



Verdala
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

**Middle School
Student-Parent
Handbook**

Academic Year

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

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On behalf of all of our faculty and staff, I would like to warmly welcome all of our students, especially our new students, to VIS Middle School. I hope you have had a great summer break and that you are looking forward to this new academic year as much as we are!

Middle School is an exciting time in every young person's educational journey and bridges the gap between elementary and high school. This is a time where our students develop new skills, become risk takers and begin to develop their own identity, thoughts and ideas. At VIS we are dedicated to providing a creative and caring environment that allows our students to truly grow and develop. Through our exciting curriculum, the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), we offer our students opportunities to solve problems, ask questions and learn new skills.

Students will explore a number of big ideas throughout their 3 years in MS, and will be engaged in an active curriculum that allows them to make meaning of their learning, make connections between their learning and to take risks in their learning within a safe and structured environment. Students will be involved in a variety of entry and exit points which will develop both their independent skills and their ability to work effectively as part of a team. In addition, Middle School students will participate in a Creativity and Service (CAS) project through which they will develop the academic and social skills needed to navigate the complex issues facing today's global citizens. Throughout Middle School our students will continue to become knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors to our world.

Middle School prides itself on being a safe, caring and nurturing environment for all of our students. Our students are supported through a dedicated staff, supportive homeroom teachers and effective student support services. This is imperative through what can be an emotional time. On leaving Middle School, students will be thoroughly prepared for the challenges that await them in High School as part of the IGCSE and IB programmes.

We recognise that school today can be a very different environment to that experienced by many parents. We encourage parents to play an active role in our Boosters Club (Parents' Association) and to join us at the various Parent Information Meetings (PIM) we schedule throughout the year to provide insight into our programme, activities, and educational approach. We will also be reaching out to parents to help us as Room Parents, serving as a bridge between the school and parent body, thus improving communications and ensuring we can all provide support as needed.

I encourage both students and parents to sit down together to read this handbook carefully. This handbook provides all the necessary information needed for a positive and successful Middle School experience. Your understanding, acceptance, and cooperation will help ensure that your time with us is positive, beneficial, and focused on our core purpose: learning.

We are all looking forward to welcoming both new and returning students in what promises to be a fantastic academic year ahead!

Sarah Boylin
Middle School Principal

SECTION 1: WELCOME TO VIS

In a diverse setting representing over 47 different nationalities, Middle 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 Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC), followed in High School by 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 enables 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 and an awareness that we are educating students for their futures, not our pasts, 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 in Middle School Community Service activities are embedded into our programme.

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.



VIS GUIDING STATEMENTS

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 multicultural 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

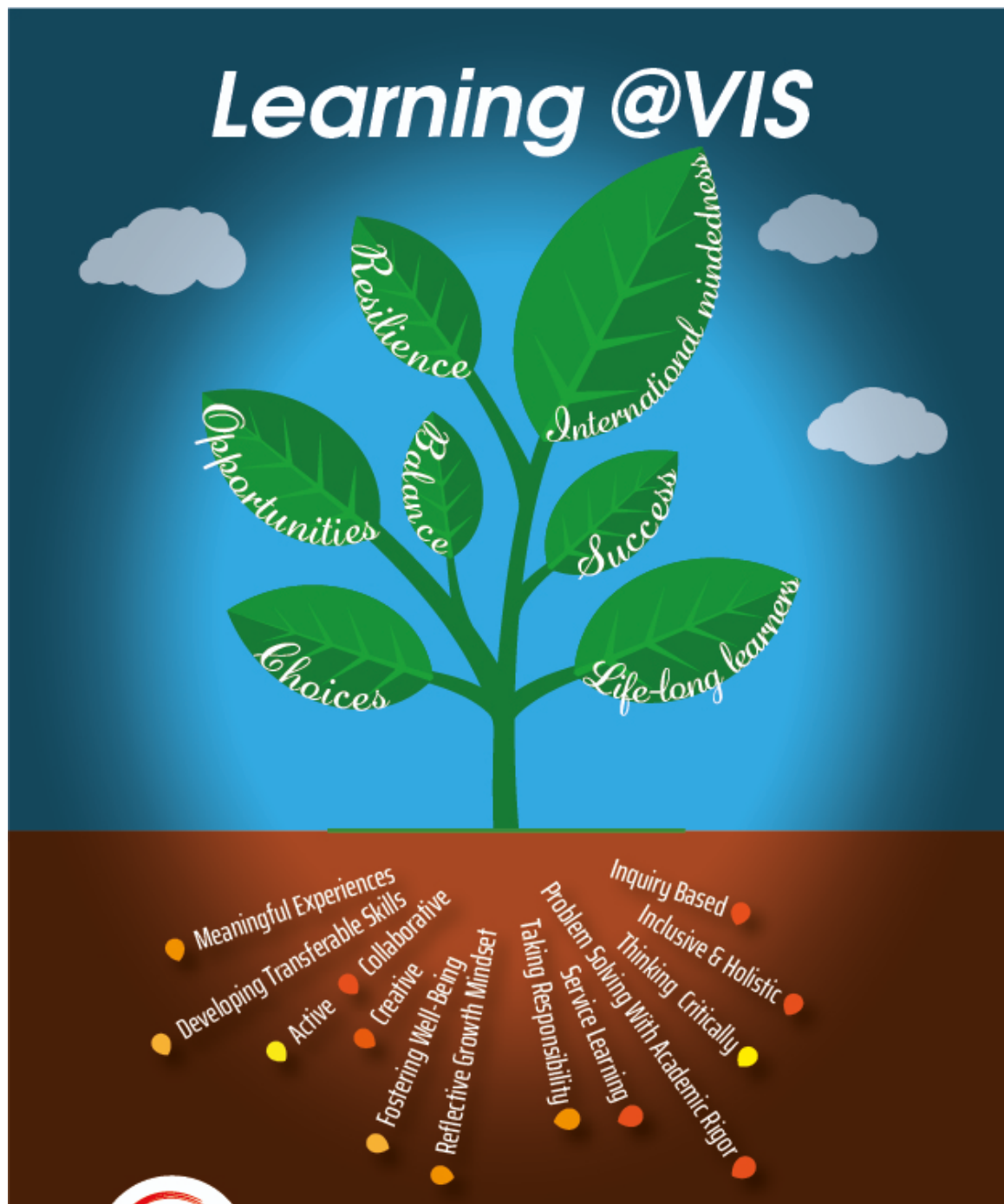
Students at VIS actively pursue opportunities to contribute responsibly to their local and global communities.

DEFINITION OF LEARNING: LEARNING @VIS

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

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

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



Effective learning occurs in a positive and nurturing environment fostering a reflective growth mindset.

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 a grade level cohort go into quarantine, 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 or mandatory quarantine for a grade level cohort; 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 grade level is required to quarantine due to a positive case in the cohort.

Distance Learning Mode is no longer available for students who are vulnerable (due to health reasons) and/or for students who live in a household with a vulnerable family member; which results in not physically attending school for an extended period of time. For students in either of the above situations, medical documentation must be provided to the school, confirming the vulnerability of the student or family member. Once confirmed, a mentor (ie. Principal, Program Coordinator, etc.) will be assigned to support the student’s learning and engagement from home. The arrangement of a mentor for vulnerable students and/or those living with a vulnerable family member is conducive for a limited amount of time. Principals will reevaluate the mentorship after two weeks to decide if it continues.

The responsibilities of the mentor are as follows:

- Daily morning check-ins to ensure tasks for the day/week are clear.
- Close monitoring of student’s engagement with assigned tasks posted in Managebac.

- Following up with student to ensure tasks assigned in Managebac are completed/submitted.
- Liaising with teachers if a student demonstrates a decrease or lack of engagement in tasks assigned in Managebac, and coordinating additional support between student and teacher (ie. Zoom).

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.

SECTION 2: MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERVIEW

MS FACULTY & STAFF

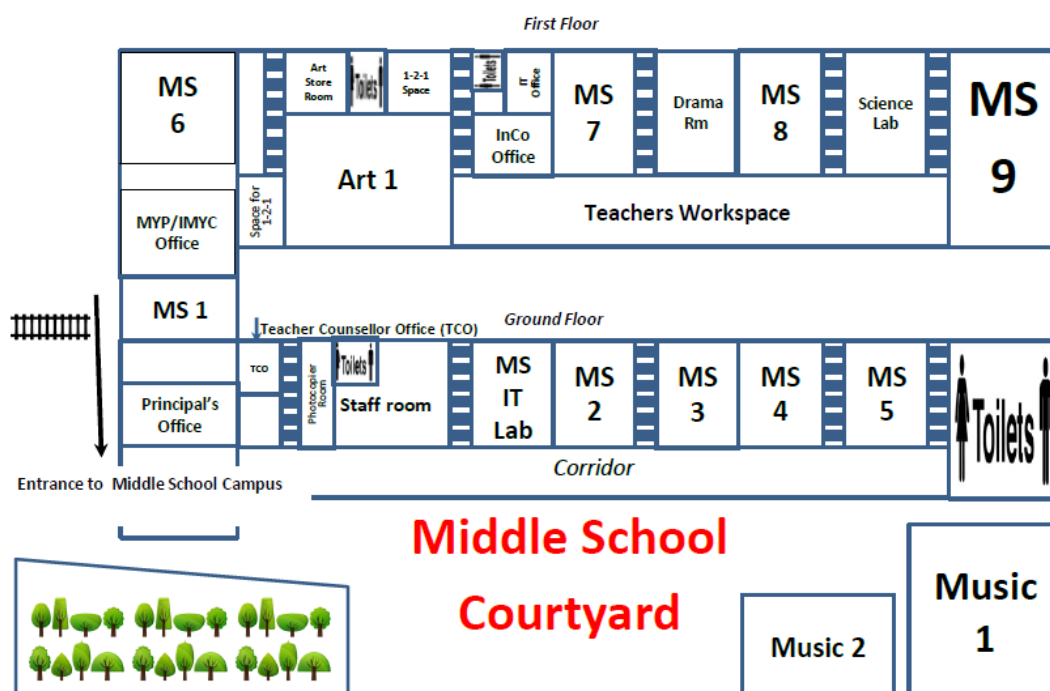


Teacher	MS Subject Area	Responsibility
Alexandra VELLA McINTYRE	PSHE	MS Counsellor
Alexandros ANASTASOPOULOS	Science	
Amanda MUSCAT	Science	
Andrew MOULTON	English as an Additional Language (EAL)	
Anita Formosa		Library Assistant
Ann-Marie CASSAR TORREGIANI	Science	Head of Science
Ben MAY	English	
Carolyn CASSAR-GEORGE	Mathematics	
Christine BINDA	Mathematics	
Claire Cuthbert	French	Head of Languages
Corinne BORG		Director of Well Being, Inclusion Coordinator
Daphne SAID		Head of Arts
Denise TANNER	English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Head of English as an Additional Language (EAL)
Duncan ROBERTS	French, Spanish	
Elaine CAMILLERI		PE Assistant
Elise STOFFREGEN	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Hannah CUTHBERT	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Ingrid DONATI	Italian, Spanish	
Jason WARD		MYP Coordinator
Jill KIRKSTADT		Head of Mathematics
Jose Maria CASTRO ALONSO	Music	
Krista MICALLEF-TRIGONA		MS PA
Kristina DEPASQUALE	English	Head of English

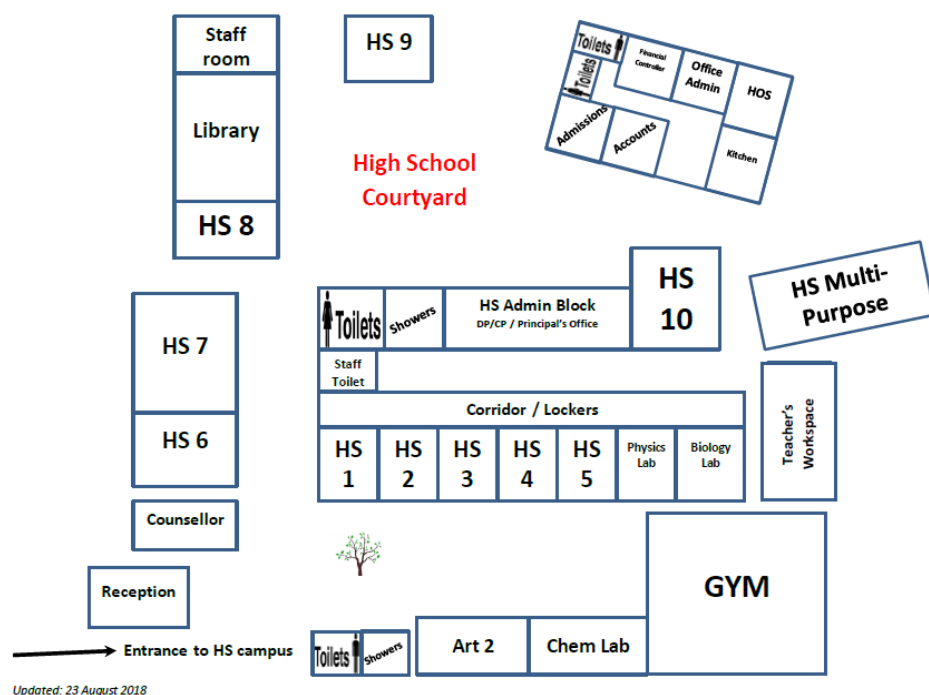
Lucienne AGIUS	Italian	
Marianne OGDEN	Art	
Martin KACOR		Head of Humanities
Mary Kay ZAMMIT	Mathematics	
Michaela GERMAN	English	
Mike MCHUGH	Music	
Nermina KUTUZ-BESIREVIC	Geography	Head of Theory of Knowledge
Nicolette GALEA	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Niti FIGEAC	Science	
Odette MICALLEF ENGERER		School Nurse
Rebecca FARRUGIA	Geography, History	
Richard PRICE	Science, IMYC	IMYC Coordinator
Ruby BOOGARD	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Samantha BAKER	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Sara CARTER	Drama	
Sarah ABUGHRARA	Learning Support Educator (LSE)	
Sarah BOYLIN	History	MS Principal Head of Physical and Health Education (PHE)
Stephen CRICHTON		CAS Coordinator
Ufuk YAGCI	Information Technology	Head of Technology
Veronica CALLEJA		MS/HS Librarian
Veronica DE LA ROCHA MANCHON	Physical and Health Education (PHE)	
Zack BERG	Physical and Health Education (PHE)	
Zoe MAY	Science	

The Middle School Leadership team is made up of the Middle School Principal, IMYC Coordinator and MYP Coordinator.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS



For some subjects, Middle School students have lessons on the High School Campus in specialist spaces. All Grade 6-7 students are accompanied by a member of staff when crossing from the MS to the HS campus. Grade 8 students are allowed to cross to the HS campus unaccompanied for their lessons on this campus.

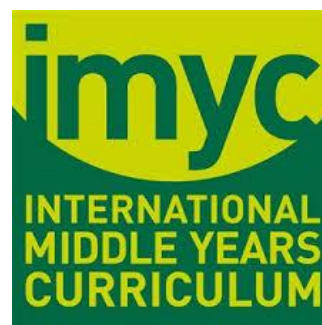


CURRICULUM PROGRAMME

WHAT IS THE IMYC?

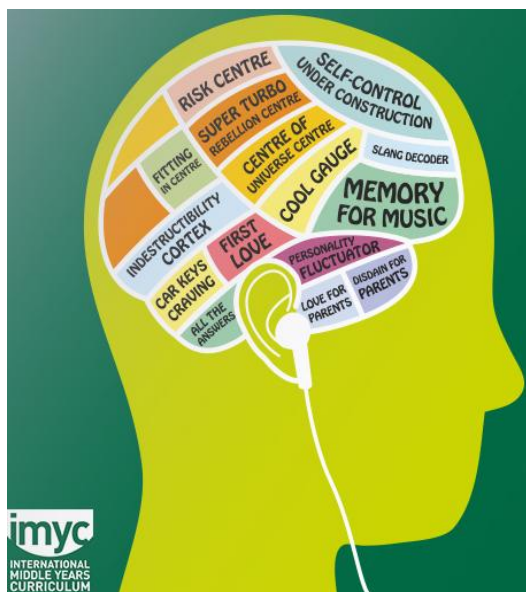
At Verdala in grades 6-8 our middle school students follow the IMYC curriculum. The IMYC is a broad curriculum built on a sound research-based philosophy that makes meaning, connects learning and develops minds.

- It develops minds by providing a comprehensive international curriculum, structured around subject disciplines, that prepares students for the next stage of learning
- It helps students to make meaning of their own learning by giving students opportunities to develop and present their own ideas
- It connects learning by linking all subjects together through the conceptual idea.



WHY THE IMYC?

The IMYC aims to bridge the divide between Elementary and Secondary education. One side of the bridge represents the needs of the adolescent brain and the other side represents the academic rigour required to ensure they are ready for the next stage of the secondary school.



The 5 key needs of the **adolescent brain** are:

#1: They need to make meaning of their learning

(Desire to find relevance to their own lives)

#2: They need to make connections

(Associating new learning with previous learning or knowledge)

#3: They need active involvement in their lives

(Risk, seeking sensation in an organised, safe and structured environment)

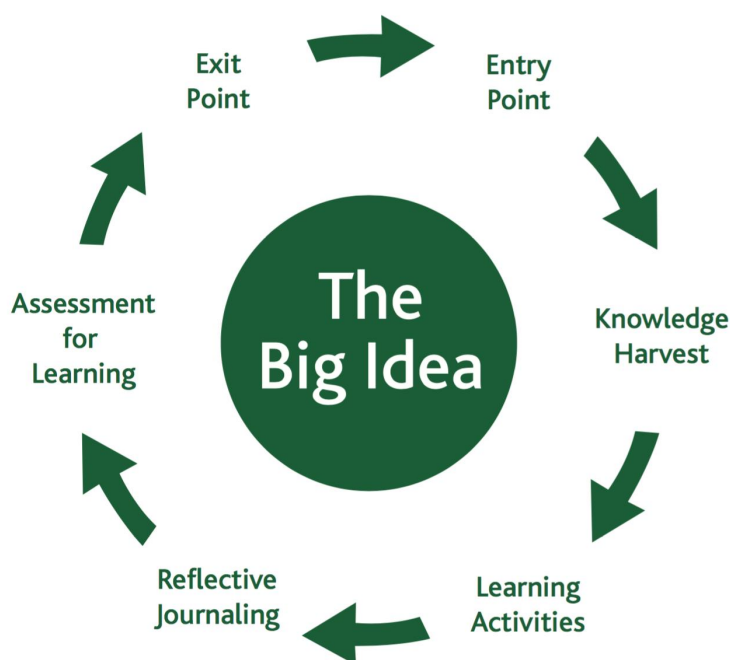
#4: They need their peers for so many things

(Tending to value peers' option above others)

#5: They need a bridge from elementary to secondary

(Need support during this critical time to ensure they don't become disengaged from their learning)

THE IMYC PROCESS OF LEARNING



ENTRY POINT

Each new big idea begins with an entry point. This is an introductory activity for students in each unit of work to hook the students into learning, emotionally engage them with the big idea and to generate enthusiasm for the new unit. Entry points can consist of a number of activities and can be held both on and off campus.



BIG IDEA LEARNING

Once the entry point is completed, students will go to classes taught by subject specialists. The IMYC believes in inquiry-based learning, allowing students to find out things for themselves (but with clear direction from the teacher). Students will be:

- Researching
- Investigating
- Inquiring
- Thinking
- Reporting

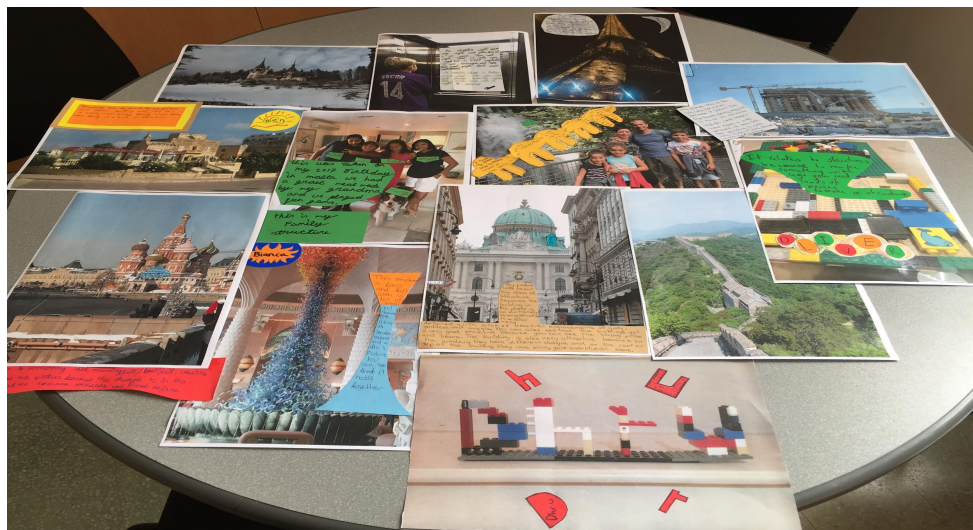
BIG IDEAS 2021-22

Big Idea	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
#1	ADAPTABILITY	RESPECT	CHALLENGE
#2	BALANCE	TRADITION	IDENTITY
#3	STRUCTURES	RELATIONSHIP	ENTREPRENEURSHIP
#4	CONSEQUENCES	RESILIENCE	INTERPRETATION
#5	CREATIVITY	CURIOSITY	COMMUNITY

EXIT POINT (MEDIA PROJECT)

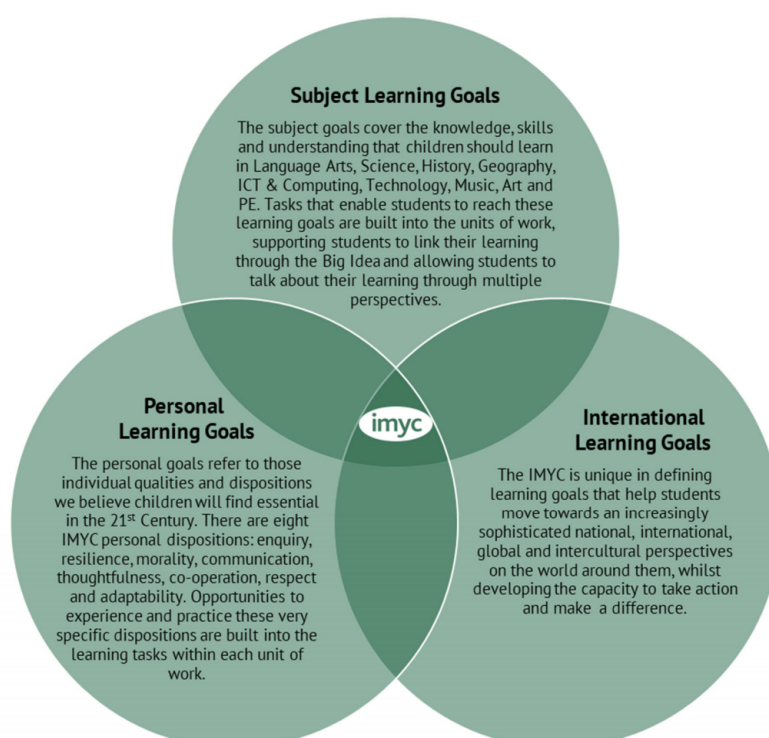
At the end of each big idea, students will be asked to reflect on their learning, create an individual or group project, and present it to peers, parents and teachers. As each student will experience their own learning in a unique way, this activity will be individual to the understanding of each

learner and will demonstrate their understanding in different subjects, enabling them to connect subjects through the big idea and make personal meaning. Students are engaged in a variety of different projects including filmmaking, drama performances and photography.



IMYC LEARNING GOALS AND AREAS

The IMYC's backbone is formed by learning goals that are arranged around three areas of learning: Academic, Personal and International.



The IMYC subject learning goals were drafted after studying many different international curricula which means that the learning goals are very international and are designed to make learners

‘mobile’, enabling them to move country easily and learn through a broad curriculum. The IMYC has clearly articulated learning goals that are universal and focus on how we are both similar and different:

‘We live locally in a global world; local problems begin to be solved when we have an awareness of perspectives different from our own. National problems are almost always International as well.’

IMYC INTERNATIONAL MINDEDNESS LEARNING GOALS

The IMYC is unique in defining International Mindedness Learning Goals that help students continue to move towards an increasingly sophisticated national, international, global and intercultural perspective and develop a sense of International Mindedness. These learning goals will help students to develop an international mindset that strives to consistently consider others. Students will learn about:

- How to acquire knowledge and understanding of what lies beyond their own nationality
- How to understand the independence and interdependence of peoples, countries and cultures
- How to develop both a national and international perspective
- The countries representing the population of students in their school
- Other countries studied in each subject
- How to maintain an appreciation for the ideas and cultures outside of one’s own

IMYC PERSONAL DISPOSITIONS

The IMYC also identifies 8 key personal dispositions that are key to developing both academic and personal growth. These are:

- Communication
- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Enquiry
- Morality
- Thoughtfulness
- Responsibility
- Respect

SUBJECTS OFFERED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- English or English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- French, Italian, or Spanish
- Geography
- History
- Science
- Mathematics
- Art
- Drama
- Music
- Information Technology (IT)
- Physical and Health Education (PHE)
- Personal Social Health Education (PSHE)



In addition, students have an IMYC lesson each fortnight which serves to pull together the various elements of the programme.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is integral to learning as it is through assessment that students are able to understand how well they are learning and can use feedback from the assessment process to improve in this regard. Assessment results can be accessed on a regular basis through ManageBac.

Although teachers may provide grades as a part of the feedback process, the emphasis should be on written feedback that provides information for students on what they have done well and how they can improve.

Middle School students will complete 2 main types of assessment. These are **Formative** and **Summative** assessments.

IMYC GRADE BOUNDARIES

Where grades are given, these grade boundaries will be used in all IMYC classes. A D is considered a passing grade.

Grade	Boundary
A	90
B	75
C	60
D	50
E	30
F	20
G	0

ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

On Progress and Semester reports, students will receive an Attitude to Learning grade, as follows:

Grade	Descriptor
E	Excellent- Consistently demonstrates outstanding diligence, care and participation in all aspects of work including independent study. Always up-to-date, punctual, prepared for class. Behaviour is exemplary and the student works at a level that shows initiative and goes “beyond the call of duty”.
S+	Very Good - Demonstrates diligence, care and participation. Up-to-date, punctual and prepared for class.
S	Good - Generally diligent, careful and participates in class. Work assignments done as required. Some room for improvement and the student is capable of doing better.
S-	Weak/Insufficient - almost adequate. More effort and an increase in diligence, care and participation is possible and necessary. Needs to take more responsibility for his/her progress and seek guidance if unable to improve by him/herself.

U	Completely inadequate - Level of behaviour, effort and progress are unacceptable. Shows a complete lack of interest. A significant increase in diligence, care and participation is essential.
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COMMUNITY AND SERVICE - VIS SERVES

The school has a philosophical commitment to the ideals of service to the local and global communities. The opportunities available to Middle 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 knowledgeable, inquisitive and ethical contributors mentioned in the VIS mission.

In the Middle School years there are a range of community service opportunities for students to participate in.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY (ASA) PROGRAMME

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

The ASA Programme 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"/> Young Chefs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robotics | <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coding | <input type="checkbox"/> Capoeira | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball/Softball | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin Dance | <input type="checkbox"/> Handball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Flamenco | |

All 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. This support can take many forms, but is predominantly provided by the following people:

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 teacher who can provide ongoing support emotionally and academically. Homeroom teachers work to build a sense of community within the homeroom group.

Homeroom teachers for 2021-22

Class	Homeroom Teacher	Room Number	Email
6V	Ms Christine Binda	MS 4	bindac@verdala.org
6I	Mr Andrew Moulton	MS Art	moultona@verdala.org
6S	Ms Michaela German	MS 3	germanm@verdala.org
7V	Mr Zack Berg	MS 9	bergz@verdala.org
7I	Ms Mary Kay Zammit	MS 2	zammitmk@verdala.org
7S	Ms Veronica De La Rocha Manchon	MS 8	delarochamanchonv@verdala.org
8V	Ms Rebecca Farrugia	MS 5	farrugiar@verdala.org
8I	Mr Mike McHugh	Drama 1	mchughm@verdala.org
8S	Mr Duncan Roberts	MS 7	robertsd@verdala.org

EXTRA LEARNING SUPPORT

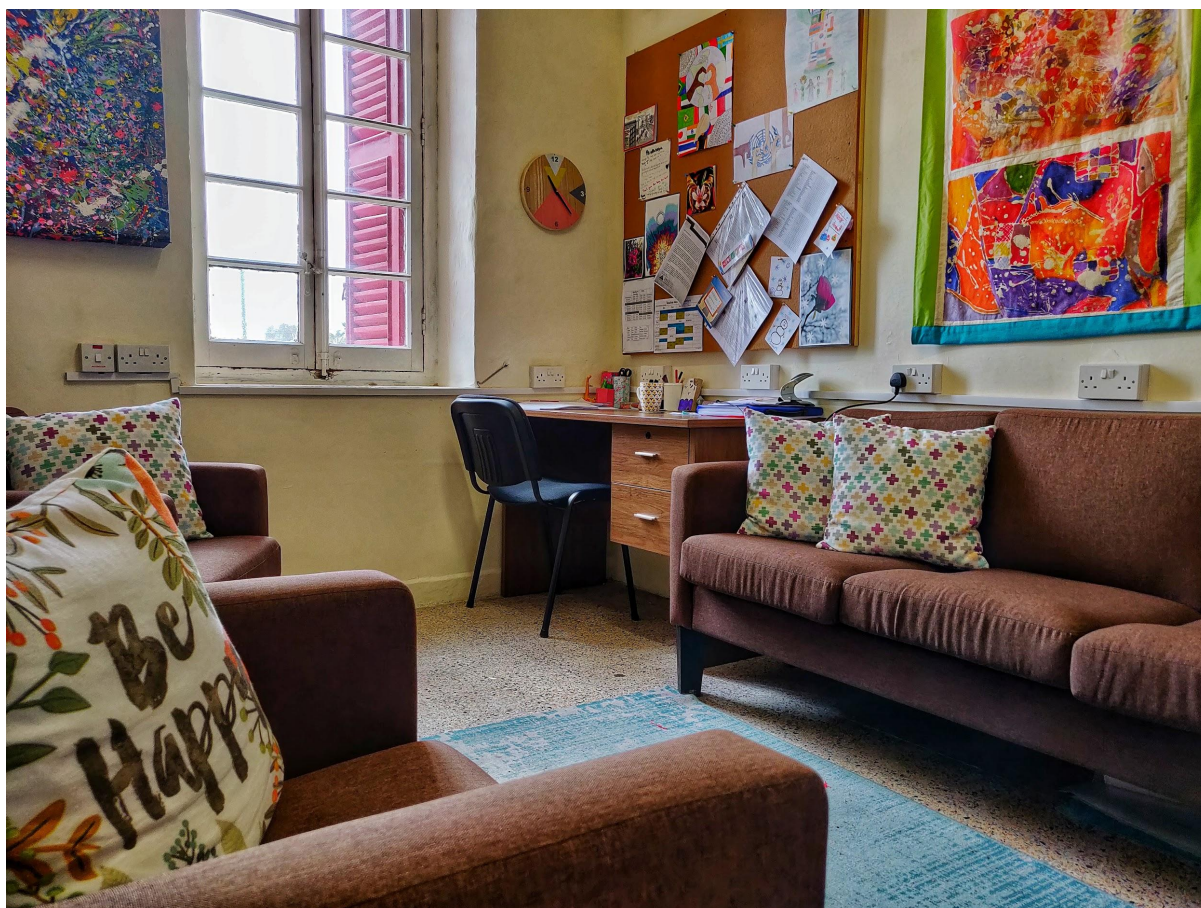
Students who experience difficulties related to their learning can acquire a range of support within the classroom and outside such a setting. Primarily it is the teacher who addresses students' inconsistencies with their learning. However the school has a specialist with whom teachers and parents can 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
- 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 Educator, 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.

WELLBEING AND PERSONAL COUNSELLING

We have two members of staff who can provide counselling support to students in MS: Ms Corinne Borg and Ms Alexandra Vella McIntyre. 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.



Parents are encouraged to contact any member of the Student Support Services team or Middle School Principal should they have any concerns about their child’s wellbeing.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE & FIRST AID

Many teachers have up to date first aid certification 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, Ms Odette Micallef Engerer, who is based near the Elementary School but works with all sections.

MS students who feel unwell and/or wish to see the nurse must inform Ms Krista the MSPA immediately. Students must not call their parents/guardians before they have been given permission to go home sick by the school nurse.

Parents/Guardians: *please ensure that you speak to the nurse, MS PA, or a member of the MS Leadership Team before arranging for your child 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

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](#)

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

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. The Board of Directors 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.

Families are expected not to take vacation time during school days and should be aware that such absences will always be recorded as **Absent** (see below).

EXCUSED OR ABSENT

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

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)
 - o 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.

All other absences will be recorded as **Absent**.

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. This decision will be taken by the Principal in conjunction with the Head of School.

LATENESS

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

MAKING UP 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 absence to make appropriate arrangements to take the assessment in advance, or for the teacher to reschedule it for all students.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Teachers are expected to review the expectations for academic honesty with their students at the start of the year. There can be very serious consequences if a student commits an act of academic dishonesty in a final assessment and it is our responsibility to ensure that students develop good habits of academic honesty throughout their time at VIS.

Although each Programme Coordinator will discuss this issue with students from their programme, it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that their students are explicitly given the opportunity to learn the skills necessary for good academic honesty practice (referencing sources, for instance) within their area, and are consistent in promoting good practice and picking up on cases of academic dishonesty.

It should always be remembered that students may commit acts of academic dishonesty unintentionally or through a lack of awareness, this will often be the case. This is especially important at VIS with our very internationally diverse population, as the rules and customs regarding academic honesty can differ greatly. We can never assume that students are aware of good academic honesty practice, and therefore must ensure that we are explicit about what is required and that we revisit these expectations on a regular basis.

[Academic Honesty Policy](#)

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 6-8

Within a school year, regardless of subject area, the consequences for academic dishonesty are:

First instance

- The class teacher will review the standards and expectations for academic honesty and will support the student in re-submitting the work to an acceptable standard. Feedback will be given and the work assessed as normal.
- A note will be recorded on the student's MB Behaviour record and the MS Principal informed.

Second 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.

Third & 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
- 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

HONOURS AND HIGH HONOURS

At the end of each semester the student's marks are assessed and awards are presented. These are indicated on the student's report card and also presented in the form of a certificate at one of the school assemblies where the student receives accolation for their academic achievement.

In the Middle School these awards are based on their attitude towards learning, not on their academic results.

The awards are given as follows:

- Honours: A minimum of 10 E's (Excellent effort grade in 10 subjects)
- High Honours: For achieving E (Effort grade) in all subjects!

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 Middle School/Library and Information Technology).

MOBILE PHONE USE

Guidelines

- The general use of mobile phones in Middle School is not permitted.
- If students do bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must not be visible upon entering the school campus.
- All mobile phones should be switched off and locked away in students lockers at the start of the school day.
- If students need to communicate with parents/guardians and vice versa this can be done through the MS PA or MS Principal.

Please note, on occasion mobile phones may be used as a learning tool within a classroom setting. When this occurs, teachers will provide adequate warning to students either via managebac or the homework diary.

Consequences

Students who do not follow these guidelines will have their mobile phones confiscated by the MS Principal using the following guidelines:

- 1st Occasion - students will be allowed to collect their mobile phone at the end of the school day.
- 2nd Occasion - parents will be informed and will be asked to collect the mobile phone.
- 3rd Occasion - this will be treated as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour guidelines outlined in the MS Student-Parent Handbook.

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PHE)

Physical and Health Education (PHE) is a compulsory course for all students in Middle School.

Students participate in a number of different sports and are therefore expected to come prepared for all PHE lessons.

Students will require the following equipment for land PE:

- School PE kit
- Efficiently soled sports shoes (no flats soles allowed)
- Hat and sunscreen in summer
- Refillable Water bottle
- Change of clothes, underwear and socks
- Towel
- Shower gel and roll on deodorant (no aerosols allowed in changing rooms)

For swimming units students will require the following equipment:

- One piece swimsuit/swimming trunks
- Swimming hat
- Goggles
- Flip flops
- Towel
- Shower gel and roll on deodorant (no aerosols allowed in changing rooms)

More details regarding equipment for PHE can be obtained from the interim Head of PHE Ms Sarah Boylin (vismiddle@verdala.org)

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



GENERAL INFORMATION

TEXT BOOKS

- All textbooks will be supplied by the school unless indicated otherwise.
- Students should write their name inside the front cover of each textbook checked out to them.
- Students will be required to pay a fine for damaged or lost books, which must be settled before the publications of grades/reports.

GENERAL STATIONERY AND EQUIPMENT

- All students are provided with a stationery pack at the beginning of the academic year. This pack also includes a set of headphones for use in ICT for Grade 6 and all new students to Verdale.
- Subject teachers will indicate to students if there are any additional stationery requirements.
- All students are responsible for ensuring they have all the required materials for each lesson.
- All students are required to clearly print their name on all property. This includes clothing, calculators, etc.

RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT

- The school provides each homeroom with their own set of equipment for various games such as basketball, football and four-square.
- Students may bring their own equipment as well to school, but they should ensure this is clearly marked with their names.
- The school is not responsible for loss or damage to any personal recreational equipment the student may bring to school.

SECURITY: LOCKERS, VALUABLES, AND LOST PROPERTY

Students are expected to be responsible for their own belongings at all times. To help with this, all MS students are assigned a locker at the beginning of the year, which may be locked with a combination code or a key. Students are expected to provide their own padlock, and a copy of the key or the combination is to be given to the homeroom teacher. 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 them at any time should the need arise. Locker privileges may be revoked if used inappropriately such as damaging a locker, or failing to keep articles in a neat and orderly fashion.

Students are encouraged to always store their electronic equipment in their lockers during breaks, lunch or when required to be absent from the MS building such as during PHE classes.

The School will periodically conduct random bag and locker checks. 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. 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.

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 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 HS Reception or MS lost and found box (near MS PA). Students should look in these locations in the first instance. At the end of each month, lost and found items will be displayed for claiming, and then what remains will go to charity.

TRANSPORTATION

The school operates a bus service; further details can be obtained from our website or from Reception. The Student Code of Conduct and behaviour expectations apply when travelling on the bus, and failure to comply with these expectations can result in disciplinary consequences. In particular, students must be aware that:

- they are required to sit safely and in an appropriate manner.
- the bus driver is the authority on the bus and may assign seats to students.
- they must wear seat belts.
- they must remain seated at all times unless entering or leaving the bus.
- behave in an appropriate manner throughout the journey.

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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Middle 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.

MS STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



VIS Middle School Student Code of Conduct

Our VIS Middle 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 MS 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 MS 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.

MS 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.

MS 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
- ❖ 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
- 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 MS Student Code of Conduct applies to any student enrolled in Grades 6-8 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 MS 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 MS 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
- 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 MS teaching faculty, the IMYC Coordinator, or the MS 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 MS Student-Parent Handbook.

Acknowledgement

All Middle School students and parents must read this document in its entirety, agree to all terms and conditions.

BEHAVIOUR

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 or in Google Classroom).

- 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

- Principals will review these Behaviour reports on a weekly basis 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.
- To promote positive behaviours, students will receive a certificate for 6 commendations and an award for 10 commendations (within a particular category). These certificates/awards will be issued throughout the school year.
- 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, dealt with internally. Parents are informed via email.	Orange For serious incidents. Parents must be informed in person.	Red Forextremely serious issues. Usually a sanction implemented after a Disciplinary Committee has been involved.
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First case of academic dishonesty in a year Regular use of unacceptable language 	Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further incidents of behaviour that merited a yellow card 	Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further incidents of behaviour that merited an orange card

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent lateness to school or to class • Unacceptable behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second case of academic dishonesty in an academic year • Bullying of any kind • Deliberate destruction of property • Truancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further case of academic dishonesty in an academic year • Alcohol or drug abuse • Physical abuse of another person • Theft
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Blue

For ongoing issues to do with approaches to learning skills. Not assigned for isolated incidents. Parents may be informed if necessary.

Examples

- 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.
- 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.
 - o Teachers will be advised that the student is on report
 - o 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:
 - o Consider the matter closed
 - o Place the student on report for another week (a note in MB should accompany this decision)
 - o Move the student onto another card (a note in MB should accompany this decision)

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

Severe issues may result in a decision to suspend or expel a student from VIS. These are rare and each case is dealt with carefully, taking into account the student's record, the nature of the incident, and other factors.

A student may receive an in-school suspension, or an out-of-school suspension lasting from one to various days. Decisions to suspend a student are taken by the Principal in consultation with the Head of School. Students who have been suspended will be placed on an Orange or Red Report Card for at least two weeks upon their return to school, depending on the reason for the suspension.

Expulsion of a student is a complex matter requiring the involvement of the Head of School and the Board, and is very rarely required.

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

A Disciplinary Review Committee is convened whenever an extremely serious issue arises and potentially appropriate consequences include suspension or expulsion.

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, or a range of other consequences.

NON-SMOKING CAMPUS

VIS is a non-smoking campus; this includes all areas of our school. 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 from the school campus.

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

THE SCHOOL DAY

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

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

	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 - 10:45	Break
Period 3	10:25 - 11:10	10:45 - 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 - 13:15	12:40 - 13:25	Period 5
Period 6	13:15 - 14:00	13:25 - 14:10	Period 6
Period 7	14:00 - 14:45		
Period 8	14:45 - 15:30		

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 will be set along the following guidelines:

Grade 6 - 1 x 20 minute task per subject area per week.

Grade 7 - 1 x 30 minute task per subject area per week.

Grade 8 - 1 x 45 minute task per subject area per week.

Homework is never expected to be handed in the next day. Staff will always provide students with the appropriate amount of time to complete their homework.

Homework tasks will be clearly communicated to students and will be visible on Managebac.

Most students manage this successfully, but for those who need additional support with this aspect of school life, they can speak to a counsellor, or to the Principal.

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

- Underwear should not be visible.
- Skirts and shorts should be an appropriate length. Short shorts are not permitted.
- 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. In particular, dangling jewelry and earring hoops are not considered safe.
 - 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. However, 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.

Continued failure to abide by the dress code will result in disciplinary sanctions.

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.

A monthly newsletter The Fort can be found at <https://verdalaafort.com/> and is also accessible through the VIS website.

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.

COMMUNICATING PROGRESS

WRITTEN REPORTS

Reports are sent home four times a year:

Report	Grade Levels	Nature of report
Semester 1 Progress report	6-8	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
PST Conferences	6-8	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 1 Report	6-8	Grades & Comments
PST Conferences	6-8	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 2 Progress report	6-8	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
Semester 2 Report	6-8	Grades & Comments

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

PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER 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 on these days.

Students are expected to accompany their parents to these conferences.

GRADE PARENTS

The role of the Grade Parents is primarily to touch base with the homeroom teacher on a regular basis and plan ahead with them. They can facilitate class parent get-togethers (communicate Q&A with teachers and parents), identify field trip volunteers fairly, when needed, and support homeroom teachers in other ways.

If you are interested in this role for your homeroom, please put your name forward as soon as possible, either to the homeroom teacher or to the Principal. We are hoping to finalise election of the parents to these roles as early on as possible in the year.

MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS

Parents 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. If there is an urgent issue, please contact the MS PA Ms Krista Micallef-Trigona (mspa@verdala.org) who will then pass on the message.

CAMPUS GUESTS

Due to Covid-19 Protocols in place, parents and visitors are currently not allowed onto the school campus.

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

Students wishing to have visiting friends attend school must apply with a letter/email from their parents/guardians, at least one week in advance, for permission from the Principal.

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.

DAILY SCHOOL TIMETABLE

Each student has their own online timetable which can be accessed through ManageBac. Other schedules can also be seen via <https://verdala.edupage.org/timetable/>.