



**Verdala**  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



# MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2022 - 2023

*Last updated: 16th August 2022*

<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>A Message from the Principal</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 1: Welcome to VIS</b>	<b>6</b>
VIS Guiding Statements	7
Our Vision	7
Our Mission	7
Our Educational Philosophy	7
Our Student Profile	7
Definition of Learning: Learning @VIS	7
Distance learning @ VIS	9
<b>Section 2: Middle School Overview</b>	<b>11</b>
MS Faculty & Staff	11
Middle School Campus	13
Curriculum Programme	14
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) - Launching September 2022	14
MYP Coordinator	16
IB Learner Profile	17
Subjects offered in Middle School	18
Assessment	18
MYP Grade Boundaries	18
Attitudes to Learning	18
MAP Assessments	19
Community and Service - VIS SERVES	19
After-School Activity (ASA) Programme	19
Student Support	20
Homeroom teachers	20
Extra Learning Support	21
Wellbeing and Personal Counselling	21
Medical Assistance & First Aid	22
Head Lice	22
Attendance Requirement	22
Excused or Absent	23

Lateness	23
Making up missed work	23
Academic Honesty	24
Academic Dishonesty Consequences	24
Grades 6-8	24
First instance	24
Second instance	24
Third & subsequent instances	25
Awards	25
Honours and High Honours	25
Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)	25
Mobile Phone Use	26
Physical and Health Education (PHE)	26
Emergency Procedures	27
General Information	27
Text Books	27
General Stationery and Equipment	28
Recreational Equipment	28
Security: Lockers, Valuables, and Lost Property	28
Lost Property	28
Transportation	29
<b>Section 3: Expectations for Students</b>	<b>29</b>
VIS Student Rights	29
MS Student Code of Conduct	30
MS students at VIS have a responsibility to:	30
When does the Code apply?	31
Disciplinary Consequences	31
Acknowledgement	32
Behaviour	32
Report Card System	33
Procedure	34
Suspension/Expulsion of students	34
Disciplinary Review Committee	34

Non-Smoking Campus	35
The School Day	35
Homework	35
Dress Code	36
Dress code infractions	36
<b>Section 4: Communications</b>	<b>37</b>
ManageBac	37
Communicating Progress	37
Written Reports	37
Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences	38
Grade parents	38
Messages for Students	38
Campus Guests	38
School Calendar	38
Daily School Timetable	38

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



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 new curriculum, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP), we offer our students opportunities to solve problems, ask questions and learn new skills. In MS students 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 encouraged to develop both their independent skills and their ability to work effectively as part of a team. In addition, Middle School students will participate in interdisciplinary units 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 they continue their MYP journey in Grade 9 and 10 and enter either the IBDP or IBCP programme in Grade 11 and 12.

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 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 Grade 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 Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), continued in High School in Grades 9 & 10 and then followed by International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) or International Baccalaureate Careers Related Programme (IBCP) 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 Community Service activities which 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

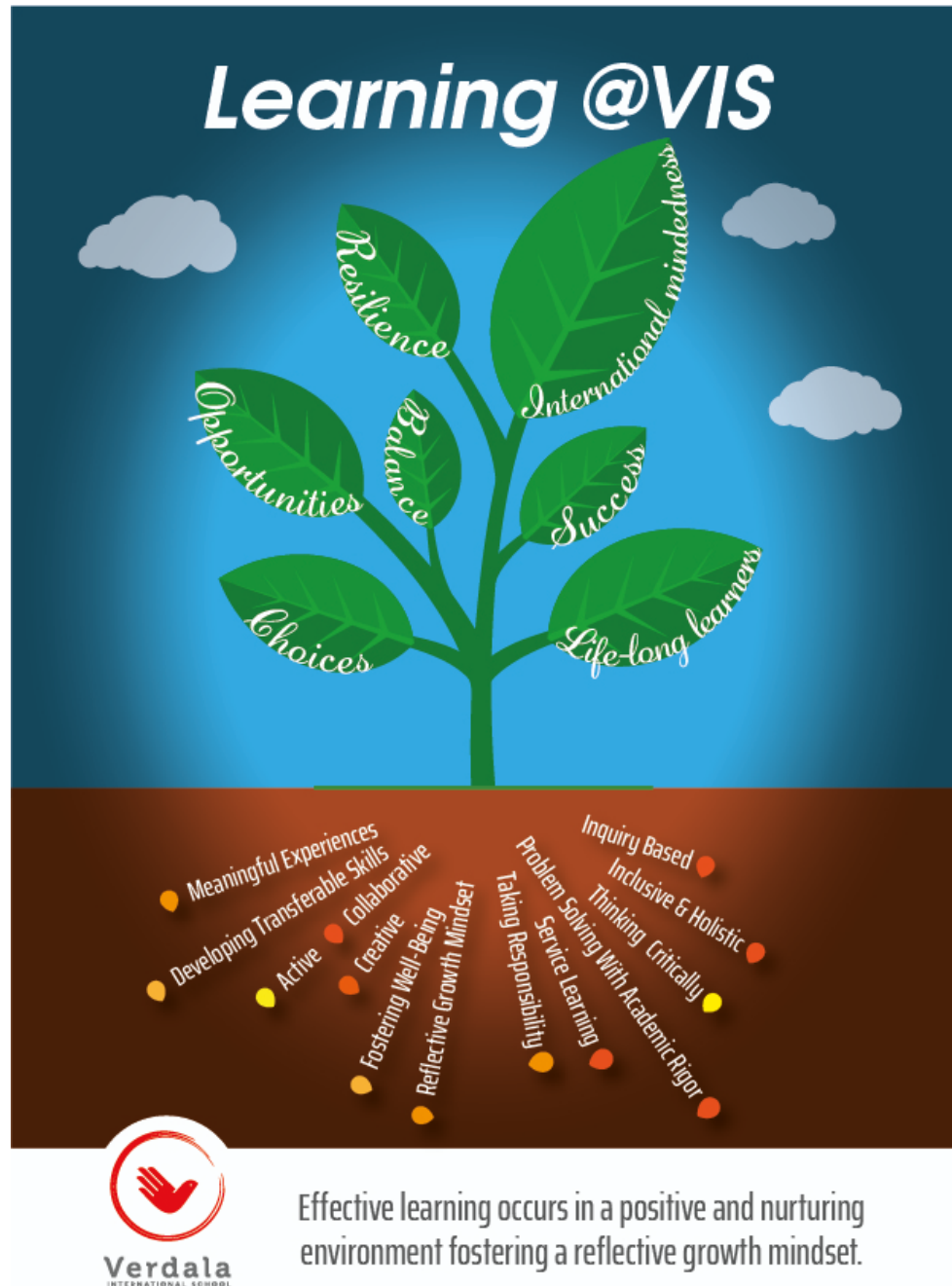
### DEFINITION OF LEARNING: LEARNING @VIS

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.





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.
- Partial school shutdown, with certain sections of campus inaccessible, with students in those sections 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

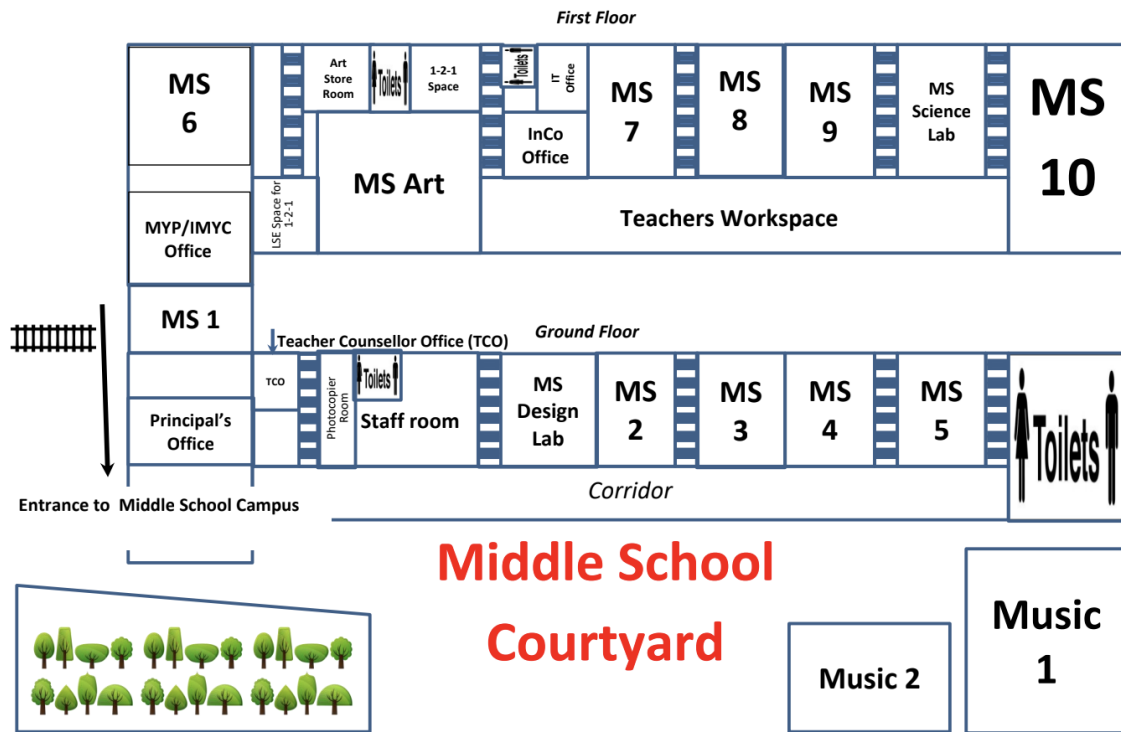


Teacher	MS Subject Area	Responsibility
Lucienne AGIUS	Italian	G7 HR Teacher
Rogelio BALLADARES		IT Assistant
Joseph BARKER	English	EE Coordinator
Zack BERG	Physical Health Education (PHE)	Head of PHE Grade 6 HR Teacher
Christine BINDA	Mathematics	Grade 6 HR Teacher
Corinne BORG		Director of Well-Being
Sarah BOYLIN	Individuals & Societies (I&S)	Middle School Principal Acting Head of I&S
Travis BURNHAM	Science	
Mark CACHIA		Maintenance
Veronica CALLEJA		Secondary School Librarian
Carolyn CASSAR-GEORGE	Mathematics	
Jose Maria CASTRO ALONSO	Music	PHE Assistant
Steve CRICHTON		CAS Coordinator
Claire CUTHBERT	French, Spanish	Head of Language Acquisition
Hannah CUTHBERT		Learning Support Educator (LSE)
Abigail DAVEY	English	G7 HR Teacher
Kristina DEPASQUALE		Head of English

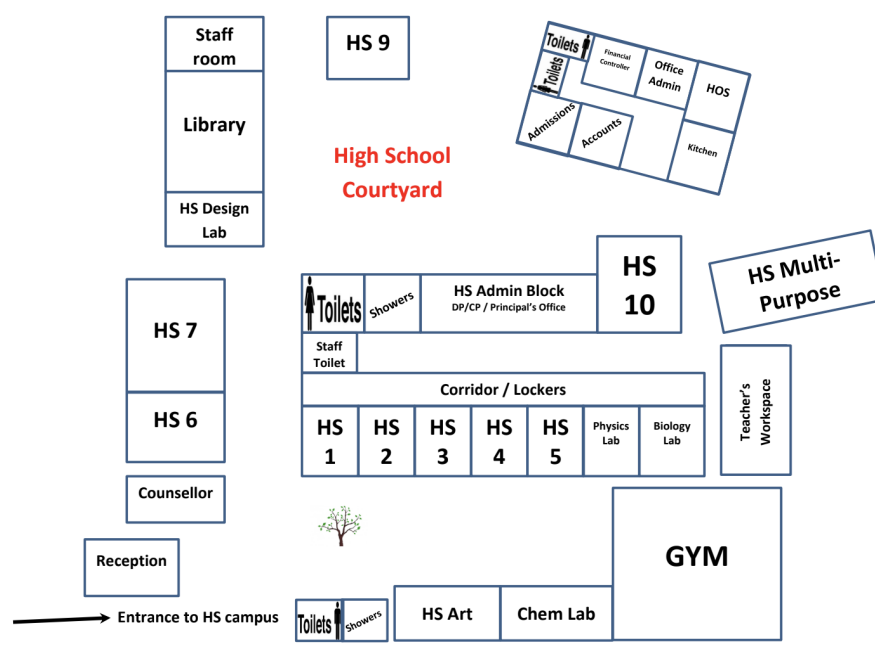
Ingrid DONATI	Italian, Spanish	
Fady ELKHALAWY	Individuals & Societies (I&S)	
Silvio ELLUL		IT Manager
Elaine FALZON		PHE Assistant
Rebecca FARRUGIA	Individuals & Societies (I&S)	
Niti FIGEAC	Science	
Gemma FITZPATRICK	Physical & Health Education (PHE)	G8 HR Teacher
Kester FITZPATRICK	Science	
Anita FORMOSA		Library Assistant
Nicolette GALEA		Learning Support Educator (LSE)
Michaela GERMAN	English	G6 HR Teacher
Lesley KENDALL		Nurse
Jill KIRKSTADT		Head of Mathematics
Natasha KISSAUN		Learning Support Educator (LSE)
Patricia LUPI		Learning Support Educator (LSE)
Zoe MAY	Science	
Mike McHUGH	Music	
Sofia MELO LOPES	Spanish	
Krista MICALLEF TRIGONA		MS PA
David MILES		Director of Tech Integration
Maria MORA CORRAL	Design	
Ellie NIAS	Drama	
Derek O'MALLEY	Individuals & Societies (I&S)	
Marianne OGDEN	Visual Art	
Jane PEEL		MS PA
Lauren PRAZEAU	French, Spanish	G8 HR Teacher
Richard PRICE		Head of Science
Jaime RUIZ	Science	
Ethan SALTER	Visual Art	Head of Arts
Elise STOFFREGEN	English, English Acquisition	Grade 8 HR Teacher
Denise TANNER	English Acquisition	Head of English Acquisition
Alex VELLA McINTYRE	PSHE	MS Counsellor
Jason WARD	MYP	MYP Coordinator
Ufuk YAGCI	Design	Head of Design
Hortense ZAMMIT		Learning Support Educator (LSE)
Mary Kay ZAMMIT	Mathematics	G7 HR Teacher

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

## 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

### INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP) - LAUNCHING SEPTEMBER 2022

From September 2022 (awaiting authorisation), Grade 6-8 students at Verdala will follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP). The MYP is a challenging framework that encourages students to make practical connections between their studies and the real world, preparing them for success in further study and in life. The MYP aims to develop active learners and internationally minded young people who can empathise with others and pursue lives of purpose and meaning. The programme empowers students to inquire into a wide range of issues and ideas of significance locally, nationally and globally. The MYP encourages young people to be creative, critical and reflective learners, capable of transferring their knowledge, skills and understandings across contexts and disciplines.

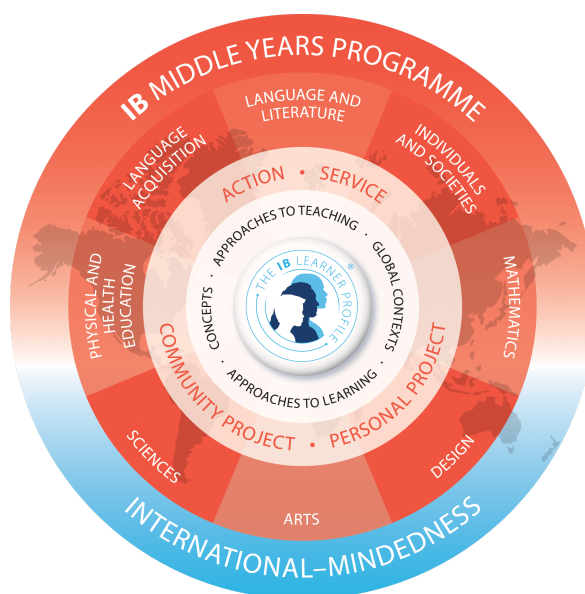


The MYP is a five-year programme (with G9 starting in 2023 and G10 in 2024 @ VIS) and students who complete the MYP are well-prepared to undertake the IB Diploma Programme (DP) or Career-related Programme (CP) in Grade 11 and 12.



The MYP comprises eight subject groups:

- Language acquisition.
- Language and literature.
- Individuals and societies.
- Science.
- Mathematics.
- Arts.
- Physical and health education.
- Design.



The MYP requires at least 50 hours of teaching time for each subject group in each year of the programme. In Grade 10, students have the option to sit an externally assessed e-assessment.

Each year, students in the MYP also engage in at least one collaboratively planned interdisciplinary unit that involves at least two subject groups. MYP students also complete a long-term project, where they decide what they want to learn about, identify what they already know, discover what they will need to know to complete the project, and create a proposal or criteria for completing it. MYP students learn essential project management skills. They complete a collaborative, community project at the end of Grade 8 and a personal, independent project at the end of Grade 10. The project component represents an accessible and inclusive experience which allows students to engage with their interests and passions in a safe and supported way.

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) helps students develop both subject-specific and interdisciplinary understanding. The MYP curriculum framework includes:

- Approaches to learning (ATL), helping students learn how to learn by developing skills for research, critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and self-management
- Key and related concepts help students to connect and explore big ideas that really matter in today's and tomorrow's world.
- Global Contexts help students understand the relevance and importance of what they are studying through real world scenarios and situations that promote our common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet.



The MYP culminates in an independent learning project in Grade 10. Students complete a significant piece of work over an extended period of time, encouraging them to consolidate their learning and reflect on the outcomes of their work.

Another component of the MYP is service as action, through community service. Action and service have always been shared values of the IB community. Students take action when they apply what they are learning in the classroom and beyond. IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a commitment to service—making a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. Service as action is an integral part of the programme, especially in the [MYP community project](#) which students participate in at the end of Grade 8.

This information is taken from the Official International Baccalaureate website. For further details please visit: <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/>

*"Verdala International School is a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme and pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy - a commitment to improve the teaching and learning of a diverse and inclusive community of students by delivering challenging, high quality programmes of international education that share a powerful vision."*

#### MYP COORDINATOR

Our MYP Coordinator for the academic year 2022/23 is Mr Jason Ward. Should you have any questions about this programme, please do not hesitate in contacting him: [wardj@verdala.org](mailto:wardj@verdala.org)





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:



---

#### SUBJECTS OFFERED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- English or English Acquisition
- French, Italian, or Spanish
- Individuals & Societies (I&S)
- Science
- Mathematics
- Visual Art
- Drama
- Music
- Design
- Physical and Health Education (PHE)
- Well-Being



In addition, students have a MYP lesson each week which serves to pull together the various elements of the programme. This MYP session aims to help the students adapt and transition to their new curriculum. It supports the acquisition and practice of self-management, collaborative and reflective skills which are differentiated and developmentally appropriate as the students transition through 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 tasks are opportunities to reflect, learn and grow. At VIS we encourage our students to be proactive and demonstrate commitment to their studies.

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.

Further information will be provided at the end of September 2022, along with Parent Information and Student Information sessions run by the MYP Coordinator.

---

#### MYP GRADE BOUNDARIES

Further information will be provided at the end of September 2022.

---

#### 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.

#### MAP ASSESSMENTS

In addition to classroom-based assessments, all Middle School students sit for the Measures of Academic Progress assessment (MAP) twice a year - in September & January. This assessment is an adaptive, computer based test that benchmarks growth and progress against millions of students around the world. The results of this assessment are used to help VIS evaluate the effectiveness of its programs and determine next steps for individual students. It is one piece of the puzzle that helps teachers support student growth and progress. MAP results are not used as a single data point, but are utilised by teachers alongside a range of data gathered. MAP results are shared with students and parents via Managebac.

#### 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.

Further information will be provided at the end of September 2022.

#### AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY (ASA) PROGRAMME

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. Further information can be obtained through emailing our ASA Coordinator Ms Nicky Schembri ([schembrin@verdala.org](mailto:schembrin@verdala.org))

## 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 2022-23

Class	Homeroom Teacher	Room Number	Email
6V	Ms Christine Binda	MS 4	<a href="mailto:bindac@verdala.org">bindac@verdala.org</a>
6I	Mr Zack Berg	MS 10	<a href="mailto:bergz@verdala.org">bergz@verdala.org</a>
6S	Ms Michaela German	MS 7	<a href="mailto:germanm@verdala.org">germanm@verdala.org</a>
7V	Ms Abigail Davey	MS 3	<a href="mailto:daveya@verdala.org">daveya@verdala.org</a>
7I	Ms Mary Kay Zammit	MS 2	<a href="mailto:zammitmk@verdala.org">zammitmk@verdala.org</a>
7S	Ms Lucienne Agius	MS Art	<a href="mailto:agiusl@verdala.org">agiusl@verdala.org</a>
8V	Ms Elise Stoffregen	MS 9	<a href="mailto:stoffregene@verdala.org">stoffregene@verdala.org</a>
8I	Ms Gemma Fitzpatrick	MS 5	<a href="mailto:fitzpatrickg@verdala.org">fitzpatrickg@verdala.org</a>
8S	Ms Lauren Prazeau	MS 8	<a href="mailto:prazeaul@verdala.org">prazeaul@verdala.org</a>

--	--	--	--

---

#### 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.

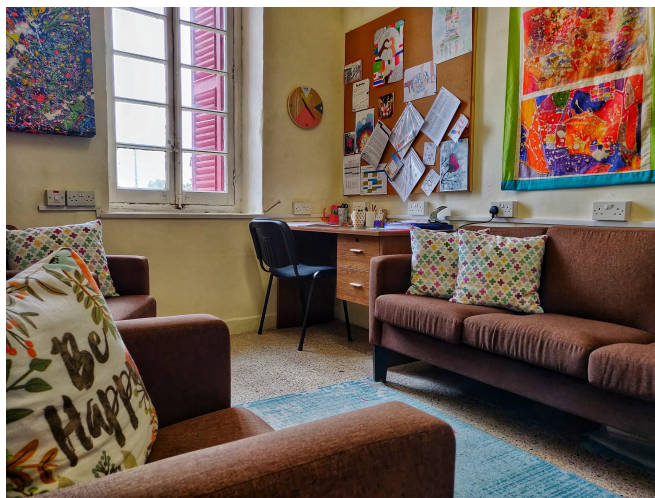
Depending on the student's individual needs, the plan aims to enhance any presenting difficulties, whether these are academic, behavioural, or giftedness.

For further details on Learning Support, please refer to the Student Support Services Handbook, or contact our Director of Wellbeing and Inclusion Coordinator, Ms Corinne Borg ([inco@verdala.org](mailto:inco@verdala.org))

---

#### WELLBEING AND PERSONAL COUNSELLING

We have two members of staff who can provide counselling support to students in MS: Ms Corinne Borg and Alexandra Vella McIntyre ([mscounsellor@verdala.org](mailto:mscounsellor@verdala.org)) Matters brought to the attention of the counsellor are dealt with in strict confidentiality, except when there is "clear danger to the person or to others" (American Psychological Association, 1981, p.636), or when it deemed fit to elicit support of competent professionals in order to assist with solving an issue.



Ms  
a  
is

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 Lesley Kendall, 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)
  - 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. 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 incidents 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).

### 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 (provided in G6 and for all new students)
- 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 Head of PHE Mr Zack Berg ([bergz@verdala.org](mailto:bergz@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 practised 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 Design for Grade 6 and all new students to Verdala.
- 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.





### 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 MYP 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.

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

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

---

## 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, MS 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 usually not expected to be handed in the next day. Please note, the only subject area where homework may be expected for the next day is Mathematics due to the nature of the schedule.

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, can speak to the counsellor, homeroom teacher, MYP Coordinator or MS 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 jewellery 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 quarterly newsletter The Fort can be found at <https://verdalaft.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	Date	Grade Levels	Nature of report
Semester 1 Progress report	23/11/22 3.30pm	6-8	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
PST Conferences	28/11/22 ½ day 29/11/22 Full day	6-8	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 1 Report	08/02/23 3.30pm	6-8	Grades & Comments
PST Conferences	13/03/23 ½ day 14/03/23 Full day	6-8	10 minute meetings per student
Semester 2 Progress report	28/04/2022 3.30pm	6-8	Grades only. Comment should be included for any D/3
Semester 2 Report	22/06/23 3.30pm	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](mailto: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/>.