

# Early Learning Village

# Early Years Handbook



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# Message from the Head of Early Years



As an International Baccalaureate school, we are committed to your child becoming an active, compassionate and lifelong learner.

The Early Years program at AIS caters for children from 18 months to four years of age in resource rich, purpose built learning environments. Your child will become a part of a dynamic learning environment where they can actively inquire, continually build on their understanding of the world, and take responsibility for their learning.

The AIS Early Years is authorised to implement the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) which provides the curriculum framework for learning at the Early Years. The PYP recognises that development and learning are interrelated. Therefore your child will develop knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes which are relevant, engaging and challenging across subject areas. As Boyer says: "To be truly educated a student must also make connections across the disciplines, discover ways to integrate the separate subjects, and ultimately relate what they learn to life". It is also an expectation that action will be a result of the learning process.

The heart of learning at AIS is the development of the attributes of the IB learner profile inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled,

open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. These capacities and responsibilities go beyond intellectual development and academic success. They imply a commitment to help all members of the School community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them.

We celebrate community at AIS. Parents play an active role in assisting classroom learning in a variety of ways and this allows parents to understand the classroom environment and to contribute meaningfully to learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Parent information sessions and social events are also organised to help promote the spirit of community within the Early Years.

AIS is a thriving and vibrant learning community. As learners, we constantly reflect on our practices and of those within the network of IB schools globally. Our goal is to ensure that we provide quality resources, effective, relevant and inspiring teaching and learning, and an enriching, supportive environment for your child.

Welcome to the Early Years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eromie Dassanayake". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a circular stamp.

**Eromie Dassanayake**  
Head of Early Years

# Contact Details

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# Introduction to AIS

## A Brief History

The Australian International School opened on 1 February 1993 at its original campus on Mount Sophia, an area behind Plaza Singapura and the Cathay Building reconstruction. The School started under the leadership of Miss Coral Dixon with 32 students and seven teachers, with no air-conditioning, uniform or facilities that are now taken for granted. By the end of the first year, the school roll exceeded 200.

The school experienced rapid growth with numbers having doubled after another year. The campus moved to Emerald Hill, directly behind Orchard Road. Although larger and able to accommodate many more students, it did not have a full-sized gym, pool, theatre or other much needed facilities.

Again, the school expanded out of its space and at the end of 1997 moved to Ulu Pandan, near Clementi; the former site of the Singapore American School, which had recently moved to a new site at Woodlands.

After a further five and a half years, the school finally secured land to construct a purpose-built campus at Lorong Chuan, the current site, with Mr Peter Bond as Principal.

AIS was purchased by the Cognita Group in 2007. In 2008, a Junior School and Preschool were constructed to house children from Preschool to Year 2 at an outstanding purpose-built facility with a bright, airy, contemporary building with large pod spaces for group work. In 2010, a new Senior building opened to accommodate Year 10, 11 and 12 students. This wing incorporates private study spaces, 35 classrooms and a Science and Technology area.

In January 2012, Dr Nick Miller took over as Principal of AIS, and the School moved to a new school structure with two sub-schools: Elementary School and Secondary School.

Mr Andre Casson was appointed Principal in November 2014 and has been instrumental in executing significant transformative changes that have led to improved academic outcomes for Secondary students at AIS. From 2018 he will move into the role of Head of School following Simon Leslie's departure at the end of the 2017 academic year. Dr Eddie Groughan took over in July 2017. Dr Groughan works closely with the three sub-schools to ensure smooth transition between the schools and academic synergy.

In 2018 the school celebrated its 25th year of operation and continues to build strongly on the foundations that have been laid.

Dr Edward Groughan has been part of the AIS Leadership team since 2017, and is an integral part of the School's culture and success. He joined the Australian International School as Principal in 2017 and in December 2021, he took over the role of Interim Head of School.

The opening of the Early Learning Village in July 2017 was a big step in the School's history, with the building being a world-leading purpose-built facility for our littlest learners, aged 2 months to 6 years old.

## School Guiding Statements

### Vision

AIS strives to be a globally recognised centre of educational excellence whose students consistently exceed expectations and are committed to addressing the needs of our world.

*'Globally focused, distinctly Australian'*

### Mission

To enable our students to realise their potential through exceptional opportunities, within a nurturing community which equips them to flourish in life and to make a difference for good.

# The School Governance and Board Members

AIS is owned by the Cognita Group of Schools, a UK based company. For further information, see [www.cognitaschools.co.uk](http://www.cognitaschools.co.uk). The School receives no Government funding and is funded by school fees and the investment of shareholders.

## Population

AIS is a co-educational school for students from Nursery (18 months) to Pre University (Year 12, age 18+). There are over 50 nationalities represented at the School.

Section of school	Program	Age
Infant Care	2-18 Months	Babies can commence Infant Care any time after they turn 2 months.
Early Years	18 - 24 months 2, 3 and 4 year olds	Children can commence any time after they turn 18 months. Children can commence if they turn 2/3/4 years of age by 30 April
Elementary School	Prep to Year 5	5 - 11 year olds. Children commence Prep if they turn 5 by 30 April
Secondary School	Years 6 to 12	12-18 year olds. Students usually complete High School at age 18

## School Year

AIS follows the Australian school holidays as closely as possible, but commences in mid-January and takes a four-week break mid-year. This is to coordinate with other international schools in Singapore who have a long break in the middle of the year. Singaporean rather than Australian public holidays are celebrated. An annual and term calendar can be viewed on Connect AIS.

# Our Values

## Respect - Opportunity - Achievement

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### Respect

We Value:

- Integrity and responsibility
- Acceptance and appreciation of differences
- Care for self, each other, the community and the environment

Therefore, we will:

- Develop positive attitudes and a sense of personal and social responsibility
- Build relationships within communities based on mutual respect, trust, acceptance and care
- Foster a community of learners who take responsibility for their choices and actions
- Maximise the learning opportunities for all students through the differentiation of programs and practices
- Embrace and celebrate diversity

### Opportunity

We Value:

- Confidence
- Creativity and innovation
- Leadership and initiative
- A balanced and well-rounded education

Therefore, we will:

- Provide a broad range of opportunities for the development of well-rounded learners who can make links across curricula, across cultures and across languages
- Develop individuals who have the capacity and aspiration to make a positive contribution to the local and international community
- Provide opportunities for all members of the

community to exercise initiative and leadership

- Capitalise on innovation to enrich our programs and practices
- Motivate our students in all endeavours and encourage curiosity in their learning.

### Achievement

We Value:

- The pursuit of individual interests and passions
- Commitment to learning
- Personal excellence
- Perseverance and resilience.

Therefore, we will:

- Encourage a passion for learning and a spirit of inquiry
- Celebrate success and achievement across all endeavours
- Support and challenge the members of our community to reach their full potential
- Encourage a culture which rewards initiative, continuous learning and teamwork
- Nurture the capabilities of each individual to strive for personal excellence.



# The Infant Care

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## Individual Care Programs and Communication with parents

At the Early Learning Village Infant Care, each child receives an individual care program. Through sensitive observations and in partnership with parents, we are guided by respect for each child's competence. We work with parents to carefully observe and understand the infant's communications and their needs.

Each family has a regularly updated electronic portfolio using the celebrated Storypark platform, which shares special moments in weekly Sneak Peeks through photos, videos and text. Parents may also follow their child's ritual/daily routine updates in real time through the Storypark app.

## Flexibility and partnership

Infant Care at the ELV strives to provide you and your child the extension of your home. We achieve this through our individualized and personalized caregiving plans. The structure of the day is flexible, following children's cues and their biological rhythms.

Our Infant Care Coordinator, Anna, will be in touch with you about your child's unique needs and preferences. You will receive a form and have an online consultation with Anna who will be able to answer your questions about the program and prepare you for what you can expect on your first day in Infant Care.

Our flexible approach is also evident in the way we tailor our program offerings. To suit each family's requirements, the Infant Care program is available:

- 5 days: Monday to Friday

We remain responsive and flexible to guardians' schedules. The Infant Care has an open door policy, inviting you to drop your child off and pick them up any time between 8 am and 6 pm Monday to Friday. Infant Care is closed for only 5 weeks out of the year (2 weeks in June/July, 3 weeks in December/January), 4 days of professional development and public holidays.

We are also committed to flexibility in embracing parenting styles and philosophies, finding ways in which our program can support families in this regard. Kindly note that we are bound by health and safety policies, however we do always try to work towards a middle ground solution.

## First solid meals and bottle feeds

The Early Learning Village kitchen has a separate fully equipped allergen kitchen to cater for children's individual needs. All meals are designed and prepared by a team of chefs, with advice from a dedicated dietician. First solid meals (vegetarian purees and cereals) are provided in consultation with parents who are invited to choose from a list of approved ingredients and add more variety as children become more and more experienced at digesting solid foods.

Babies and Infants who are still bottle feeding will have their own milk (provided by parents) warmed in the mini kitchen within the Infant Care Pod.

We also made available a nursing room for mothers who require a quiet space to feed their child at drop off or pick up, or to express milk.

## Health and Safety

Apart from developmentally-appropriate environments, we also have specially designed sleep rooms. Our Sleep room sets the tone for sleep by offering a calm, relaxing and comforting space that enables infants to rest and drift off to sleep when they're ready to. The sleep room is equipped with nanny cameras and children's safety is assured through safe sleep policies as well as 15-minute sleep checks performed by educators.

Within the Early Learning Village, our fully equipped Health Centre is supported by our pediatric experienced nurses, which means that the health and wellbeing of your child is in the hands of professional and experienced medical personnel.

## First Day

You will be asked to complete a detailed Infant Care questionnaire in relation to your child's daily routine and preferences for feeding, sleeping and eating. You will have an opportunity to chat with the teachers during drop off to discuss any particular requirement for each day.

Here is a list of the essential items that are required:

1. Labelled breast milk (breast milk will be kept in the breast milk fridge) or formula
2. Bottles (1 per feed)
3. Sleep Sack (if required)
4. Comfort Object (if required)
5. Named spare clothes
6. Nappies (you will be able to leave a full week's worth in the classroom)
7. Nappy rash cream (if required)
8. Water bottle

# The Early Years

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## Structure

The Early Years is led by the Head of Early Years who is supported by the Deputy Head of Early Years and Assistant Head of Early Years.

The Early Years consists of Infant Care, 2-18 months, Pre-Nursery and Nursery classes for 18 month and 2 year olds, as well as Preschool classes for 3 and 4 year olds.

## Facilities

AIS Early Years classrooms are arranged to provide an opportunity for small group work and whole class activities. Within the Early Learning Village there are three separate play areas – The Bridge, The Canopy and The Green which are spaces where students can climb, explore, run and enjoy. The Multi-Purpose Hall ‘The Hive’ is used for a variety of different activities and there is a separate function room used specifically for the Smart Steps play equipment which helps to develop children’s gross motor skills. The swimming pool has been specially- designed for young children and is open to the air but features a UV-protective roof. The Secret Garden provides opportunities for connections with nature.

## Daily Routine

Parents can drop children off anytime between 8:00 and 8:30 am. \*Parents are encouraged to stay and play in the classroom with their child until the teacher starts the day. Children in the full day program finish at 3:00pm half day children finish at 12:00pm

## Food and Nutrition

All children in the Early Years are served lunch which is prepared by canteen operator, Sodexo, and which forms part of the School’s curriculum. The children will eat in their classrooms and will be supervised at all times by the Teachers and Teaching Assistants. The meal times will foster an experience that is all about ‘eating together with

friends’. This is the next step at bringing the Reggio Emilia Philosophy into all areas of our Early Years Teaching & Learning Program.

The meals will be prepared in the brand new state-of-the-art kitchen in the Early Learning Village and all students will be served the same food, with the exception of children who have allergies, intolerances or who are vegetarian. To cater for children with allergies and intolerances, a separate allergen kitchen has been built where there will be rigorous processes in place to avoid cross-contamination.

Parents are asked to provide their child with a snack from home for the mid-morning break. The snack should be sent in your child’s bag in named containers.

We actively encourage the children to develop healthy eating habits. Parents are encouraged to discuss ideas about food with their children so that meals can be both healthy and fun.

Please note that, owing to the risks to children who have a severe allergy to peanuts or other forms of nuts, no nut-based products (e.g. peanut butter, Nutella) are permitted in the School. AIS is a nut- minimisation zone. You can contact the AIS Health Centre for more information on this policy, [nurse@ais.com.sg](mailto:nurse@ais.com.sg).

## Excursions

These are an integral part of the curriculum and provide opportunities for enriching the curriculum. Excursions are planned to stimulate, support and extend the classroom learning. Children are expected to participate. Supervision is always well organised and costs are kept to a minimum. Details of excursions and permission forms are sent to parents well in advance. All children will wear a school supplied safety vest whenever they are travelling on a bus.

## Visiting Performances

The Early Years also regularly invites artists to perform or children's authors to visit. Performances can include drama, puppetry, mime, as well as cultural activities from other countries, music and dance.

All Early Years students are to use the AIS backpack that is to be brought to school each day. Bags for the library and sleep sheets are sold separately through the Uniform Shop.

## Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform at all times. Only garments purchased through the AIS Uniform Shop/AIS Uniform Supplier are regulation uniforms.

The AIS approved Uniform Supplier is Lim Meng Keng, located at #02-18 Holland Road Shopping Centre, 211 Holland Avenue, Singapore 278967. Contact +65 6468 3655

Lim Meng Keng is able to offer three flexible service options for families:

1. Visit Lim Meng Keng Department Store direct to fit and purchase AIS uniform items on the day
2. Fit and order at the AIS Uniform Shop on the school campus, and then pick up and pay at Lim Meng Keng Department Store Holland Village when the order is ready for collection
3. Fit and order at the AIS Uniform Shop on the school campus, and then return to the AIS Uniform Shop to collect from Lim Meng Keng and make payment (Lim's will visit AIS every Monday during term time between 2pm to 4pm to facilitate this service).

All clothing and belongings should be clearly marked with the child's name. This includes items such as school bags, hats, jumpers, shoes, socks, raincoats, lunch bags and/or boxes (and lids), drink bottles (and lids).

Early Years students can wear their own shoes. Sandals are acceptable, but shoes must be enclosed at the back or have a heel strap.

Velcro fasteners are preferred as this encourages independence. Crocs and flip flops (thongs) are not allowed, as they are not safe for physical activity.



# The Early Years Program & Curriculum

## Curriculum

### Reggio Emilia Philosophy

Our program is framed by the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) and it is inspired by the Reggio Emilia Philosophy. Named after the Italian town where it originated, the Reggio Approach is based on a comprehensive philosophy, underpinned by several fundamental, guiding principles:

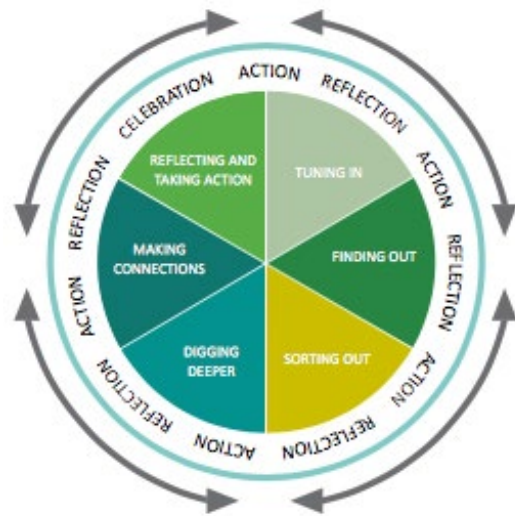
- The child as protagonist, collaborator and communicator
- The teacher as partner, nurturer, guide and researcher
- Cooperation as the foundation of the educational system
- The environment as the “third teacher”
- The parent and wider community as partners
- Documentation as communication

### The Role of the Teacher:

- To co-explore the learning experience with the children
- To provoke ideas, problem solving and conflict resolution
- To take ideas from the children and return them for further exploration
- To organise the classroom to be accessible and interesting to the child
- To organise materials to help children make thoughtful decisions

- To document children’s progress: video, audio recording, photos, portfolios
- To assist children to see the connections in learning and experiences
- To assist children in expressing their knowledge through projects
- To have a dialogue about their projects with parents and other teachers
- To foster the connection between home, school and community

For more information on the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, visit [www.reggiochildren.it](http://www.reggiochildren.it)



## The Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework is an early childhood curriculum framework, which guides early childhood educators in developing quality, early childhood education programs. The framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to 5 years old.

The Early Years Learning Framework has been developed collaboratively by the Australian and State and Territory Governments with substantial input from the Early Learning sector and early childhood academics, with a strong emphasis on play-based learning. The framework recognises the importance of communication and language, including early literacy and numeracy, as well as social and emotional development.

This curriculum framework has very similar guiding principles as the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) that we offer for Preschoolers from 3 years of age, and was chosen because of its philosophical alignment with the PYP.

### **Primary Years Programme (PYP)**

AIS Early Years is authorised to offer the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3 years to 5 years old. AIS has developed a curriculum that maximises the use of PYP scope and sequence documents, aligned with the Australian Curriculum, incorporating the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and drawing on other international resources to provide for further detail and rigour. Detailed information about the Early Years curriculum can be accessed on Connect AIS. Detailed information about the PYP can be accessed at [www.ibo.org/pyp/](http://www.ibo.org/pyp/).

We provide a broad, balanced, contemporary curriculum that seeks to provide for all students an enriching school experience that is significant, challenging, meaningful and relevant to the needs of each child. The curriculum is based upon a continuum of learning which recognises that, at any one time, children of the same age are not always at the same point in their learning.

Inquiry is the leading pedagogy of the PYP, and allows students to be actively involved in and take ownership of their learning, although a variety of other teaching methodologies are also utilised. Teachers and students at AIS develop and use key questions that are concept-based to structure learning. Student-initiated inquiry is planned for and fostered, and this approach nurtures independence and results in building enduring understandings.

An explicit expectation is that successful inquiry will lead to action, initiated by the student as a result of the

learning process. This action may extend the student's own learning, or it may have a wider social impact, and will clearly look different within each age range, and from one age range to the next.

### **The PYP Programme of Inquiry**

AIS has developed a comprehensive Programme of Inquiry including all aspects of Social Studies and Science and many of the other learning areas. In many of the Units of Inquiry, Literacy and Mathematics also form part of the inquiry process as part of meaningful, transdisciplinary learning. Preschool classes work on four Units of Inquiry each year and four transdisciplinary themes are also covered each year.

For further information on the IB Primary Years Programme and how it is integrated into the classroom please consult AIS' Curriculum Guides which are available on Connect AIS.

### **Specialist Program**

- Physical Education through the Smart Steps Perceptual Motor Program (PMP)
- Language through Daily Mandarin with Early Childhood Mandarin specialists.
- Music is taught using the Kodály method, which places an emphasis on intuitive, interactive learning

## Assessment and Reporting

The primary objective of assessment in the PYP is to provide feedback on the learning process.

### A Basis for Practice (IBO 2007)

The approach to assessment undertaken in the Primary Years Programme at AIS is focused on addressing this central question – how can we best engage students, teachers, parents and school leaders in the development of authentic pathways that lead to on-going improvement in teaching and learning? Assessment is seen as an on-going practice, focused on the gathering and analysis of data regarding student performance. Essential within this practice is the identification of what students know, feel, can do and understand at different stages in the learning process.

The development of effective assessment is seen as crucial in working towards the fundamental goal of schooling – the sustained improvement of student learning. It is important to note that, through the Primary Years Programme, the School acknowledges the importance of improving student outcomes across the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastery of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take responsible action.

### The Role of Observation in Early Years Classes

Put simply observation is the practice of looking at and listening to children to find out how they are developing, what they like doing and what they are learning through their play and the experiences on offer. It is important that parents and teachers share what they know about these three things so that they can decide whether the child's development is at the expected stage, whether the resources such as toys and equipment are suitable for the child and to focus them on what to provide in future to support the child to develop new interests, learn new skills and acquire new knowledge.

Observations of children are vital. Because each child has a unique set of abilities and talents, observations in different situations capture these first hand. The starting point is always with the child. Observing what children choose to do, what their interests are and who and what resources they enjoy playing with, provides adults with reliable information about children as individuals.

The 5 outcomes from the Early Years Learning Framework, Identity, Connectedness, Wellbeing, Learning and Thinking and Communication, support developing systematic observations. Observation also provides opportunities to gauge children's needs and to more accurately plan the next steps in their learning. Observations take place on a regular basis as part of daily routines. Discussing these with the child, their parents and team members gives a starting point for a holistic approach that will ensure that the child is always central to what is planned.

All children will have an online portfolio using the Storypark platform. Storypark uses our curriculum and is fully customised to align with the AIS vision and practices. Teachers weave curriculum links through the stories and observations in Storypark. Each child's portfolio includes observations from all the adults working with the child and allows for parents and families to contribute stories. In this way we are building a picture of the whole child.

Storypark is free for parents for life and can be transferred between different settings, saved electronically or made into a photo book. By including video, pictures, text and audio parents can see and hear evidence of their child's development. Parents are the administrators of their child's portfolio and can invite friends and families to view and comment on the stories.



# Celebrations

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## Celebrating Diversity

AIS recognises the diversity of cultures in Singapore, even in each child's own class, and provides opportunities for all children to learn about and to respect other cultures.

This is implemented in the Nursery and Preschool programs by using a large variety of books, music, cooking, crafts, clothing, singing, posters, assembly activities, excursions and by the celebration of special days and festivals (e.g. Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, and Deepavali). AIS parents and staff are from a variety of backgrounds with diverse cultural experiences, and are encouraged to contribute their knowledge and culture to enhance the overall program.

## Class Parties

### Birthdays

Children who would like to celebrate their birthday at school may bring cupcakes or another similar item that they may share with their classmates at a time decided with the class teachers.

Please remember that AIS operates a 'Nut Minimisation' policy which means that no nuts, nut-based products, or products containing traces of nuts are allowed anywhere on school grounds or buses. For more information you can contact the AIS Health Centre nurse@ais.com.sg.

### Farewells

Children who are leaving the Early Years often wish to say farewell to their classmates by hosting a small class party. Guidelines for all class parties can be shared by your class teacher.

Sharks are an AIS tradition; a stuffed calico shark is available from the Uniform Shop for the class to sign.

Families have the option to purchase the gecko, should they wish to.

## Celebration of Learning: Semester 2

This annual showcase of learning provides teachers and children with an opportunity to share the learning journey that your child has been on throughout the four terms in the Early Years school year.

The Celebration of Learning will take the form of a student led presentation day. The exhibition provides parents with an opportunity to gain a snapshot of the learning journey that your child has undertaken this year.

The Celebration of Learning has a number of key purposes:

- To showcase the quality teaching and learning practices in the Early Years
- To provide your child with an opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for sharing and consolidating their understandings
- To unite children and parents whilst celebrating your child's learning
- To provide you with a greater understanding of the curriculum Framework followed in the Early Years

Should parents have any concerns at other times throughout the year, they should contact their class teacher directly. Class teachers will also contact parents as and when required.

# Communications

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## Communication with Parents

The relationship between home and Early Years plays a very important part in a child's education. We cannot overestimate the critical role that parents play in successful learning: they contribute much to their child's development and are among the most important influences on the child's approach to learning.

Teachers are responsible for the more formal aspects of children's learning, and successful teaching builds on the home experiences of the child. This is most effective where there is an active partnership with parents.

Two-way communication is a critical factor in the partnership between parents and the School. Where a partnership exists, it is easier for parents to solve problems and to feel confident about the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom.

The Early Years expects parents to partake in the shared responsibility for the welfare and education of the students. This includes notifying the Early Years of any changes in routine that may have an effect on the behaviour of their children, supporting the Australian International School Management policies and staff in the implementation of these policies, and ensuring consistency of expectations between school and home.

In order to maintain a professional relationship between staff and parents at all times, we would ask all parents to be aware of and to follow the protocols below in communicating with Early Years staff:

- Parents are encouraged to address all questions, comments, complaints or concerns regarding any aspect of their child's education or experience at school directly to the child's teacher in the first instance. This can be done either in person, by telephone or in writing (either handwritten or via email). Parents are also requested to choose an appropriate time

and place to discuss the concern. If an extended discussion is needed, parents are asked to make an appointment with the teacher at a time that is mutually convenient.

- In the event that the situation is not adequately resolved, either the parent or the teacher (or both) may choose to take the matter to a more senior member of the Early Years staff. This would initially be the Head or Deputy Head of Early Years. Appointments are required for all such discussions.
- The Principal, as appointed by the Australian International School's Governing Body, has the final responsibility for resolving the situation. It may also be wise for other staff members who have particular expertise in the area under discussion (e.g. the School Counsellor, Head of Learning Enrichment) to be invited to become involved at this point.
- Parents are requested not to make an appointment with a senior member of staff prior to discussing the problem directly with the class teacher and to follow the accepted protocols in the appropriate order should further clarification or resolution be considered necessary.

Here are some tips for parents to help in maintaining positive relationships with the Early Years community. Acting on these tips will ensure a positive relationship with the Early Years Centre staff and, more importantly, allow your children to flourish.

- All children have strengths and areas for improvement. All have their own developmental time frame. Please be supportive of the Early Years staff whenever recommendations are made regarding your child. Support your child's individual path and pace

- Please don't be reluctant to seek the advice of Early Years staff if you are having difficulty with your child, or have any concerns about your child's development. Along with the joys, parenting can also be very stressful and challenging at times. We understand this and are only too happy to offer advice and support.
- Be active in supporting the Early Years. Try wherever possible (business travel requirements of parents notwithstanding) to attend all functions that involve your child and offer your help in any way that you can.
- Make an effort to form a positive relationship with your child's teacher and keep in contact. This means that, if there is a problem, you already have a rapport and it makes it much easier to express a concern or to seek advice.
- Show an interest in your child's learning and in the classroom teaching program. If you are confused about any aspect of the program ask for an explanation. Schools have changed enormously over the past 20 years. The way in which teaching and learning experiences are presented and the types of activities engaged in by the children will not necessarily be as they were when you were at school. All programs are based on best practice principles in education today and on sound research into how children learn best.
- Read the information we send you. Put dates in your diary and note all the details of each event. Support your child's belonging by participating in dress-up days and cultural events.
- Trust in the professionalism of the teaching staff employed in the School. When you have a concern, express it directly to school staff, rather than with other parents. Avoid discussing your concerns or criticising teachers in front of your children. By seeking first to understand, you will set an important example for your

children to follow.

- If your child is having difficulties with another child during school time or you are concerned about the actions of another child or parent, please speak with your child's class teacher, not directly with the other child's parent, or with the other child. This often only serves to inflame the situation further. Our staff will address the situation confidentially and in a way that best serves the children and the community.

## Communication Tools used at AIS

- Storypark online Learning Journal
- Weekly newsletters
- Parent Teacher Conferences each term

You are more than welcome to talk to your child's teacher whenever you feel there is a need. Appointments ensure that a mutually suitable time can be set aside, as well as allowing time for the teacher to gather any additional information that may be useful in your discussions.

## Connect AIS

Connect AIS is our school's online learning environment. This password protected website is a place for parents, students and teachers to engage with the learning that is happening at AIS everyday. Our vision for Connect AIS is to allow parents immediate access to information and communication with the School as and when they would like to access it, rather than waiting for updates from teachers. In this way, Connect AIS enhances the existing communication channels within the School, and paves the way for a strong partnership between school and home.

Passwords for Connect AIS are provided upon admission to the School. When logging into Connect AIS parents will be taken to a personalised landing page which shows their children and the classes they are enrolled in. From here, parents have access to general school life information, newsletters, updates from the Principal and Leadership teams and contact details for all staff.

In one click from the personalised homepage, parents of the Early Years will be able to view two main pages linked to their child's class; class updates and news.

The class and news tabs are updated weekly by the classroom teacher, providing parents with a reflection of the week's learning and further information to support their child's learning from home. Early Years parents can also access curriculum and resources relevant to their child's year level.

<https://connect.ais.com.sg>

## Parent Helpdesk

AIS has a dedicated Customer Experience and Parent Helpdesk Manager who acts as the first point of contact for parents who have feedback for the School or who need assistance. To provide feedback or seek support, parents may email [ask@ais.com.sg](mailto:ask@ais.com.sg).

## AISPA - Australian International School Parents Association

If you have any other queries our AISPA office is open from 8am till 10pm on Monday - Wednesday and is located opposite the Billabong Café in the Lower Elementary school. Otherwise we are always

contactable by email [aispa@ais.com.sg](mailto:aispa@ais.com.sg)

Using Classlist, AISPA can manage events; facilitate our special interest groups and share important Parent Association communications. While parents can privately discuss arrangements for parties or lift shares; find a home for old bicycles or furniture, and volunteer. This site is completely free to the school and to parents. This is also where you can join your parent class and year level chat groups, parent interest groups and Country Ambassador groups.

## Help Us Grow

The School also has a structured survey program to allow parents to tell us - openly and honestly - what we're doing well and what they believe we can do better.

The Help Us Grow program supports our commitment to continuous improvement – a key value of our school and the Cognita Group. It enables us to work in partnership with parents in order to improve the whole school experience.

Through the program, we will regularly survey parents to gain feedback on their day-to-day experience of our school, and of specific aspects of school life. The feedback will help us to identify the changes we need to make to delight our parents, earn their loyalty and encourage their recommendation.

## Parent Education

Many information sessions are held at the School throughout the year. These may include sessions on the philosophy and curriculum of the Early Years and its daily operation, transition from one year level to the next and information sessions evenings/mornings on various topics of interest, such as helping children learn to read or supporting the development of children's emotional and social skills.

Parents are encouraged to take part in the education sessions that the School presents. These sessions are advertised on Connect AIS, in the weekly School Newsletter as well as class updates/news from the classroom teacher.

# Student Health & Medical Services

## Medical Services

### OPENING HOURS:

#### Early Learning Village Health Centre

(Located on Level 2 of Early Learning Village)

Monday - Friday 8.00am – 6.00pm

#### Main Health Centre, Lower Elementary School

(Located at Lower Elementary Undercroft/Playground)

Monday – Friday 7.00am – 6.00pm (Sports)

#### Nurses Room

(Located at Gate 1 Main Reception)

Monday – Friday 7.30am – 4.00pm

Nursery and Preschool students can access the Early Learning Village Health Centre if they are accompanied by Early Years staff.

Nurses are on duty to attend to first aid, to assess students who become unwell at school, and to provide support to parents and students.

Parents are encouraged to keep unwell children away from school. If a child attends school and is not well enough to participate or is at risk of spreading infection, the nurses will contact parents to collect the child. Parents should have arrangements in place to collect unwell students within **1 hour of phone call**. Please ensure your GP has given the all clear before returning your child to school after a bout of fever or illness.

### Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

1. Parents/guardians shall keep their child home from school if the child is or is suspected to be unwell. The student should not return to school until they are fully recovered or assessed as well enough to do so from a doctor/medical professional.
2. Parents will keep children at home until they are fever free for 24 (for ELV students) hours without medication (fever classed as temperature of above 37.5 degrees

Celsius - as per Singapore MOH recommendations)

3. Children with gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhoea will stay home for 48 hours from the last instances of symptoms.
4. Parent/guardian will collect their child from School when requested to do so by the School Nurse.
5. Children may not travel home on the school bus if deemed unwell by the Nurse. In particular if the student has a fever above 37.5 degrees Celsius or gastrointestinal symptoms.
6. Parents/guardians are to be contactable at all times during school hours, or whilst their child is attending extra-curricular activities. If for any reason they will be unable to take calls it is expected that the student's class teacher and/or School Nurse will be provided with alternative contact/guardian information.
7. Parents/guardians of students in Elementary School and Early Learning Village (ELV) are to collect their unwell child from school within one hour or make arrangements for another adult to do so.
8. Students in Secondary School may go home in a taxi at parent's request if Nurses deem them stable enough to do so.
9. It is AIS Policy that parents submit a Medical Certificate (MC) for all medical-related absences more than 2 consecutive days.

### When to stay home from school

Deciding whether or not to keep your child home from school is not always easy. Obviously, a very sick child does not belong in school, but deciding when a child is too sick for school can be tricky. Below are some helpful guidelines to follow.

Please keep your child home if unwell with:

- Fever, defined above 37.5 degrees Celsius. Ill children sometimes have normal temperatures in the morning, but their temperature rises in the afternoon. Students may return to school after being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Panadol or Nurofen.

- Discomfort from conditions, such as urinary tract infections or painful injuries. Students should stay home until they feel well enough to participate in classroom activities.

- Contagious diseases that are spread by casual contact. Some examples include the “flu” and strep throat. A child with a strep throat may return after 24 hours on antibiotics if feeling better.

- Conjunctivitis or “pink eye,” usually demonstrated by red, scratchy, and sometimes painful eye irritation. Children can return once prescription treatment commences after 24 hours.

- Vomiting and diarrhoea. Children may return once they are symptom free for 24 hours (*48 hours for our ELV students*)

- Constant sneezing, coughing, or severe sinus congestion. Children will probably be more comfortable at home where they can rest until they feel a bit better. Please remember how easily the “common cold” is transmitted, and encourage frequent hand washing.

### **Common Health Issues in Singapore**

There are some communicable diseases that are commonly found in school settings because of the ease of transmission from person to person in a group setting in which people are in close contact and share supplies and equipment. Despite this, AIS remains vigilant in its efforts to keep the community healthy through developing good habits including:

1. Encouraging sick students and staff to stay home and seek medical attention for their illness.

2. Teaching good hand hygiene practices and supplying soap and paper towels.

3. Being vigilant about cleaning and disinfecting

classroom materials and surfaces.

4. Providing communications to families and students to create awareness of health issues and aid in preventing further spreading of infectious disease.

5. Employing healthy practices throughout the school.

To learn more about some common health issues found in Singapore including Head Lice, Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis), Mycoplasma, School Sores (Impetigo), Vomiting, Diarrhoea, Dengue Fever, see the resources available on Connect.

### **Medical Information**

All families new to the School are issued with a Health Declaration form. These should be completed and returned to the Admissions Department as soon as possible (and certainly prior to the student’s commencement at the School). This information is recorded and used as a reference when your child attends the nurse. Separate medical forms accompany excursions and camps and must be completed prior to students attending camp. Teaching staff will be informed of special health needs.

If there are any changes in a child’s health status, it is the responsibility of parents to inform the School.

### **Medications at School**

No child is to self-medicate at school unless authorised by the School.

Parents whose children require occasional or regular medication at school need to deliver the medication and the Request to Administer Medication form to the nurse. This form is available from the Health Centre, the Nurses Room or from Connect AIS.

If a child presents to the nurse and has been assessed to need pain relief, with your consent, nurses can administer Paracetamol. Consent is given on Medical Information and Consent forms; however, a nurse will always try to contact parents prior to administering Paracetamol or any medication.

### **Emergency Contacts**

Accidents do occur. In any emergency the injured student will be the primary consideration. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible. If a parent cannot be

contacted, the School acts in loco parentis. To avoid delay in contacting parents it is essential that the School be notified of any changes of address or telephone numbers. This information needs to be forwarded to the Records Department via email to records@ais.com.sg. Please also inform the class teacher.

It is of critical importance that we have reliable up-to-date information. If both parents are away from Singapore for any length of time (even as little as overnight), and the children are under the care of a temporary guardian, please notify your child's class teacher, the nurses and the Elementary School Secretaries of the emergency contact details during your period of absence.

### **Students with Specific Health Needs**

The School is not responsible for the management of medical conditions; it gives support to students and families so that children with specific health needs achieve the same educational opportunities as their peers.

If a specific health need is identified on the Health Declaration form you will need to meet with the nursing staff for an assessment to develop a medical plan if necessary. It is best to have all health needs attended prior to their commencement date at the School. Relevant information will be forwarded to teaching staff.

### **Asthma and Allergy Needs**

Parents of children who have severe asthma or known allergies are required to arrange to see the nurses to develop an Emergency Response plan. The ERP is reviewed annually. Students with asthma will also need to submit Asthma Form annually.

These assessments provide us with detailed information relating to the child's current treatment, symptoms, triggers, maintenance treatment, and emergency treatment. With parents' permission, plans will be displayed in areas according to need. Parents may be asked to provide the School with medication. All medication should be clearly labelled and in original containers and it is the parent's responsibility to maintain in-date supplies. The School requires each child prescribed with an EpiPen to have two pens for use at school.

The Allergy & Anaphylaxis Support Group is a voluntary parent group who provide support not only to parents but who also support staff and students in the AIS community. For further details, please refer to Connect AIS.

### **Dehydration**

Dehydration is a common issue in the tropics and can affect your child's health and impact on their learning. Please encourage your child to regularly sip water through the day. Children should have their own water bottles in their classroom, these can be refilled from water coolers available around the school.

Signs and symptoms of dehydration:

- Poor concentration
- Tiredness
- Lack of coordination
- Late signs are: thirst and headache

Such symptoms can have a profound impact on safety, health and learning.

### **Foot Protection**

Please send your child to school in adequate foot protection. This includes on non-uniform days. Children often suffer injury as a result of inadequate protection. An injured foot is likely to be injured further without the protection of a shoe. For more information about school uniforms and appropriate footwear, please consult the AIS Uniform Guidelines document available on the School's online portal.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice are transmitted from person to person by direct contact. Parents need to remember that transmission is not always at school. Research shows that transmission is greatest at gatherings with family and friends (this includes sleepovers). If your child has been discovered to have nits (head lice eggs) or head lice, treatment is to be provided and assessed as effective before bringing them back to school. It is advisable that you continue to check for the eggs or lice every day; eggs are not killed by treatments. If left unchecked, the cycle will continue.

If your child has been found to have head lice whilst attending school, parents will be notified. The School recommends using the conditioner method regularly to reduce the spread of lice. Head lice control treatment

options are:

1. Mechanical removal
2. Chemical and mechanical removal

If you have any questions, please contact the school Nurses or visit this reliable website: [www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/)

Please notify the Nurses and/or your child's class teacher if you discover that your child has head lice. Such information is invaluable; it helps us to identify outbreaks and to address areas of need.

### **Immunisations**

The School does not provide these services. Parents are encouraged to ensure that immunisations are done according to their home country requirements. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain up-to-date immunisation records and to notify the nursing staff when immunisations are updated. In Singapore, it is mandatory to be fully vaccinated against measles and diphtheria. For more specific immunization advice please contact your local medical centre.

### **Hearing and Sight Testing**

Parents are also encouraged to conduct hearing and sight testing before formal education commences (Preparatory year) and are advised to have an updated test during their Primary years. Please refer to your local doctor for advice.

### **Nut Minimisation Policy at AIS**

Please note that, owing to the risks to children who have a severe allergy to peanuts or other forms of nuts; no nuts, nut-based products or products that contain traces of nuts, are permitted on school grounds or on school transport. This includes peanut butter and Nutella. For more information, please contact the AIS Health Centre, [nurse@ais.com.sg](mailto:nurse@ais.com.sg).

### **Sun Protection**

The wearing of sunscreen is actively encouraged and parents are advised to apply sunscreen to their child before school each day.

### **Thread Worms/Pinworms**

From time to time, this can become an issue in younger children. Prophylactic treatment is encouraged. The

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) promotes six monthly deworming.

Regular deworming contributes to good health and nutrition for children of school age. Treatment, available from the chemist, is regarded as safe by the CDC.

It is important that all family members need to be treated at the same time and all bedding changed and toilets cleaned.

### **No Smoking**

AIS has a strict 'No Smoking' policy. Parents, staff and visitors are not permitted to smoke within the School grounds or directly outside the School gates



# General Information

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## Dogs and Pets on School Grounds

Dogs are not permitted to enter school grounds. Parents are advised not to bring pets into the School grounds.

## Early Leave Forms

If your child will be going home before 2.45pm, please collect a Permission to Leave Early Form from the Early Years Secretary to pass to the guard. This is not applicable to Infant Care due to flexible drop off and pickup times.

## Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Students and staff carry out evacuation drills at regular intervals throughout the year. Any parent who is on-site during an emergency evacuation is requested to follow the directions of AIS staff and/or to leave the building through the designated exit.

## Exit Forms

Upon withdrawal from the School, all families are issued with an Exit Form. This form must be completed by various departments and returned to the relevant Heads of Year. Parents will be billed for any items borrowed from the School such as sporting or musical equipment, library books, audio visual equipment or text books that are not returned to the School.

## Fee Payment

The school fee includes Course Material fee, Fee Protection Scheme Insurance Fee, Medical Insurance Fee and Parent's Association membership. Tuition fees are payable before the student joins the School and then prior to the start of each semester.

Accounts are billed on a semester basis and payment of fees is expected by the due date. Payment information can be found on Connect AIS.

## Library/Inquiry Centre

There are four libraries on the School campus; **The Nest** in the Early Years Centre, **The Hub** in the Lower Elementary School Library and Inquiry Centre, **The Link** in the Upper Elementary School and **The Source** also known as The Learning Resource Centre in the secondary school. Parents are welcome to become members of the Library and borrow books. All parent fiction, non-fiction, newspapers and magazines are housed in the The Link.

We have a great network of parent- volunteers in the library, and all parents are welcome to join the team. Please speak with the Library staff if you would like to volunteer your time.

### Early Learning Village Library – The Nest

The Nest is located on Level 2 of the ELV and is open from 8.00am until 4.00pm from Monday to Thursday and from 8.00am until 3.30pm on Fridays. Children have access to over 10,000 books in the library, including a substantial picture book collection, non-fiction and fiction

Parents are free to utilise the library from 8.00 to 8.30am weekdays and from 3.00 to 4.00pm (except on Fridays). Children must be accompanied with a parent during these hours.

## Lost Property

At AIS we seek to help children to become responsible for their personal belongings.

Please ensure that all clothing is clearly marked with your child's name and current class so it can be easily returned when found. When unnamed lost property is found it is generally removed to one of the designated collection points around the School. Students should check these areas for their lost item.

## Notice of Withdrawal

AIS conducts a two semester academic year. Course fees are charged on a per semester basis and are to be paid in advance of the semester commencement. Upon the provision of notice of withdrawal, on or before 19 October in relation to students due to commence during Semester 1 (January to June); or on or before 13 April for students due to commence in Semester 2 (July to December), there is a maximum refund of 100% of that semester's course fees already paid. For withdrawal after commencement of a semester, there is no refund of any portion of that semester's course fees, regardless of when the notice of withdrawal is given.

For further details on the AIS Withdrawal Policy, please refer to the Finance pages on Connect AIS.

## Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop accepts school uniforms and sportswear, including external provider sportswear, footwear and equipment for sale. All items offered for sale must be clean, pressed and in good condition. When you are leaving the School, should you wish to donate items to the shop for sale, these will be readily accepted. All funds raised are allocated to the AIS Parents' Association funds and distributed accordingly at the end of the year.

## School Yearbook, *The Endeavour*

A school yearbook, called *The Endeavour*, is produced and distributed at the end of each school year. Students collect the school yearbook in the last week of the school year in class groups. If students are leaving prior to the year end, they may elect on the Exit forms (please read the Exit Form section) to have the yearbook mailed to them (postage costs will apply).

## Security

Guards are located at all entrances to the School and access to the School is closely monitored. These guards work on a 24 hour rotating shift. Closed circuit TV operates on the perimeter of the campus and in specific internal areas within the School.

## Visitors Pass

The wearing of visitor passes is compulsory for contractors and visitors to the School (other than parents). Visitors must sign in at the guard house with a recognised proof of identification (e.g. drivers licence, passport etc) and obtain a visitor pass before entering the School. This must be returned before departing the premises.

## Parent Pass and Car Decal

AIS families are issued with security passes which must be worn by parents, helpers and guardians, when visiting the campus. People who forget their pass will be treated as a visitor and will need to sign in at one of the guard houses.

Parent pass and car decals are provided for families who drive onto the campus.

Parents are asked to support these security measures, which assist the guards in knowing who is located on the grounds at any one time.

## Travel to and from School

### School Buses

The School supervises a bus service, run by an external company, which transports students point-to-point, to and from school each day. In addition to the driver, a bus auntie travels on the bus with the students.

Early Years staff meet morning buses and all children are taken directly to their classrooms. In the afternoons, children are gathered in groups and the attendance roll is marked. All Early Years bus children are taken directly to their buses, by Early Years staff and seated in the front seats where seatbelts are placed upon each child.

For new Early Years students, we recommend that the bus service is not used in their first two weeks of school. This is to ensure all staff can recognise and settle the new children into routines before they move to a bus routine. All parents/guardians of children who use the bus service must give prior written permission to the child's teacher, notifying the number of the bus on which their child is to travel.

## Child Safety Restraint

From January 2018, all students at the Early Learning Village are required to use one of two types of child safety restraint when traveling on the school bus.

Age of Child	2-3 years old (P2 and P3)	4-6 years old (P4 and Prep)
Restraint type	Urban Kanga Portable Car Seat  Or  Ride Safer Delight Safety Vest (with a minimum weight of 13.6 kg & a minimum height of 88.9cm.)	Ride Safer Delight Safety Vest (with a minimum weight of 13.6 kg & a minimum height of 88.9cm.)
School Recommendation	Required	Required

The safety of our students when they travel to and from the campus is of utmost importance to us.

The legislation in Singapore requires children to wear an appropriate restraint when travelling in public or private vehicles, but does not specify what type of restraint is appropriate. We have consulted with travel safety experts and benchmarked that advice against standards in Australia. Their advice is that our youngest students should only travel on the school bus if they are wearing an age-appropriate child restraint.

In the interests of safety for our youngest students, this advice applies to all students in the Early Years (Nursery and Preschool) who travel to and from school on the school bus and on excursions.

The bus coordinator can be contacted via the School on +65 6517 0255 or email [aisbus@jtt.com.sg](mailto:aisbus@jtt.com.sg) or through the School Receptionist on +65 6883 5155. All students are made aware of the bus code of behaviour that is expected of all children. Issues of concern that relate to the behaviour of students on buses should be addressed to the Transport Office. If further assistance is needed, please refer to the Head of Early Years.

### Early Years Drop-Off and Pick-Up Zones

Early Years parents may park in the underground car park beneath the Lower Elementary Building and Early Learning Village. Please be aware, however, that this car

park has limited spaces. If parking, parents must then accompany their children to the Early Years.

Children may also be dropped along the drop-off zone outside the Early Learning Village between 8.10am-8.30am. Children will then be escorted by an Early Years teacher to their class. Please inform the Early Years secretary if you would like to take advantage of this option. Please note that, pre-nursery and nursery children should be accompanied to their classrooms by parents.

After school, parents may either park in the same car park referenced above and pick up their child from the Early Years, or drive through the pick-up zone at the Early Learning Village where their child will be waiting under supervision of an Early Years teacher. Should their child not be immediately available, they must proceed around the loop again until their child appears.

### Taxis

Taxis may enter the drop-off and pick-up zone at any time during the morning period and should follow the same procedure as that of private cars. In the afternoon, taxis are not permitted to enter the drop-off and pick-up zone between 3.00 - 3.30pm

# Welfare

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Student Welfare encompasses the personal, social, spiritual and academic wellbeing of students at our school. As an International Baccalaureate (IB) School offering the Primary Years Programme (PYP) our approach to Student Welfare is embedded in the essential elements of the PYP. Through a focus on attitudes and transdisciplinary skills we work towards our goal of fostering human beings who reflect the IB Learner Profile and uphold the mission of the IB. Students are able to thrive in an environment in which they feel safe with a strong sense of connectedness and belonging. A supportive school community promotes the wellbeing of all students and fosters a sense of competence and positive self-esteem. We empower our students to take control of their own learning and develop essential social and self-management skills.

To support our Student Welfare approach, the Early Years uses the philosophy of 'restorative practice' to ensure that positive relationships are fostered and appropriate behaviour is identified, recognised and celebrated. When conflict arises, it is managed in a positive and consistent manner, allowing each child to maintain their dignity, realise their obligations and work to re-build the relationship. Our goal is not short term compliance but sustained behaviour change. Staff are supported through on-going professional learning to attain the skills to effectively manage the welfare of all students.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding children describes the action we take at AIS to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. We believe that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and that everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Cognita Asia supports the School in this endeavour through providing us with guiding principles and policies.

## Personal Data Protection

The school will collect, use, disclose and process "Personal data", for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of your child, and where necessary, for the interests of the School and ensuring that all relevant legal obligations of the school and families are complied with. Parents/Guardians consent to such collection, use and disclosure of personal data for the purposes set out above through the signing of the School's Terms and Conditions at the point of enrolment and during re-enrolment prior to beginning of each school year, provided that at all times any collection, use or disclosure of personal data is done in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act.

## Duty of Care

AIS staff are required to take care to ensure that the School ensures the safety of students within their care. Parents can assist by ensuring that the School is informed about their child's medical history. Consent forms for excursions must be returned before students are allowed to leave the School.



**Australian  
International  
School**

Globally focused, distinctly Australian

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Australian International School Pte Ltd is registered by the  
Committee for Private Education (CPE), part of SkillsFuture  
Singapore (SSG). CPE Registration Number 199204405H.  
Period of Registration 6 July 2023 to 5 July 2027