



Verdala
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

**High School
Student-Parent
Handbook**

Academic Year

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



A warm welcome to all of our students and parents/guardians, especially those of you who are new to our school community this year. Of the many aspects I love about our school, the rich diversity within our community is one which stands out most strongly. I look forward to meeting you, learning about your personal stories, and working with you during your time with us in High School.

Our Definition of Learning emphasises the development of well-grounded and mindful individuals who proactively take responsibility for their own learning. We offer a rich and varied programme and expect all students to engage actively with this to the best of their abilities, finding meaning in the experiences of learning. We aspire to see each student collaborating with their peers but competing with themselves, leading by example and always challenging themselves to constantly improve while supporting others on their personal journeys towards success. We believe very strongly that a caring, diverse, and inclusive environment, where students and staff feel safe to experiment, innovate, and make mistakes, is a core requirement for quality learning and personal well-being.

We aspire to see all of our students grow and discover their true potential. Our mission is to help each student identify what their own personal success looks like, and then support them in working towards their goals. All students in High School work towards their VIS HS Diploma, a minimum university entrance qualification that takes into account all semester grades throughout Grades 9-12. Students in Grades 9 & 10 also work towards achieving strong results in the external IGCSE examinations, and in Grades 11 & 12 all students complete IB Diploma Courses, with most students working towards achieving an IB Diploma, which opens up many more opportunities at universities around the world.

This year, we are faced with many challenges due to the Covid19 situation, which is making many familiar activities a challenge or completely impossible. We are having to re-think many of our activities as classroom arrangements are much less flexible than we would like, communication through masks makes it much harder especially for those not native to English, and we all have to be extra-vigilant about our habits and interactions which need to change to keep us all safe and healthy. There is a very high chance that we will have shutdowns of some kind, though I anticipate these will affect groups, rather than the whole school at one time. However, with everybody's assistance and proactive compliance with the protocols we have put in place, we will hopefully keep these to a minimum.

This handbook is a manual with necessary information for students and parents/guardians. Please take time to review this document together. Of particular importance is the Code of Conduct which all students and parents/guardians are required to read, understand, and sign at the beginning of each school year. If you feel there is anything missing from this handbook, please do let me know.

I wish you all the best for this academic year.

David Miles
HS Principal

SECTION 1: WELCOME TO VIS

In a diverse setting representing over 47 different nationalities, High School students of Verdala International School (VIS) prepare themselves for personal and professional success by engaging in a challenging course of studies and activities providing balance across areas of knowledge and personal development.

Through the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Grades 9 & 10 and the International Baccalaureate Programme (IBDP) in Grades 11 & 12, students learn to become knowledgeable, inquisitive, ethical contributors to the world around them. Students may take various paths towards graduation, with most students obtaining an accredited US High School Diploma, and the majority achieving the IB Diploma which opens doors to many of the best universities around the world. Regardless of their final awards, students develop their critical thinking, analytical, problem-solving and creative skills, as well as developing empathy for and understanding of the complexity of the modern world and the problems we face as a global community.

As an International school with such a diverse population, students at VIS benefit from the opportunity to engage with peers and faculty from around the world. This experience encourages them to value their own cultural backgrounds while also learning to appreciate the cultures of others.

As a school that values approaches to teaching and learning which are based on up-to-date educational research, we work to seamlessly integrate the use of technology into learning to ensure that students learn how to use these tools with purpose. We also offer a range of clubs, sports and leadership opportunities both within and beyond the school day, and have a thriving Community Service and Creativity/Activity/Service (CAS) programme throughout the High School.

Together, the range of opportunities at VIS enables students to develop their personal, physical, academic, leadership, and creative skills and to engage in activities which provide them with enriching experiences which contribute to their development as individuals who are ready to play an active role in the world around them.



OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION

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

OUR 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

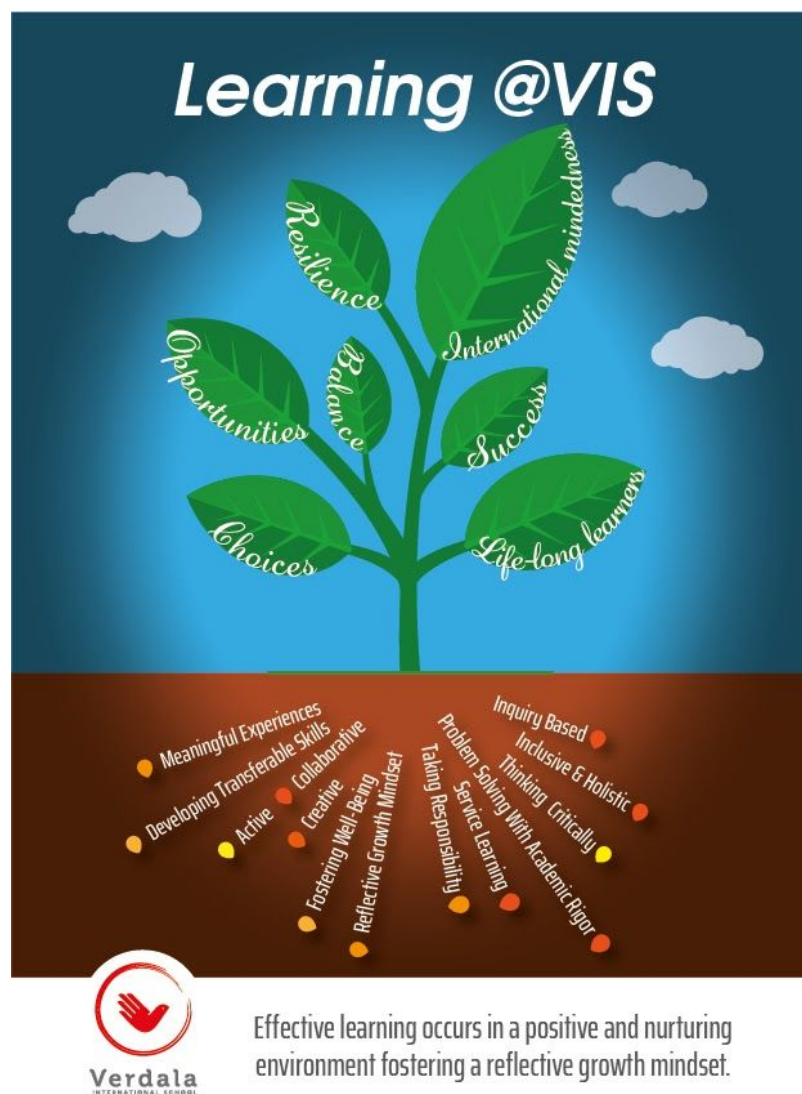
Students at VIS actively pursue opportunities to contribute responsibly to their local and global communities.

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.

June 2019



We are proud at Verdala International School of the high-quality education we offer and of our efforts to fulfill our mission to ensure that all of our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors to our world. As part of our vision of being the international school of choice in Malta we strive to prepare our students for the world of tomorrow, and one way in which we do this is by ensuring we offer high quality experiences through both local and distance learning experiences.

In the event that circumstances require a partial or full campus closure, or students are unable to attend school for any other authorised reason, our commitment is to provide an alternative means of education in the form of Distance Learning. Distance Learning designates the experience students will have when school remains in session but when students are unable to physically attend school. While Distance Learning cannot replicate onsite learning, our teachers can deliver powerful instruction that allows students to meet expected standards in an online environment.

The VIS Distance Learning experience aligns with our Definition of Learning@VIS. Our students will apply problem-solving skills to think critically and creatively in order to collaborate and take responsibility for their own learning. Learning experiences will be meaningful, inclusive and inquiry-based. We aim to ensure that learning is effective, occurring in a positive and nurturing environment, and fosters a reflective growth mindset. The result of such learning experiences will expand student academic progress and attend to student social and emotional well being.

The purpose of this document is to outline how VIS will continue to offer an effective education through Distance Learning in the event of school closure/restricted attendance conditions, and to do so within an approach to teaching and learning which combines both Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning Experiences, both of which are recognised as key educational processes. “Synchronous Learning” means that students and teachers will work together through virtual means at agreed times; “Asynchronous Learning” does not require students and teachers to be online at the same time.

The Distance Learning Policy is designed to address the following scenarios:

- Complete school shutdown, with all students working remotely through synchronous and asynchronous learning methods.
- A Hybrid situation, with a combination of on- and off- campus learning throughout the school day.
- Isolated vulnerable students who are not physically attending school for an extended period.

The Distance Learning Policy outlines the Roles & Responsibilities for the various stakeholder groups, and can be found on the VIS Portal on our school website.



The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

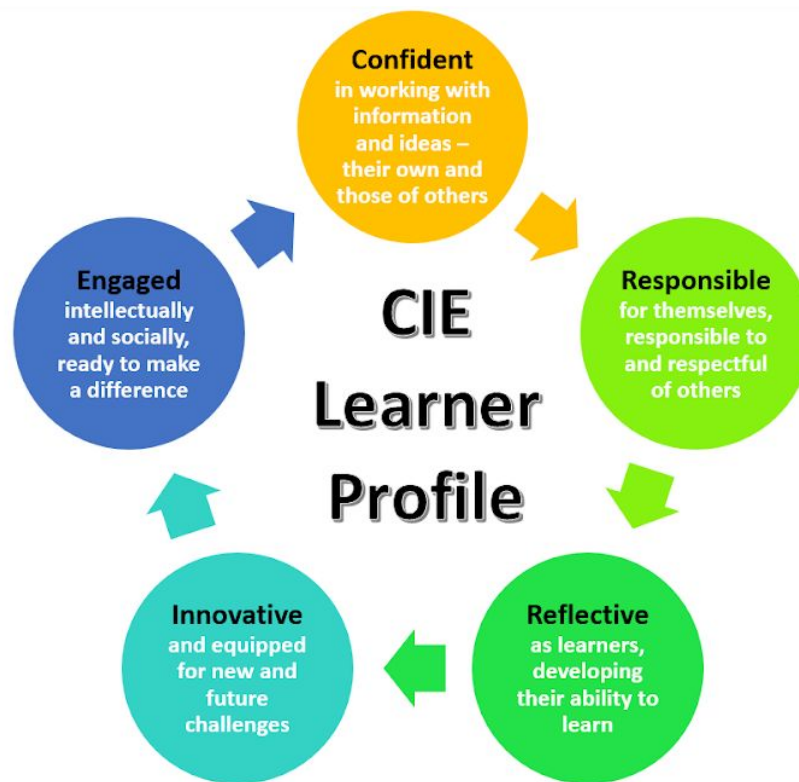
The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

As IB learners we strive to be:



CIE IGCSE courses are aimed at preparing students for post-16 academic study, ensuring that their content knowledge is strong while also developing independent learning skills and ownership of their own success

CIE learners are:



SECTION 2: HIGH SCHOOL OVERVIEW

HS FACULTY & STAFF



Teacher	Teaching Area	Responsibility
Alexa LARYEA	Music	
Alexandra VELLA McINTYRE	PSHE	MS Teacher Counsellor, MS Advisory Programme
Amanda MUSCAT	Science, Environmental Systems and Societies	Head of Sciences
Andrew MOULTON	EAL	G6 Homeroom Teacher
Angela ZAMPAGLIONE		Learning Support Educator
Ann Marie CASSAR-TORREGGIANI	Science, Physics	G9 Homeroom Teacher
Carolynne CASSAR-GEORGE	Mathematics	G11 Homeroom Teacher
Christine BINDA	Mathematics	G6 Homeroom Teacher
Claire CUTHBERT	French	G7 Homeroom Teacher
Corinne BORG		Student Support Services Coordinator, Inclusion Coordinator
Daphne SAID	HS Drama, Theatre	Head of Arts

David MILES	Mathematics	HS Principal, Director of Studies
David SIMON	Science, Physics	G8 Homeroom Teacher
Denise TANNER	English as an Additional Language	Head of EAL G12 Homeroom Teacher
Elaine CAMILLERI		PE Assistant
Ingrid DONATI	Spanish, Italian	G10 Homeroom Teacher
Jennifer MARSH	HS Art, Visual Arts	G11 Homeroom Teacher
Jill KIRKSTADT	Mathematics	Head of Mathematics
Joseph BARKER	English Language and Literature, SSST	G8 Homeroom Teacher EE Coordinator
Katerina MIHAJLOVSKA	Spanish, French	G12 Homeroom Teacher
Krista MICALLEF TRIGONA		MS PA
Kristina DEPASQUALE	English Language and Literature, SSST	Head of Language and Literature
LaTosha PARKER-JACKSON	History	IGCSE Programme Coordinator
Laurent MOSELEY	Physical and Health Education, Technology	Head of PHE
Liliana GOMEZ	Spanish, TOK	IBDP Coordinator
Lisa PLACI	Mathematics, Psychology, Global Perspectives, TOK	G11 Homeroom Teacher
Lucienne AGIUS	Italian	Head of Language Acquisition
Luke WYSOCZANSKI	English Language and Literature	G12 Homeroom Teacher
Maria MORA CORRAL	Computer Science, Mathematics	G10 Homeroom Teacher
Marianne OGDEN	MS Art	
Martin KACOR	Business Management, Economics	Head of Humanities
Mary Kay ZAMMIT	Mathematics	G7 Homeroom Teacher
Michaela GERMAN	English Language and Literature	G9 Homeroom Teacher
Natalia LYBANIEVA		Science Lab Assistant

Nermina KUTUZ	Geography, TOK	Head of TOK
Odette MICALLEF ENGERER		Nurse
Paul APPLEBY	MS Drama	
Pek Yen LIM		HS PA
Radka ZARKOVA	Science, Biology	G10 Homeroom Teacher
Rebecca AQUILINA		Learning Support Educator
Rebecca FARRUGIA	Geography, History	G6 Homeroom Teacher
Rebecca VELLA		Learning Support Educator
Richard PRICE	Science	IMYC Programme Coordinator
Rose-Ann TRAPANI		Careers & University Counsellor, Social- Emotional Counsellor
Saleem HUSSAIN	Science, Chemistry, ESS	G9 Homeroom Teacher
Sarah ABUGHRARA		Learning Support Educator
Sarah BOYLIN	History, IMYC	MS Principal
Stephen CRICHTON	English Language and Literature, Global Perspectives, TOK	CAS Coordinator, HS Student Council Liaison
Ufuk YAGCI	Technology, Computer Science	Head of Technology
Veronica CALLEJA		Librarian
Veronica ROCHA	Physical and Health Education	G7 Homeroom Teacher

The HS Leadership Team consists of the HS Principal, the IGCSE Coordinator, and the IBDP Coordinator.

We aim to provide the very best education for students of all levels of ability by means of:

- A well designed international curriculum
- High expectations
- Excellent resources
- Encouragement of self-discipline
- Careful monitoring of student progress

The school seeks to provide for change and academic success by encouraging staff and students to develop flexible approaches to teaching and learning, which help students achieve the self-respect, self-discipline, organisational skills and examination success required for their futures either in Malta or overseas.

High School students are in a unique period of transition from childhood into adolescence, and will experience more rapid physical, emotional and academic growth during these years than at any other time of their life. It is important for students at this age to understand and accept the changes they will be going through, and it is equally important for teachers and parents to understand the age group, and to cooperate with each other by sharing information and strategies for supporting students as they go through the High School years.

The High School experience is about the journey. There are important examinations, but there is also a focus on experiential learning and other components which contribute to a rich and varied learning experience which gives meaning to what is being learned. For students and families to get the most out of their time in High School, it is important to engage with the full range of experiences both in and out of the classroom.

INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE)



VIS is an examination centre for International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) courses in both Cambridge International Education (CIE) and Edexcel; offering courses throughout students' Grades 9 and 10 academic years based on the syllabi provided by these two examination boards. The two year IGCSE courses taught at VIS are designed to prepare our learners for the rigours of the IB Diploma Programme offered during Grades 11 & 12.

All IGCSE students at VIS are expected to take:

- two Languages (English Language/Literature or English as an Additional Language, and their choice of an Additional Language),
- one Social Science (History, Geography, or Global Perspectives),
- Coordinated Sciences,
- International Mathematics,

- one Creativity/Problem Solving subject (Drama, Art & Design, Music, or Computer Science).

Students sit for examinations at the end of Grade 10 in every subject or select courses of their choosing. *We strongly encourage students to sit for their external examinations in all of their courses.* Cambridge International Education offers the International Certificate in Education (ICE) for IGCSE students who choose to sit for specific combinations of seven subjects from the courses offered. The benefit of students being awarded with Cambridge ICE is that learners demonstrate competence across a wide range of subjects and skills. *(Note that students sitting for Computer Science or Art & Design will not qualify for the ICE award)*

As well as our students completing their exam-related courses throughout Grades 9 and 10, we also emphasise the development of learners research & writing, time management, and collaboration skills that are essential to long-term success. In addition, students will be able to develop an awareness of the needs in VIS and Malta's community and address those needs through service and experiential learning in the Creative Service in IG Project (CSiG). Learners participate in sustained and in-depth inquiry, leading to service as action in their community. They will be able to demonstrate confidence in working with information and ideas - their own and those of others; responsibility for themselves - as well as a responsiveness to and respect for others; innovation and being equipped for new/future challenges; and intellectual and social engagement.

IGCSE Course selection takes place towards the end of Grade 8 in collaboration with the IGCSE Programme Coordinator, teachers, students, and parents/guardians; however students' academic performance and approaches to learning skills during Middle School are influential during this process. It is strongly recommended that students & parents/guardians speak to the High School Counsellor during this process to ensure that they embark on an appropriately challenging programme of study that will assist them in achieving their short-term goals in High School and long-term goals in University.

For more detailed information about the IGCSE Programme offered at VIS, speak directly with the IGCSE Programme Coordinator.

THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

VIS is authorised to offer the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) and all courses on offer during Grades 11 & 12 are IBDP courses.



The IBDP is a two-year pre-university course designed to facilitate the mobility of students and to promote international understanding. Students select from a range of

courses on offer to develop a programme that is both achievable and personally challenging. For students on the full Diploma, in addition to studying six subjects (three at Higher Level and three at Standard Level) they also complete a 4000 word Extended Essay (EE), the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, and the Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

programme. At VIS, completion of the CAS programme is a graduation requirement for all students, and some who are not taking the full diploma will also complete the EE and TOK.

Students holding the IB Diploma are accepted by universities and other institutions of higher learning around the world. In some cases, universities will give university credit for IBDP courses. By providing access to tertiary education on a worldwide basis, the IBDP can truly claim to be an ‘international passport’ to higher education. Much importance is attached to fostering international understanding and to providing a relevant, coherent Diploma Programme, consisting of a blend of rigorous specialisation balanced by an appropriate element of breadth.

The courses currently on offer at VIS can be found in the Diploma Programme Handbook and further details can be obtained from the IBDP Coordinator. Students normally make their subject choices during the latter half of Grade 10 in consultation with the IBDP Coordinator and the University Counsellor: academic performance and approaches to learning skills during Grades 9 & 10 are influential during this process. Any changes in course choices must be discussed with the IBDP Coordinator who has the final say on whether such changes will be approved.

For more detailed information about the IBDP offered at VIS, speak directly with the IBDP Coordinator.

CREATIVITY/SERVICE & CAS

The school has a philosophical commitment to the ideals of service to the local and global communities. The opportunities available to High School students serve to develop the academic and social skills needed for navigating the complex issues facing today’s global citizens. The programme works towards ensuring that our students become the knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors mentioned in the VIS mission.

In the IGCSE years there is a range of community service opportunities for students to participate in as well as the introduction of the CSIG (Creative Service in IG) Project. In the Diploma years, all students are required to complete the Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) programme. Each student will have the opportunity to achieve the seven learning outcomes laid out by the IB through a tailor-made individual programme.

Please note that Covid-19 protocols, particularly the need to keep students in Grade clusters, will impact on these aspects of our programme, nevertheless they remain essential components and we will continue exploring ways to ensure that learning continues even if physical activities must be restricted.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMME (ASAs)

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, ASAs will not be offered at the start of the year. This may change depending on circumstances.

The ASP provides a wide range of activities and opportunities for students to explore areas and develop skills that lie outside those developed during regular school activities.

Activities are run by external providers, teachers, and parents, and do change from year to year. Some examples of previously offered activities are:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness training | <input type="checkbox"/> Guitar | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robotics | <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coding | <input type="checkbox"/> Capoeira | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball/Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin Dance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handball | <input type="checkbox"/> Flamenco | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Chefs | |

All HS students are strongly encouraged to get involved in the opportunities offered by this programme.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students often require support ranging from help dealing with emotional, behavioural or social issues to concerns regarding their academic performance.

HOMEROOM TEACHERS

Homeroom teachers meet with students on a daily basis at the start of each day and once a week for a 45 minute period. It is important that students develop a positive, open relationship with their homeroom teachers who can provide ongoing support emotionally and academically. Homeroom teachers work to build a sense of community within the homeroom group.

EXTRA LEARNING SUPPORT

Students who experience difficulties related to their learning can acquire a range of support within the classroom and outside such a setting. Primarily it is the teacher who addresses students' inconsistencies with their learning. However the school has a specialist with whom teachers and parents can liaise and discuss individual student's needs. Provision plans on how to assist and support the student are generally planned and implemented within a mainstream curriculum and/or classroom. These plans:

- Are developed in collaboration with the parents and teachers concerned
- may also involve the student at the HS level
- may involve various members of the Student Support Services team who coordinate their efforts to ensure systematic support is provided
- can involve the support of a Mentor, individual attention from a Learning Support Assistant, or outsourced therapeutic or tutoring sessions
- can also involve the support of other community members and other support service professionals where necessary.

Depending on the student's individual needs, the plan aims to enhance any presenting difficulties, whether these are academic, behavioural, or giftedness.

For further details on Learning Support, please refer to the Student Support Services Handbook or contact the Inclusion Coordinator, Ms Corinne Borg.

CAREERS & UNIVERSITY GUIDANCE

As students prepare for study in Grades 9 and beyond, their interests and skills become very important for making appropriate choices that will influence their life after school. In order to assist with this process, the school has a Careers & University Counsellor, Ms Trapani. In addition to the IGCSE Programme and IBDP Coordinators, students and their families should schedule meetings with the Counsellor in order to develop an individual plan of action supporting each student's personal interests and eventual choice of a career path.

For further details of the guidance and support provided throughout the HS years, see the Careers and University Guidance Handbook.

WELLBEING AND PERSONAL COUNSELLING

Our HS counsellor, Ms Trapani, provides assistance with wellbeing and personal counselling and all students are encouraged to speak to her about any issues they may have. Matters brought to the attention of the counsellor are dealt with in strict confidentiality, except when there is a "clear danger to the person or to others" (American Psychological Association, 1981, p.636), or when it is deemed fit to elicit support of competent professionals in order to assist with solving an issue. The HS counsellor also provides assistance with the advisory programme, helping with discussion of a range of sensitive issues.

Parents/Guardians, as well as students, are actively encouraged to set up meetings with Ms Trapani to learn more about the career and university guidance processes or for wellbeing and personal counselling support for students, and to resolve any concerns or queries they may have. Ms Trapani's email is hscounsellor@verdala.org.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE & FIRST AID

All members of staff have up to date first aid certification, or will obtain it within their first year at VIS, and it is a requirement that there is a qualified First Aider on all off-campus school trips.

The school also counts on the support of a full-time nurse, who is based near the Elementary School but works with all sections.

HS students who feel unwell and/or wish to see the nurse must inform and sign out with the HS PA or a member of the HS Leadership Team before going to see the nurse (or the MS PA if on the MS campus).

Students must not call their parents/guardians before they have been given permission to go home sick by the school nurse. Students must then sign-in again upon their return from seeing the nurse.

Parents/Guardians: please ensure that you speak to the nurse, HS PA, or a member of the HS Leadership Team before arranging for your student to go home. We do not wish you to have a wasted journey, and students who have not received such permission from the nurse will be expected to stay in school.

Please refer to the specific Covid-19 protocols regarding student attendance at school if they or a family member are unwell.

[VIS Protocols for Sick Students](#)

HEAD LICE

The procedure outlined here will be evaluated in light of the Covid-19 protocols, and parents/students will be informed as necessary.

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 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](#)

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The VIS High School Diploma is a minimum requirement for entry into university education. All courses studied from Grade 9 onwards count towards the VIS HS Diploma. Where students transfer to VIS at a later stage (i.e. after the first semester of Grade 9) their previous records are considered towards their VIS HS Diploma, as detailed below.

The VIS HS Diploma is awarded to students at the end of Grade 12, subject to them meeting the credit and attendance requirements. Credits are awarded for each semester of study, according to the following system:

Grade 9-10 courses: A minimum of a D on the Semester Report

Grade 11-12 courses: A minimum of a 3 on the Semester Report (D in the case of TOK or EE)

Assuming the student has achieved the minimum level of performance required, credits are awarded as follows:

Year	Course	Credits per semester	Max Credits possible
9 & 10	English & Science	0.75	3
	All other courses	0.5	2
11 & 12	Per HL subject	0.75	3
	Per SL subject	0.5	2
	TOK	0.25	1
	EE	0.25	0.5
	CAS	1 credit is awarded for successful completion of CAS at the end of Grade 12	

CREDIT REQUIREMENT

There are two factors - certain course prerequisites, and the total number of credits.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

In order to graduate, students must obtain the minimum credits in certain courses, as follows

Course	Minimum credits
English	4
Additional Language	2
Humanities	3

Science	3
Mathematics	3
Physical Education/Arts	2
CAS	1

REQUIRED NUMBER OF CREDITS

A High School Diploma is awarded to all students who achieve at least 24 credits and who meet the course prerequisite minimum credit requirements.

RECUPERATING LOST CREDITS

Students who lose a credit in a particular course can recuperate this credit by passing the external examinations at the end of that course. “Passing” is defined as obtaining the required minimum grade of a D or a 3.

If the credit is successfully recuperated, the student will be awarded the credits, however the original grade earned will still appear on the transcript.

Students in Grade 12 who need to pass IB DP examinations in order to recuperate lost credits will have to wait until the results are issued in early July before their graduation can be confirmed.

AWARDING CREDIT FOR COURSES FROM PREVIOUS SCHOOLS

Where a student transfers to VIS at a later stage (i.e. after the first semester of Grade 9) their previous records are considered towards their VIS HS Diploma. Credits will be awarded for courses similar to those taken in the corresponding VIS semester. Up to 4 credits per semester, or 8 per academic year can be transferred.

ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

At VIS we believe that learning is about more than just academic performance. Students at VIS are expected to participate in and take advantage of the range of academic and other opportunities offered by the school and we believe that learning does not take place to the level we expect if students are absent from school.

VIS therefore emphasises the importance of attendance, requiring that students maintain at least a 90% attendance rate, and recognises that any student with more than 10 absences in any semester and/or more than 18 in total may not be promoted to the next grade at the end of the school year. For students in Grades 9-12, they may be denied VIS High School Graduation Diploma credits for that semester.

In recognition of the significance of regular attendance, VIS distinguishes between Excused and Absent.

EXCUSED

Excused absences are those which are considered beyond a student's or families' control. Some examples of acceptable excuses would be:

- External procedural requirements which must be completed during school time, e.g. visa paperwork, visiting new school. A parental note must be submitted in advance.
- Bereavement leave.
- Medical (when supported by a parent note for 1 or 2 days' absence, or medical certificate in the case of 3 or more days of absence)
 - Note that when the absence coincides with the deadline for a Summative Assessment task a medical certificate will always be required even for a one-day absence - see the Assessment Policy for details.
- Participation in an externally organised event, e.g. a sports competition, music recital.
- Suspension
- at the Principal's discretion: other similar reasons beyond the parental control.

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

ABSENT

Any absence not covered above will be recorded as **Absent**, including vacation- or travel-related absences during school days.

LATENESS

Students are expected to be punctual for all obligations. Repeated or persistent lack of punctuality is treated as a disciplinary issue.

MISSED WORK

It is the student's responsibility to catch up on missed work, including all assessments. It is at the teacher's discretion to allocate extra time to support them.

If the student is **Absent**, it is their responsibility to catch up on missed work. The school is not obliged to provide work in such cases.

If the student is **Excused**, the school will support their learning in their absence as far as possible.

Students are expected to liaise with their teachers ahead of any pre-planned Excused absence to make appropriate arrangements to take the assessment in advance, or for the teacher to reschedule it for all students.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

All absences, whether Excused or Absent, count towards a student's total number of absences. Where a student's absences exceed the rate of 10 per semester or 18 per year, the reasons for any Excused absences will be taken into consideration when determining whether to promote to the next grade/award the credits. In the case of IBDP students, attendance per subject may also influence this decision. This decision will be taken by the Principal in conjunction with the Head of School.

ABSENCE FOR COVID-19 RELATED REASONS

We understand that some students will be absent from school for reasons related to Covid-19, whether that is because they are required to remain in quarantine, they are sheltering due to vulnerability, are affected by visa/flight restrictions and have not yet arrived in Malta, or various other legitimate reasons.

It is essential that parents/guardians inform the HS Principal of the justification for this absence, and there will be expectations regarding school attendance such as attending certain Zoom sessions, keeping to deadlines, etc. These expectations are still being worked out but will be clearly communicated to those students and parents/guardians affected.

Please keep in mind that we do have a legal responsibility to monitor student attendance to ensure that our records are up to date, all students accounted for, and any long-term or repetitive absences investigated.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic Honesty is a core component of our curriculum and is a set of values and skills that promote personal integrity and good practice in teaching, learning, and assessment. There can be very serious consequences if a student commits an act of academic dishonesty in a final assessment and it is the responsibility of all students that they develop good habits of academic honesty throughout their time at VIS.

Although each Programme Coordinator will discuss this issue with students from their programme, and teachers will review the issue from the perspective of their own subject,

it is the responsibility of all students to be aware of the expectations regarding academically honest behaviour.

Please review the school's [Academic Honesty Policy](#) and if you have any queries, get in touch with the appropriate Programme Coordinator or subject teacher as required.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY CONSEQUENCES

VIS treats academic honesty issues very seriously, and requires that all students learn academically honest behaviours. Although there is a learning process involved, this is also a serious matter that can have an impact on external examination results and students' futures. The practices and consequences outlined here are therefore intended to help students learn to value and model academically honest practice.

Please see the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) for details of what is considered academic honesty and for your roles and responsibilities in this area.

GRADES 9-12

Across the four years of high School, regardless of subject area, the consequences for academic dishonesty are:

First instance

- The student will be required to re-submit the work to an acceptable standard. Feedback will be given and the work assessed as normal.
- The student will write a reflective essay reviewing their actions and how to avoid this issue in the future (link). The essay will be written with supervision and support from the school counsellor; signed by the student, parents/guardians, and the programme coordinator; and then added to the student's file.
- The student will be placed on an Attitudes to Learning report card (blue) for at least one week.
- The student will be required to attend regular sessions with the school counsellor focused on ensuring quality Attitudes to Learning
- A record will be made in ManageBac highlighting the issue.

Second & subsequent instances

- A Disciplinary Review Committee will be convened to discuss the appropriate consequence which may include:
 - Re-submission of the work to an acceptable standard, including feedback and assessment as normal
 - Suspension (in or out of school)
 - Expulsion
 - The issue being recorded on school transcripts
 - Withdrawal from the examination subject/Diploma programme
 - Withdrawal or modification of university references
 - Other consequences as deemed appropriate by the committee

The committee will take into consideration the student's history at the school, especially regarding previous incidences of academic dishonesty, when determining the appropriate sanction.

AWARDS

CIE LEARNER ATTRIBUTE AND IB LEARNER PROFILE AWARDS

Each semester, teachers will nominate students for CIE Learner Attribute (G9 & 10) and IB Learner Profile (G11 & 12) awards, which serve to highlight and celebrate students who demonstrate these qualities of good learners.

All students, regardless of their level of academic achievement, should aspire to receive such recognition from their teachers.

ACADEMIC HONOURS AND ACADEMIC HIGH HONOURS

These awards are given at the end of each semester and recognise excellent student academic performance. These are recorded on their semester reports and certificates are presented to students during an assembly.

The specific criteria are shared with students at the start of the year and are based on the grades in their semester report cards.

	Honours	High Honours
Grades 11 & 12	35+ points All AtL grades S or more	38+ points All AtL grades S+ or more
Grades 9 & 10 (A = 7, B = 6, etc)	43+ points All AtL grades S or more	46+ points All AtL grades S+ or more

ANNUAL AWARDS

We have a number of awards which are given at the end of each academic year. These can vary somewhat each year, the most important are outlined below.

Awards will only be given if suitable candidates are nominated.

ECIS Award for International Understanding

This award is given by the Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS), of which Verdala International School is a member, and is designed to recognise those students in an international school that are actively involved in promoting international understanding.

This is awarded to a student (usually a graduate though that is not always the case) who is a good representative of his or her own country, with a positive attitude toward the life and culture of others, a contributing force in the life of the school, with the ability to

bring differing people together into a sense of community, thus furthering the cause of international understanding.

This award is given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony.

VIS Award

Given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony and goes to the graduating student who best:

- demonstrates exemplary behaviour (punctual, prepared, class participation, not disruptive, helpful, caring, helps set learning standard)
- is an active participant in school events
- promotes respect for self and others
- works to develop full academic potential
- has a positive attitude toward learning
- demonstrates leadership qualities
- takes personal responsibility
- promotes international understanding and social awareness

Head of School Award

This award is an opportunity to recognise someone who is worthy of receiving an award but who perhaps doesn't meet the statistical criteria. The recipient will be someone who is an all-rounder, someone whose presence is always felt in a strong, positive but often subdued fashion.

This award is given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony.

IB Learner Profile Award

Given to a graduating student who best personifies all of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

This award is given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony.

Citizenship Award

Given to a student or group of students who display the requisite qualities of leadership, service and character.

This award is given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony.

CAS Award

Given to a student or group of students in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the CAS programme during their Grade 11 & 12 years.

This award is given during the Grade 12 Graduation Ceremony.

BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE (BYOD)

We operate a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy and students are expected to have a working laptop (device must include integrated physical keyboard) with them for all lessons. This ensures that learning can take advantage of the opportunities presented by access to technology on a regular basis, whether for the production of documents or multimedia, or to conduct research or access resources via the internet.

For guidance regarding device specifications, software and FAQs, please see our BYOD Guide on the school's website (under High School/Information Technology).

PHYSICAL & HEALTH EDUCATION

Physical & Health Education is a compulsory course for students in Grades 9 & 10. Although not scheduled as a class in the DP years, students are required to engage in regular physical activity as a component of their CAS programme. For more details of what meets this requirement, students should speak to the CAS Coordinator.

In addition to the regular Physical & Health Education classes, we also hold a Swimming Gala and a Sports Day. These are community events and all students are expected to participate. Non-attendance will be recorded as an Absence.

We also encourage everyone, including parents, to participate in Fitness Week in September.

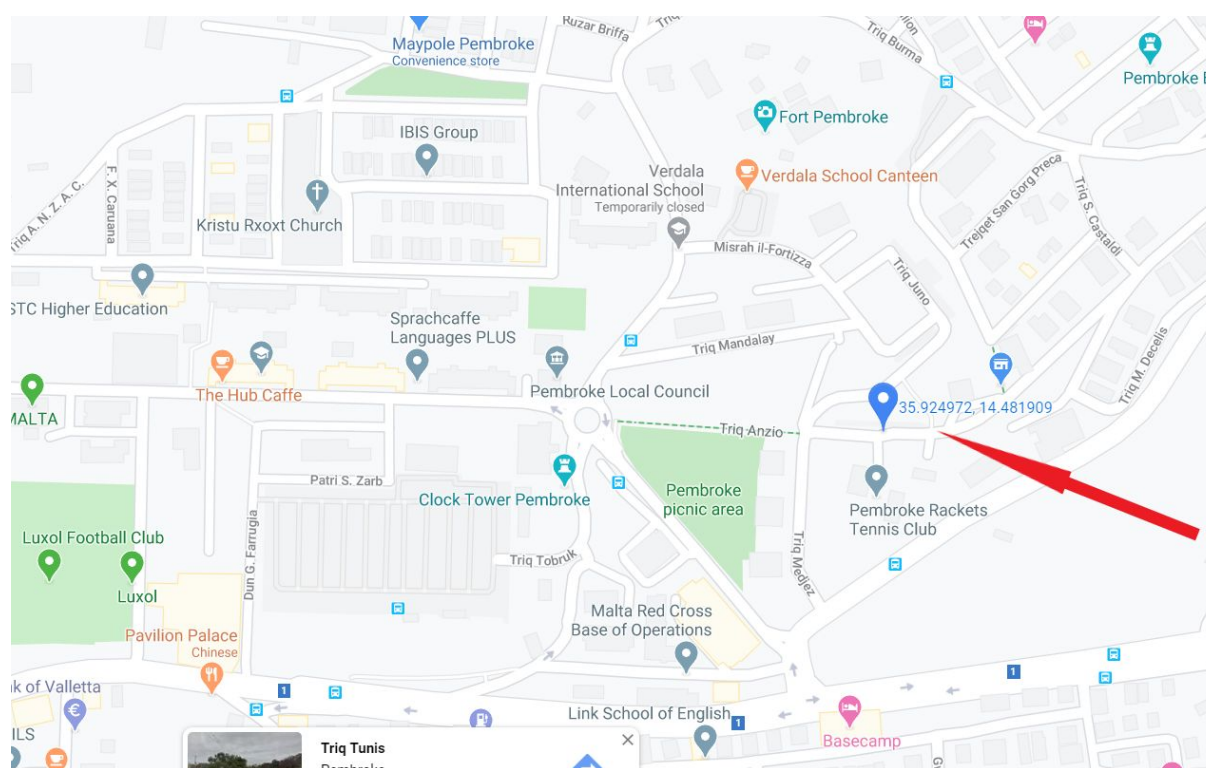
Any student who is unable to participate in Physical & Health Education activities will be required to provide a medical certificate to confirm this.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

From time to time, the school will run safety drills to prepare the students for a possible emergency. Fire drills will be practiced so that the children learn how to quickly and quietly exit the building. We will also prepare the students in case the potential emergency would require the children to shelter in class, such as a lockdown. In all cases, the teachers will introduce these drills in a child-friendly way, appropriate to their age.

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 Secondary School's "Safe Haven" assembly point (on Triq Tunis, see map below) will be used. Parents will be contacted by phone and will need to pick up their children as quickly as possible.



SECTION 3: EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

VIS STUDENT RIGHTS

As a community, Verdala International School, like all groups, has expectations for its members. These expectations help all members be successful, protect their rights, foster mutual trust and respect, and create a positive and safe learning environment where students can maximize their learning. These expectations are built on the foundation of our mission, vision, and student profile.

Verdala International School High School students have the right to:

- be in a safe school environment, conducive to learning, and that promotes a healthy lifestyle (including healthy snacks, food, and drinks available for sale on school premises);
- be treated fairly, equitably, and with respect by teachers and other school employees;
- be protected from physical, verbal, and emotional abuse whilst on school premises or at school events;
- have enthusiastic, motivating, well-qualified, and dynamic teachers, always prepared for their lessons and constantly striving to help each child to achieve his or her full potential;
- be graded fairly;
- have a reasonable choice of subjects, at the appropriate levels in High School, but within the constraints of VIS's capacity to provide them;
- receive extra help from their teachers, within the school day, if requested and/or as needed;
- have supervised access to the outdoor sports facilities during the lunch break;
- receive education including, but not limited to, sexual education, healthy eating, and physical fitness;
- be involved in all aspects of the life of the school community and to seek positions of responsibility in the school;
- offer suggestions with regard to the administration of the school and improvements to its facilities through the High School Student Council;
- approach any member of staff regarding the conduct of another teacher and to be listened to in a non-judgemental way (staff will deal with the complaint as they see appropriate);
- be properly prepared for examinations;
- have a Student Council that acts as a representative voice for the students and which can represent the student body's issues without fear of retribution; and
- have clear procedures for filing complaints and/or grievances and to appeal a decision.

Our VIS High School Student Code of Conduct sets out expected standards of behaviour which align with our School Vision, Mission, Educational Philosophy, Student Profile, and other statements and policies which guide our community. At VIS we strive to ensure that all of our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors to our world. The HS Student Code of Conduct specifically focuses on ethical behaviour and positive contributions to our school community.

In general, the aim of this Code is to ensure that the school is a safe and pleasant place in which learning takes place, that the property and reputation of the school is protected, and that students develop self-discipline and consideration for others.

The HS Student Code of Conduct holds individuals and groups responsible for the consequences of their actions. Failure to fulfill these responsibilities may result in the withdrawal of privileges or the imposition of sanctions, which can in serious cases include suspension or expulsion from school.

HS students are required to read and sign this Code of Conduct on an annual basis, and will be held to the promises of behaviour they make in doing so.

HS students at VIS have a responsibility to:

- ❖ accept school policies regarding behaviour
- ❖ act and work cooperatively with other students and teachers
- ❖ respect the learning needs of other students
- ❖ be mindful of their use of resources and their impact on the local and wider environment
- ❖ take progressive responsibility for their own learning
- ❖ proactively engage with the diverse nature of the school community and demonstrate caring, inclusive behaviour at all times, in accordance with the School's Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Policy
- ❖ be punctual and regular in attendance
- ❖ uphold the reputation of the school by observing an appropriate standard of behaviour
- ❖ behave in a manner which ensures the health and safety of themselves and others
- ❖ behave with courtesy and consideration for others
- ❖ use technology appropriately, in line with the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement and with classroom expectations
- ❖ use appropriate and respectful language at all times (this includes avoiding swearing or derogatory terminology)
- ❖ refrain from behaviour which would interrupt the work of any class or hinder the learning opportunities of other students
- ❖ respect school property and the property of staff and other students

- ❖ remain on the school grounds during the school day, unless specific permission to be absent has been granted by the HS Principal
- ❖ complete work set by teachers promptly and to the best of their ability and to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at the school
- ❖ dress neatly and appropriately with due regard for health, hygiene and safety, in accordance with the school's Dress Code.
- ❖ avoid any Prohibited Conduct.

Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- any form of bullying whether verbal, emotional, physical, cyber, or in any other form. This includes, but is not limited to: assaulting, harassing, intimidating, threatening, or excluding another individual or group
- stealing, misusing, destroying, defacing, or damaging School property or property belonging to someone else
- academic dishonesty as outlined in the VIS Academic Honesty Policy
- disrupting school activities
- using school facilities, equipment, services, or technological resources without authorisation
- making false accusations against any member of the school community
- supplying false information to the School or forging, altering, or misusing any School document or record
- storing, possessing, or using real or replica firearms, knives, or other weapons, explosives (including fireworks), ammunition, or toxic or otherwise dangerous materials on School premises
- using, possessing, or distributing illegal drugs, alcohol, or nicotine-related products (including vaping), or using, possessing, or distributing any related paraphernalia (e.g. lighters, matches, vape refills, etc)
- accessing, possessing, or distributing indecent material such as pornographic websites, magazines, etc.
- encouraging, aiding, or conspiring in any prohibited conduct
- failing to comply with a disciplinary consequence or disciplinary consequences imposed under the procedures of this Code

When does the Code apply?

The VIS HS Student Code of Conduct applies to any student enrolled in Grades 9-12 at VIS. The Code applies to conduct that occurs on or near the premises of the school, at any time. It also applies to conduct that occurs elsewhere if it is related to school-sponsored programmes or activities (such as off-campus PE lessons or field trips) or if it occurs in the context of a relationship between the student and a third party that involves the student's standing, status, or record at VIS.

The VIS HS Student Code of Conduct also applies to behaviour in the online world where that behaviour in some way relates to the School or the school community, regardless of

when and where this takes place. Further clarification can be found in the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement.

Disciplinary Consequences

Disciplinary Consequences that may arise as a result of a breach of the VIS HS Student Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to:

- written warning or reprimand
- detention
- meeting with parents
- being placed on a behavioural report card for one or more weeks
- probation, during which certain conditions must be fulfilled and good behaviour must be demonstrated
- payment of costs or compensation for any loss, damage, or injury caused by the conduct
- issuance of an apology, made publicly or privately
- loss of certain privileges
- restriction or prohibition of access to, or use of, School facilities, services, activities or programmes
- suspension
- expulsion

Most breaches of the Code of Conduct may be dealt with by a member of the HS teaching faculty, a Programme Coordinator, or the HS Principal. Incidents involving prohibited conduct will usually result in suspension or expulsion.

Serious breaches, especially where suspension or expulsion may be considered, will require the student(s) concerned to appear before a Disciplinary Review Committee which will include the Head of School. The Disciplinary Review Committee process is outlined in the Behaviour Management section of the HS Student-Parent Handbook.

Our philosophy of behaviour management begins with respect and an understanding that students will make mistakes which are an integral and important part of growing up. Unacceptable examples of behaviour should therefore be considered learning opportunities and students should be given the chance to discuss and reflect on their behaviour.

- All teachers are expected to develop essential agreements with students at the start of the year, which should be clearly shared and referred to throughout the year. These may be posted on classroom walls, in student notebooks, or on a shared online space (e.g. in the ManageBac class).
- Teachers will make use of the Behaviour module in ManageBac to record behaviour related issues, using the following categories:

Commendations	Criticisms
Sec: SP+ Knowledgeable	Sec: SP- Knowledgeable
Sec: SP+ Inquisitive	Sec: SP- Inquisitive
Sec: SP+ Ethical	Sec: SP- Ethical
Sec: SP+ Contributor	Sec: SP- Contributor

Parents/Guardians: please be aware that students cannot see the Behaviour module, however teachers are expected to ensure that students know before a commendation or criticism is recorded in the system.

- Homeroom teachers monitor these behaviour issues and support students in improving where a need arises. The Principal will also review these behaviour reports regularly and take action as necessary - this may range from a meeting with the student, with their parent/guardian, detention, or placement on a report card, amongst other consequences.
- The report card system outlined below will be used where students do not demonstrate a positive response to teacher intervention, or where the infraction is deemed more severe/extreme.

REPORT CARD SYSTEM

We operate a Report Card monitoring system for students as an aid to help them reflect on the appropriateness of their actions. The card usually focuses their attention on two or three aspects for improvement, linked to the VIS student profile and guiding statements.

There are two systems

- Yellow, Orange, Red - for disciplinary issues. These are assigned by the Principal.
- Blue - for attitudes towards learning. These can be assigned by the homeroom teacher or by a Programme Coordinator. The goal here is to help students focus on

the improvement of certain skills or dispositions which are having a negative impact on their learning. This card will usually be assigned once a student has failed to respond to intervention by one or more teachers.

Yellow For minor incidents and dealt with internally. Parents are informed via email.	Orange For serious incidents. Parents must be informed in person.	Red For extremely serious issues. Usually a sanction implemented after a Disciplinary Committee has been involved. See below for more details.
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First case of academic dishonesty in a year • Regular use of unacceptable language • Persistent lateness to school or to class • Unacceptable behaviour 	Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further incidents of behaviour that merited a yellow card • Second case of academic dishonesty in an academic year • Bullying of any kind • Deliberate destruction of property • Truancy 	Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further incidents of behaviour that merited an orange card • Further case of academic dishonesty in an academic year • Alcohol or drug abuse • Physical abuse of another person • Theft

Blue For ongoing issues to do with approaches to learning skills. Not assigned for isolated incidents. Parents may be informed if necessary.
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor organisational skills • General failure to attempt homework in one or various subjects

PROCEDURE

- The incident/issue causing the problem is brought to the Principal's attention (or in the case of a Blue card, to the attention of the homeroom teacher and the Programme Coordinator). This may be through the weekly review of Behaviour reports, or because of a more serious and urgent matter.
- In the case of an extremely serious issue, a Disciplinary Review Committee will be convened. See below for more details of this process.

- If, based on the evidence and previous actions taken, it is deemed suitable, the student will be placed on report for one or more weeks, depending on the severity of the incident/issue.
 - Teachers will be advised that the student is on report
 - A note will be recorded in the Behaviour module in MB
- A student on report is required to give the card to the teacher in each lesson they attend, who will then sign and comment on the student's performance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their card is signed, however this is a learning process and teachers should proactively support the student through the development of this habit.
- During homeroom time each morning, homeroom teachers will review the progress being made.
- At the end of each week the student must present the completed card to the Principal (or homeroom teacher/Programme Coordinator in the case of a Blue card) who will then decide whether to:
 - Consider the matter closed
 - Place the student on report for another week (a note in MB should accompany this decision)
 - Move the student onto another card (a note in MB should accompany this decision)

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

A Disciplinary Review Committee is convened whenever an extremely serious issue arises and potentially appropriate consequences include suspension or expulsion. Parents will be informed as soon as the decision to convene this committee has been taken.

The committee is made up of 5 members: Head of School, HS Principal, Head of Student Support Services, Programme Coordinator, and the student's Homeroom Teacher.

The student involved is encouraged to bring along an adult observer; this is often a trusted member of staff but should not be a parent/guardian. The observer may not participate in the discussion, but should help the student debrief and process the experience after the meeting.

The committee will review the facts of the case, and hear the student's perspective and reflection regarding the issue. The committee will then determine appropriate sanctions for the incident, which may include suspension, expulsion, conditional enrolment, community service, or a range of other consequences.

The resulting sanction will be communicated in writing to the student(s) parent(s)/guardian(s), and permanently stored both on ManageBac and in the student's hardcopy file held by the school.

Once the student has achieved a clean disciplinary record of no less than 12 months, they may request that the incident be removed from their record. This request will be considered by the HS Principal together with the Head of School, and the decision communicated to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing.

OFF-CAMPUS PRIVILEGES FOR GRADE 11 & 12 STUDENTS

Grade 11 & 12 students are, subject to good behaviour, allowed certain off-campus privileges during the school day. Parents/guardians are required to sign their agreement to these privileges, except in the case of students over the age of 18 who may self-certify.

Students and parents/guardians are reminded that these are privileges, not a right, and there are certain expectations they must meet in order to receive, and retain them. Specific details of the privileges are outlined in the form. These privileges will usually start a few weeks into the school year, once students have settled in and shown their engagement with their studies and a healthy academic record.

It is important for all involved to understand that these privileges represent a reputational risk to the school. Our students are ambassadors for VIS and the way they behave affects the school's reputation.

Grade 11 & 12 students are also role models to their peers both within school and beyond the campus. They are therefore expected to take this responsibility seriously, which means adjusting their behaviour when in the presence of younger students who may look up to them.

Privileges will therefore be withdrawn from either individual students or an entire cohort if their behaviour threatens the school's good reputation and relationship with our neighbours and local community.

As a general guide, and assuming that any incidents that arise can be considered minor, the following procedure will be followed:

- Students will be allowed up to 2 faults in regard to their behaviour outside of the school.
- Third incident: they will lose their privileges for 1 week and will be placed on a yellow behaviour card.
- Fourth incident: they will lose their privileges for 1 month, and will be placed on an orange behaviour card.
- Fifth incident: they will lose their privileges for the remainder of the semester. If there is less than 1 month left in the current semester, they will lose their privileges for the entire next semester as well. They will also be required to meet with a disciplinary review committee who will determine if any further disciplinary consequences are required.

Students and parents/guardians should be aware that the school reserves the right to miss certain steps in the above procedure if the incident is considered to be more serious.

NON-SMOKING CAMPUS

VIS is a non-smoking campus; this includes all areas of our school. *This includes all forms of smoking, including vaping.* All students, especially older students, are role models for the rest of our community and are therefore expected not to smoke around the perimeter of the school, i.e. crossing between campuses or on the pathways by the school.

This can be understood to mean that no member of the school community should be able to be seen smoking on or around the school campus.

“Campus” can be understood to mean anywhere a school activity is taking place. This therefore includes field trips, etc.

Smoking on the school campus by students is considered a very serious disciplinary issue and may result in a student being suspended or expelled.

THE SCHOOL DAY

We operate a Week A/B Monday to Friday schedule with a reduced day every Friday.

	Monday to Thursday	Friday	
Homeroom	8:30 - 8:40	8:30 - 8:50	Homeroom
Period 1	8:40 - 9:25	8:50 - 9:35	Period 1
Period 2	9:25 - 10:10	9:35 - 10:20	Period 2
Break	10:10 - 10:25	10:20 - 10:35	Break
Period 3	10:25 - 11:10	10:35 - 11:20	Period 3
Period 4	11:10 - 11:55	11:20 - 12:05	Period 4
Period 5	11:55 - 12:40	12:05 - 12:40	Lunch
Lunch	12:40 - 1:15	12:40 - 13:25	Period 5
Period 6	1:15 - 2:00	13:25 - 14:10	Period 6
Period 7	2:00 - 2:45		
Period 8	2:45 - 3:30		

The school’s Google Calendar, found on the website, shows whether the week is a Week A or a Week B.

HOMEWORK

Students will find that they have homework from most of their classes, which can take a variety of formats from completion of exercises to work on a long-term project. Although teachers do try to spread this out to avoid overloading students, the demands of each programme mean this can be very difficult to achieve.

Students, therefore, need to allocate sufficient time on a daily basis to ensure they can keep up to date with their obligations.

Homework tasks are posted in ManageBac and students should ensure they check this regularly. In addition to ManageBac, they may find it useful to use a personal diary or a digital organiser/calendar.

Most students manage this successfully, but for those who need additional support with this aspect of school life, they can speak to their homeroom teacher, Ms Trapani, or to the appropriate programme coordinator.

DRESS CODE

The environment in school should be considered semi-formal - although we may appear somewhat casual in many ways, we expect everyone to be focused on learning and

therefore that all students will dress accordingly. The clothes we wear affect our mind-set and our attitude.

Students, therefore, are expected to dress semi-smartly in a manner that respects the international make-up of our community and recognises a balance between the social and the formal nature of the school. We request that parents/guardians support their students by guiding them in their school wardrobe choices so as to ensure issues do not arise.

We have a few basic principles students are expected to adhere to:

- Underwear should not be visible.
- Skirts and shorts should be an appropriate length, extending at least as far as the fingertips when the student stands upright with their hands by their sides.
- Midriffs should be covered.
- Health and safety must be considered, so for instance:
 - Earrings and other jewellery should be restrained in style to avoid harm or damage to oneself or others.
 - Sandals, sports shoes, or more formal shoes are all acceptable. High heels are usually not appropriate.
- Printed messages on garments must be tasteful, sensitive to, and appropriate for a positive, diverse school environment. This includes messages printed in languages other than English.
- Although make-up is allowed, it should be minimal.

DRESS CODE INFRACTIONS

It is expected that students will abide by the dress code and therefore allow everyone to focus on learning. We aspire to ensure that the learning of each student is not affected if they choose to dress inappropriately, however sometimes this is not possible, especially for repeated infractions.

For first or minor infractions, students will usually be given a warning by a Programme Coordinator or the HS Principal. Students who do not respond to this warning or who dress very unacceptably will be required to change into something more appropriate. Should they not have such items with them, they will have to wear something from the Lost Property collection. Alternatively, their parent/guardian(s) will be called and required to bring in something acceptable to wear as soon as possible.

This can cause some contention as there is a subjective aspect, however the HS Principal's decision is final, and continued failure to abide by the dress code will result in disciplinary sanctions.

SECURITY & STUDENT PROPERTY

The school cannot assume responsibility for any student property, and students are expected to be responsible for their own belongings at all times.

Any object, material or substance which could be construed as dangerous to the health and safety of students and staff or which it is illegal to possess should not be brought to

school. The school will periodically conduct random bag and locker searches. If discovered, such items will be confiscated and severe disciplinary proceedings will be initiated. In the case of illegal possession, the police will be contacted.

LOCKERS

To help with security, all HS students are given a locker at the beginning of the year, which may be locked with a combination code or a key. If a locker key is required, a deposit will need to be left at Reception which will be returned at the end of the school year, or on departure from school if the student leaves Verdala. If the student chooses to use their own lock, the combination or a spare key should be given to the homeroom teacher in case of emergency.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their locker is kept locked.

Student lockers are considered to be school property and the school reserves the right to access lockers at any time should the need arise.

Unfortunately, we cannot ensure socially-distanced access to the lockers in HS and therefore they will not be assigned to students this year or until the situation changes.

LOST PROPERTY

The school does not take any responsibility for items lost anywhere in school. Students and parents/guardians should understand that any items brought in to school are brought in at their own risk and that the student is responsible for their safekeeping.

Items which are found around the school campus are either taken to Reception or the Principal's Office. Students should look in these locations in the first instance. At the end of each semester, lost and found items will be displayed for claiming, and then what is left over will go to charity.

TRANSPORTATION

Students in Grades 9 & 10 are able to take advantage of the free bus service provided by the government; further details can be obtained from our website or from Reception.

Please be aware that students in Grades 11 & 12 are usually not permitted to travel on this bus service, and parents/guardians must make alternative arrangements. The free bus service is not operated by the school and we have no control over the regulations.

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATIONS

The school's primary means of communication with parents is through ManageBac messages, unless we are sending a personal message or communicating with a small group, in which case email is used.

Some teachers create class blogs/websites/etc, but these are often closed groups with access limited only to the students concerned. Parents who have queries about this should speak directly to the teacher involved.

The MS/HS Principals send out a Bulletin to parents via ManageBac every week, usually on Friday. This is a great way to keep up to date with events around school and to be informed about upcoming events/activities.

MANAGEBAC

ManageBac is our student management portal, and it is essential that all parents log into the system on a regular basis to keep up with news and to keep track of their children's progress. Within the system parents can keep details up to date, inform us about absences, keep track of their children's academic progress, read their academic reports, and in general be aware of everything happening with their child's learning at school.

ManageBac can be reached through the school's website (under Quick Links) or directly via <https://verdala.managebac.com>. There is, unfortunately, currently no app available for parental access. If you have not yet accessed the system, or have forgotten your password, you can follow the "Forgot your password?" link to gain access.

We will provide training opportunities to help parents navigate the system, but you can also find useful videos on YouTube - try searching for "managebac parents".

We communicate regularly with groups of parents through ManageBac and these messages appear in your email inbox. We do try to keep the number of messages to a minimum but there are times when a lot is going on and this is not possible. You might find it helpful to set up a filter or email rule which separates these messages out from your general inbox.

WRITTEN REPORTS

Reports are sent home several times a year and there are 2 Parent-Student-Teacher conferences scheduled. Dates for these can be found on the Google calendar found on our website.

Report	Grade Levels	Nature of report
Semester 1 Progress report	9-12	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
PST Conferences	9-12	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 1 Report	9-12	Grades & Comments
PST Conferences	9-12	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 2 Progress report	9 & 11 No report for 10 & 12	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
Semester 2 Report	12	Grades & Comments
	9-11	Grades & Comments

It should be noted that Progress reports are intended for internal purposes only. Only grades on the Semester Reports are included in transcripts or communicated through official means to other organisations (e.g. universities)

PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER (PST) CONFERENCES

These are conducted twice a year, and are considered an integral component of the reporting cycle which all parents should attend. There will be no normal classes while the conferences are scheduled. Please see the above table for the scheduled dates.

Students are expected to accompany their parents to these conferences. Where parents are unable to attend a conference, HS students are strongly encouraged to attend these conferences by themselves, as this is an excellent opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and to discuss their progress with teachers and receive detailed feedback.

All conferences will take place online via Zoom this year.

THE BOOSTERS

The Boosters is the social event and fundraising arm of our parent community. This is a voluntary parent group who organise social events throughout the year, working continually to make VIS a great place for students, parents and teachers. They are always keen to hear from parents interested in participating in the organisation of these events - please contact them via visbooster@gmail.com if you would like to get involved.

Student participation in the organisation of Booster events and activities is highly appreciated and encouraged. There is a Boosters CAS group for students in Grades 11 & 12. Separate from this, each HS year group will be expected to support one particular event per year. Finally, students who want to get involved can also approach any member of the Boosters or through the email above.

CLASS PARENT GUIDELINES

- The classroom teacher/Principal will invite a parent(s) to be the Classroom Parent (CP).
- A parent can be the CP for **only one year group**.
- The CPs will meet with the Principal to discuss their role and will work within the parameters set by the Principal.
- The CP will adhere to the communication guidelines as set out by the Principal.
- All parents are free to opt out of CP communications if they so desire.
- The CP role is for a one year period.

Communication Guidelines

- The school will not provide email addresses to any parent but will assist the appointed CP in securing permission from the parents to provide their email to the appointed CP only. Parents' permission is sought on an annual basis.
- CP will send out email messages to BCC to protect parent's data.
- CP's must not include any photos in their communication with parents.
- The only acceptable form of communication on school matters is via email.

Role of the High School Class Parent

- Sharing information regarding Booster Events. Supporting student involvement in set up/tidy up.
- Attending Boosters meetings.
- Being a contact person for parents who join during the school year.
- Helping to support class activities, i.e. performances/sports activities etc.

The role does not include:

- Relaying other parents' concerns to the teacher. If approached, the CP should ask the parent to make direct contact with the teacher or Principal.
- Collecting money for birthday presents for the children in the class.

VIS reserves the right to ask the CP to step down from the role if these guidelines are not adhered to.

MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS

Parents/guardians are asked to be conscious of the school's daily schedule and to avoid contacting students during lesson times, e.g. by sending an SMS or WhatsApp message, as this causes unnecessary distraction and can result in disciplinary issues for the student concerned. If there is an urgent issue, please contact the HS PA, Ms Pek Yen Lim (hspa@verdala.org) who will then pass on the message.

CAMPUS GUESTS

Parents and visitors to the High School campus are welcome. All visitors, including parents, must report on arrival to the HS Reception to sign in and receive a visitor badge.

In the past, the Secondary School has enjoyed hosting returning or visiting students who are spending time visiting their friends who are currently attending VIS. However, due to the abuse of this privilege and the fact that many of our classes are full, we can no longer accommodate visiting students during lesson times. While visitors will still be welcome to join us for the lunch period (by prior arrangement with the Principal), they will no longer be able to join in daytime class activities.

Due to the Covid-19 situation, no visitors will be allowed on campus during this school year, or at least until further notice.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

This can be found on the school website. It is possible to subscribe to this calendar so that it appears in your calendar app on your phone/tablet/etc. Although a paper calendar is still provided, parents are recommended to refer always to the online calendar, as this will be the most up-to-date version.

DAILY SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Each student has their own online timetable which can be accessed through ManageBac. These will be available from September 1st.

Other schedules can also be seen via <https://verdala.edupage.org/timetable/>.