebration, please contact the class teacher a few days before to ensure that the timing is right.

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

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.

Parents bear the sole responsibility for their children in the morning at the bus pick-up and afternoon drop-off. Pre-Kindergarten students can only use this service if accompanied by an older sibling.

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.

From time-to-time, parents arrange play-dates for after school. For students who do not normally take the school bus home, but wish to ride on the bus with their friend, parents must contact the Front Office to ensure there is an available seat on the school bus.

STUDENT SUPPLIES

In the Elementary School, the school fee includes all the basic stationery that the students will require throughout the year. This includes textbooks, workbooks, pencils, scissors, glue, etc.

Parents need to supply their child with:

- Backpack
- Lunch box and water bottle
- Pencil case (if their child prefers to use one)

Please label all personal items with surname and class.
Unclaimed lost property is donated to charity.

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

APPENDIX - ES Staffing

Wendy Mistruzzi	ES Principal	viselem@verdala.org
Shannon Briffa	ES Personal Assistant	elempa@verdala.org

Jason Hepokoski	Junior Curriculum Coordinator	hepokoskij@verdala.org
Francesca Theuma	Infant Curriculum Coordinator	theumaf@verdala.org

Corinne Borg	Head of Student Support Services	senco@verdala.org
Nathan Tipton	Counselling/PSHE Teacher	tiptonn@verdala.org

Early Childhood Team

Suzy Blanshard	Pre KG 1 Teacher/ Milepost Leader	blanshards@verdala.org
Sandra Honney	Pre Kindergarten 1 Teacher Assistant	honneys@verdala.org
Susan Hatch	Pre Kindergarten 2 Teacher	hatchs@verdala.org
Charmaine Navarro	Pre Kindergarten Teacher Assistant	navarroc@verdala.org
Lydia Galea Portelli	Pre Kindergarten 2 Teacher	galeaportellil@verdala.org
Birgid Capozzi	Pre Kindergarten 2 Teacher Assistant	capozzib@verdala.org
Nohora Cumplido	Early Years Creative Arts	cumplidon@verdala.org

Milepost 1 Team

Francesca Theuma	KG Teacher	theumaf@verdala.org
Martina Pittaro	KG Teacher Teacher Assistant	pittarom@verdala.org
Kim Wong	KG Teacher	wongk@verdala.org
Kseniya Konyaeva	KG Teacher Teacher Assistant	konyaevak@verdala.org
Yasmin Alvi	Grade 1 Teacher	alviy@verdala.org
Nicole Hooper	Grade 1 Teacher Teacher Assistant	hooper@verdala.org

Emma Ghani	Grade 1 Teacher/ Milepost Leader	ghanie@verdala.org
Maggie Gerada	Grade 1 Teacher Teacher Assistant	geradam@verdala.org

Milepost 2 Team

Susanne Hackenbruch	Grade 2 Teacher/ Milepost Leader	hackenbruchs@verdala.org
Tyler Shepard	Grade 2 Teacher	shepardt@verdala.org
Tatjana Motschenbacher	Grade 2 Teacher Assistant	motschenbachert@verdala.org
Mignon Miller	Grade 3 Teacher	millerm@verdala.org
Jason Hepokoski	Grade 3 Teacher	hepokoskij@verdala.org
Nicola Vesco	Grade 3 Teacher Assistant	vescon@verdala.org

Milepost 3 Team

Dorothy Sinson	Grade 4 Teacher	sinsond@verdala.org
Michael Neumann	Grade 4 Teacher / Milepost Leader	neumannm@verdala.org
Alexandra Farrugia	Grade 4 Teacher Assistant	farrugiaa@verdala.org
Kathleen Chut	Grade 5 Teacher	chutk@verdala.org
Daniel Shrewsbury	Grade 5 Teacher	shrewsburyd@verdala.org
Jessica Hewer	Grade 5 Teacher Assistant	hewerj@verdala.org

Single Subject Teachers (KG-G5)

Nancy Generelli	Art	generellin@verdala.org
Sonya Agius	Music KG - G4	agiuss@verdala.org
Alexa Laryea	Music G5	laryeaa@verdala.org
Paul Appleby	Drama G2 - 5	applebypm@verdala.org
Johnna Grech	EAL KG - G2	grechj@verdala.org
Laura Byfield	EAL G3 - 5	byfieldl@verdala.org
Ana Acevedo Nistal	Spanish	acevedonistala@verdala.org

Galya Umnova	PE	umnovag@verdala.org
Nathan Tipton	PSHE	tiptonn@verdala.org
Angela Baudoin	Library & ICT	baudoina@verdala.org
Anita Formosa	Library Assistant (ES & Sec)	formasaa@verdala.org
Dorianne Gauci	Art Assistant	

Nurse

Odette Micallef Enger	Nurse	micallefengerero@verdala.org
-----------------------	-------	------------------------------

Frequently Asked Questions

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. Catch up work will be put aside.

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

What is being unsafe?

Putting yourself or others in danger.

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.

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
- Knives, guns and dangerous materials in school

Under no circumstances should a child bring in any type of real or pretend weapon.

What is inappropriate clothing?

- Ripped, torn, or frayed jeans
- Hats, caps and other headgear worn during class
- Skirts / shorts that are too short (need to be of a reasonable length, mid-thigh)
- Baggy pants that hang low
- Articles of clothing which allow underwear to be visible
- Clothing that shows midriff, even when arms are raised
- Bra straps showing
- 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 PE Clothing is not appropriate?

Students are not permitted to wear any jewelry for their PE lessons. This includes, but is not limited to: dangling earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, rings, etc. Soft-soled shoes are not allowed for physical education classes. Jeans or other tight fitting trousers are not appropriate, nor are dresses or skirts. Students should not bring any valuables to PE

Why can we only drink water in P.E. and class?

Students are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to PE class, and have access to the reverse osmosis drink dispensers throughout the day. Other drinks are not permitted for health reasons.

Am I allowed to bring my mobile phone to school?

We strongly suggest that students do not bring their mobile phones to school. If there is a need for them to contact the parents during the day, they can do so through the Elementary office. If parents prefer that their child has a mobile phone with them in case of an emergency after school, then these must be turned off during school hours (8:30-3:20) and kept in the student's school bag.

Can I bring my laptop to school?

Laptops should be brought to school ONLY if the teacher has requested this for use in a particular class and they should only be used for this purpose.

Please note: Failure to comply with these requests will result in the device being confiscated. Parents will be asked to retrieve taken items from the Elementary office. The school does not accept responsibility for any lost or misplaced phones/ laptops.

What happens during hot weather in PE?

Considerations to be made by PE Department for the Heat?

- Using the indoor gym where possible. Using shaded locations as much as possible.
- Choosing weather appropriate activities i.e water games, indoor games, less intense activities.

- Frequent water breaks; all students must have a water bottle.
- Sunscreen and a hat should also be worn by all students.

Students will be monitored at all times and encouraged to take breaks when necessary. Teachers are aware of the issues caused by the heat and will be considerate of this.

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
G1 - children are 6 before August 31st
G2 - children are 7 before August 31st
G3 - children are 8 before August 31st
G4 - children are 9 before August 31st
G5 - children are 10 before August 31st
G6 - children are 11 before August 31st
G7 - children are 12 before August 31st
G8 - children are 13 before August 31st
G9 - children are 14 before August 31st
G10 - children are 15 before August 31st
G11 - children are 16 before August 31st
G12 - children are 17 before August 31st