

2022-2023 Edition

Revised 4/2022



IMS

PARENT HANDBOOK

A HONG KONG REGISTERED CHARITY

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WELCOME TO IMS

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to returning parents and for new parents, “Welcome” to the International Montessori School – an IMEF School (IMS). We are so pleased that you have made the decision to have your child join our Montessori Dual-Language environment. Our entire staff is working to provide a happy, enjoyable, and productive educational and developmental experience for your child.

This Parent Handbook, along with other associated documents, is intended to help familiarise you with the basic school policies and procedures here at IMS. It is expected that all families will take the opportunity to review and abide by the various areas of the handbook, which form part of the terms and conditions of enrollment into IMS.

It is essential for the smooth and efficient operation of the school that these policies and procedures become an integral part of school life. This will help to ensure that your time with us will be a memorable and enjoyable experience.

The policies and procedures found in this Handbook reflect current practice in international schools. Whenever you have any questions concerning this document or future policy additions or corrections, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to discuss the matter with you personally.

We look forward to working together in order to provide you with a full and enjoyable academic and extra-curricular programme. We certainly hope that you will enjoy your involvement with IMS and become an integral part of our very special community.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

CORE VALUES

RESPECT • DISCOVERY • PASSION • COLLABORATION EMPOWERMENT • SELF-ACTUALISATION

- Our primary focus will always be the well-being and best interests of our students.
- We recognise that a Montessori school is more than a place of learning; it is a community of children and adults that have a significant impact on our students' capacity to learn, grow, create, develop, assimilate values, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world.
- We treat all students, families, teachers, and staff members with kindness, warmth, and respect.
- Our school will never permit the use of corporal punishment.
- We consciously teach our students values fundamental to Montessori education, which include: respect for oneself, others, and their property; peacefulness, empathy and kindness; truthfulness; a search for the solution fairest to all; the pursuit of independence and self-mastery; and a love of work and a passion for excellence.
- We endeavour to provide a school environment that will promote and protect the physical and emotional well-being of our students and staff.
- We seek to instil in our students, parents, and staff not only a reverence for the earth, its waters, and all living things, but also a sense of stewardship for the environment based on a conviction of our individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.
- Our school does not discriminate in matters of admission or employment on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background. We consciously teach children to accept, respect and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community.
- We consciously work to build a constructive partnership between the family and school in support of each child's educational development.
- Within reasonable guidelines established to ensure the integrity of our educational programme and the privacy of other students' records, parents are welcome to visit the school to observe their child in class or to review his/her academic progress.
- We will promptly consult with parents should it ever become clear that a student is not benefiting from the school's programme, or if the school is not the best programme to meet his/her needs.

VISION

Empowering children to maximise their own unique potential to transform their world.

Our Beliefs behind the Vision: We believe true education offers each child the opportunity to reach his or her own full personal and academic potential, within the structure and support of a caring, respectful, and creative environment, thereby assisting children in the process of becoming the next generation of leaders who are well-educated, self-actualised individuals, committed and capable of contributing to the betterment of the world.

IMS aims to cultivate children who:

- have a lifelong love of learning, and an exploring mind
- are happy, self-confident, and comfortable with change
- are competent in the skills and knowledge needed to succeed
- communicate in both English and Chinese with joy and confidence
- are well prepared to embrace the challenges of a broad spectrum of secondary curricula
- possess a strong moral compass, and seek to contribute to society in a unique and individual way

MISSION STATEMENT

IMS creates an innovative, Dual-Language Montessori community that fosters the full development of each child through collaboration, discovery, and self-actualisation.

The highly successful, proven Montessori Curriculum, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori is implemented in over 22,000 schools worldwide today. IMS aims to expand upon its position as the leading English/Chinese (Putonghua) Dual-Language Montessori school in the world.

Together, IMS staff and parents will continue to forge a community that will prepare our children to be life-long learners who are able to express their uniqueness and creativity as well as participate in diverse cultural experiences and learn to be respectful and responsible members of a world community.

HISTORY

In the summer of 2001, a group of multi-national parents and educators began searching for an education programme that would provide the highest quality academics possible, combined with child-centred teaching and learning.

The group chose the Montessori Method because we saw the value of learning through doing and enabling a child to capture the moment of interest in a subject, without interruption. The Montessori programme is an internationally recognised education method for children from birth through age 18, which has over 100 years of history in providing a unique and enriching education in 110 countries around the world. Montessori students' results consistently outperform students educated by traditional teaching methods, both academically and socially.

We also recognised the importance of a second language and wanted our children to have the opportunity to work in a Montessori environment that provided a Dual-Language setting. The International Montessori Education Foundation Limited (IMEF*) was therefore established to sponsor a Montessori School.

THE STORY BEHIND IMS' LOGO



When we were designing the logo that would represent our school, we started with the idea of a fingerprint, which symbolises the uniqueness of each person. The fundamental importance of the Chinese Language is shown by the characters “學問” which incorporate the idea of learning with one's hands and mean learning, knowledge, and enlightenment. The idea that we could fashion these characters from the swirls of IMS' unique fingerprint gave rise to our

School Logo.

IMS TODAY

On September 2, 2002, IMS opened its doors to 68 children from age 3 to 10 in a small converted office space on Queen's Road East. Today, our Montessori community continues to develop, with almost 1,000 children from over 40 different countries on four campuses on Hong Kong Island.

We are delighted that our little school which started in a small office building on Queen's Road East in 2002 has grown so much. Today, IMS is now one school housed on four campuses: three small, intimate campuses for our youngest children in Aldrich Bay, Mid-Levels and South Horizons, plus the lovely, purpose-built Stanley campus. IMS is honoured to have been allocated the Stanley site for development as an international school by the Hong Kong government, in recognition of the quality education provided by IMS, which provides the needed room to assure the continuity of the Montessori programme through the Upper Elementary, and we hope into the Middle years soon.

The growth and development of IMS since its inception has been made possible through the strong cooperation and dedication of staff, parents and friends of the school working together to make this incredible community what it is.

IMS ACCREDITATION

IMS is a member of The International Montessori Council (IMC) and received full accreditation from the IMC in November 2012. IMS is the only Elementary Montessori school to receive accreditation in greater China.

As a member of the International Montessori Council, IMS pledges to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the general public and internally to our parent community.

We further pledge ourselves to respect the diversity of the community of Montessori schools. We do not engage in negative public relations nor make any negative statements about another Montessori school.

Our school honours its financial commitments to parents, staff, vendors, and others.

IMS CHARITABLE STATUS

The International Montessori Education Foundation Limited (IMEF) is the School Sponsoring Body of IMS with the Hong Kong Education Bureau. Our schools are designated as “IMEF schools”.

These are each registered as a Charity with the Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department and are non-profit organisations.

As a charity, your donations and support are tax-deductible and contribute to a good cause – the education and development of the future generation.

INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANISATION

The core of the IMS programme is the Montessori pedagogy, offered through a variety of programs as outlined below. For further information, read more on the IMS website: www.ims.edu.hk or check out the many wonderful books available in the IMS libraries.

SUPPORTING MONTESSORI AT HOME

You are your child's first teacher, and it is important that you have the resources to support your child at home using a Montessori approach. Please make use of the following resources to help you in this effort:

1. Sign up for the **Montessori Foundation's Family Alliance** (www.montessori.org/mfa). The Montessori Family Alliance is a new international network connecting Montessori parents and teachers of infants and toddlers through teens as well as friends of Montessori. The MFA provides relevant information, insights, and practical information regarding children, Montessori education, and Montessori family life. IMS has arranged for our parents to have access to free registration to the MFA this year, which provides online access to these wonderful resources, including the online version of **Tomorrow's Child**.
2. For those parents who prefer perusing Magazines in paper form, the option to subscribe to the paper version of **Tomorrow's Child** periodical is still an option. An order form will be distributed at the beginning of the year.
3. Print out the **Montessori Glossary of Terms** created by Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).
4. Plan to attend the "**Montessori in the Home**" workshop conducted by marked in the IMS calendar.

In addition to the above resources for learning about how to use the Montessori approach at home, your child's teacher will be providing information over the course of the first few weeks with information about your child's developmental and how you can support your Montessori child more effectively at home. These documents will be posted to the Parent Portal at the same time.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The Montessori Foundation Groups provide an environment in which the very young child (24-36 months) has the opportunity to interact in a Dual-Language (English and Putonghua) Montessori environment. Learning takes place both independently and alongside teachers who use the environment to facilitate meaningful interaction. **Read more on the IMS website:** www.ims.edu.hk/programmes/foundation-groups

The Montessori Casa dei Bambini (Ages 3-6) Programme is designed for the child's sensorial focus and individual interests typical at this age. Teacher interactions are primarily individual in nature. The environment is carefully designed to maximise the child's exposure to the world.

Read more on the IMS website: www.ims.edu.hk/programmes/casa-dei-bambini

Casa dei Bambini Programme (Half Day) - is the core Montessori programme for children 3 years to 4 years of age. It is held five mornings a week for 3.5 hours each morning, ensuring a full, three-hour Montessori cycle each morning.

Casa dei Bambini Full Programme – is designed for children who are at least four years old. In order to be ready for the transition to the Montessori Elementary programme, Children who are in their second year may be recommended to stay into the full afternoon, at the classroom teacher's discretion, but are not required to do so. Most children are participating by age 4.5, and all children must participate by the start of the third year of the Casa dei Bambini programme.

Children who stay through the full afternoon have a half-hour lunch period that provides them with important opportunities to learn table manners and socialise with teachers and friends. Additional academic focus is provided in the afternoon to prepare the developing older child for the transition into the Montessori Elementary Programme with opportunities for individual and group activities of special interest to children of this age.

The Montessori Elementary Years Programme: (ages 6-12) environment is prepared such that individualised learning establishes an intimate contact between child, other students, teacher and work. The instruction by the teacher is conducted in small groups and deals first in the concrete and moves to the more conceptual as the child develops his/her capacity for logic and reason. Students are not limited by grade level, and can and do explore topics far in advance of a traditional grade's curriculum. Individual academic excellence, as well as personal development of skills and talents, is encouraged in this cooperative environment. The students are encouraged to seek answers to the questions they are studying in the world around them and to go out to the library, museum, park or beach to collect pertinent information. **Read more on the IMS website:** <https://www.ims.edu.hk/programmes#elementary>

CHINESE AT IMS

IMS was founded to provide the opportunity for children to be immersed in a Dual-Language environment. English and Chinese (Putonghua) are alive within the School at every level. Chinese is absorbed as a natural language, and every Montessori classroom has both an English-speaking and a Chinese-speaking teacher.

The teaching of traditional characters has been chosen for several reasons. First, while Putonghua is not the language which surrounds the children in Hong Kong, the written language is that which is seen. Complex characters are formed from combinations of simple characters, which are more understandable for children to understand and remember. Finally, it is far easier to learn the simplified character if one knows the complex character.

Chinese (Putonghua) is taught as a language as well as through additional arts, culture and standard curriculum work in Mathematics and Science over the course of each week, according to their level and developmental stage in each IMS programme, while, at the Elementary level, children also receive focused Chinese lessons on a daily basis.

The school will provide you with age-appropriate suggestions as you support your child's enjoyment of learning Chinese.

SINGLE-SUBJECT TEACHING

As part of the Elementary curriculum, the teaching of art, music, IT and PE, while being part of the Montessori programme, is supported through the provision of additional lessons provided by specialist teachers in these areas.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

There are a wide range of assessment tools and strategies that are an inherent and essential component of the Montessori pedagogy, which IMS teachers are required to use as part of the ongoing assessment of each child in the Montessori environment from Foundation through Upper Elementary. These assessments form the basis for our reporting.

In addition to this ongoing assessment in the classroom environment, at the Elementary level, the IMS administers external summative assessments and standardised tests which make judgements about student performance and evaluate the educational programme the school offers. The following are currently implemented at IMS for Elementary Students:

PM BENCHMARKS

These are used to measure a student's reading age and comprehension ability using pre-set assessment booklets and recording sheets. These tests involve a child reading out loud to a teacher on a one:one basis and are administered two to three times per year for most students and more frequently for children who require closer tracking. These tests are designed to measure progress and development over time. The results are provided to parents as part of the Parent / Teacher Conferences.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS' ASSESSMENT (ISA) TESTS

These are administered to children in Grade 3 equivalent and above (third Year Lower Elementary students and all Upper Elementary). Tests are given in February with results received back from ACER (the Australian Council for Educational Research) in May. Currently, the ISA results are provided to parents as part of the final report. They measure student performance in the areas of Reading Literacy, Mathematical Literacy and Writing (narrative and expository). Results provide the school with information on an individual, class, grade and school-wide level and are normed by comparison with all students across the world who took the test.

MAP TESTS

MAP tests are an online assessment that is self-adjusting and measures aspects of mathematics and language. With feedback coming within 24 hours, the tests allow teachers to make immediate adjustments to their teaching and planning. These tests will be administered three times per year in order to plot student development and progress, with results provided through conferences and as part of the end of year report.

ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

In admission decisions, IMS carefully balances the fit of the Montessori environment to the specific child, taking into consideration the availability of appropriate resources to support the individual child within the classroom and the ability to provide a positive and productive classroom learning environment for all of the students in the class.

Once in the Montessori environment, teachers may determine that your child requires some additional support, using the following process (more detailed information is available if needed):

- If a teacher should suspect that a child warrants closer scrutiny, he/she will seek the assistance of the appropriate Curriculum Leader, providing the background and assessments of activity in the classroom.
- The Curriculum Leader will typically observe the child in the classroom environment, and then provide suggestions and support to the teacher based on that (those) observation(s). If this additional support to the child in the classroom is insufficient, an IMS Learning Support teacher may be asked to provide additional suggestions for the teacher to consider. These processes will typically be shared with parents to help the child.
- The teacher will ensure the observations are routinely shared with parents and will seek input from home.
- The parents may be called in for a Parent-Teacher conference as soon as possible with the teacher and the Curriculum Leader.
- IMS may provide the support of a behavioural psychologist or other specialist to support the teachers and the School with suggested strategies for children who are displaying atypical behaviour, development, or learning patterns, who may recommend whether it is advisable to seek additional outside input, assessment, or therapy.
- The teachers and management will discuss any such recommendation for either internal additional support, and/or outside assessment with the parents, and recommendations with regard to next steps will then be reviewed. No outside resource professional will be called in to observe a child without prior parental approval other than the routine observation of the School's consulting developmental psychologist or specialists, whose visits are announced. Any record kept of consultations relating to the child will be kept in the child's file and will be available to the parent upon request. At the same time, Parents who have sought the assistance of an outside provider are required to share this information with Class Teachers in order to ensure IMS is working effectively to support the child.
- In the event that additional resources are necessary to support the child's learning and development, this will be discussed and agreed with parents. Additional classroom or in-school learning support is typically associated with an additional monthly charge to support the resources, which is confirmed with parents. The assessment tools are used to help IMS determine best approaches to the provision of support and then the measurement of intervention. *Should a parent refuse such referral or support, and the faculty believes this support to be vital to the success of the child in the programme, we may be unable to continue the child's education at IMS.* Regular contact with the family will be maintained and follow-up conducted.
- For a child receiving Learning Support at IMS, the School will make every effort to support any individual education plan (IEP) made on behalf of the child by professional resource persons or agency or to create a suitable IEP if no external resource has done so. IMS may be required to employ additional resources in order to facilitate this effort.

The faculty member who liaises with the family will document any meetings with parents and any other concerns or action taken on behalf of the child. A written summary of all referrals and team meeting notes will be provided to parents upon request.

ENRICHMENT & EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMES

IMS students enjoy a vibrant, well-rounded school programme that transcends the merely academic. Gardening, Sports, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Community Service events are all important elements to school life at IMS. After all, school is not only about classes and lessons, it is a second home for your child, where he or she spends most of the day and establishes some of their most meaningful relationships with friends and teachers.

Each year a variety of extracurricular activities are offered for IMS students on a first-come, first-served basis. The schedule for the extracurricular activities is published shortly before the beginning of each term, and parents can sign up in the campus front office or online.

LIBRARY

Library opening times vary from campus to campus and relate to the needs of the children. In all campuses, we greatly depend upon the support of parent volunteers to make the libraries a vibrant, accessible and exciting place for all.

The libraries are constantly updating their resources of learning materials. Please note that certain genres and styles of book are not considered suitable for IMS libraries, especially with regard to Casa dei Bambini and Foundation. Please refer to the library personnel for further details. In addition, the school is looking to increase its stock of books in languages other than English or Chinese and would welcome donations from any parents whose own children have 'outgrown' their own books.

Each library operates a Birthday Book system. It is a great opportunity for children to choose a book for the library. When they do, their name is printed in the book and they become the first person to check it out. Further details are distributed closer to a child's birthday.

FIELD TRIPS / "GOING OUT"

IMS students will go on field trips and outings. The Elementary students will participate in "Going Out" activities in small groups to support their learning in a specific area of the curriculum under study, which is an important part of the Elementary curriculum. Parent organisers and chaperones are often needed for these outings. This is a useful opportunity for parents to share their child's school experience. All field trips will be announced in advance.

Children must be accompanied on all outside trips according to the following ratios (adult: child):

- Casa dei Bambini programme: 1:4
- Elementary programme: 1:6

For First Aid procedures outside of IMS, consult the [IMS' Health, First Aid, and Sanitation Guidelines](#).

SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

ENROLLMENT & CLASS ALLOCATION

The International Montessori School welcomes students of all nationalities, religious beliefs and heritage, and benefits from the strength-of our highly diverse, international community.

The ideal student is a good citizen who is respectful and independent. IMS seeks to create and maintain a student body consisting of students with varying capabilities who will flourish and add to the Montessori environment and community.

Admission policies are established and regularly reviewed to maintain and follow Hong Kong law along with the School's mission statement and philosophy. For further information, and to ensure that you have the most recent version, please refer to the School's website (<https://www.ims.edu.hk/admissions>).

Applying children are given priority for a place based on an assessment of readiness, then based on whether a sibling is currently attending IMS at the time of the offer, then on a first-come, first-served basis.

INTERNATIONAL GRADE/YEAR NOMENCLATURE IN HONG KONG

It may be helpful to understand that, in Hong Kong, there are at least two educational placement systems being used with different numbering systems for the same year. In addition, whereas ESF places students according to their age as at the 31st of December, the majority of other schools use the 31st of August as their placement date. As a result, there can be a difference of *up to two grade/year levels* when placing a child into a different system. The below table provides a rough reference guide.

Age	IMS Montessori Programme		Grade (US Schools)	Year (ESF, British Curriculum)
3+	Casa dei Bambini	CdB 1	Prep / Reception	Prep / Reception
4+		CdB 2		
5+		CdB 3	Kindergarten	Primary 1
6+	Lower Elementary	Elementary 1	Grade 1	Primary 2
7+		Elementary 2	Grade 2	Primary 3
8+		Elementary 3	Grade 3	Primary 4
9+	Upper Elementary	Elementary 4	Grade 4	Primary 5
10+		Elementary 5	Grade 5	Primary 6
11+		Elementary 6	Grade 6	Year 7

TUITION PAYMENT & WITHDRAWALS

Payment Terms:

1. Tuition Fees are collected over ten (10) instalments in an academic year, excluding the two summer months. Outing fee, material and camp fees are due and payable upon the student's enrolment in the Casa dei Bambini or Elementary Programme. In case of subsequent withdrawal, these fees are not refundable.
2. A Registration Fee (equivalent to two instalments of tuition fees) is payable upon re-enrolment (for existing students) or acceptance of a place offer (for new students). This Registration Fee will be offset against the tuition fees.
3. Tuition payments must be made by Direct Debit (Autopay). Direct Debit Authorization form shall be completed in accordance with the Direct Debit (Autopay) Set-up Arrangement Instructions.
4. All Tuition and other Fees are not refundable, transferable, or otherwise creditable.
5. Tuition for the full month shall be payable for enrolment for any part of the month. No reduction in school fees shall be made for any absence from school or the closure of the school due to force majeure events like natural disasters, terrorism, bad weather, natural disasters, war, strike, riot, epidemic/pandemic and/or any other matters beyond the reasonable control of the School which in the reasonable opinion of the School materially hinders, prevents, or obstructs the School from its normal daily operation. In event of the occurrence of the said force majeure events, this Agreement is still subsisting and binding and the parties hereto agree that the School is entitled, at its absolute discretion and/or to adjust the class schedule, to implement on-line teaching or its equivalent in the place and stead of normal campus on-site teaching.
6. Fees are due on the 1st day of the month, or the last working day prior to it if the 1st day is a public holiday. In case of outstanding school fees and other unpaid invoices, the student shall not be allowed to attend school, and the school reserves the right to withhold the student's school report and any other records.
7. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Fees will be collected on behalf of the PTA upon the student's enrolment or re-enrolment in IMS.

Withdrawals:

The School Manager must be notified in writing of any withdrawals from any IMS Programmes. For any such withdrawals, the following terms apply:

1. For any withdrawals during the academic year (September to June inclusive), two (2) complete calendar months' notice is required. Notice must be served prior to the last day of the calendar month, or a full tuition instalment shall be charged.
2. For withdrawals for the upcoming academic year:
 - a. Students enrolled in one of the above programmes for the current year must give notice of withdrawal for the upcoming year prior to 31st March. In the event that a student withdraws from the upcoming academic year any time between 1st April and the commencement of the new academic year, tuition fees for the first two months of the new academic year shall be charged.
 - b. Students who have accepted a place in one of the above programmes for the upcoming school year, and who subsequently do not attend the programme, will be charged tuition fees for the first two months of the upcoming academic year regardless of the date of withdrawal.

Parents must abide by these terms and the policies of the school as described in this Handbook as a condition of continued attendance in the School.

RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

The normal annual re-enrollment process:

1. No application fee is required for re-enrolling students.
2. Re-enrollment of current students takes place in the early spring of each year. Notice will be given to parents of current students.
3. The Place Confirmation Form is due by 31 March.
4. After the notice period, no space will be reserved for a returning student.
5. If a parent withdraws a child after the re-enrollment confirmation, tuition for the first two months of the upcoming academic year will be due even if a child does not return the following academic year.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

Classes are assigned by the School Managers with input from the teachers. Class assignments are made with consideration given to balancing the classrooms for age, gender, Montessori background, time at IMS, language skills in English and Mandarin, maturity, learning styles, friends and siblings, and any special circumstances.

SIBLING CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

As a general rule, siblings are placed in different classrooms. This approach applies to twins and triplets. Only in very exceptional circumstances, where the parents, teachers and School Managers agree that it is in the best interest of each child, will siblings be placed in the same classroom at the same time, although we do look to place transitioning children into a class that an older sibling has already graduated from in order to benefit from previously established parent-teacher relationships.

PROCESS FOR CLASSROOM PLACEMENT FOR EXISTING STUDENTS TRANSITIONING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Step I: Teachers discuss the timing of children approaching the age of six with regard to their readiness for the Lower Elementary programme or the student approaching the age of nine with regard to their readiness for the Upper Elementary programme over the coming six to twelve months. Timing of this transition is entirely based on the child's readiness for the next level, especially for the child who is not yet six. The best learning environment for the child who is not yet fully in the Age of Reason is the Casa dei Bambini. In some cases, we recommend a child stay for an additional six months to a year in the Casa dei Bambini programme, especially if the child has not completed the three-year cycle, and English language skills are only at a nascent stage. The final decision for the transition will be made by the classroom teacher and Curriculum Leaders / Programme Directors.

Step II: Observations can be arranged for parents of transitioning children. Parents are encouraged to visit the Elementary Campus and observe in a Lower or Upper Elementary class as relevant.

Step III: Casa dei Bambini teachers assemble a portfolio for each child for Elementary teachers to review. English-speaking and Chinese-speaking Elementary staff visit Casa dei Bambini classrooms to observe transitioning children, including their interactions with materials, teachers, and other students, work choices, etc. Chinese-speaking teachers assess whether the child is more suited to Stream I (native/near-native stream) or Stream II (Chinese as a Second Language) in the Elementary programme.

Step IV: Parents are notified of probable timing of transition and the recommended Chinese Stream.

Step V: Students who will be transitioning to the next level are given the opportunity to begin classroom visits on a scheduled basis. Teachers are able to work with and observe these students at work.

Step VI: Teaching staff, teachers and Curriculum Leaders meet to begin the process of placing students in each of the classes. Teachers from each level meet to review the child's file.

Step VII: Parents are notified of their child's class assignment for the coming academic year.

Transitions to the next stage of development and the appropriate Montessori environment is natural, as the child is ready.

TRANSITION TIMELINE FOR CHILDREN PROGRESSING FROM THE CASA DEI BAMBINI TO LOWER ELEMENTARY

JANUARY 2023 START

2022	
October	Elementary Offer Letter IMS Open Day - opportunity to meet Elementary faculty and visit Stanley Campus
November	Transition Coffee Chat with Casa dei Bambini and Elementary Curriculum Leaders and Stanley Head at your home campus to learn about the transition process and ask transition questions.
December	Welcome Letter & Orientation Booklet from Elementary Programme Director / Stanley Campus Head for those joining in January Transition Week (meet teachers at afternoon pick-up; Orientation with Campus Leaders) Confirmation of class teacher and Chinese small group stream
2023	
January	Start of school Parent Orientation with Class Teachers by invitation

SEPTEMBER 2023 START

2022	
October	Transition Process Timeline Letter IMS Open Day - opportunity to meet Elementary faculty and visit Stanley Campus
November	Transition Coffee Chat with Casa dei Bambini and Elementary Curriculum Leaders and Stanley Head at your home campus to learn about the transition process and ask transition questions.
2023	
January	Introduction to Elementary tour for Casa dei Bambini parents - opportunity to tour Stanley Campus and see Elementary classes in action.
Spring Term	Elementary offer letter
June	Welcome Letter & Orientation Booklet from Elementary Programme Director / Stanley Campus Head for those joining in January Transition Week (meet teachers at afternoon pick-up; Orientation with Campus Leaders) Confirmation of class teacher and Chinese small group stream
August	Start of school Parent Orientation with Class Teachers by invitation

SCHOOL DAY

Each IMS campus operates a daily schedule as follows:

Campus	Full Casa dei Bambini	Casa dei Bambini Morning
Stanley	08:15 - 15:15 (Casa dei Bambini classes end at 13:15 each Friday)	08:15 - 11:45
South Horizons	08:00 - 14:30	08:00 - 11:30
Mid-Levels	08:00 - 14:30	08:00 - 11:30
Aldrich Bay	08:00 - 14:30	08:00 - 11:30

ACADEMIC CALENDAR & HOLIDAYS

The most important support for your child's education in Montessori is protected time in the prepared environment, so planning your family holidays around the school calendar is critical. We ask that parents schedule holidays **only during school holiday periods**. Students who take holidays outside of those marked on the calendar miss important lessons and fall behind in their progress. In Elementary, the absence of one student affects others in the class as well, as entire groups are affected. This is especially true of Chinese lessons, and homework cannot offset this time away.

Please read through the related documents. Some of them you will want to print and post in a convenient location for reference for the family.

PARKING & DROP OFF/PICK-UP

Each IMS Campus has specific information regarding closest parking, drop-off practices, and contact information for smooth communications.

There is no parking on any campus, however, hourly parking is available close to each campus. Prior to visiting a non-familiar IMS campus, please request any relevant parking information from your campus administration.

As part of its operating agreement with the government, all parents/drivers are required to abide by local conditions of access, parking etc. In the event of continued non-compliance, the school reserves the right to require the child to take the school bus in order to ensure continued enrollment at IMS.

Please carefully observe class start times and pickup arrangements.

LATE ARRIVALS

Children should be brought to school before the official class start time, with consideration to the special arrangements of your child's campus described in the **Campus Logistics**. **It is important that the arrival time is carefully observed.** Late arrivals can be disruptive and potentially embarrassing to the child, and diminish important social rituals of greetings of teachers and friends. Children who arrive late to school **MUST** report to the Administration office before going into their classroom. Any child who is late will be marked "Tardy" in year-end reports.

BUS SERVICE

IMS uses Castle Brothers, an independent company, to provide bussing services for the students of the school. As a condition of using this service, your child must comply with the bus rules and expectations for behaviour. **Contact:** Robert Mu of Castle Brothers – 2555-2088.

Currently, bus service covers all of Hong Kong Island, including South Side and Outlying Island Ferry piers. Arrangements for bussing are made directly with Castle Brothers, and all forms and payments should be sent directly to them. Castle Brothers request that parents confirm no later than one week prior to the child's start date on the bus.

Castle Brothers will confirm by mail:

- pick up / drop off locations and times
- Bus pass must be worn for bussing

Please be patient for the first two weeks of each term: Schedules may change over the first two weeks of any term as new children are added to the bus routes and traffic conditions are observed. This could result in the timings of buses being amended.

NOTE: If you normally arrange for bus service, and plan to pick up your child from school, you **MUST** notify Castle Brothers **AND** the IMS campus administration office **AT LEAST ONE DAY IN ADVANCE** to ensure we do not put your child on the bus. For routine activities which happen each week, one notice by email can be given; however, any change for that routine must be notified to both Castle Brothers and the School. IMS cannot place students on other buses to support one-off play dates, birthdays etc.

BUS BEHAVIOUR AND PROCEDURE FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that they act in a safe and responsible manner while on the bus. Bus drivers have been instructed not to continue their journey if students are not seated safely. Travelling on the School bus is a privilege, not a right.

Students are not allowed to:

- Undo their seat belts
- Get out of their seats
- Put their head, arm or any item out of the window
- Disturb the driver
- Make excessive noise
- Throw things around the bus
- Upset other passengers

While most issues are dealt with in an informal manner, continued failure to abide by these rules will lead to:

1. A verbal reminder from the Principal / Campus Head / Curriculum Leader, with information sent to the parents.
2. A written warning from the Principal / Campus Manager / Curriculum Leader, to be signed by the parent.
3. Suspension from the use of the bus. In such a case, bus fees will not be refunded.

For further information, please refer to the IMS Bus Guide in the Engage Parent Portal.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Your child's health and safety are of critical importance to us. Please carefully review all of the pertinent information.

HEALTHY EATING

IMS students learn the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition. We ask that parents support this by encouraging your child to choose, make and bring healthy food choices to school for snacks, lunch or special events. Please review the [IMS Healthy Eating Guide](#) including the important information on **allergies**.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

Before starting School: Your child's health forms (Student Medical Information Form, Medical Alert Information Sheet & Allergy/Dietary Restrictions) must be filled out by your physician or yourself as indicated on the form, and must be returned before the first day of school.

Required inoculations and immunizations must be up to date. Immunizations required by the Department of Health are Hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis, mumps, rubella, varicella, and measles. If parents choose not to immunise their child, IMS *must* be notified in writing. IMS takes no liability for any resulting illnesses or related complications to such children.

If your child's medical information should change during the course of the year (s/he develops an allergy, is put on medication, etc.) you must notify the school and child's teacher in writing.

MANAGEMENT OF SICK CHILDREN

Children attending IMS are expected to be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Please do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever (above 99.5°F / 37.5°C)
- Unusual (for the child) rash
- Very bad cough (unusual for the child)
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Sore throat
- Profuse discharge of discoloured mucus from nose or eye
- Any symptoms related to communicable disease which may be prevalent at the time.

Any child who develops any of the above symptoms **MUST** be taken home, even if he/she claims to feel better. The school will call the parent or emergency contact person to pick up the child as soon as possible. The ill child will be sent to the First Aid room or school office, where he/she will be monitored until the parent/guardian arrives to take the child home. We encourage the parent to seek the advice of a doctor for early medical treatment.

If your child has a fever, current CHP protocols require that they stay home for 48 hours after the fever has subsided. If your child will not be attending school because s/he is ill, please notify the school.

PLEASE NOTE: We will adhere to specific protocols and inform parents as necessary to respond to COVID-19 or any prevalent communicable disease with the guidance of the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Education Bureau (EDB). We will inform you should such protocols be required at the start of the new school year or when the government puts requirements in place.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

No medication, prescription or non-prescription, may be administered to a child without specific written permission from the parent and the physician on the IMS Form.

Topical medications require written permission. Sunscreen or SPF creams should be applied by caregivers in advance of attending school.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In the case of an emergency, one of the following procedures will be adopted:

If it is decided that **immediate hospital treatment is needed:**

- Inform the Campus Head and the front office.

- Seek help/advice from trained personnel.

- The front office will organise transport to be immediately available.

- Ensure that at least one Chinese-speaking member of staff accompanies the child to the local hospital or designated hospital as shown on their health forms.

- This staff member will act *in loco parentis* until one of the parents arrives.

- The front office will contact the parents to inform them of what has happened.

- The front office will contact the appropriate hospital to inform them of our arrival.

If it is decided that **parents can be called first:**

- Inform the Campus Head and the nurse/office.

- Seek help/advice from trained personnel.

- The nurse/office will contact the parents to inform them of what has happened.

- When the parents arrive at school, they will take responsibility for the child's welfare from that point.

USE OF WASHROOMS

The washrooms in each campus are under the overall supervision of the classroom teachers, and directly by the school's housekeepers. Children must wash their hands with soap and running water after using the toilet. Paper towels or hand dryers are used to dry hands. Children are encouraged to dry their hands thoroughly.

Children must be toilet trained to be offered a place in the Casa dei Bambini. Children under age five (5) are assisted as needed with buttons, snaps, etc. *Please allow your child to practise the skills required to go to the toilet independently at home so they can increasingly master this by themselves.*

SMOKING

The School site is a smoke-free area and smoking is not permitted by any person on the premises.

FIRE DRILLS & EVACUATION IN EMERGENCIES

Fire drills occur regularly throughout the school year so as to prepare for actual emergencies.

Some drills will be announced, while others will not. When an actual emergency occurs, the same procedures will be used.

- A separate evacuation diagram is posted at each exit of each room.
- An accurate daily attendance log recorded at the time of child's arrival will be used for roll call in an emergency.
- An accurate log of dates and times of all drills and notes about the effectiveness or problems of any drill are kept.
- All persons on the School premises are required to take part in any Fire Drills or Evacuations.

Please make a note of the Emergency route of the room you are in to prepare for such an event. The emergency route is posted on the back of each door in the school. All visitors must cooperate with school staff who are trained for such occurrences.

SECURITY IDENTIFICATION

The school provides each child with a security card which must be presented to enter the campus, and prior to collection of the child from school. If a person other than the child's usual guardian for pick-up is to collect a child, parents must either give the security card to that person or notify the admin office ahead of time with an email that includes the full name of the child, the person authorised to pickup, and the dates on which they are authorised to pick-up.

If you do not have the security card you will need to sign the visitor register and show a Hong Kong ID.

Additional or replacement card can be applied from the admin office. If you lose this card, please notify the admin office immediately.

CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORISED PERSON.

All visitors to the school campus for any purpose are required to sign in and provide proof of identification to ensure registration in case of emergency.

In order to better identify all adults who enter an IMS campus and to improve safety during any emergency, all staff, parents and visitors will be provided with an identification card that *must be worn at all times whilst on the campus*. Failure to provide a relevant identification card will result in any parent/guardian needing to register as a guest in order to enter any campus.

WEATHER WARNINGS: SCHOOL CLOSURE

When Hong Kong Schools close due to inclement weather, IMS will close, too. Please review and post the attached **Weather Warnings: School Closure Guide**.

SCHOOL CLOSURES: COMMUNICABLE DISEASE or CIVIL UNREST

The safety of our students, parents, and staff is our greatest priority. If required, parents will be informed by both Engage Parent Portal Notice and email in the event of school closure due to COVID-19, other communicable diseases, or travel safety issues related to civil unrest. Such closures may be enforced as a Government or Education Bureau (EDB) mandate or as a decision of the School's crisis management team. In any such cases, changes to class schedules, bussing, and any implementation of at-home learning will be communicated directly by the School in response to the specific details of the event. Please ensure that your email address and contact information is current in our records to ensure that you receive all such communications.

GIFT POLICY

IMS has a policy on the non-solicitation and acceptance of gifts by IMS faculty and staff. We understand that from time to time, grateful parents may wish to give small gifts to their teachers or to other employees to express appreciation. The best gift a student can give a teacher is a genuine and personal expression of gratitude.

If, in addition to any personal thank you, you or your child wishes to give a small token gift, such gifts of appreciation may be given or received only if they meet the following conditions:

- The total value of the gift/s does not exceed HK\$500 per child per school year. A group gift may be given as long as no individual contributes more than the stated HK\$500.
- Modest gifts of food hampers or other consumables may be accepted without specific financial limits, so long as it is something that will be shared openly within departments or divisions.
- Gifts must meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, and must not be politically or culturally offensive to other members of the school community.
- All participation is voluntary.

Invitations to lunch, dinner, and social events are acceptable as an appreciation of thanks. We value building positive relations among parents, teachers and staff.

PARENT TRAVEL

If there is a significant change in a child's usual routine, this may manifest itself in behavioural changes in your child. Please confirm parent trips, caregiver holidays, etc. to your child's teachers. If both parents will be travelling outside Hong Kong, IMS must have a signed form that in the case of emergency, that the Guardian has the right to make decisions regarding your child. Please print out the [Parent Travel Form](#).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mobile phones are NOT permitted for Foundation and Casa dei Bambini-aged children. Elementary children have the option to bring a phone to school but they are not allowed to use them during the school day and they must be switched off throughout this time. The School does not accept responsibility for any child's personal belongings, although a phone may be handed into the teacher for safer keeping.

The School provides students with the necessary equipment and materials required to access the curriculum. Except with the express permission of the teacher for a particular situation, children should not bring personal electronic devices into school. Currently, this would include 'smartwatches', which can easily be damaged, become lost or be used in ways that are not beneficial to teaching and learning. Portable gaming devices are NOT permitted while riding on the bus or on the school campus. They will be kept in the office if brought to school.

PHOTO AND VIDEO RECORDING

At IMS, we recognise that image and audio collection is a useful tool within the school and it is employed routinely in many ways, for example for record-keeping, portfolios, displays, teachers'

lessons and the children's own work. On occasions, photographs are also used for the newspaper, social media and other promotional purposes. We also recognise the wishes of parents to take photographs and/or video of their own children participating in school events. We are also sensitive to the wishes and rights of parents who may not want their children to be photographed and/or who might have concerns about the use of such images. In addition, we are aware of the need to ensure that photography and audio recording is not permitted anywhere other than at approved events. We are aware of our responsibility to protect the children and all members of the school community from harm.

The [Parental Authorisation Form](#) gives IMS permission to use your child's photos/videos, for purposes directly linked to the School, including but not limited to the production of the School publications, Memory Book, newsletters, website, blog, social media, brochures, flyers, application package and banners, etc. You will be requested to provide your authorisation in a Parental Authority Form so if you do not wish to do so, please state so on the [Parental Authorisation Form](#). This will be kept in your child's record for reference.

STUDENT INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

STUDENTS' RIGHTS & EXPECTATIONS

All students have a right to:

- A positive, friendly, respectful and supportive environment in which to receive an effective education
- Participate in a safe environment that is free from verbal or physical abuse

CONDUCT

Parents and teachers should help students develop good self-discipline so they become productive and responsible individuals who will make positive contributions to the school and to society in the future.

All students are expected to:

- Respect the rights of self, others and the environment
- Display good manners
- Use appropriate language
- Work and play cooperatively with others, avoiding all forms of rough play, e.g. play-fighting, tackle games and piggy-back riding
- Solve problems by talking them out with others
- Know and follow school and bus rules
- Treat school and personal property with care and respect
- Remain on school property during the normal school day unless an outing has been scheduled and parents notified.
- Have an awareness for the safety of self and others, e.g. by walking when moving around the school

PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

All students have a desire to be accepted and to participate in their classrooms in a positive and constructive manner. Individuals are to be respected for their uniqueness and for their individual

feelings, interests and abilities. We work towards helping students to learn how to help themselves in terms of self-discipline. Grace and Courtesy lessons are an important part of all Casa de Bambini and Elementary classrooms. Each child has an opportunity to role-play in different challenging situations and learn appropriate behaviours and responses – whenever possible before the situation descends into a behaviour problem.

Every student is important and we nurture the whole person. The individual person and each child's feelings are respected. Students need to know that certain rules and guidelines are necessary so that everyone can grow and develop effectively. Students are reminded as necessary that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated within the school.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Rather than focusing on what should not be done, we work to show children what should be done, and explain and model appropriate behaviour in every Montessori environment at IMS. Our teachers are trained to use various techniques to redirect a child's behaviour, including encouragement, positive reinforcement, and natural consequences for actions.

IMS believes that all children desire to be productive and in control of themselves. We also believe discipline should include acknowledging the child's contributions, respecting her/his achievements, and recognizing progress. To that end, our discipline policy is designed to help our students develop self-discipline and self-respect. If used consistently, this positive approach to discipline is extremely effective with most children.

If a child's behaviour is disruptive or inappropriate, the teacher will speak to the child; explain what is expected and why the action was unacceptable. Consequences of misbehaviour are explained and the teachers ensure that even the youngest children understand.

If the child does not respond appropriately, a method of discipline appropriate and effective for the child will be applied. A common example would be that s/he will be asked to sit on a chair away from the group in a quiet area, but within the classroom and under constant adult supervision. This quiet time gives the child a few minutes to think and settle back to positive activity. This method of discipline is called "Time Away" or "Thinking Time." The length of time will be appropriate to the age of the child and the behaviour and is never longer than one minute per year of age.

Older children are encouraged to think about their actions and choose when they are ready to participate again themselves. Children involved in disputes are encouraged to try to work through a difficulty themselves, and teachers will help as necessary to resolve differences. (See Grace & Courtesy lessons as pre-emptive measures of dispute resolution).

Teachers use their best efforts to help children make good choices, as described above. If a child continues to be disruptive despite verbal discussion and "Time Away"/"Thinking Time," the teachers will contact the parents to discuss the situation and determine if there is anything unusual going on with the child at home as well as any approaches which may work well with the child.

If, after discussion with the parents, the behaviour continues, the teacher and the School Manager will schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss discipline issues and work towards a positive

resolution. Through close cooperation between home and school, effective solutions can usually be found.

If this approach is unsuccessful an external behaviour psychologist or other appropriate clinicians may be recommended to observe the child and confer with the parents, teachers, and School Manager in order to resolve the situation.

In the case where a child deliberately hurts another child or a teacher:

1. The child will be sent to the School Manager, and the parents of all parties will be notified. In the case of an Elementary child, with consultation with the teachers who observed the incident, and taking into account the situation, the School Manager may determine that the child should be sent home from school.
2. Especially in the case of a younger child, it is possible that the child may be deemed overtired or ill, and sent home as a non-disciplinary action.
3. If a deliberate injury occurs a second time after being sent home as a disciplinary measure, the child may be asked to stay home for one day or another appropriate response to curb repeat behaviour of this kind as agreed with the School Manager and teacher. The school may recommend a behavioural plan be implemented for the child at this point. An external behaviour psychologist or other appropriate clinicians may also be recommended to observe the child and confer with the parents, teachers, and School Manager in order to resolve the situation.
4. If a child repeats the aggressive behaviour, s/he will be required to stay at home for a one-day suspension, and this information will be recorded in the child's permanent record for submission to other schools. The school may recommend a behavioural plan be implemented for the child at this point.
5. In very unusual situations the implementation of a behaviour plan is insufficient to resolve the situation. If in this case, the aggressive behaviour continues, the school reserves the right to request the child not continue at school.

DISCIPLINE METHODS IMS WILL NOT USE:

- At no time will spanking or any other form of corporal punishment be used.
- No child will be subjected to frightening, cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child will be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child will be subject to an outside/home punishment at school.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

“Bullying” - what it is and is not

The Student’s Rights & Expectations as well as Conduct expectations described above inherently include an anti-bullying stance, and go far beyond, to work towards the creation of a harmonious school environment. Rather than establishing policies which are labelled “anti-bullying,” IMS encourages positive, respectful behaviours, with older children encouraged to be positive role models and actively assist their younger peers.

EDB School Administration Guide (2017/2018), Chapter 3.7.6 definition of “Bullying:

In general, bullying is a repeated and intended act of harm or oppression by a person or a group of persons who is more powerful or in the majority. It has three elements in common:

- Repetition
- Malicious intent
- Imbalance of power

Cited from the Alannah and Madeline Foundation - Keeping Children Safe

Because bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults, and will probably continue if no action is taken, it is important to create positive support structures of trust. While the bullying definition is broad and can occur in a variety of environments it usually is a relationship problem and requires relationship-based solutions. These are best solved in the social environment in which they occur: in a child or young person's life, this is most often the school.

What bullying is not

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of “bullying,” and they are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

When people work, play and live together, disputes are inevitable, and a significant element of the Montessori teacher's training involves age-appropriate lessons to model positive, proactive boundary setting and responses when disputes with another child do arise. Whenever there is an altercation between children, IMS teachers work closely with children to assist in the restoration of the relationships, and as necessary will engage the support of the parents in this effort when is out of the age-typical norm and deviates from the Student Rights & Expectations.

If you are concerned about an interaction with your child, please contact your Class Teacher to discuss the situation.

GENERAL RULES FOR PLAY AREAS

Safety is our main concern, the physical and mental well-being of each child is important.

Language such as "Use your words, not your hands", "Keep your hands to yourself", and "Remember that there are other children here to watch out for" will be used by adults to remind children to be careful.

Basic Conflict Resolution skills will be utilised to help children resolve their own differences. Students are expected to attempt to solve an issue by themselves, using language like, "Stop, I really don't like that", or removing themselves from a situation. If an issue needs adult intervention, each child will be given the opportunity to express his/her side of the incident.

"Time Away/Thinking Time" may be used during recess and under the supervision of the staff members on duty.

Balls may be rolled or thrown to one another, but may not be kicked unless children are located on an open area or are participating in an activity under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Children may not use any implement, natural or manufactured, as a weapon. Sticks are to be left on the ground and not picked up or played with.

When the children are playing on the play equipment before or after school hours, a parent or caregiver **MUST** follow the relevant rules of the campus, which are set out in the **Campus Logistics**, be present at all times, and is responsible for the child's safety.

CODE OF PARENT / VISITOR BEHAVIOUR:

All parents and visitors to the school are expected to follow the same rules of respect-based conduct as the students and staff of IMS, as well as the specific guidelines for respectful use of the Campus described in the relevant Campus Logistics published by each campus. Parents and visitors are required to follow current safety and health protocols required at the time of their visit, which may include the submission of health declarations. Parents, guests and visitors must also take responsibility for the safety of their children on the school premises.

UNIFORMS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

It is the responsibility of all parents/caregivers to ensure that children are wearing the correct school uniform at all times. Details of the summer and winter requirements are in the [**IMS Uniform Guide**](#). **IMS can take no responsibility for any lost items; please label everything.**

EXTRA CLOTHING FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Children must be toilet trained to be offered a place in the Casa dei Bambini; however, with younger children, occasional accidents do happen. For that reason, as well as the fact that water activities are part of the pre-elementary curriculum, each child in the Casa dei Bambini programme must have a complete change of clothing (especially socks and underpants) at school. If a child wets or soils himself/herself, a staff member assists him/her in changing her clothes and will notify the parents. Wet or soiled clothes are sent home in a plastic bag. Replacements must come back the following day so that we can be prepared to minimise any embarrassment for the child in the event of a future accident. All replacement clothes need to be clearly labelled.

BIRTHDAYS

IMS children may celebrate their birthday by bringing in a birthday treat.

Since we at IMS are concerned with nutritional awareness by the children, we ask that you please keep the sugar content to a minimum and keep the servings small. Choose your child's favourite from the suggested snack list in the [**IMS Healthy Eating Guide**](#). Parents may also arrange for pizza to be delivered to the school. Fruit kebabs are always a hit!

Prior to the celebration, a detailed birthday letter will be sent in advance to parents. Parents are asked to arrange with the teachers in advance whenever they intend to provide a birthday treat.

In the Casa dei Bambini level, parents are invited to celebrate with the child. As the child transitions to the Elementary level, a celebration is held in the class with the class teachers. Again, we recommend that you involve your child in the process of making the treat – this is part of the fun for the child!

If you are planning a birthday party for your child outside of school, please consider the other children in the classroom. Invitations should not be distributed at school unless every child in the class is invited. We also ask that children do not bring gifts for after-school parties.

HOLIDAYS & CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

IMS celebrates holidays from the cultures around the world, and especially those of the children in the classroom. As a non-religious school, IMS discusses the cultural aspects of holidays rather than any religious background.

At the Casa dei Bambini level, parents are welcome to speak with your child's classroom teacher about how you can help make the holiday special for the class, which may mean making a special snack, coming in to read a book or finding a child-friendly recipe for a holiday food for the children to prepare snack during the class cooking time. At the Elementary level, we encourage the child to share a special holiday with the class him/herself, based on personal interest.

COMMUNICATION

PLEASE NOTE THAT, WITH THE ROLLOUT OF A NEW INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL BE LIABLE TO AMENDMENT DURING THE CURRENT ACADEMIC YEAR. SUCH CHANGES WILL BE NOTIFIED TO PARENTS BY EMAIL AND NOTED IN THE IMS PARENT PORTAL.

IMS recognises the need for clear and timely communication channels both from home to school and from school to home. In order to achieve an effective process, it is important to contact the person directly responsible, which in most cases will be the class teachers.

SCHOOL TO HOME

IMS has developed a comprehensive system for communicating student progress, as well as school news and events, using a variety of different channels to share information as efficiently as possible:

- **Engage Parent Portal & Parent App:** IMS has a school management system that will enable you to have instant access to official school communications; calendars, progress & academic reports, policies, parent-teacher conferences and extra-curricular activities bookings. We encourage you to register in the IMS Parent Portal, and then download the Parent Portal App, as the App is the most dependable way to receive emergency notifications from the school such as School Closure due to Weather, or bus delays. SMS does not work well when all schools are sending out SMS's. **We strongly encourage parents to activate their account and download the app.**
- **IMS Website (ims.edu.hk)** can be used as a reference tool for our entire community! The depth and breadth of the curriculum information was carefully curated so that parents can go as deep as they wish in their understanding of Montessori pedagogy, learning Chinese, parenting, or other areas of IMS Life. Our Montessori Moments Newsletter is being replaced by a new blog, will be uploaded every 2 weeks, and covers different areas of the IMS community's life.
- **IMS Facebook & Instagram** enable us to share the everyday magic that happens in and out of the classrooms. Please follow us and don't forget to use our hashtag **#IMSLife** if you want to share something yourself.
- **Engage Portal & Mailchimp:** the School uses Engage Portal for most parent communications, but will also use Mailchimp for certain whole-school or campus-wide communications. Please ensure that your inbox accepts Mailchimp emails.

Below is an overview of the School's strategies for ensuring that parents remain well informed throughout the year.

Dates & Events	Annual School calendar (email & Parent Portal) Monthly Class calendar (Child's Communications Folder) Engage Portal & Mailchimp messages (School and IMS PTA)
Publications	IMS website blog / Articles Annual Report Memory Book

Procedures	Parent Handbook Orientation Handbook Emergency Messages: Parent Portal App - push messages (replaces SMS)
Curriculum Framework	Montessori Moments / Website Articles Parent Handbook Curriculum Attachments Montessori Evening Articles Parent information sessions Montessori Foundation & Montessori Family Alliance Membership
Class / Subject Programme	Class Newsletters / blogs Class Emails
Student Progress	In-Class Open House Classroom Observation(s) Parent-Teacher Conferences Progress Reports & End of Year Report Elementary (various student assessment reports)

ROUTINE CLASSROOM/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Overall Communication regarding events and other items of interest with regard to the life of the school and our community are communicated every 2 weeks as the blog is posted on the website. Please get in the habit of checking this, and encourage your child to read it with you. You may even find some photos of your child or his/or her work posted.

Each month the Monthly Class Calendar will be updated in the Engage Parent Portal.

In the **Casa dei Bambini**, each child has a plastic folder, the Communication Folder, in which all communications and finished work will be placed. Teachers send home some of the work that your child has completed on a routine basis, as well as any important communications. Please check this folder daily. Please put any communication you cannot email to your child's teacher or the school in this plastic folder, and ask your young child to be sure to give it to the teacher. These folders are checked by Office administrators each day at the Casa dei Bambini level.

In the **Elementary Programme**, the student has two zip folders – one English and one Chinese – in which your child's Work Diary, Chinese homework journal, all paper communications, and some finished work are placed. Please check this folder each day for notes from your teacher or the school, and follow up as requested. Please put any communication items you cannot email to your child's teacher or the school in this zip folder, and ask your child to be sure to give it to the teacher. Elementary students are expected to be responsible for this communication between home and School. Folders are not checked by Office Administration.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

In case of a notice needing to be sent quickly to all parents or a group of parents, e.g. because of bussing or red/black rain, this will be done via the School's Parent Portal, and push notifications from the Parent App are the sole method to assure yourself that you are receiving these urgent

notices in a timely basis. We have discontinued our SMS messaging service due to the delays inherent to this system.

For other emergencies, we may need to contact you via telephone. Please keep us informed of any changes to mobile phone numbers for your child's emergency contact(s).

PARENT INFORMATION SESSIONS

IMS holds information evenings regularly throughout the year to provide more in-depth coverage of the classroom programmes and curriculum. Each evening one area of the curriculum, for instance, Language or Mathematics, is discussed in detail, and parents have the opportunity to use materials and discuss questions. In order to gain a greater understanding of what your child is learning, and why, we advise parents to attend these information sessions delivered by qualified and practising Montessori teachers. They are an enjoyable and hands-on way to experience how the Montessori Method works for your child.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Parents are strongly encouraged to observe in the classroom each year to learn more about the Montessori Method and how it works in action. Opportunities to observe in classrooms will occur at designated times during the school calendar; the School will communicate these times to you in advance and how to register. More information regarding Classroom Observations in a Montessori environment and how to get the most out of your time without disrupting will be provided prior to your observation.

PARENT - TEACHER / STUDENT-LED CONFERENCE

IMS holds scheduled Parent-Teacher or Student-Led Conferences (PTC / SLC) twice a year, in the autumn and in the spring. For PTCs, these are meetings between the child's parents and class teachers. For third-year children in Lower Elementary and for those in Upper Elementary, the second PTC is replaced by an SLC, during which the student uses a portfolio of work in order to highlight areas of development and challenge to his/her parents.

PTC and SLC provide an important opportunity to understand your child's activities and progress. **Both parents are urged to attend.**

IMS teachers prepare progress reports prior to these conferences which are sent home to parents in advance. These reports cover all curriculum and enrichment areas, as well as review important social-emotional development.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

IMS teachers also prepare a comprehensive written progress report at the end of the academic year. This report provides a qualitative review of how the child is progressing in each area of the classroom, as well as social skills, and work habits. Tardy days and Absences are also recorded. Taken together with the mid-year Reports, and any Standardised test results (for Elementary students only), this comprises the IMS Written Performance Report.

If a child is leaving the school before June 1st of the academic year, reports and other records will be given to the parents on the last day of attendance, provided two months' notice has been

given to IMS and all fees due to the school have been paid. After June 1st, reports will be mailed on the last day of school.

MONTESSORI IN THE HOME SEMINAR

Parents are invited to attend the Montessori in the Home Seminar given each year by IMS Montessori Curriculum leaders on each campus. This is a valuable opportunity to learn more about how you can support your child. We encourage you to share this information with all caregivers in your home regardless of your child's age.

You can also learn more about how to support the Montessori approach at home by subscribing to the [Tomorrow's Child](#) periodical from mid-September and to the [Montessori Foundation](#) mailing list.

We also encourage you to download and review the information regarding how you can best support your child between home and IMS. Please be aware that how you support your child will be very different at each stage of your child's development.

HOME TO SCHOOL

Teachers and Administration will endeavour to return a parent email or phone call by the next school day at the latest. If the question is of a more complicated nature, teachers or Administration staff will confirm that they have forwarded the question or request to the School Management for a response within this time. Generally, teachers or Administration will refer a question first to their Curriculum Leader or Campus Head for consideration, and then if necessary to the Programme Director or the School Founders.

At all times, we look forward to hearing from parents and being able to work with you as we partner with you in the education of your child. In order to make this communication as productive as possible, we ask that parents and caregivers follow the guidelines outlined below:

CONNECT WITH YOUR CLASS TEACHERS

We encourage you to connect with your Class teachers anytime with questions about your child or about the Montessori philosophy, especially in the early days of the class. Please feel free to call after classes finish any day, or it may be easier to send an email. Each teacher has an IMS email address to ease communication. We ask that parents include both class teachers on communications, and teachers will often link in the Curriculum Leader.

Teachers are not permitted to be Facebook or other social media "friends" with parents and are not encouraged to share their personal mobile phone numbers with parents.

The key to success in guiding your child throughout the three-year cycle is the triangular Parent-Teacher-Child relationship, which you can read more about by reading the [Child-Parent-Teacher Triangle](#) article available on our Parent Portal.

PARENT FEEDBACK

Parent feedback is important to us as a school, and we are constantly working to ensure our communication systems are working well. Teachers and Administration are a parent's first line of communication.

The Curriculum Leaders, Programme Directors, Campus Heads, and School Founders have an open-door policy for parents. Please feel free to pop in and arrange a meeting time to discuss any issues with us. We are always happy to speak with parents to help resolve any questions or issues with you.

IMS also has a structure of Class Parents who volunteer to serve in each class, and who form the backbone of the IMS PTA. Class Parents meet with their Campus Head each month. We find this informal coffee provides an important channel of communication about IMS programmes and pedagogy along with questions and suggestions for general improvement. Please remember that personal concerns should be directed to the teacher, administrator or manager concerned.

More formal feedback is sought from IMS parents through an annual Parent Survey towards the end of each academic year, which forms an important part of the School's future planning, which is reviewed in the Annual Report. We have had very strong parent participation in the survey in the past, which only strengthens the school's ability to respond. Please give us your feedback!

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Please call us or email us with any questions or concerns. Every teacher has his/her own email address, which we encourage parents to use. Please cc: the campus Administration (Front Desk) on any logistical communication as well, as teachers check their email only during break times or after school and urgent communication should not be assumed to have been delivered unless copied to the Front Desk.

Teachers work to be prompt in responding to parent questions. The best time to speak with class teachers is generally after school. For most teachers, this is after 3:15 p.m. Foundation Group teachers have a different schedule and are best reached between 1-2 p.m.

If an issue is not resolved to a parent's satisfaction with a teacher, the Curriculum Leader is very willing to assist to work through a problem and, if necessary, to bring it to the Senior Leadership of the School. While your Class Parent can always provide an additional perspective, please pursue any concern directly with the School.

URGENT QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have an urgent issue, please call the Administration Office/ Front Desk directly and a message will be given to the teachers or appropriate staff member. **TEACHERS DO NOT CHECK EMAIL DURING CLASS HOURS.**

UPDATES TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please remember to update us with any change of address or other information, including allergies or medical information. This information is shared within the class to be used for

communicating with other IMS parents within the class with regard to school-related issues. It will not be used for any other purposes and only hard copies will be distributed.

It is vital that parents update any contact phone numbers and emails as soon as any changes occur.

Please note that the Hong Kong Government requires all students attending schools in Hong Kong to hold a valid proof or dependent visa for their stay in Hong Kong. Parents are required to provide the school with an updated copy of their child's dependent visa or any valid proof of the child's legal stay in Hong Kong as part of the enrollment process.

Important notes: In order to reduce duplication of receipt of messages, the School will only send to two email addresses per family. Please ensure that all email addresses and the phone number of your emergency contact are current.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and strictly confidential. IMS will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the programme plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parents unless required by Hong Kong Law. If a child's records are required to be given to a third party, IMS will notify the parents.

IMS shall maintain a permanently written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in the record has been released. Each person disseminating or releasing the information contained in a child's record in whole or part, shall upon each instance of dissemination or release, enter in the log the following: name, signature, position, date, portions of the record which were disseminated or released, the purpose of such action and the name of the person to whom the information was released. Such a log shall be available only to a child's parents and the school staff.

DATA COLLECTION POLICY

All information provided by a family, including address, employment information of parents, payment history, etc. is privileged and strictly confidential. IMS will distribute or release such information only as strictly necessary to related companies and service providers and in accordance with Hong Kong Law.

THE IMS PARENT COMMUNITY

Parent involvement is an important addition to community spirit. It is expected that each family will contribute to the IMS community in some meaningful way. IMS parents are encouraged to do so by sharing their talents, hobbies, or careers by making a classroom or a grade level presentation, volunteering in the library, serving as a Class Parent, or as a Parent-Teacher Association Board member, volunteering to serve on a PTA Sub-Committee (i.e., Library, Fundraising, events coordination, Memory Book, etc.).

Getting involved in your child's school illustrates to them how much you value their work and education. It also serves to build better communication between teachers, administrators and parents, resulting in a coordinated approach to each child's growth and wellbeing.

THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Parents play an instrumental role in supporting IMS and its mission of providing an authentic, Dual-Language Montessori education. The IMS Parent-Teacher Association (IMS PTA LTD) was established in 2005 to support IMS' special community of teachers, students, and families. Since then, it has become an integral part of the community. The vibrancy and warmth of our parent community are a testament to, and an essential aspect of, the nurturing, child-centred environment that IMS provides for every student.

PTA MISSION

The PTA collaborates closely with parents, teachers and the school management to:

- Provide a forum for parents and teachers to exchange views for the overall benefit of students at IMS
- Promote a sense of community among the teachers, parents, and students
- Enhance the educational environment at IMS
- Encourage parents to actively participate in IMS programmes and activities
- Assist in fundraising for PTA and school programmes

GETTING INVOLVED

We encourage parents to get involved in making IMS a wonderful environment for your child. There is a myriad of opportunities for parents to contribute by joining one of the many subcommittees led by the PTA. You could volunteer to be a Class Parent, assist students in the school library, work on the Memory Book or help organise exciting events such as the School Picnic, Annual Fundraiser, Book Week and International Fair.

Please go to the PTA website <https://www.ims.edu.hk/our-ims-pta/> to learn more and sign up. You are most welcome to put in as much, or as little, time as you have available, whether it is a few hours a year or a few hours a month. **Thank you in advance for your support!**

The Parents-Teacher Association fee that you are billed at the beginning of the year goes directly to the PTA and helps fund various activities organised by the PTA to achieve its mission. All IMS PTA funds are controlled independently by the PTA.

The PTA hosts regular meetings. A number of meetings are open, and all parents are welcome to join. Please check the monthly calendar distributed in your child's communication folder for the

date and location of our open meetings. Note: Parent-Teacher Association notices are usually sent by email via MailChimp or the IMS Parent Portal in the interests of the “Go Green!” philosophy.

Teachers are scheduled to help you learn more about the Montessori Method and the PTA also supports a Speaker Series to introduce other topics of interest to families as per the school calendar. This is a great place to meet other families, support the teachers & staff, and learn what you can do to make this an ever-greater community. This Association is your association and will be as useful as you wish.

If you would like to volunteer, let the PTA know – pta@ims.edu.hk.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising activities provide the school with a sound financial base for major capital expenses associated with programme development and expansion. We generally have one major fundraiser each year, which is an important source of funding for the extra resources which are beyond the operating budget for the year. Details of this year’s fundraiser will be provided during the school year.

(See more on <https://www.ims.edu.hk/ims-giving/>)

IMS is a non-profit organisation, which receives no financial support from the Hong Kong government other than the allocation of the Stanley Campus. Our parent community raising funds for our extras and for the future development of the school makes a great deal of difference for our children.

PARENT NOTICES

No advertising or demonstrations of products or books is permitted in the classrooms but may be displayed in the School with the permission of the Campus Head.

No notice may go in the children’s cubbies without prior approval by the Campus Head.

All correspondence with people or organisations in IMS’ name must first be approved by the Campus Head.

DISCLAIMER

IMS reserves the right to modify this handbook at any time.