

Verdala International School Policy Manual 2020

GUIDING STATEMENTS

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1. VIS Guiding Statements

1.1 VIS Vision

To be the international school of choice, celebrating diversity, empowering and inspiring future generations.

1.2 VIS Mission

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

1.3 VIS 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 multi-cultural society.
- We trust that a caring inclusive community will help build a sense of self-worth and a profound respect for others.

1.4 VIS Student Profile

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

1.5 VIS Definition of Learning

At VIS, learning involves developing the knowledge, skills and understandings through inquiry-based and trans-disciplinary 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.

1.6 VIS Anti-Discrimination Policy

As an international school, we expose students to the diverse world around them and celebrate different cultures. We celebrate diversity by ensuring that all members of the school community regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. Teachers are encouraged to provide students with a variety of opportunities to learn about diversity and different cultures.

We value people's right to express views and opinions in a respectful manner, however, discrimination on any basis is unacceptable.

The anti-discrimination policy, will apply for all issues related to school life, including but not limited to: teaching and learning; facilities and access to them; guidance and counselling; and on all our community interactions.

All members of the VIS community, including Board Members, Leadership team, staff, students and parents, are expected to respect this policy, which is aligned with the VIS Inclusion policy.

2. Verdala International School Statute

Amended 20/3/1997

Endorsed 29/3/2001

Verdala International School Foundation

1. Name

- i. The name of the Foundation shall be 'Verdala International School Foundation'.
- ii. It shall continue in existence for an indefinite period.

2. Scope and Purposes

- i. The scope and purposes of the Foundation shall be:
 - a. to establish, maintain, carry on and support an American international school hereinafter referred to as 'the school', for the education of children of any sex, nationality, creed or race, and in particular, dependents of the staff of the diplomatic missions in Malta and dependents of other international parents for whom the Anglo/American model of education is best suited.
 - b. to promote mutual understanding among peoples of different nationalities.
 - c. to provide an alternative educational opportunity for students of Maltese nationality.
 - d. to provide financial assistance for a limited number of children, who might otherwise be unable to attend the school.
- i. The Foundation shall be a non-profit organization.

3. Address

The address of the Foundation shall be at Pembroke, St Andrews, limits of St Julian's or, in the event that the School is relocated, at any address which the Board of Directors shall determine.

4. Organs

The Foundation shall have two main organs. These shall be the General Meeting (composed of members of the Foundation) and the Board of Directors (composed of Directors).

5. Members

- i. The members of the Foundation shall consist of such individuals, or corporations, companies and bodies of persons (hereinafter referred to as 'corporations') who shall be accepted as members of the Board of Directors under any such conditions which the Directors deem fit to impose, and who shall pay to the Foundation such fees, dues, or other sums of whatever nature as suggested by the Board of Directors and approved by the General Meeting.
- ii. The parent(s) of School children shall hold one membership in the Foundation.

- iii. The full time members of the professional staff of the Foundation shall be members of the Foundation.
- iv. Membership shall cease on terms as pre-established by the Board of Directors, on dissolution of the Foundation, or on the occurrence of such event agreed upon in any particular case between the member and the Board of Directors.

6. General Meeting

- i A General Meeting of the Members of the Foundation shall be convened by the Board of Directors at least once every year, or, at any time within 21 days from the written request of at least twenty five percent (25%) of the current members of the Foundation.
- i At any General Meeting:
 - a) each parent membership shall have one vote per child currently enrolled in the School.
 - b) Each non-parent, professional staff member shall have one vote.
 - c) A corporation membership shall have any number of votes agreed upon by the member and the Board of Directors upon acceptance of such member into the Foundation.
- ii Resolutions proposed at any General Meeting shall be considered adapted if approved by a simple majority of the members present and voting.
- iv. Members can vote either in person or by written proxy. Appropriate proxy documentation will be supplied to members along with other materials necessary to prepare for the meeting.
- v. Meetings of members shall be chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Directors or, in his absence, by any person chosen by the members of the Board of Directors who are present. The Chairman shall not have a second or casting vote.
- vi. Notice of each General Meeting shall be given to all members of the Foundation by the posting of a letter addressed to the member at the last address notified by him/her to the School. Notice shall be deemed to be effected if the letter is posted at least 21 days before the date of the meeting.
- vii. The quorum for the holding of any General Meeting shall be 20% of the members of the Foundation. However, after a delay of 30 minutes from the appointed time, the General Meeting can proceed and conclude business notwithstanding the number of members present, subject, however, to the overriding principle stated in section B hereunder.

7. Powers of the General Meeting

The members of the Foundation shall collectively in General Meeting exercise the following rights and powers:

- i. Election of parent members to the Board of Directors
- ii. Appointment of an auditor to audit the accounts of the Foundation.
- iii. Consideration of recommendations submitted by the Board of Directors and by the Auditor.
- iv. Modification of the Statute of the Foundation in accordance with the provisions of the Statute.

- v. Representation of the interests of the members to the Board of Directors.
- vi. Regulation of its proceedings, subject to what is stated in the Statute.

8. Amendments to the Statute

Amendments and alterations to this Statute shall require approval by a number of affirmative votes equal to 75% of the total votes of the members of the Foundation who are resident in Malta. The votes of all members, whether resident in Malta or not, shall be included in the vote tabulation. However, the number of votes of members resident in Malta will be used to determine the number required to approve an amendment or alteration to this Statute.

The provisions of section 14 (Dissolution) may not be amended unless such amendment is consented to by the Government of Malta.

9. Board of Directors

- i. **a.** The Board of Directors shall be responsible to set the policy of the Foundation, and for the conduct, management and administration of the affairs and business of the Foundation. The Board shall, in consultation with the Headmaster, regulate matters of an academic nature relative to the School including the hiring of staff and budget for the Foundation's financial requirements.
b. The Board of Directors shall exercise all such functions and powers of the Foundation as are not by the Statute required to be exercised by the members in General Meeting, provided that no resolution of the members in General Meeting shall invalidate any prior act or decision of the Board of Directors which would have been valid if that resolution of the General Meeting had not been passed.
c. Enter into financial contracts on behalf of the Foundation for the specific purpose of engaging staff or funding capital works.
- i. The Board of Directors is authorized to delegate all or any of its powers to third parties, provided this is in writing and revocable.
- iii. The Board of Directors shall be answerable to the General Meeting.
- iv. The Board of Directors shall submit at each Annual General Meeting for consideration of the members:
 - a.** a report of the Chairman with respect to the affairs of the Foundation.
 - b.** a financial report accompanied by a copy of the audited accounts of the Foundation. Such accounts shall be open to inspection at the office of the Foundation by any member for a least 10 days immediately preceding the meeting and until approved by the General Meeting.
- v. The Board of Directors is authorized to appoint from amongst themselves, officers as required to assist in running the Foundation.
- vi. The Board of directors shall be composed of seven persons who shall be nominated as follows:
 - a.** One Director shall be nominated by the Government of Malta.
 - b.** One Director shall be nominated by the Government of the United States of America.
 - c.** One Director shall be collectively nominated by any such corporate companies who sponsor or provide funds to the Foundation and who are members of the Foundation according to the votes that they hold.

- d. Three Directors shall be elected from the Foundation's constituency of parent members. The term 'parent members' is defined as those members of the Foundation who are parents and not Verdala staff members.
- e. Two Directors shall be elected from the Foundation's constituency of staff members.
- vii. The members of the Foundation shall, upon recommendation of the Board of Directors, by means of a resolution consented to and approved by a simple majority of the votes of the members of the Foundation, be entitled to increase the number of Directors and determine the method of appointment or nomination of such Directors. If the members of the Foundation, however, do not determine the method of appointment or nomination of such Directors, then such Directors shall be appointed by the Board of Directors.
- viii. The Directors shall be nominated by not later than the 31st March of any particular year, and barring unforeseen circumstances, shall hold office for one year.
- ix. The Board of Directors shall have the right to co-opt other Directors, with non-voting powers, for specific purposes and periods as may be required from time to time. The Board of Directors shall have the right to fill any vacancy that may occur for any reason whatsoever. Such appointed Director shall have all the rights of a Director.
- x. The Board of Directors shall continue to function and exercise its powers, notwithstanding any vacancy in its membership.

10. Board of Directors Meeting

- i. The Board of Directors shall make regulations for its meetings and the conduct of its business.
- ii. The Chairman shall be appointed by the Board of Directors from among the Board's members.
- iii. The quorum necessary at any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be at least 4 voting Directors composing the Board.
- iv. Each Director shall have one vote. All decisions of the Board of Directors shall be taken by a majority of votes of those present.
- v. Written notice of each meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given to all members of the Board of Directors at least 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.

11. Headmaster

- i. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Headmaster to manage and run any school established, maintained and carried on by the Foundation.
- ii. The Headmaster shall conduct the day to day administration of the School.
- Hi. The Headmaster shall follow policies set by the Board and shall be accountable to the Board of Directors.

12. Representation of the Foundation

The representation of the Foundation in judicial and extra-judicial matters is vested in the Headmaster jointly and together with any other person or persons designated by the Board of Directors.

13. Funds

- i The sources of the Foundations funds shall be from
 - a. Contributing membership fees, school tuition and fees, subsidies.
 - b. Inheritances, legacies and gifts.
 - c. Other income
- i The Foundation shall hold a bank account with any commercial bank in Malta.

14. Dissolution

- i The Foundation is dissolved in any of the following cases:
 - a. if a resolution dissolving the Foundation is passed and carried by seventy five per cent (75%) of the votes of the members of the Foundation.
 - b. if the Foundation becomes insolvent.
 - c. if it is impossible for the Foundation to maintain, carry on and support the School.
 - d. if the courts of Malta so judge.
- i The Foundation shall be dissolved by one or more persons, hereafter referred to as the liquidator, chosen by members of the Foundation or in default by any person chosen by the court
- ii Upon dissolution, any assets of the Foundation which shall remain after all the debts and liabilities of the Foundation have been paid, shall become the property of the Government of Malta.

3. Memorandum of Understanding with Government of Malta

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Malta and the Verdala International School

This Memorandum of Understanding is between the Government of Malta, hereinafter referred to as 'Government', and the Verdala International School, hereinafter referred to as 'the School'. The MOU details the relationship between government and the School, and the educational parameters the School needs to comply with. This MOU is to be considered an integral part of the Emphyteutical Deed between the Government and the School.

The Character of the School

1. The International character of the School, recognised and supported by the Embassy of the United States of America, is recognised by Government as being the distinguishing feature of the school. It is this International character that justifies the special relationship between Government and the school and, therefore, underpins the Emphyteutical Deed.
2. The School shall retain its International character, recognised and supported by the Embassy of the United States of America, by the following non-exclusive measures:
 - ensuring that the school curriculum allows for the inclusion of international students whose family/work commitments require them to ensure that their children can continue their education across different countries;
 - ensuring that a reasonable proportion of the teaching staff has an International education professional background. This proportion shall be set from time to time by the School Board;
 - ensuring that sustainable measures are in place to attract such staff, in ways that are not discriminatory to staff with a Maltese education professional background. These measures shall be set from time to time by the School Board.
3. Government and the Embassy of the United States of America shall each have one director on the Board of the School, each with the same voting powers as each other director and in accordance with the School Statute. The main role of the Government representative on the Board shall be to ensure that this MOU is being fulfilled, and to support the school as required to be able to fulfil it and to enhance its provision.
4. The School Statute shall be interpreted in light of this MOU.
5. The School shall abide by the conditions of its licence.

The School Curriculum

3. For the purpose of this MOU, the School curriculum is defined as the overt framework for intended learning and teaching during normal school hours, the provision of which is covered by parents' normal school fees.
4. The school curriculum at the different levels of learning shall include the following eight Learning Areas: Languages, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Ethical Education, Health Education, Humanities, Education for Democracy, and Visual and Performing Arts.
5. The school curriculum shall include reference to and learning time at the different levels of learning on Maltese culture (understood in the widest sense), so as to foster an awareness and appreciation of the culture of the host country.
6. The School curriculum shall provide for the learning of Maltese up to SEC level for those students of Maltese nationality who wish it, as from the cohort of students who start Grade 6 in scholastic year 2013-14.
7. The School shall provide guidance to parents and learners of Maltese nationality so that the requirements for entry into post-secondary education in Malta are clearly understood.
8. The school shall be free to consider providing for the learning of Maltese at Intermediate and/or Matriculation level to its students.
9. The school shall prepare its students to sit for an internationally recognised examinations board or boards, such as the IB, that allows for the reality of mobility of its international students.
10. Following the consideration of Articles 6 to 12 above, the School shall thereafter be free to develop its curriculum according to its International character and considering the reality of mobility of its international students.
11. The school shall be able to apply for exemption from External Review (School Inspection) provision by Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, by presenting its Accreditation process and eventual outcomes. The School may still be subject to Compliance Checks at par with other non-state schools, to ensure compliance with applicable Maltese regulations.

Support Services

9. The School shall be able to send its staff to all training and professional development provision provided nationally by the Directorates within the Ministry for Education, at par with other non-state schools.
10. The School shall be able to make free use of the Resource Centres run by the Directorate for Educational Services to ensure the appropriate inclusion of learners with special needs whose Statement of Needs indicates the use of such Resource Centres.
11. The School shall be able to freely access the expertise of the various departments and sections within the Directorates for the purposes of technical advice.

12/12/2012