



VIS Financial Planning FAQ

Facilities Masterplan - Presentation Q&A

Will the community be informed about the new build start dates/disruption? Yes, there will be a Parent Zoom Presentation sharing the time-line and expected changes to the drop-off zone.

Will the building be green/environmentally friendly? Whilst the architectural structure has been designed to consider temperature control, there are other possibilities that with additional investment can be considered. We are looking at recycling water options and other ideas that could enhance it to be an Eco-supportive building. This may require alternative funding as they are above the present budget. However, all possibilities are being considered should that funding become available, perhaps through sponsorship. Within our budget limits we will do what we can. One project is a green roof venture that would allow for a biosphere roof possibility. The company that develops this has worked in Spain and Malta and understands the requirements needed to make this a sustainable project

Did you have any planning objections? All planning has gone through Heritage Malta and the Maltese Planning Authority (MEPA). As noted in our Board minutes, the process was delayed by discussions with Heritage as the design needed to be tweaked according to their expectations. This took place May - June 2021.

Staff Salary Review - FAQs

Why are we doing a salary review? The goal of this salary review is to put the School in a better position to attract and retain high quality staff through affordable and competitive salaries, which are comparable to other similar international schools.
We committed to an all staff salary review as part of the School's current 5-year Strategic Plan. This is coming to an end. Work is underway on the next, ambitious Strategic Plan which will enhance what the School has to offer. To deliver, we need to invest in staff, as well as infrastructure and facilities.

Why are we increasing salaries? VIS salaries, especially for professional teaching staff, are low compared to other comparable international schools in the region. Cost of living in Malta has increased. Combined, this hinders our ability to recruit and retain high quality international teaching staff.
To give our students the best education possible, and the best value for our parents, we must retain current staff and recruit high quality staff who will stay for longer. This salary review will help achieve this.

How much will the fee increase be? Fees will increase by 7.5% in 2022. There was no fee increase in 2021 due to the pandemic.

When will fee increases be invoiced/payable? As usual, deposits are paid in March to secure each child's place. Final invoices are issued in July and payable by 31 August. We aim to share the new fee structure by February. This will be applicable for next academic year - starting September 2022.

What is VIS going to do to make the increase in fees manageable for me as a parent? VIS is supportive of parents who ask to go on a payment plan. Any parent can request this; the first step is to arrange a meeting with the Financial Controller.

If student numbers drop significantly over the next few years will my fees increase even more?	We have a high degree of confidence that student numbers will remain stable over the next 5 years. However, the Board has planned for various scenarios and - if student numbers were to drop - there is a cost reduction model in place that would reduce costs without jeopardizing quality of teaching.
How do VIS fees compare to equivalent/similar international schools?	VIS fees are substantially lower than comparable international schools in the region (similar school-size/not for profit), such as Schools in Rome, Milan, Barcelona and Madrid.
What are other local independent Schools' fees?	Private schools in Malta have a range of fees depending on the type of school and what it offers. VIS is the only school in Malta to offer inquiry-based education from Pre-K to pre-University. In terms of international schools, VIS fees approximately 60% of QSI fees. St Edwards, which offers IBDP, does not offer International Primary Years or Middle Years Programmes, nor is it co-ed in Early and Middle school.
How do VIS teachers' salaries compare to equivalent/similar international schools?	Most schools (and companies) do not share their salary scales. Search Associates 2019/20 School Leadership Compensation Survey” and “Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe 2019/20 Eurydice – Facts and Figure
When is the next salary increase scheduled? And the next review?	The next review will be 2027 - in line with the Board 5-year policy review cycle. This salary review was due in 2022, however it was brought forward to improve recruitment and retention.
When was the last salary review? What was the increase?	The last substantive review was in 2015. This focused on the local context. In 2017, a housing cost adjustment was given to all teaching staff due to the significant increase in local cost of living.
Will all teachers get the same?	The same salary structure will be applied to all teachers. The absolute increase will vary according to a teacher’s qualification and experience.
What about the VIS Support Staff?	We are conducting a comprehensive assessment of support staff roles, on the basis of a local bench-marking exercise, and will recommend new salary scales early next year. This has been included in the budget planning and will not further impact fees.
How can you be sure the extra salary will make a difference to recruitment/ retention?	Exit interview data show every year 50% of departing teachers state they are leaving because of financial reasons, such as cost of living in Malta, inability to save, no pension with contract. This increase will mitigate those reasons, we hope leading to better retention.

With fewer financial concerns, we hope to retain more staff and it will make it more appealing for interested candidates to consider VIS when they compare to other international schools in the region.

Why don't we recruit locally?

We recruit based on merit rather than convenience. We aim to recruit the best teachers possible for our curricula - those with experience of the IB system and/or with inquiry-driven teaching experience. This experience is more available internationally.

Of course, we have many excellent local teachers. When we get applications from local teachers with values which match those of VIS, we recruit, invest and train them into the international system.

If the local cost of living, particularly rental is an issue, why not address through relocation /rental allowances/school properties etc?

We cover some relocation costs for teachers coming from abroad. To be competitive with other international European schools, salary must be sufficient to cover rental costs.

Rental allowances only make sense when they reduce the tax burden on teachers. Local tax regime means this is not possible unless housing is located on school property (e.g. in boarding school context).

Staff Salary Review- Presentation Q & A

Will the salaries be benchmarked annually to ensure there is not another big hit?

The next salary review is due to take place in 5 years (2027). However, we will continue to monitor the benchmarking internationally.

Did the salary increase include the Leadership team ?

The salary review includes the Leadership Team, which plays a critical role in the management of the school. As with the teachers salary review process, we have benchmarked increases against similar schools in the European region. Details of teacher and Leadership Team remuneration is subject to GDPR and data privacy laws, and details are therefore not shared publicly.

If you have further questions about VIS finances please contact the Financial Controller, Mr Ivan Camilleri on financialcontroller@verdala.org