



International College  
Hong Kong  
HONG LOK YUEN

## EARLY YEARS GUIDE

A Community Learning for Tomorrow.



## CHAPTER 1

### WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL



#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

*Welcome to International College Hong Kong, Hong Lok Yuen.*

*I am delighted that you have chosen to educate your child / children at our dynamic school, which has been delivering excellence in education for more than 30 years.*

*Our Early Years programme has a strong reputation across Hong Kong, and is delivered by qualified and experienced teachers, who are passionate about helping children learn and discover their individuality.*

*Children take their first educational steps during the Kindergarten years and these form the essential building blocks for their future learning. We aim to provide a warm, safe, caring, happy and stimulating environment in which all children build confidence and reach their full potential.*

*Our Kindergarten is a well-resourced unit where children learn through play. Our caring and dedicated staff take great care to support children's developing self esteem. Children are exposed to a wide range of activities and experiences and are actively involved in their learning through speaking, exploring, using their imagination and play.*

*Specialist teachers enrich the curriculum, promoting an early interest in Music and Physical Education. Chinese (Mandarin) is taught daily through stories, songs and games.*

*We are very proud of our strong community atmosphere, our location, our large playing field and extensive grounds, which provide our children with the space to play in the fresh air, away from the crowds.*

*We look forward to meeting you.*

**Ruth Woodward - Principal**





## THE SCHOOL CULTURE

Parents often tell us how much they are struck by the depth of the family and community feel at our school.

Our strong community ethos is something we are very proud of, and one of the key reasons why so many choose to educate their children with us.

This positive climate for learning is sensed by visitors very quickly and we believe that the personal touch that we add sets us apart from other schools.

Students achieve more when schools and parents work together and parents can help more if they know what the school aims to achieve.

Our open door policy means staff will always make time to speak to parents and close connections are formed as a result. We have excellent channels of communication with our families and the sense of pride that students, teachers and parents take in our school becomes quickly evident to all who visit us.

We have created a true community school, which provides a supportive environment where children of all cultures and abilities can thrive.

The Council of International Schools has applauded the school as “a welcoming and friendly place with a strong sense of community, characterised by fairness, trust and mutual respect.”

The Visiting Team concluded that “a caring, supportive atmosphere pervades the school and it is clear that the needs of the child are central to the programme.”

It is this ethos that underpins everything we do at ICHK Hong Lok Yuen.

## MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Our mission is to be a vibrant and caring community developing creative, enthusiastic, confident learners who will take action in an ever-changing world.

***We provide high quality education through our shared core values:***

- celebrating individuality and diversity;
- fostering the talents of every community member, inspiring all to reach their full potential;
- developing skills, knowledge and understanding to become lifelong learners and global citizens;
- respecting ourselves, each other and the environment.



## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY YEARS PHILOSOPHY

#### PRINCIPLES

When children begin in our Early Years Programme, they bring with them their own set of life experiences, based on culture, family backgrounds and lifestyles. We appreciate and embrace these differences and encourage our students to build on what they know and have experienced, to learn new skills and understandings that will continue to shape their identity.

Our students will learn in different ways and at different rates. All of our students have things to learn, as well as things to teach us. We believe that learning is for life and learning can be for everyone.

*The principles we share within our Early Years unit and our school include:*

- learning occurs in a variety of social and cultural contexts;
- relationships are a fundamental part of a child's experience.  
This includes other students, teachers and families;
- children are motivated to learn in a warm, safe, caring, happy and stimulating environment;
- play is essential to life and learning.
- play inspires children to respond to ideas,  
develop imagination and skills, and make sense of their world.

#### RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that relationships are fundamental to student learning. Our Early Years curriculum is based around the philosophy that students learn best when socially and culturally motivated. The development of relationships between all members of the Early Years unit (students, teachers and families) is an essential part of learning.

Learning occurs best through these shared relationships. It is this learning that shapes how students perceive the world.

*To develop relationships in the Early Years unit we:*

- learn about each child and their families;
- provide guidelines and routines that help each child feel comfortable and valued;
- invite families to be actively part of the learning and teaching;
- talk to children, ask them questions, invite them to explore and find out;
- encourage learning about own and other cultures;
- cater for different learning styles and individual needs;
- respond to student interest, allowing time and opportunities for children to express themselves, building confidence and positive self-esteem;
- allow for children to have a voice and a chance to be listened to;
- develop communication and social skills;
- make strong links between the school and home.



## ENVIRONMENT

We believe that the learning environment is crucial to our Early Years programme. This refers to the use of indoor and outdoor space, teaching and learning materials, as well as the routines and expectations.

The learning environment in our Early Years unit is created to promote play, discovery and exploration. It supports routines and expectations. It is used as a record of learning, allowing children to develop a sense of ownership and reflect upon their learning. It is used to allow children to think, make choices and establish connections with what they already know about the world. It encourages children to constantly explore, manipulate a variety of materials and experiment to learn more about the world around them.

### *Our Early Years learning environments:*

- allow our students to explore, play and develop relationships;
- support learning objectives, interests, routines and expectations;
- change regularly to meet the developing needs of the child;
- allow children to learn individually or in groups;
- provide opportunities for children and adults to share their thinking and learning.

## PLAY

At ICHK Hong Lok Yuen, we believe that play is essential for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. It is through play that children construct meaning and define themselves as members of a social group.

Play allows children to initiate learning, ask questions and explore their imaginations. Play allows children to develop personal identity.

### *We believe that play:*

- should be fun, positive and safe;
- helps children build relationships;
- extends thinking, communication and social skills.

### *We believe that play happens best when:*

- we provide a safe environment with appropriate resources (including time);
- adults get involved in play;
- adults respond to 'teachable' moments.



## CHAPTER 3 CURRICULUM

### PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

The school uses the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IBPYP) for its curriculum framework. This is an international model catering for teaching and learning from Nursery to Year 6. Our curriculum promotes the development of the whole child, with emphasis on social, physical, emotional and cultural needs, as well as academic development. The IBPYP curriculum framework supports the philosophy we hold for our Early Years programme.

### LEARNER PROFILE

Through the IBPYP our students are encouraged to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners.

*We also aim for our students to develop attributes of the IBPYP Learner Profile:*

- inquirers
- communicators
- knowledgeable
- caring
- balanced
- thinkers
- risk-takers
- principled
- open-minded
- reflective

### UNITS OF INQUIRY

The IBPYP uses a concept-driven, inquiry approach to teaching and learning. It organises Units of Inquiry under trans-disciplinary themes. Nursery and Reception students complete four Units of Inquiry throughout each year. Units of Inquiry are designed, as much as possible, to integrate all subject areas.

#### Nursery Units of Inquiry

- Who We Are: Self
- How the World Works: Exploration & Discovery
- How We Express Ourselves: Creativity and Expression
- Sharing the Planet: Living Things

#### Reception Units of Inquiry

- Who We Are: Learning
- How We Express Ourselves: Emotions and Imagination
- Where We Are in Place and Time: Homes and Journeys
- How the World Works: Life Cycles

### SUBJECT AREAS

*Our students are exposed to new knowledge and skills across the following subject areas:*

- Language (English, Chinese)
- Social Studies
- The Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance)
- Personal, Social and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Science

#### Language (English)

Language is the key to learning in all subject areas. It is taught by all teachers who work with our students.

*Our Language curriculum is formed around four strands:*

- Reading and Interpreting
- Speaking and Listening
- Writing and Creating
- Viewing and Presenting

Our Nursery and Reception students develop English language skills through shared stories, drama, songs, games and play. In Reception, reading and writing are introduced by modelling and teaching through a balance of phonics, word recognition and whole language experiences.





### Language (Chinese)

The main focus for Chinese (Mandarin) learning in Nursery and Reception is through the Speaking and Listening strands of our Language curriculum.

Our students have daily sessions of Chinese.

Our students develop Chinese language skills through stories, songs, rhymes and games. Students are exposed to some reading and writing of Chinese characters towards the end of Reception.

### Mathematics

*In Nursery and Reception, our students develop their mathematical understandings through exposure of five strands:*

- Number
- Shape and Space
- Data Handling
- Patterns and Function
- Measurement

Mathematics is taught through the use of play, problem solving and everyday situations.

### Science and Social Studies

Science and Social Studies are heavily integrated into the Units of Inquiry. Through these units, the students are encouraged to become curious about their world, ask questions about, explore and investigate their world, and draw conclusions to make sense of their world.

### Personal, Social and Physical Education

All teaching and learning in the Early Years aims to develop individuals and relationships. Experiences are designed to build confidence and encourage independence. This is achieved through play and collaboration with others. Experiences are also planned to develop fine and gross motor skills.

From Reception, students are taught by a specialist Physical Education teacher. Lessons are aimed to develop coordination, control and movement. Reception students begin swimming lessons in term three.

### The Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance)

Nursery and Reception students are encouraged to express themselves in a variety of forms. Experiences allow students to develop skills in all areas of The Arts. Music is taught by a Music specialist with an aim to develop performing and listening skills.

## ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Assessment is central to all teaching and learning at our school. It is an ongoing process of gathering and analysing information on student learning. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. It involves a range of information, collected in different situations over time.

Our teachers and assistant teachers interact with, observe and monitor students to identify the best way to support, extend and meet the needs of each student.

Reporting is about communicating what students know, understand and can do. It describes the progress of the students' learning and identifies areas for growth. Reporting at our school involves parents, students and teachers as partners.

*Reporting between parents, students and teachers occurs through:*

- parent/teacher conferences
- student portfolios
- shared documentation of learning
- student-led conferences
- formal written reports
- informal meetings

Parents are encouraged to regularly discuss their child's development with the teacher. The parent's role as a partner in their child's education is vital to the development of their child.



## CHAPTER 4

### OUR KINDERGARTEN

#### FACILITIES

The Nursery and Reception classrooms are self-contained units, situated in the Kindergarten section of the main school buildings. They comprise two Nursery classrooms on the ground floor and two Reception classrooms on the first floor.

The rooms are large, spacious and well-resourced with designated toilets and washing facilities on each floor. The Kindergarten also has two large outdoor play areas.

The students have access to various mobile equipment, including iPads, to support flexible learning engagements.

The students also have access to other areas of the school, including the library, garden, school field, the music room and the hall.

#### CLASSROOM NUMBERS

There is one teacher with two assistant teachers in each Nursery class and one teacher with one assistant teacher in each Reception class.

#### SCHOOL TIMES AND DATES

##### Nursery

Our Nursery programme offers half-day and full-day options. It is open for children aged two years and eight months (*but must turn three years-old by December 31*).

**Half-Day Option:** Monday to Friday 8:15am to 11:30am

**Full-Day:** Monday to Friday 8:15am to 3:00pm (2:00pm on Wednesdays)

##### Reception

Our Reception programme is full-day only. It is open for children aged three years and eight months (*but must turn four years-old by December 31*).

The school year is spread over three terms. We observe all Hong Kong public holidays.

*For specific timings of the terms and the term breaks, please visit our school website ([www.hlyis.edu.hk](http://www.hlyis.edu.hk))*

Our policy is to stagger the entry of students into our Nursery to enable students to start in small groups and give them the individual attention they need. We find this strategy to be effective when children are adjusting to new routines and an unfamiliar environment. Letters are sent to parents with details of starting dates.

#### COMMUNICATION

We believe that good communication between school and home plays an essential role in learning. Students are given home-school books at the start of each school year. Parents are encouraged to use them to write messages and notes to our staff. Parents are also able to communicate via email or speak directly with the teacher each morning and afternoon.

All parents are given access to our school intranet, Orchard II. This is where parents can find important information from teachers, school reports, curriculum information and policies.

Each class also has its own website, where parents can access weekly messages about teaching and learning, school events and reminders. The website also houses photos of student learning.

A community bulletin is published every Friday with school-wide news from the past week and upcoming events. Parent sessions are also arranged to share information with regards to curriculum and other school areas.





## CHAPTER 5 STARTING SCHOOL

### THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

Starting school is a major milestone in life. When your child starts school, we want them to feel secure, to feel that they can manage without their parents or helpers and to learn how to relate to new groups of children and adults. Children settle into school routines far more quickly if they are able to complete certain tasks (such as dressing themselves) with only a little help.

The first few weeks may be unsettling for a new child. We advise all parents to be patient with their child during this time and to let the school know if any problems arise. We also ask parents to remain positive about school.

### PROVIDING A GOOD START

- Talk about school in a positive way
- Read books to your child daily
- If your child has an unsettled start, encourage them to bring something special from home to share with the class
- Label all belongings clearly
- Involve your child in packing their bag
- Ensure your child has a good night's sleep and has a healthy breakfast.

### UNIFORM

All students should wear the correct uniform and shoes should be black. For specific uniform information and details of our shop opening time please see the school website.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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**For more detailed information on the school contact the Principal Ruth Woodward at [principal@hlyis.edu.hk](mailto:principal@hlyis.edu.hk)**



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