



Elementary School and Early Years Parent Handbook

2023-2024 School Year

**Francesca
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Elementary
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(PK1-Grade 1)

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Elementary Principal

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(Grade 2 - Grade 5)

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Welcome to Verdala International School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the entire elementary school, we would like to welcome you to the 2023-24 school year. This year, we are thrilled to continue our common journey of celebrating diversity and empowering students to become knowledgeable, ethical and inquisitive contributors to our world. With a focus on both academic growth and progress, as well as well-being and social-emotional development, VIS is committed to serving students to the best of our ability through community partnerships and high quality instruction.

Every year, it is our goal to partner with the parent community to maintain and enhance the welcoming environment for which VIS is known. With this in mind, we have compiled important information in this handbook that helps to outline our practices and ways in which parents can engage with our community. We encourage you to take the time to review the handbook at the beginning of the year and keep it as a reference, should you have any questions. If you require any clarification concerning the information contained within, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help!

VIS is a special place. Our community works hard to do what is best for each and every child on a daily basis. For this reason, we have an exceptional environment focused on inclusivity, inquiry and empowerment. Whether you are a new or returning family, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Verdala International School. We look forward to an exciting year of partnership and growth ahead.

Sincerely,

Francesca Theuma

Elementary Assistant
Principal
(PK-Grade 1)

Damon Rickett

Elementary Principal

Michael Neumann

Elementary Assistant
Principal
(Grade 2- Grade 5)

VIS GUIDING STATEMENTS

VIS VISION

To be the International School of choice, celebrating diversity, empowering and inspiring future generations.

VIS MISSION STATEMENT

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.

STUDENT PROFILE

We strive to ensure that all our students become knowledgeable, inquisitive & ethical contributors to our world.

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

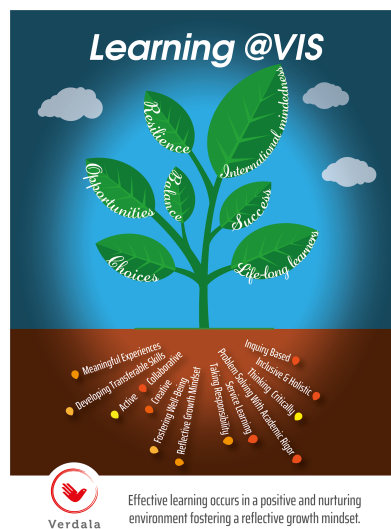
Students at VIS actively pursue opportunities to contribute responsibly to their local and global communities.

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.



ECO CHARTER

Rationale

As a community, we have a common understanding that environmental education needs to become a core part of our school's programme and ethos. We recognise the need to find a balance between our personal interests and protecting our health, our lifestyle, and our environment. This document serves to outline the principles, practices, and commitments we expect all members of our community to be guided by when engaged in any activity related to the school.

Guiding Principles

- VIS values our global ownership of the planet on which we live and we are committed to educating our community to be active & responsible eco-citizens.
- We will make principled decisions that are sustainable and minimise any negative impact on the environment.
- We will foster activities and initiatives that have a positive impact on the environment.

Practices

The school will actively:

- integrate environmental learning into the curriculum at all levels of the school in connection with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals;
- implement operational systems and policies that support sustainability and protection of the environment;
- foster habits of reduce, reuse, recycle throughout our community;
- communicate and promote our shared environmental responsibilities to all our stakeholders.

Commitments

- We will actively demonstrate our engagement with these principles & practices through sustainable actions & initiatives that benefit the environment.
- We will consider and, where possible, prioritise environmental sustainability as part of financial decision-making.
- We will encourage and educate our community to integrate this environmental responsibility into their daily & home life.
- We will unpack and interpret our Principles and Practices at age & context-appropriate levels across all stakeholders.
- We will explicitly identify short-term and long-term goals and report regularly on progress towards achieving these goals.

STUDENT RIGHTS

A right is a freedom that is protected. At Verdala Elementary School, students have the following rights:

- To be in a safe school environment, conducive to learning and one that promotes a healthy lifestyle
- To be treated with respect by their peers, teachers and other school employees
- To be protected from physical and verbal violence while on school premises or at school events
- To have enthusiastic, well qualified teachers, always prepared for their lesson and constantly striving to help each child to achieve their own full potential
- To be graded fairly
- To receive extra help from their teachers, if requested / needed
- To have supervised access to the outdoor sports facilities during the lunch break
- To be involved in the life of the school community

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

A responsibility is a duty or something you should do. To support the above, students have the following responsibilities:

- to be polite
- to be honest
- to be kind to classmates and other students
- to listen to the teachers
- to follow the school rules
- to come to school prepared to learn
- to always try their best

SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

Role	Name	Email
Elementary Personal Assistant	Krisztina Puskas	elempa@verdala.org
Elementary Principal	Damon Rickett	viselem@verdala.org
Elementary Assistant Principal (G2-5)	Michael Neumann	espa_jun@verdala.org
Elementary Assistant Principal (PK-G1)	Francesca Theuma	espa_inf@verdala.org
Elementary Social Emotional Advisor	Catherine Jolly	ESSEadvisor@verdala.org
School Nurse	Lesley Kendall	nurse@verdala.org
Director of Well-Being	Corinne Borg	inco@verdala.org

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

DISTANCE LEARNING @ VIS

In the event that circumstances require a partial or full campus closure, our commitment, as per our Distance Learning Policy, is to provide an alternative means of education in the form of Distance Learning. While Distance Learning cannot replicate onsite learning, our teachers can deliver powerful instruction that allows students to meet expected standards in an online environment. In the event of Distance Learning, more information will be shared with families and students.

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME - (PreKindergarten 1-PreKindergarten 2)

International Early Years Curriculum

The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) uses international best practices, holistic enquiry and play-based approaches that cover all curriculum areas including personal, social and emotional development. (2021, Fieldworks)

Learning Strands

The IEYC is built around four Learning Strands that underpin all learning and development:

- Independence and interdependence
- Communicating
- Enquiring
- Healthy living and physical wellbeing

Each unit of learning links all four of these Learning Strands to relevant and engaging activities that can be adapted and extended to meet individual children's needs. The four Learning Strands are used to guide teachers' planning so that there is consistency to what and how children learn.

Capturing Curiosity

In the IEYC, children and teachers collaborate to co-create meaningful experiences that build upon and make links to previous learning and development.





Units of Learning

All 18 IEYC units of learning have been carefully designed around a central theme, holistically linking all four Learning Strands to relevant and engaging activities that can be adapted and extended to meet individual needs.

Reflective Practices for Improving Learning

Reflective Practices for Improving Learning consists of three key actions – Capturing, Interpreting and Responding. These enable IEYC practitioners to incrementally assess a child's progress.



Language

Emergent literacy skills outline a key stage in a student's language development. In order to grow thoughtful, effective communicators who are capable of understanding and using language in a variety of contexts, we utilize a combination of play-based activities and core resources to integrate language outcomes into IEYC units whenever possible. As a result, our students develop the following skills:

- Letter/sound recognition and association
- The ability to manipulate sounds in spoken words
- Developmentally appropriate vocabulary and communication skills
- Emergent reading and writing skills
- Fine and gross motor skills

Math

VIS believes that the development of numeracy skills in the early years is firmly grounded in concrete, hands-on experiences. With this in mind, we employ a play-based approach that allows students to explore the mathematical components of their environment and make sense of the world around them. The math program supports students in developing the following outcomes:

- Number recognition
- One-to-one numerical correspondence
- Sequencing
- Patterning
- Spatial awareness
- Emergent measurement
- Estimation
- Problem solving

Creative and Performing Arts

Creative Arts enables children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. It provides opportunities and encouragement for sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of experiences. These include art, music and physical education, which will support development of the children's fine and gross motor skills. Outdoor PE exercises, games and activities will be more prevalent in the cooler months. During the hottest parts of the year, these activities will happen during the early periods of the school day or indoors.

The Performing Arts program will give students the opportunity to explore feelings, gain confidence through movement and drama, and make good use of their body and space when performing together. They will learn how to follow teacher instructions and cues.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMME - (Kindergarten to Grade 5)

International Primary Curriculum

The [International Primary Curriculum](#) (IPC) is committed to the holistic development of learners through enjoyable academic, personal and international learning that prepares them for opportunities and challenges now and in the future (Fieldworks, 2021).

Mileposts

The IPC provides children with subject goals, personal learning goals, and uniquely, international learning goals, and these are defined for each age phase:

- Ages 5-7 = Milepost 1
- Ages 7-9 = Milepost 2
- Ages 9-11 = Milepost 3

Learning Goals

The Learning Goals define what learners are expected to know, what they should be able to do and the understanding that they will develop through learning. The Learning Goals are organised into the following 3 unique but connected sections:

Subject	International	Personal
Cover the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should learn in.	Helps learners move toward national, international, global, and intercultural perspectives.	Underpins the individual qualities and dispositions that learners will need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Personal Learning Goals

Enquiry

Communication

Thoughtfulness

Adaptability

Cooperation

Resilience

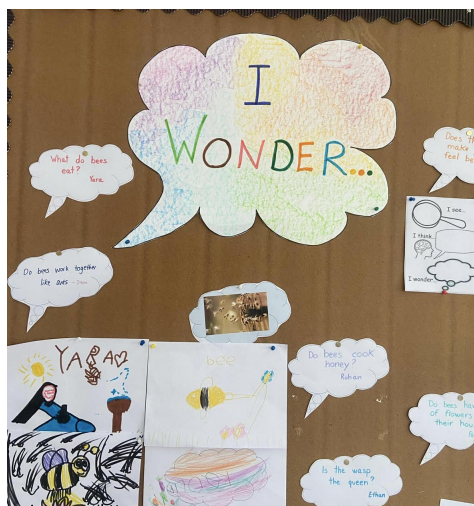
Respect

Morality

The IPC Personal Learning Goals underpin each unit – they represent the attributes that we believe children will find essential in the 21st Century. They help children to develop those qualities that will enable them to be at ease with the continually changing context of their lives.

Units of Learning

The IPC is based on thematic units of learning, which outline activities and tasks. Units have been designed to appeal to children's interests and help them to learn more about the world around them.





Globally Competent Learners

For students to become globally competent citizens, it is vital for them to develop not only a strong interest in their own and other cultures and a deep understanding of multiple perspectives, but also desire to help shape the local and global communities through actions that impact positively on society. We hope global competence develops the sense that children are capable of influencing change.

Assessment for Improving learning

The design of the International Primary Curriculum provides opportunities for both students and teachers to evaluate student learning against pre-established outcomes. The IPC supports the viewpoint that this type of assessment should take place regularly and allow for reflection and goal setting as well as provide opportunities for regular feedback.



Language Arts

The journey of understanding and using language in order to become a thoughtful, effective communicator continues in Elementary School. We believe that instilling a love of language, in all of its forms, is a life-long process. Our curriculum is standards based and we draw on a wide variety of core resources in order to work towards developmentally appropriate outcomes for each student. Since students develop at different rates, we continually monitor each student's progress to support their learning needs and integrate literacy instruction into IPC units whenever possible. The literacy program develops the following literacy outcomes.

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language foundations

Maths

VIS believes that the learning of mathematics is an active process that involves meaningful investigation and exploration. The VIS math program develops a deep, rich understanding of mathematical concepts and skills by supporting a conceptual, contextualized understanding within its units. As with literacy, we utilize a standards-based approach in combination with a set of core resources to develop a love and understanding of mathematics. Important categories of mathematical outcomes include the following:

- Mathematical practices (eg. Problem solving, reasoning, attending to precision)
- Measurement
- Data
- Number sense
- Shape and space

Drama

One of the main goals of the programme is to help students to gain confidence when presenting in front of others. They will be able to make simple dramatic presentations to each other as they adopt different roles, often as part of storytelling. As they get older, students are expected to be able to perform a scripted play, as well as improvise. Throughout the years, children learn to make use of their voice, language choices, posture, movement and facial expression to enhance their own performances. Another aspect of the Drama programme is to teach the students how to respond to presentations by simply stating what they liked or disliked and being able to evaluate the effectiveness of their own performance as well as that of others.

Music

The aim of the music program is to develop a sense of appreciation, understanding and interest in music. The program aims at developing personal skills such as self-confidence, cooperation and resilience. Students engage in:

- Singing songs
- Creative movement (dance with fans and Body percussion)
- Music composition
- Instrumental skills using different sound sources such as percussion instruments and body percussion
- Learning about music styles across the world and musical vocabulary related to the elements of music

Information Technology (IT)

IT at VIS is a combination of explicit instruction and cross-curricular integration. During IT classes, students practice specific concepts and skills that they can apply to other areas of life and academia. Students develop their keyboarding skills, whilst becoming familiar with navigating and handling digital hardware. Their computational thinking skills (involving problem-solving, logic processes, and decomposing larger tasks) progress from PK2 to G5, starting with using physical gadgets to build simple algorithms until they are coding more complex animations and games. Research skills are fostered to create curious and resourceful learners. Throughout the year, students are encouraged to be conscientious digital citizens, taking responsibility for their actions online and contributing to a positive networked world.

Library

Students have Library sessions once a week. They are encouraged to browse for, and select, two suitable books to borrow and take home for a week. Children should bring library books to school on scheduled library days so that the books can be returned or renewed each week. It is suggested that children in the upper grades (Grades 3, 4 and 5) take at least one fiction and one non-fiction book. Children in the lower grades (K, 1 and 2) should take any two books of their choice.

Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE)

In PSHE at Verdala International School, we follow the curriculum and guidelines outlined by the PSHE Association (PSHE Education Programme of Study Key Stages 1-5), UK. It is the third edition of the PSHE Association's programme of study for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and follows the 2014 National Curriculum, UK.

In PSHE we cover a wide-range of key concepts, skills and attributes within three broad and overarching themes, which are: 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships' and 'Living in the Wider World'. The idea is to help contribute toward preparing each student for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences they will encounter in life. The Key Stages are aligned to the students' age group and grade, thereby the three core themes overlap, but are also aligned to be adaptable to the age group. The overarching themes are structured into a number of further defined, detailed, concrete concepts that are to be covered with the students, e.g. Core theme: *Health and Wellbeing, Key Stage 1, 'What is meant by a healthy lifestyle?'*. Towards the end of the Grade 5 scholastic year, there is a part of the curriculum which covers the topic of *puberty*, one which is covered with sensitivity and understanding, at which point we make room for students to ask questions important to them about changes to their body.

Physical Education (PE)

Quality physical education programs at both the Elementary and Secondary levels promote the physical growth and development of all students, contributing to their general health and wellness. They focus on preparing the students to lead an active and productive lifestyle.

Our PE curriculum is ongoing and designed to achieve the goal that upon graduation students will have the necessary skills, ability and knowledge to:

- Develop motor skills and skills that allow for safe, successful and satisfying participation in physical activities.
- Become familiar with various sports and lifetime activities and acquire the desire to pursue them.

- Engage in a physically active lifestyle: maintain physical, social, and emotional health by practicing healthy behaviors and goal setting.
- Become confident, self-assured, independent, and self-controlled through effective communication, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills, cooperate with others, become accepting and respectful of individual and cultural differences.
- Reinforce knowledge learned in other subject areas such as science, math and social studies. Become knowledgeable about health and wellness and how to access health resources.

Physical Education requirements:

Wearing athletic clothing that is appropriate for physical activity allows children to experience movement through our full range of motion. Please see the Dress Code section for more information.

HOME LEARNING

Educational research shows that some types of home learning can be beneficial to elementary student growth and progress. Since the number of words that pass by a student's eyes on any given day is directly related to their reading success, VIS encourages daily at-home reading. More information about the types of books and recommended time spent reading will be communicated by your child's teacher.

In addition to reading, home learning may take the form of engaging in a family activity, preparing for further learning or addressing a specific need identified in class. If necessary, information related to this type of home learning will be communicated to you by your child's teacher.

It is important to remember that home learning should never be stressful for a student. If your child experiences trouble completing a home learning experience, please stop the activity and contact your child's teacher the next day for further clarification and support.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

The purpose of assessment is to support student learning. VIS believes that practices such as teacher feedback, self and peer assessment as well as goal setting set the foundation for student empowerment and provide the opportunity for students to take ownership of their learning.

CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT

Classroom-based assessment at VIS can be formative or summative in nature. Formative assessment is any evidence of learning that is collected or observed by teachers that is related to the learning target and helps to inform future instruction. This type of assessment is collected throughout the learning process thereby providing multiple opportunities for students to display their understanding.

On the other hand, summative assessment usually takes the form of a task that is positioned towards the end of a unit and asks students to combine multiple skills and understandings. This

assessment helps teachers to evaluate the learning that has occurred over the course of the unit and is used, in combination with the formative assessments, to come to a final determination of progress.

STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

In addition to classroom-based assessments, students in grades 3-5 sit for the Measures of Academic Progress assessment (MAP). 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 data point with regard to the written reporting system mentioned below and results will be shared with families when testing is completed.

COMMUNICATING STUDENT PROGRESS

Partnership with the parent community is an important and defining quality of VIS and we are committed to engaging with parents throughout the year in order to support learning. The following sections describe some of the ways in which we provide information to parents about their child's progress

Celebrations of Learning (CoL)

Reflection and goal setting are important components of the learning process. Celebrations of Learning are opportunities for students to share with their parents their learning journey, progress and future goals. The classroom teacher will invite the parents in for at least two CoLs per year.

Written Reports

VIS reporting is based on a trimester system and therefore shares written reports with parents three times a year. Trimester One and Trimester Three will be report cards while Trimester Two will be a progress report. Publishing dates for these reports can be found on the VIS calendar. These reports detail your child's progress relative to a series of learning targets that are drawn from a variety of curricular areas. The school uses a three level system to indicate your child's progress towards any given learning target. These levels are listed below.

Level	Descriptor
Beginning	Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates ability to apply knowledge, skills, and understandings being explored, with frequent support. • has difficulty performing at the expected grade level standard
Developing	Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates ability to apply knowledge, skills, and understandings, with occasional support. • Is approaching the expected grade level standard
Mastering/ Independent	Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and understandings, consistently and/or independently. • performs at the expected grade level standard
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This topic has not been taught and/or there is insufficient evidence of learning to report on this curriculum area.

This report will be accessible through your ManageBac account after the end of each Trimester. The information shared in the report is an evaluation of your child's learning to date that is based on multiple data points throughout the semester. Children will have engaged in a number of opportunities to display their learning and no one experience will be used to determine their progress. Teachers will use a body of evidence to evaluate your child's learning so that we are able to evaluate each individual child's learning journey.

Well Being Check In

In the middle of Trimester 1, families will be able to meet with their child's homeroom teacher for a well being check in. This is an optional meeting during which teachers will discuss the student's start to the year and how they are settling into their new grade level. Little to no academic progress information will be provided at this point in time, as the teachers will be continuing to get to know your child as a learner and evaluating their growth and progress. The signup process for this meeting will be similar to the one described below under the Parent-Teacher Conferences section.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Two times a year, after Trimester One and Two written reports have been issued, parents will be invited to engage in a conversation with their child's teacher about the student's growth and progress at school. This may take the form of an in-person meeting or video conference, depending on the situation. During these conferences, teachers will discuss students' academic and social progress, their learning targets, as well as showing some pieces of work.

Before conferences begin, you will be able to book your time slot through a booking system called SchoolsBuddy (<https://verdala.schoolsbuddy.net/>). We urge you to book early in order to ensure you secure a time that is convenient for your family.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

As an international school, we expose students to the diverse world around them and celebrate different cultures. We celebrate diversity by ensuring that all members of the school community regardless of ancestry, culture, ethnicity, sex, physical or intellectual ability, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or other factors – are welcomed, included, treated fairly, and respected. Teachers are encouraged to provide students with a variety of age-appropriate opportunities to learn about diversity and different cultures. More information about this policy can be found on our [website](#).

TRANSITIONING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

As an academic year draws to a close, Middle School plans its way forward to welcome our Grade 5 Elementary students. Grade 5 Parents are invited to attend an orientation tour with the Middle School Principal. You will receive information on this nearer the time, through ManageBac.

In Elementary, we spend time discussing this important transition with our Grade 5 students. We also facilitate an open forum led by Grade 6 students for the Grade 5 students. Elementary students can bring forward questions about Middle School while Grade 6 students describe their experience, challenges and provide advice on how to succeed.

MOVE UP WEEK

In grades Pre Kindergarten 1 - Grade 5, one week towards the end of the year is dedicated to having students visit teachers and classrooms in the next grade level. Students will have the opportunity to visit the rooms and ask any questions they might have about the class. Please note that no information about teacher assignment will be shared at this time as class lists are still being developed at this time. Class list information will be shared in late August or early September of the following academic year.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attending school is directly related to student success and consistent or repeated absences can be detrimental to growth and progress. In addition, being punctual allows students to experience the progression of carefully structured lessons while minimizing the classroom disruption for other students. With this in mind, we encourage all families to limit the number of absences and tardies their child may experience.

That being said, we understand that some absences are unavoidable and we strive to support families whenever a situation arises that is out of their control. We ask that families notify the school of any foreseen absence through ManageBac before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If that is not possible, please contact the principal's personal assistant and your child's homeroom teacher by email to inform them of your situation. In our system, absences can be classified as either excused or unexcused.

Excused Absences are those which are considered beyond a student's or family's control.

- Medical (a doctor's note is required) This will be recorded on ManageBac as Health (H)
- External procedural requirements which must be completed during school time, e.g. visa paperwork. A parental note must be submitted. This will be recorded as Excused Absence (EA)
- Participation in an externally organised event, e.g. a sports competition, music recital / exam.
- Bereavement leave (EA)
- At the Principal's discretion: reasons beyond parental control (EA)

Unexcused absences are any absences that do not fall into one of the categories listed above.

When a child is absent from school, we require one of the child's family members to submit an attendance excusal through ManageBac. Should any child be absent without an attendance excusal, the school will call the family to confirm the child's absence. If the school is unable to contact the family by phone, an email will be sent to the email address available to the school on ManageBac.

Students with 10 or more unexcused absences per semester or 18 or more per year will only be promoted with the Principal's and Head Of School's approval. If a child's punctuality affects their learning, their parents will be contacted in order to request a conference with the principal or assistant principals so that the proper support can be provided. The school is required to refer any excessive or long term absences to the Child Safety Services and/or National Student Support Services.

DATA PRIVACY

Collecting and maintaining the privacy of student data is of the utmost importance to VIS. Student records, such as enrollment forms, health records, observation records and written parent teacher conference reports, and all other information about the student are confidential. A student's school records/information will only be accessible to parents or a legal guardian and it can only be shared with outside agencies with parent/guardian approval.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Students attend Library sessions once a week. They are encouraged to browse for, and select, suitable books to borrow and take home for a week. Children should bring library books to school on scheduled library days so that the books can be returned or renewed each week. In general, we encourage the following number of books to be checked out according to the child's grade level.

Grade Level	Number of Books Permitted for Checkout
Kindergarten and Grade 1	1
Grade 2 and 3	2
Grade 4 and 5	3

A fee equal to the replacement and processing cost will be charged for books, materials or equipment that are lost or damaged beyond repair.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Technology continues to transform the way we live our day-to-day lives. In order to prepare students for life in a digital age, VIS intends for technology of all kinds to be used by students, individually and collaboratively, to promote and enhance their educational excellence. As a VIS student, understanding of “digital citizenship” is essential to interact with VIS and world communities with respect.

In order to promote digital citizenship, respect and responsibility, the VIS Technology Acceptable Use Agreement will be sent home with each student during the first week of technology lessons. Families are required to review, sign and return this agreement before students can begin using technology at school. This agreement will also be unpacked with students during an IT class at the beginning of each school year.

Technology has incredible potential to transform the way in which students learn and it is only through teaching the safe and responsible use of these tools that we create a safe and caring environment in which students can learn.

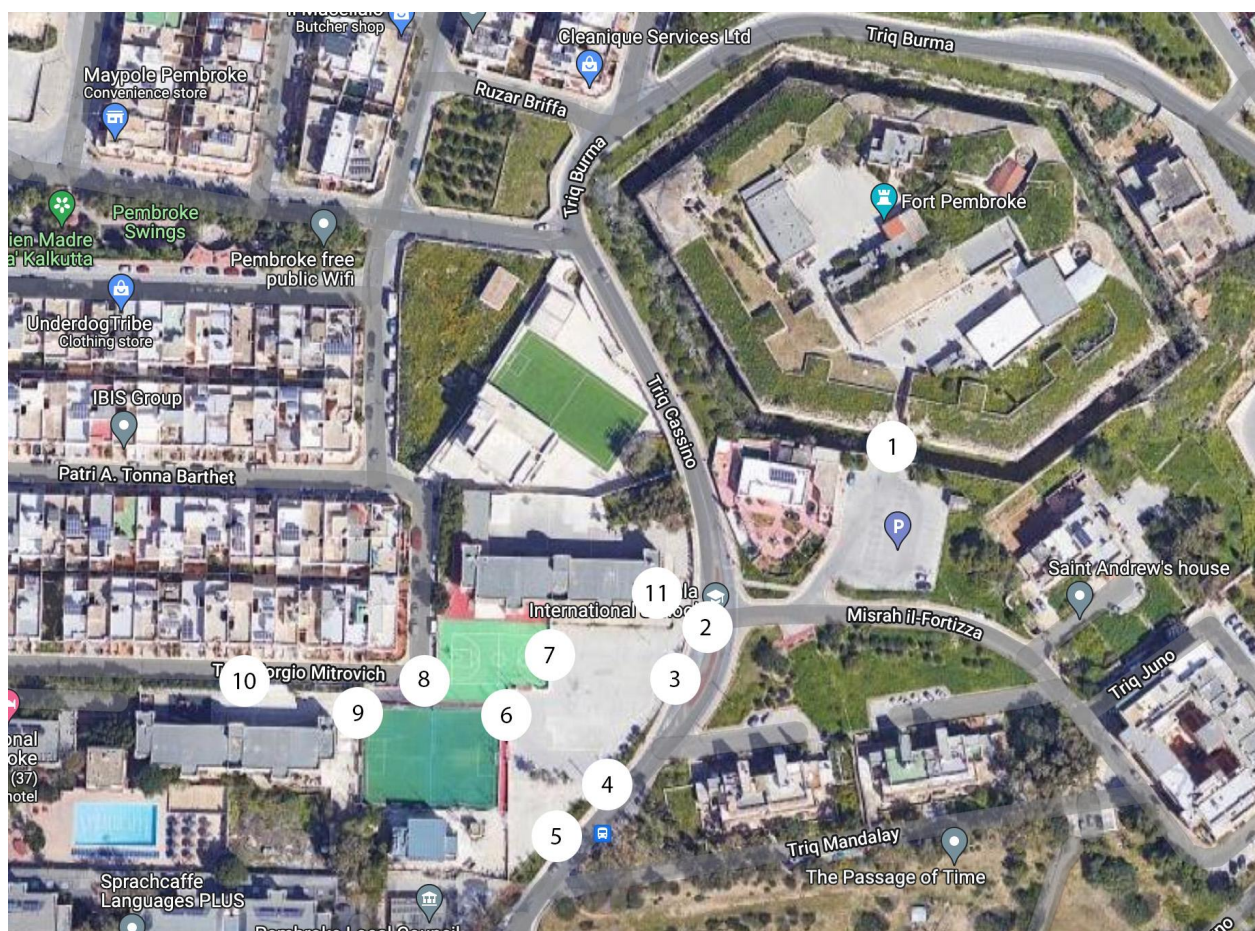
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

VIS implements arrival and departure procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, families and staff. Any alterations to these procedures will be communicated to families in a timely manner and handbooks will be updated accordingly.

Time	Event	Details
8:00am	Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students arrive in the parking lot and proceed to gate 6. Only students in grades PK1, PK2 and KG are permitted to be dropped off by car in the school parking lot. All other families must park on the street and walk onto campus. Families that are permitted to be dropped off by car will be provided with a sign that must be displayed in their windshield when entering school grounds.
8:30am	Classes begin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance is taken and all students are expected to be

		<p>in class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Elementary PA will begin contacting families whose children are absent and who have not yet submitted an attendance excusal.
3:00pm	PK1 Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are dismissed through Gate 8.
3:10pm	PK2 Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are dismissed through Gate 8.
3:15pm	KG Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are dismissed through Gate 8.
3:20pm	1-5 Dismissal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 1-5 students are dismissed through Gate 10.

A map of the gate locations is provided below for your convenience.



Parking Around Campus

Due to space constraints, families arriving by car are required to park any vehicle that was driven to school outside of the school premises and proceed to one of the pedestrian gates by foot. This does not apply to families with students enrolled in PK1, PK2 or Kindergarten as they are permitted to enter campus and drop off children in the car park as described above.

Early Pickup Procedures

If, for any reason, a parent needs to collect their child prior to the end of school, we ask that you contact the homeroom teacher and office well in advance to inform them so that we can have your child ready for pickup when you arrive. At this point in time, parents must pick up their child outside of Gate 10. If an emergency arises, please call the office to provide verbal approval for dismissal so your request can be accommodated.

Alternate Dismissal Procedures

If a family wishes for their child to be dismissed to someone other than their parent or designated guardian, an email originating from one of the email addresses registered with the school must be sent to the child's teacher and elementary personal assistant prior to noon notifying them of the change in dismissal practices. If written approval is provided, we are able to dismiss students who are being collected by another parent who has student(s) enrolled at VIS.

In cases where parents are requesting that someone outside the VIS community collect their child (e.g. a caregiver, a family friend), we require that the parents send a copy of the designees photo ID with the communication mentioned above so that we can confirm the designees identity upon dismissal.

Due to tight scheduling, we cannot guarantee that requests received after noon will be processed in time for dismissal.

After School Activities Dismissal

Our After School Activity programme is an important part of educating the whole child. With this in mind, once every term, VIS offers a range of activities in which children can engage. Families will receive a communication from our ASA coordinator during sign-up periods. Please note that no buses will be provided and that parents or guardians will be responsible for collecting their children at the conclusion of the activity. Should you have any questions about the ASA programme, please contact our ASA Coordinator at asa_coordinator@verdala.org.

VISITING SCHOOL

The school accepts visitors by appointment only. Any required meetings will be scheduled face-to-face or over a video conferencing platform (e.g. Google Meet).

All visitors to the school must pass through the Elementary Office, where a visitor's badge will be issued to them. Anyone not wearing an ID badge will be questioned as to who they are and redirected to the elementary office to sign in. As you move through campus, please make sure that all gates and locks are closed behind you. You will also be asked to return your visitors ID and sign-out at the elementary office upon departure.

Meeting With Teachers

Teacher-parent communication is a vital component of the learning process. In order to support this communication, as well as student privacy, we ask that you schedule appointments with your child's teacher on any occasion where a conversation is warranted. Due to our staff meeting schedule and other collaborative practices, teachers are not able to meet with parents after hours unless an appointment has been scheduled.

LUNCH

The school requires parents to provide students with lunch and a snack. We recommend that food is sent to school in a sealable container that is labeled with your child's name. Microwaves and fridges are not available at school and we suggest the use of a small thermos or cooler if you require food to be kept at a specific temperature. Gum is not permitted at school.

In order to provide adequate energy for learning, we encourage parents to send healthy food to school on a daily basis. Your child's teacher will contact you if there are any adjustments that need to be made with regard to lunch or snack.

Please note that we aim to be a nut free school and we request that parents pack lunches accordingly.

BIRTHDAYS

At Verdala Elementary School, we believe that celebrating the day of your child's birth is very special and important. As we encourage children to be independent; please send a birthday snack that the child can serve themselves such as cupcakes, or cookies (nut-free) along with the necessary paper plates, napkins, etc. In order to support our inclusive environment, invitations to events outside of school will not be distributed unless all children in the class are invited.

Any food that is sent to school for birthday events **must contain a list of ingredients**. This helps us to ensure that no nuts or nut products are present on campus. See below for more information about our nut-free policy.

DRESS CODE

We require that students come to school in attire that is appropriate for the setting, allows them to move easily and supports both their and others learning. In general, clothes should be long enough to ensure that undergarments are not showing at any time. Any advertisements or messages worn on clothing should be consistent with the guiding statements outlined in this handbook. If a student is dressed inappropriately, we will discuss the attire with the student and contact the parent if necessary.

With approximately 300 days of sun per year in Malta, we enjoy the benefits of a warm and bright climate. To offer protection from the sun, Verdala operates a 'No Hat - Play in the Shade' policy. With this in mind, please ensure that your child is sent to school with a hat that will protect them from the sun. If students arrive at school without a hat, they will be required to play in the shade during recess and any outdoor activities.

On rare occasions when rain is in the forecast, please prepare by sending your child in appropriate rain gear so that they can transition between classes and depart from school while remaining dry and comfortable.

PE Clothing

Wearing athletic clothing that is appropriate for physical activity allows children to

experience movement through our full range of motion. This can help them to develop additional confidence in physical activity settings. It also keeps them safe by preventing injuries that may result from inappropriate attire. Each student is required to dress in the proper attire, which includes:

- Proper sport shoes and socks (tennis shoes or sneakers). Soft-soled shoes, sandals, crocs and other similar footwear is not permitted during physical education classes or on the pitch.
- A t-shirt, shorts and a hat are appropriate for hot weather.
- A sweatshirt and sweatpants, light wind stopper or raincoat are appropriate for cold or rainy weather.
- Skirts, dresses, and jeans are not appropriate.
- All long hair should be tied back to avoid entanglement.
- Students are not permitted to wear any jewelry or other items that may snag during exercise.

HOUSE TEAMS

Each child will belong to a VIS house team (Earth, Air, Water and Fire). You will be able to purchase a House T-shirt for Sports Day and other house team events, if you wish. If you do not wish to purchase a Houser T-shirt, we encourage you to send your child to school on the appropriate day wearing their house colour.

HEALTH OFFICE

Verdala employs a full-time nurse whose responsibilities include supporting the health and well-being of our students. Details about our health services can be found below.

Nut Policy and Practices

The Elementary School has a nut-free policy; this means that we do not allow any foods on the elementary campus that contain (or possibly may contain) nuts in any form. We do allow foods to be brought into school but we do ask that you provide a list of ingredients contained within them; either from the manufacturer in the case of pre-prepared items or if they are home baked, then a list of ingredients from whoever made them.

We do this in order to provide a safe environment for all students but especially those who have severe allergies.

This is particularly important to those members of staff and students who have a nut allergy and may suffer from anaphylactic shock (which is a life threatening response to a substance that your body is allergic to) if they are exposed to foods containing nuts.

We aim to both protect those individuals from harm but also to support and help those students with nut allergies to be able to take responsibility for what foods they can and cannot eat.

We strongly discourage food sharing for all students. If your child has a particular allergy, we ask that you give the teacher some treats that are suitable which can be given on birthdays etc so that they are not excluded from the celebration.

Examples of what is not allowed:

Nuts / nut products

Packets of nuts

Peanut butter

Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts.

Pesto (pine nuts)

Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts.

Sesame seed rolls (many people who are allergic to nuts are also allergic to sesame seeds)

Cakes made with nuts.

Nutella

Food fried in Peanut oil

Please do not send boxes to school that have previously contained nuts.

Staff and visitors to Verdala Elementary agree not to consume nuts or nut containing foods on the premises. We would ask that if you are to send items into school, they are clearly marked with the ingredients, be they manufactured or home made.

Party food is a particular issue and must be checked before bringing it into school. Such warnings may include:

- *Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers*
- *This product may contain nuts.*
- *This product may contain traces of nuts.*
- *Unsuitable for school consumption.*

They must also be clearly marked with the ingredients. If you are unsure, please speak to your child's teacher or the school nurse who will be able to advise you. If they are not marked with the ingredients, the teacher will not give them to the children in order to ensure a safe environment for our students.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians must notify the nurse of any known or suspected allergy to nuts and provide all medical information, including an emergency response plan. Parents must also provide rescue medications to be kept with the student (these usually comprise of antihistamines and EpiPen)

Verdala International School has a full time Nurse on site but all staff are trained in emergency First Aid and are capable of administering the EpiPen in case of an emergency. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the school nurse.

Toilet Training

Please note that it's an expectation that your child is toilet trained before starting Pre-K1. If your child has an accident, we are not permitted to change them and we will ask that you come to school to provide new clothes for your child.

Illness and Injury

If a student becomes ill at school, they will be referred to the nurse's clinic. The nurse will assess the child, and take any appropriate action deemed necessary. The school nurse will contact the parents in any case of injury or illness that may require further observation at home, or any further intervention from outside health professionals. Parents may be asked to pick up the child from school if the illness/injury warrants such action. The nurse will contact parents or guardians via a phone call and a school accident form will be provided to the family when necessary. Please see the document [Protocols for Sick Students](#) for more information about managing illness that occurs both at school and at home. If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact our school nurse.

Please note that families are required to provide a doctor's note for their children to be able to return to school after an illness of 3 days or longer.

Reducing the Spread of Illness

One of our primary goals is to ensure the health and safety of our students. The following guidelines will help diminish illness during the year for both teachers and students. Parents should not send a sick or overtired child to school. A sick child will not benefit from attending school, and the flu, cold, or other contagious condition can infect the entire class.

At VIS we are committed to safeguarding our community from the problem of head lice, so 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. Please see the [Head Lice Flow Chart](#) for more information.

Medical/Emergency Information

Each family is required to submit up-to-date medical and personal information for each child prior to the start of the school year. This is done through a Google form sent to families at the beginning of the year. If there are any changes to your emergency information, please make sure the elementary PA is informed of the changes.

In addition, If you are leaving your children under the guardianship of another, the school must receive the [Parent Overseas Form](#) so that the school can contact the student's guardian in case of emergency.

Dispensing Medication

Procedures for dispensing medication:

- The emergency contact form allows parents to provide permission to administer over the counter medication to their child.
- If a student needs to take prescribed medicine during school hours, parents must fill in the [VIS Medical Administration Form](#), and provide a doctor's certificate supporting the need and dose of the required medication.
- Families with children with severe medical conditions are required to inform the school

through OpenApply and consult with the nurse so that an individualized health and safety plan can be developed.

- If there is a change in your child's medical status mid-way through the year, please consult with the school nurse immediately.
- Medications are left with the School Nurse and stored in a secure location in the Nurse's Office.
- The container must be clearly labeled with the student's name and the appropriate dosage.
- No student may carry medicines of any description while at school.
- Any medication provided to the school will be returned to the family by the school nurse at the end of the school year.

Parents are requested to discuss the necessary information regarding the dispensing of prescribed medication with the Nurse. No prescribed medication will be given to students without the written permission of the parent.

In order to develop an individualized health and safety plan, any medical condition must be supported by a medical doctor's certificate.

Accidents and Emergencies

If a minor accident occurs at school, the supervising teacher/staff member will accompany the child to the nurse's clinic, or else call the nurse to come to the site of the accident. After the appropriate first aid is given, an Accident Report Form will be filled in by the supervising staff and the nurse, and a copy of the form will be sent home with the child at the end of the day (or within 24 hours of the incident) so that the parents are informed of what happened.

In case of a serious accident or injury during school hours, parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible, and asked to come into school. In the unlikely event of the school being unable to get in touch with either parent, or next of kin listed on the Emergency Information form, the nurse will accompany the child by ambulance to the nearest emergency medical services department. The school nurse will remain with the child until the parent or guardian takes responsibility for the child

TOYS MONEY AND VALUABLES

We ask that students bring items from home (e.g. toys, games etc.) only when requested by their teacher. This helps the school to manage the equipment, provide equitable access to activities as well as minimize loss or damage.

Students should not bring items of value to school (e.g., large amounts of money, mobile phones, personal listening devices, and/or jewelry) as the school is not responsible for loss or damage of any personal items.

If you consider it necessary for your child to carry a phone, it must be left in their backpack during the day and not be brought out. If the phone becomes visible at school, the student will

be asked to return it to their backpack. If the phone is removed from the backpack multiple times during the day, a member of staff will collect the phone and deliver it to the elementary office where it will be held until dismissal and then returned to the student.

In the case that one student damages the property of another, the school will act to connect the families involved so that they resolve the issue and repair or replace the damaged item.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles of clothing and other items found on campus will be placed in the Lost and Found wrack outside the Elementary Office. Students are responsible for checking the Lost and Found wrack to claim lost items. We will also send periodic emails with pictures of lost items to the community to assist with the process of finding lost goods. Unclaimed items are donated to local community service organizations at different times of the year so please check the lost and found regularly if your child is missing any belongings.

SUPPLIES

In order to reduce our environmental impact, we strongly encourage students to bring reusable water bottles and cutlery.

Early Years (Prekindergarten 1 and 2)

Below is a checklist of items your child will need at the start of the school year

Item	Pre K 1	Pre K 2
A spare set of LABELLED clothes in case of any 'accidents'. Kindly bring these in a separate LABELLED bag. This will remain in your child's classroom. If these get sent home, please replace them the next day with a fresh set.	✓	✓
A school backpack that they can carry themselves, big enough to hold an A4 folder, water bottle and lunch boxes.	✓	✓
Reusable water bottle that is spill proof	✓	✓
Appropriate cutlery is needed for their snack/lunch	✓	✓
Separate snack and lunch boxes, CLEARLY LABELLED with your child's name. Please write Snack/Lunch on each box accordingly.	✓	✓
LARGE BOX of tissues (Kleenex)	✓	✓
Red VIS Field Trip t-shirt	✓	✓
LARGE PACKET of wet wipes	✓	✓
1 packet of toilet wipes.	✓	
Yoga mat and blanket for 'quiet, rest time' & Yoga sessions	✓	✓

A sun hat that can be kept at school. (Children will not be allowed to play in the sun without a hat.)	✓	✓
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Elementary (Kindergarten - Grade 5)

In the Elementary School, the school fee includes a starter kit containing all the basic stationery that the students will require throughout the year. This includes workbooks, pencils, scissors, glue, etc.

Parents need to supply their child with:

- Backpack
- Lunch box and cutlery
- Water bottle
- Pencil case (if their child prefers to use one)
- Hat

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus routes are established at the beginning of the school year and the option of joining this service at another point in the year will depend upon availability.

Parents bear the sole responsibility for their children in the morning at the bus pick-up and afternoon drop-off. For students 4 years of age and below, we highly recommend that they are brought to school by their parents or guardians. It should be noted that VIS does not have bus monitors present on the buses and we cannot actively supervise students during their ride to or from school.

All families that utilize the bus service assume responsibility for any injury or harm as a result of allowing their child to ride government operated transportation to and/or from Verdala International School. They acknowledge that they understand that the risks include, but are not limited to a lack of adult supervision on the bus, inadequate safety harnesses for children under four years of age and possible exposure to inappropriate language and/or behavior. Furthermore, if any incident occurs involving their child (or children) while they are in a vehicle owned or operated by this transportation service, it is the sole responsibility of the transportation company to resolve this issue and it must be dealt with by contacting the transportation company directly. **If any family enrolls a child aged four or below with the bus service, they are required to set a meeting with the Elementary School Principal to ensure that they understand the risks and responsibilities mentioned above. In addition, we highly recommend that these families purchase a GPS locator device (e.g. Air Tag) and have your child carry it. This will allow you to locate them at any time and contact the bus driver if there is a need.**

Students are required to wear seat belts and follow the directions of the bus driver. Students are not allowed to ride a bus other than their assigned bus, unless it has been authorized through the main office. Behaviour on the bus should comply with the Student Code of Conduct.

Changes Related To Bus Services

Students enrolled in the bus service can change their dismissal preferences by logging on to [SchoolsBuddy](#) and making the appropriate request. Please note that no student is able to ride a bus to which they have not been assigned by Malta Coop. These changes must be made by noon and changes will be confirmed by email. Families should call the school directly if there are any emergencies that require a change after noon.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Our After School Activities program supports our belief in a balanced lifestyle and allows children to involve themselves in a variety of activities outside of the school day. They are an integral part of developing the whole child and we encourage all families to take advantage of the program to encourage children to explore and develop their talents and interests.

At the beginning of each term, a variety of activities will be offered to children in grades Kindergarten through Grade 5. Activities are conducted between 3:30pm and 4:20pm Monday through Friday. And are run by either staff members or outside experts. Depending on the nature of the activity, a small fee may be associated with participation.

A full list of activities will be sent to parents within the first few weeks of school and the terms of participation can be viewed on the [school website](#).

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips enrich the educational experience as valuable extensions of classroom learning. As part of our IPC, we study our “Home” and “Host” countries. We select destinations based on connections to our IPC, Math and Language units, considering age appropriateness.

Parents will be notified by the teacher in charge of the trip, well in advance of the scheduled date for the trip. The cost for entrance fees, special guides and bus transportation are included in the school fees. However, for special trips, such as overnight stays, there may be additional costs.

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to complete a permission form for field trips, including walks in the community. Teachers will still inform you of any excursions off campus.

It is recommended that parents purchase an excursion shirt from the Elementary School office. This is a red polo shirt with the school name and phone number which, for easy identification purposes, all students must wear when they go on a field trip. Alternatively, students may wear a bright red shirt of their choice when attending a field trip.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL ADVISOR SERVICES

VIS has one full-time social-emotional advisor available to assist students and families with personal or well-being related issues throughout the day. Beyond teaching the PSHE

curriculum, the social-emotional advisor provides one-on-one services as well as small group counseling, depending on the need. The social-emotional advisor maintains an “open door policy” in order to be available as much as possible to support the community in achieving educational and personal growth. That being said, it is always best to schedule an appointment in advance with the counselor as the nature of their work often involves responsive services and require them to be out of the office on a regular basis.

CREATING A SAFE AND CARING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Code of Conduct

In order to ensure the welfare of all children in the Elementary school, we have compiled a set of standards of behavior, referred to as the Student's Code of Conduct. Students, staff and parents all share the responsibility for ensuring these common sense behaviours are met at all times. For the purposes of the information below, please note that VIS defines bullying as any behavior that is hurtful, targeted, repeated and involves an imbalance of power.

The students are regarded as representing Verdala from the moment they either arrive on campus or arrive at their bus stop. Behaviour at these times must reflect that expected of a Verdala member, which is the following:

1. **RESPECT** towards learning, oneself, peers, school employees, school property, environment and host country
2. **HONESTY** academic / interpersonal / sports
3. **COLLEGIALITY** and fostering solid interpersonal skills
4. **SAFE** environment: conducive to learning

1. RESPECT

- a. Respect towards learning is shown through:
 - i. Growth mindset (learn from our mistakes)
 - ii. Integrity (doing the right thing, even when no one is looking)
 - iii. Coming prepared to learn and giving your best
- b. Respect towards oneself is defined by:
 - i. personal health and hygiene
 - ii. keeping safe (reporting promptly bullying, harassment, unfair treatment)
 - iii. adhering to the dress code
- c. Respect towards peers is shown through:
 - i. being polite, and active listening
 - ii. acknowledging cultural / social differences
 - iii. keeping others safe (reporting promptly bullying, harassment, unfair treatment)
- d. Respect towards school employees is shown through:
 - i. being polite, and active listening
- e. Respect for the host country is shown through:
 - i. being polite
 - ii. acknowledging cultural / social differences
 - iii. abiding by the laws of the host country
 - iv. adhering to the dress code

- v. respect for school property/environment
- vi. appreciate what we have and help take care of our environment
- vii. help keep our environment safe, clean and tidy
- viii. recycling as much as possible

2. **HONESTY** academic / interpersonal / sport

- a. be truthful
- b. be kind, or say nothing
- c. 'win gracefully, lose with dignity' Michelle Obama

3. **COLLEGIALITY** and fostering solid interpersonal skills

- a. show team spirit – and value it!
- b. include others
- c. offer to help others, when appropriate
- d. be kind to each other

4. **SAFE** environment, conducive to learning

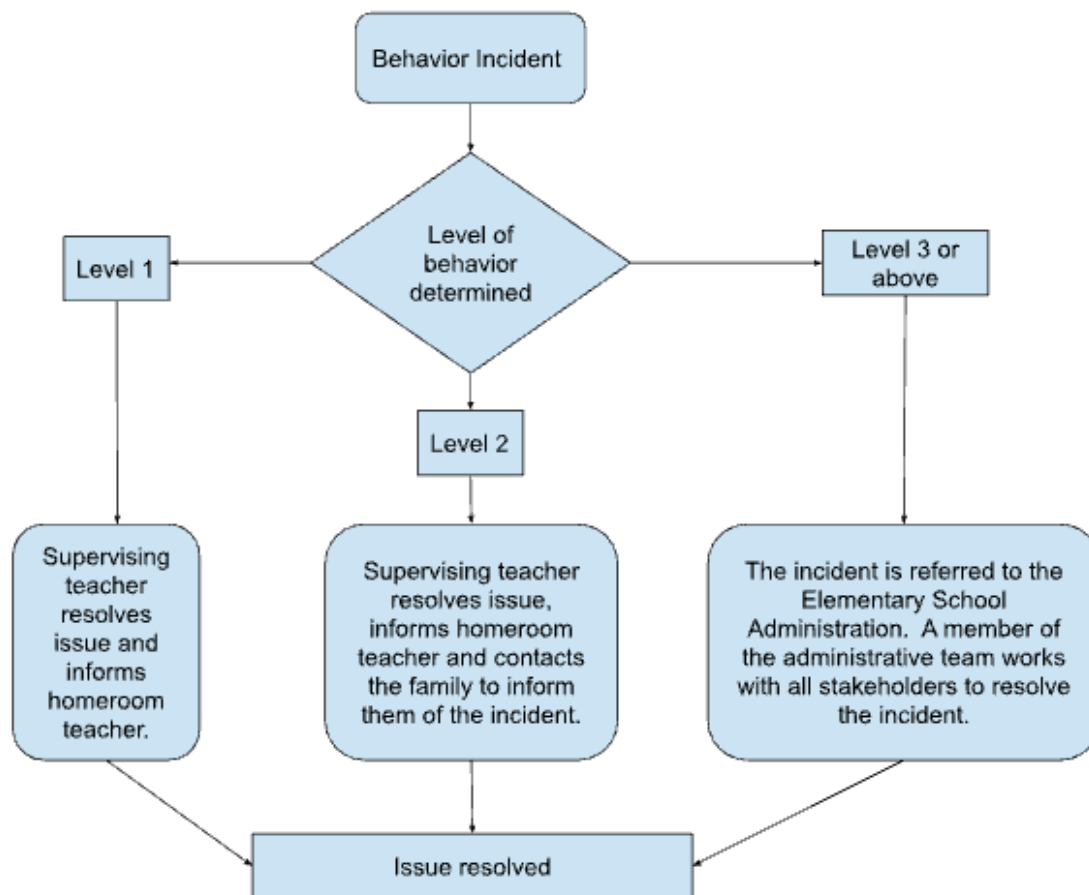
- a. look out for one another
- b. be gentle with your words and actions
- c. use your words such as, *"Stop it I don't like it. If you don't stop I'm going to ask a teacher for help."*
- d. make safe choices i.e. *use pedestrian crossing. cross with an adult*

Supporting Positive Behaviour

VIS strives to create classrooms where young people are treated with respect, have the courage and excitement to love learning, and have the opportunity to learn the skills they need for a successful life. We believe that children feel empowered by the opportunity to learn from their mistakes in a safe environment and we teach students to be responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their community.

The following charts provide general guidelines to help students, parents, teachers and administrators understand the most appropriate response for any given incident. The following chart is not prescriptive and the school acts as the sole arbitrator when determining the seriousness of any behavior as well as the appropriate response. Note that responses may include, but are not limited to, the actions outlined in the flowchart and Response to Behavior Chart below.

Elementary School Behavior Management Flowchart



Note: This chart is intended to be used in conjunction with the Response To Behavior Chart found in the Early Years and Elementary Parent and Elementary Staff Handbook.

Response to Behavior Chart - General Guidelines

Level	Examples of Possible Observed Behaviour	Possible Support	Possible Logical Consequences	People Responsible
1 Unacceptable Minor	Disruption, disrespect, noncompliance, property misuse, minor physical contact (pushing, grabbing), inappropriate language, lying, cheating, leaving a supervised area, littering, name calling	Positive Discipline strategies implemented as appropriate -Student/Teacher conference to reflect on their action	-See Positive Discipline strategies -Expectation reminder -Removal from activity -Positive timeout -Logical consequences -Apology of action	Supervising Teacher (communicates with Homeroom)
2 Unacceptable Minor (repeated)	Repeated rule breaking, swearing, obscene language or gestures, repeated physical incidents (pushing, grabbing etc.)	-All items mentioned above and... -Teacher documents behavior - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) -Morning/Class meeting focus on specific behavior - All teachers are made aware of concern -Parent/Teacher meeting/contact/email	-All above and ... -Required to spend time in an alternative supervised area -Logical consequence (e.g. loss of appropriate privilege)	All Grade Teachers Parents/Guardians Dir. Well Being, AP Counsellor available for support
3 Serious Misbehaviour	Intentional aggression/fighting causing lasting harm Bullying/Harassment Chronic unkind, disrespectful behavior Destruction of property Prolonged disruptive tantrum Disruptive noncompliance Theft Breach of AUA Violent threat	-All items mentioned above and/or Referral Form -AP documents behavior on Managebac -Positive behavior contract implementation -Parents contacted by email or phone -Parent/Teacher/AP/Dir. WB Meeting -External referral	-All above and ... -Student requested to explain behaviour to parents -Withdrawal from class events and/or classroom/recess/bus service -Separation from class (loss of school day)	All Grade Teachers Counsellor Parents/Guardians AP Dir. WB Principal
4 Major Misbehaviour	Repeated fighting/aggression, repeated disruptive noncompliance that interferes with learning of others, chronic bullying, "weapon", repeated violence, racism, major theft, discriminatory harassment, repeated disruptive noncompliance Repeated breach of AUP, acts that threaten other's safety	-All items mentioned above and/or ... -Administration documents behavior -Head of School notified -Create/review/revise behavior plan with SST -Parent/Teacher/Administrative meeting -Administrative letter written to parents detailing support provided to date and required next steps by both school and parents for contract renewal	-All above and ... -Withdrawal from class or school events and classroom/recess -Restitution as needed -Multi-day separation from class (loss of multiple school days) -Contract delay	All Grade Teachers Counsellor Parents/Guardians AP Dir. WB Principal Head of School
5 Major Misbehaviour (repeated)	Chronic disruptive noncompliance that interferes with learning of others, serious intentional violence, repeated bullying or harassment (verbal, nonverbal, physical), racism, major theft, repeated major misbehavior	-All items mentioned above and/or ... -Head of School notified -Parent/administrative meeting -Administrative letter, along with all all supporting document compiled to date, detailing reasons for nonrenewal of contract	-All above and ... -Formal suspension -Denial of re-enrollment	All Grade Teachers Counsellor Parents/Guardians AP Dir. WB Principal Head of School

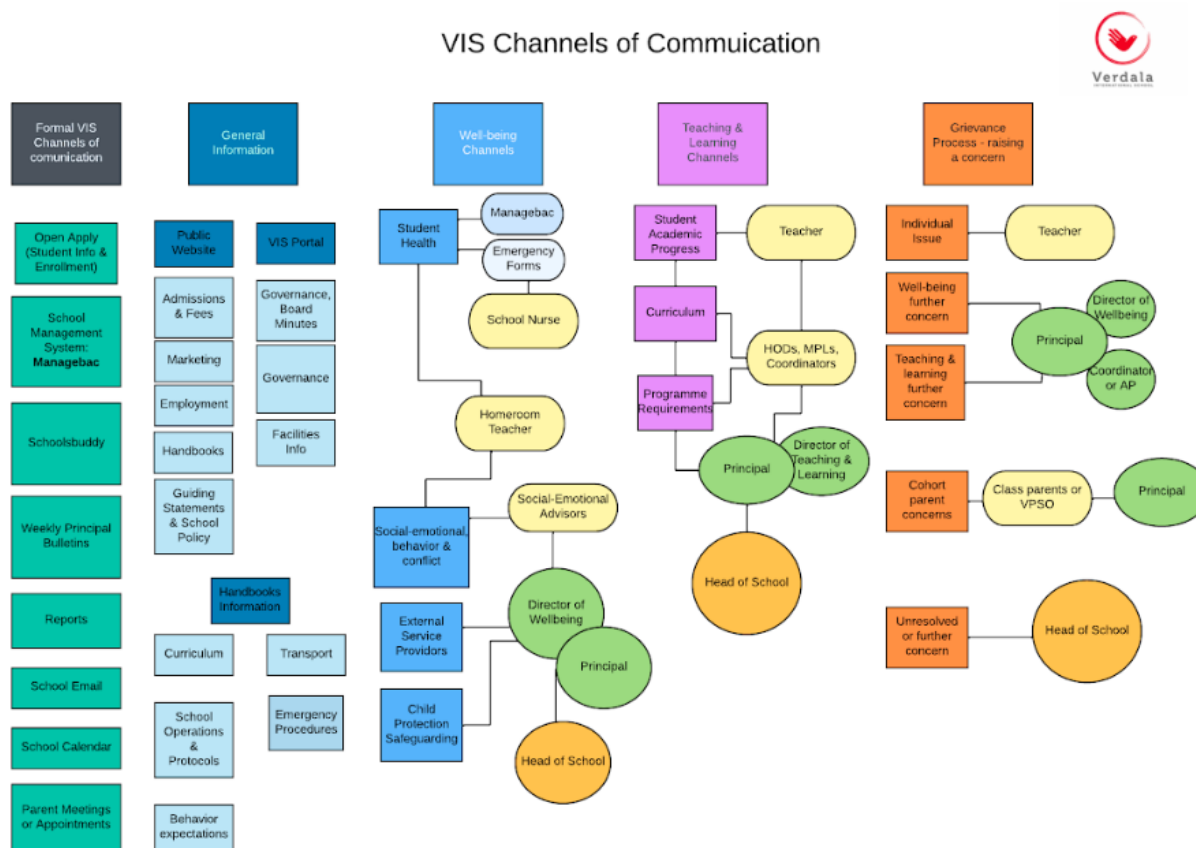
COMMUNICATION

We consider communication between home and school to be of utmost importance. We make every effort to be sure that parents are informed in a timely manner of their child's progress, school events, and other important information.

A crucial part of this process is having up-to-date telephone numbers and email addresses, as the school relies heavily on email communication. Please ensure that the school always has your most current contact information as well as an alternate contact person in case you cannot be reached in an emergency. To update your information, please ensure that the information on ManageBac is updated and correct.

Chain of Communication

The following flowchart outlines channels of communication at VIS. For more information, and a list of FAQs, please refer to Appendix



In general, if a question or issue should arise concerning your child, please contact the person most directly connected to the situation. In most cases, that will be your child's teacher. If you cannot resolve the question or issue at that level, you are requested to contact one of the Elementary School administrators for further assistance. If the situation remains unresolved after working with the school administrators, you would then contact the Head of School.

Open House

Open House will be held within the first month of school. On this day you'll be invited to attend a presentation by your child's teaching team. This is an opportunity for you to gain insight into your child's learning journey. Your teacher will share with you information about our curriculum, along with general classroom routines, planned trips, and class values. Since we strive to be ethical and green, you will not receive many handouts as we move towards a paperless presentation where possible.

ManageBac

We use a system called ManageBac to share weekly bulletins, announcements, report cards and attendance. You can access ManageBac on our website or through [this link](#).

It is important that you are registered on this system, and know your username and login. Access to this site is secure and private. For those of you who are new to ManageBac and need some guidance on how to navigate the site, help can be found [here](#).

If you require further assistance, please contact the elementary PA.

Email

Email is one of the most frequently used methods of communication at the school. You can find a list of staff and their associated email addresses in Appendix I of this handbook. Should you require immediate assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the school by phone.

Parent Information Meetings

Parent Information Meetings (PIMs) are held approximately once a month. These are usually run by the Principal, Assistant Principal or Milepost Leader and on occasion, teachers may participate. They range from topics such as curriculum, pastoral matters or other important matters that may arise.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We are always interested in hearing from those who would like to get involved by volunteering at school for various activities and programs. Parental involvement is important to us and helps develop the sense of community we have at Verdala.

Parent Volunteers

Listed below are just a few of the ways parents might volunteer in the Elementary School.

- Reading with students
- Trip supervision
- Help organizing special days/ events

At Verdala, all parent/guardian volunteers must submit police checks before they have any responsibility for children. This police check must be no older than 6 months. If you require help in obtaining a Maltese police check please liaise directly with the Principal's PA (elempta@verdala.org.)

Class Parents

We hope each homeroom will have a 'Class Parent'. Whilst the role is flexible, depending on the time the parent can give, they may:

- Facilitate parent get-togethers.
- Identify field trip volunteers fairly, when needed.
- Coordinate support for voluntary roles such as reading parents.
- Help organise a winter and end of year party with the class teacher.

If you are interested in this role, please express interest to your child's class teacher prior to Syllabus Day that is held in the first weeks of school. This role can be shared, or done alone. At this event, parents can share their contact information through the Class Parent, as the school cannot share this information due to data protection. Please note that the only acceptable form of communication on school matters is via email.

VIS Parent Representative Protocol

Parent Representative Guidelines

- The classroom teacher/Principal will invite a parent(s) to be the Parent Rep (PR).
- These may be referred to as Class Parents (CP) in Elementary and Grade Parent (GP) in Secondary
- A parent can be the PR for **only one class**.
- The PRs will meet with the Principal to discuss their role and will work within the parameters set by the Principal.
- The PR will adhere to the communication guidelines as set out by the Principal.
- All parents are free to opt out of PR communications if they so desire.
- The PR role is for a one year period.
- PRs will be nominated each year during the month of May and will continue in this role over the following year.

Communication Guidelines

- The school will not provide email addresses to any parent but will assist the appointed PR in securing permission from the parents to provide their email to the appointed PR only. Parents' permission is sought on an annual basis.
- PR will send out email messages using **bcc** to protect other parent's data.
- PR's must not include any photos in their communication with parents.
- The school's official communication channels with parents are through email and ManageBac only.
- Parents may use other channels for informal communications (i.e. WhatsApp). The school assumes no responsibility for the communication that happens through such channels.

However, the school will support parent representatives with establishing clear protocols for such channels.

E.g. This forum is an informal communication space for our cohort to share school reminders and communications regarding cohort matters. Please stay polite and respectful according to the school's values and the parent code of conduct.

It should not be used for discussion of private matters; these should be taken directly to the relevant teacher/Principal.

Role of the Parent Rep

Elementary Class Parent
Sharing information regarding School Events/ surveys/ forthcoming cohort events.
Attending VPSO meetings.
Supporting School Events as a Volunteer and/or sharing info with other parents about how to help out at School.
Being a contact person for all parents.
Supporting all new parents with the transition to VIS.
Arranging gifts for staff.
Helping to organize food for class parties or special section events i.e. celebrating different cultures.
Helping the class teacher to find extra supervisors for field trips with the younger students.
Assisting the teacher to organize costumes for IPC presentations, concerts, etc.
Helping parents communicate with each other regarding events outside of school.

The role does not include:

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

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

GUARDIANSHIP AND SUPERVISION

Given the nature of international work and traveling requirements, there may be rare occasions when parents and/or guardians are away from home. Parents are responsible for finding a guardian for their child(ren), when this situation arises. The guardian will have all the responsibilities and rights of a parent. *Parents are expected to make arrangements for appointing a guardian and communicate that plan to the school in writing by completing the [Parent Overseas Form](#) whenever both parents will be out of the home for any longer than a single night. This form can be accessed by clicking on the link above or contacting the elementary personal assistant.*

CLASS CREATION

VIS is committed to creating a learning environment that maximizes access to learning, inclusivity and well-being for all. In order to achieve this, the staff spend a significant amount of time engaging in a process that attempts to create the most conducive learning environment possible for all students. During this process, a wide variety of factors are considered and students are placed based on information collected throughout the year.

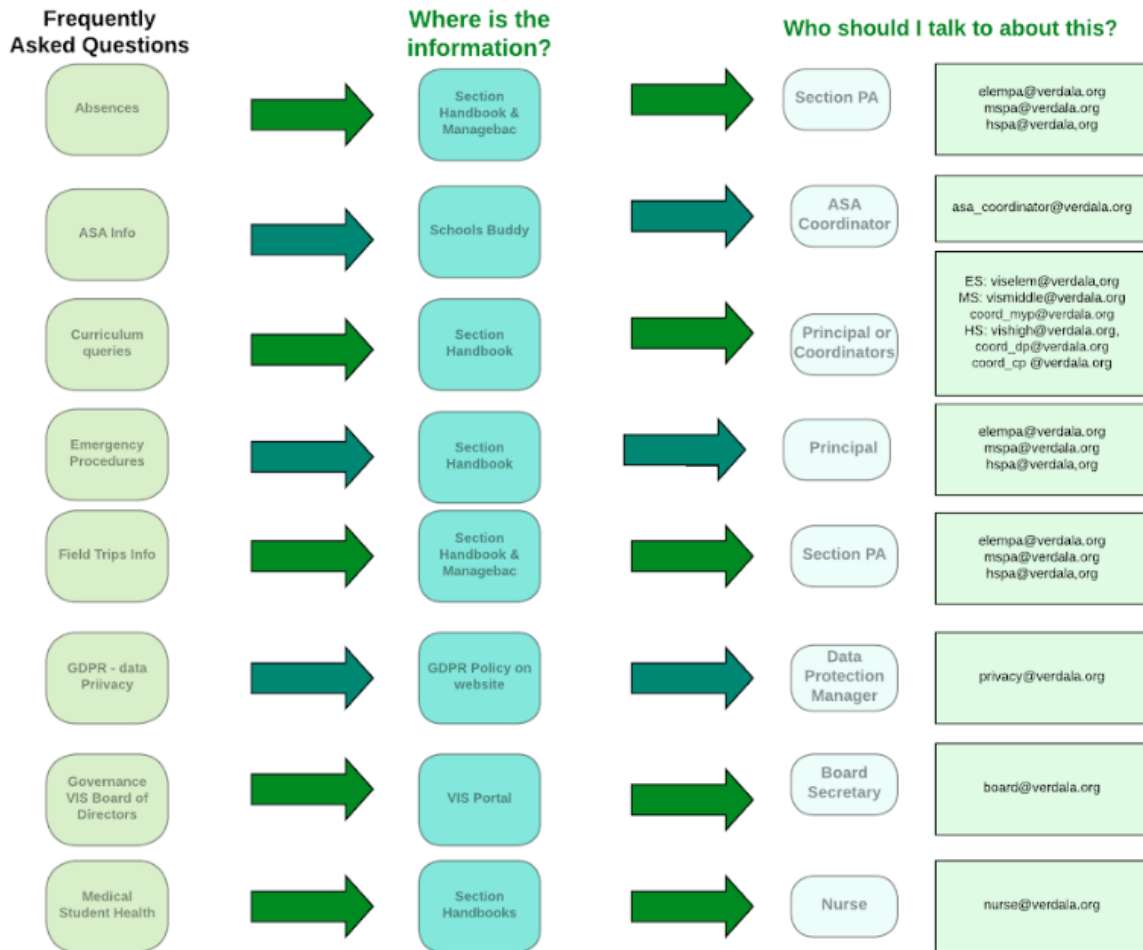
Friendships are considered during class placement and teachers focus on ensuring that students are placed with at least one friend identified either by the teacher or the student. If you have any information related to class placement that you would like our teachers to consider, we ask that you inform them before June. This information will be taken into consideration when developing class lists for the following school year. Please note that we cannot guarantee that any requests will be met due to the complex nature of the class placement process and we do not accept requests for specific teachers.

APPENDIX I - 2023-2024 Key Dates for Parents

Date	Event
Sept 5	New Student Orientation (Prek2-Grade 5) Syllabus Day (PreK1)
Sept 6	1st Day of School (Prek2-Grade 5)
Sept 8	School Holiday
Sept 6 & 7	PK1 Meeting Days
Sept 11	PreK1 1st Day of School
Week of Sept 18	Open House - date will be communicated by teachers
Sept 26 - Oct 6	Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) - Grades 3-5
Oct 3	Student Wellbeing Meetings (half day)
Oct 23-27	School Spirit Days
Oct 30 - Nov 3	Fall Holiday
Nov 23	Half School Day - Thanksgiving
Dec 7	1st semester report cards published
Dec 8	School Holiday
Dec 11	Parent Conferences
Dec 13	School Holiday
Dec 19 - Jan 2	Winter Break
Feb 5 - Feb 16	Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) - Grades 3-5
Feb 19 - Feb 23	School Holiday
March 22	2nd semester report cards published
March 26	Parent Conferences
March 29 - April 5	Spring Holiday
June 7	School Holiday

June 10	Return all school books
Week of June 10	Grade 5 to Middle School Transition, Move Up Week
June 20	Last Day Of School 3rd semester report cards published Half School Day

APPENDIX II - Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

Where is the information?

Who can I talk to about this?

