



# PRIMARY STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

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2023-2024



***We are a respectful, learning-focused community  
where each student is inspired to achieve his or  
her potential and to become an ethical, confident,  
and internationally-minded citizen of tomorrow.***

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the International School of Riga! We are delighted to have you and your child(ren) as part of our school community. As we begin our year together, on behalf of our staff and the Senior Leadership Team, Emily Buckland, Diploma Programme Coordinator; Heath Capello, Secondary Principal, Kristine Daktere, Operations Director; Emily Johnson, Secondary Assistant Principal, Ginta Karklina, Primary Years Programme Coordinator, Duong Mai, IGCSE Coordinator, and College Counselor, and Tony Rialland, Child Protection Officer, I want to express our excitement and commitment to providing an incredible educational experience for every student, from Preschool to Grade 12.

We understand the trust you place in us as educators, and we want to assure you that the entire ISR team is dedicated to supporting you and your child throughout their journey with us. Our focus is on creating a solid foundation for learning at every grade level, achieved through authentic experiences and inquiry-based approaches. We believe in instilling a genuine passion for knowledge that will serve your child well beyond their time at ISR.

We recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual child. Our approach to education is not only about academic growth but also about tending to their social and emotional well-being. We aim to create an environment where every student feels seen, heard, and valued, fostering a sense of belonging within our community.

This handbook has been thoughtfully prepared as an introduction to our school and its policies. We kindly ask that you take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents before the start of the new academic year. Please keep it for future reference as needed. If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Once again, we are thrilled to have you and your child(ren) as part of our ISR family. We believe that together, we can create a nurturing and enriching educational experience that will empower your child to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Looking forward to an amazing year ahead!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Amanda Easterling Romey  
Director



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**GENERAL  
CONTACT  
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# KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please call the Office: +371 6762 4622 and your call will be directed to the appropriate person. Please note that teachers are generally not available to take phone calls during the school day. All staff can be contacted by email using the format [firstname.lastname@isriga.lv](mailto:firstname.lastname@isriga.lv). Staff names and roles are listed on the school website.

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# GUIDING STATEMENTS

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## ISR Mission

We are a respectful, learning-focused community where each student is inspired to achieve his or her potential and to become an ethical, confident, and internationally-minded citizen of tomorrow.

## ISR Vision

The International School of Riga will be the ideal choice for internationally-minded families in Latvia who desire an education focused on developing the whole person through inquiry and experiential learning.

## ISR Definitions of learning

### High-Quality Learning

High-quality learning at ISR occurs when students are motivated to inquire, engage and reflect on the subject matter in ways that develop creative and critical thinking skills. The students are guided, supported, and motivated to achieve their individual potential.

### Intercultural Learning

Intercultural learning at ISR encourages students to develop global awareness and understanding, and to contribute positively to their local and global communities.

## ISR Philosophy

- The Mission, Vision, and Definitions of Learning guide all aspects of the school
- Development of moral character, wellness, leadership, teamwork and learning to learn are as important as academics
- Embracing both the Latvian Heart and ISR diversity unites the community
- A collaborative and stimulating environment, which facilitates student ownership to their learning, inspires students to achieve their full potential
- Individual needs and abilities are respected, supported and celebrated throughout each learning journey
- ISR members respect and positively contribute to both local and global communities
- ISR members adhere to environmentally sustainable practices
- ISR fosters enjoyable and experiential learning
- Teachers, students and parents act in partnership to achieve the ISR Mission.

# SCHOOL PROFILE

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## Overview

Founded in 1997, ISR provides an internationally accredited education in English to students aged 2-18 (preschool through Grade 12). In order to fulfill our mission, time spent at ISR is not solely focused on academic education but also on social and cultural events which are equally important to developing the whole student.

Throughout the year the ISR students participate in a variety of events, some of which are whole school and some are divisional. The expectation is that all students are actively involved in these special events as each experience has been carefully designed to develop an aspect of our school's mission. These events could include, but are not limited to: Sausage Sizzle, Independence Day, Winter Festival, Shadow Day, STEM Days, International Festivities, and Jāņi.

## Latvian Heart

The Latvian Heart at ISR refers to the unique relationship that the school plays within the city, the region, and the country itself. It is about not only knowing and understanding that we are an international entity within the community, but that we are a friend and willing partner. It is about the school's connections to nature, to community, and to the people we interact with on a daily basis in Riga. It is visible in our community connections and it is tangible when we seek partnerships and collaborate with those within our community. More than 45 nationalities live in harmony at ISR, and even though we all come from different parts of the world, there is a place we all have in common: Latvia. At ISR, students have a great opportunity to discover the country in which they live, no matter whether it is their country of origin or their host country! They take part in the Independence Day event, and celebrate Jāņi (Latvian midsummer) at the end of the school year. It is more than learning facts about Latvia, it is about understanding its traditions and values. ISR is an International school with a Latvian Heart!

## History

What is now ISR was initially started in 1995 by expatriate parents as an informal playgroup for their children. In 1997, ISR was officially registered as a Preschool. In 2001 the school relocated to Kipsala and was reorganised as a formal Preschool and Primary School. Since that time the school has been steadily growing and is now on 2 campuses.

## Location

ISR's Early Years and Primary are located Kalnciema iela 118, 10-15 minutes from the Riga city centre, in the historic Pārdaugava neighbourhood. The ISR Secondary Campus is located at Vesetas iela 3 and 9 just minutes from central Riga and historic Old Town Riga. These locations mean the school is a short drive, bus ride or walk for students living in Riga or nearby suburbs.

## Facilities

ISR Primary Campus is housed in the 1912 heritage schoolhouse designed by renowned Latvian architect Reinholds Georgs Šmēlings. The facilities include general classrooms, a cafeteria, a library, a music room, an art room, a gym as well as rooms for Latvian and French languages. The school has a wonderful green yard for outdoor activities and a football field right outside the school doors.

## Parking

There is limited parking on the Primary campus. If at all possible please come by foot, bicycle or public transit. Considering that Early Years students are the youngest learners at ISR, we reserve the parking lot for them. Please remember to use the small gate when entering the campus, not the car gate and to be mindful of the parking lot dangers at all times.

## School calendar

ISR school year starts around the third week of August, ends in mid-June and has 180 student contact days per year. Term, holiday and event dates can be found on the school website calendar [here](#).

## Faculty and student body

ISR recruits the best teachers from within Latvia and around the world who are fully certified in their home countries. As of the start of the 2023 - 2024 academic year, school-wide enrolment was approximately 300 students and 47 faculty members, representing more than 45 nationalities.

# SCHOOL ORGANISATION

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## Membership and Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The International School of Riga is a cooperative association formed to provide an international education in Riga. Under ISR statutes, the representatives (parents or guardians of enrolled students) of the Members (enrolled students) of the school elect its governing body, the School Council, with each member having one vote. The School Council consists of up to seven voting members elected for a two-year term.

The Annual General Meeting of the Members is held in the spring each school year. All parents or guardians of enrolled students are strongly encouraged to participate in this meeting as it reviews the budget approved by the School Council and sets the school's strategic direction, which is implemented by the School Council. On occasions when a parent cannot attend the meeting, it is possible to give a vote by way of proxy to another member to ensure a quorum of votes are present at the meeting.

The School Council appoints a Board including the Director and Operations Director who oversee the overall daily operations of the school. Open School Council meetings are generally held monthly and are attended by Members, the Director, and a teacher representative. All members of the ISR community are welcome to attend.

## Parent involvement and the Parent Teacher Organisation (PTO)

At ISR, we strive to work in close partnership with parents as we believe this allows us to best support each child. We also value everyone's participation in building a strong sense of community. To that end, we aim to establish regular communication with each parent, and we invite parents to participate in many community events throughout the year. Another way to get involved with the ISR community is to join the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

ISR's PTO contributes to the school and community by volunteering and organizing special events and projects. The PTO brings parents/guardians and staff together in order to cooperate and work for the education of the children of ISR. The PTO supports ISR in various fundraising events and family activities in order to provide ISR with a successful educational environment.



# Organisation of students by classes

## Mixed Age Groups

ISR offers learning opportunities for Toddlers (2 years old on the 1st of September of the current school year) and Preschool (3 or 4 years old on the 1st of September of the current school year) age students in mixed age groups based on various education research advocating that this is the way children learn the best, especially if the focus is on developing the whole child, including personal, social and emotional development besides acquiring knowledge.

Mixed age grouping provides the following benefits for the whole group:

- Mixed-age grouping resembles family and neighbourhood groupings, which throughout human history have informally provided much of children's socialization and education.
- Students go through a cycle of social development – they start with being the youngest ones who accept help and learn from older students; they experience the shift from being helped to being able to help others as they are in the middle age range; they are the oldest ones who help and support the younger students.
- Mixed-age grouping increases cooperation and other forms of prosocial behaviour and appears to minimize competitive pressures on children.
- Children whose knowledge or abilities are similar but not identical stimulate each other's thinking and cognitive growth. Personal construction of knowledge is facilitated at a greater rate.
- In mixed-age grouping teachers' tendencies to teach all children the same lessons at the same time are reduced.
- Chronological age is an insufficient criterion of readiness for academic instruction.
- In most cases mixed-age grouping makes the transition from home to school easier for new students who join the class. The start of the new school year is easier as part of the group and teachers return to the same class.

Mixed age grouping provides the following (middle age range and the oldest) benefits for older students:

- As older children interact with younger children, they solidify mastery.
- Social development can be enhanced by experiences available in mixed-age grouping (leadership opportunities, self-confidence, accepting responsibility, helpfulness, caring, empathy etc.).
- Older children are more sensitive to the complexity of social interaction when younger children are present.
- When older children in a mixed-age class are encouraged to remind younger ones of the appropriate codes of behaviour, their own self-regulation may be enhanced.
- Younger children allow naturally withdrawn and/or low confidence older children opportunities for social and leadership skills practice.

Mixed age grouping provides the following benefits for younger (middle age range and the youngest) students:

The younger children use more advanced skills to try to interact with older children.

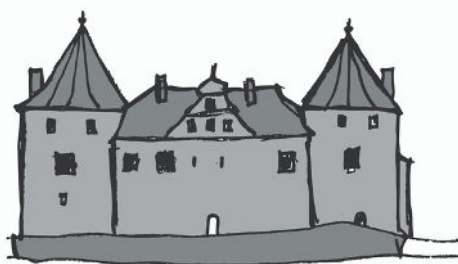
- Younger children can engage in more interactive and complex types of play – the play that they can participate in, but would not yet be able to initiate.
- Mixed-age groups provide contexts for significant learning for younger children as they strive to adapt to the different understandings presented by older classmates.
- Younger children are more likely to share their own understandings with age-mates. Mixed-age groups provide opportunities for both – learning from older students and sharing their learning with age-mates.

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are placed in the appropriate grade based on their age, previous schooling and skill development as demonstrated by their school reports and appropriate assessments. All classes are heterogeneously mixed according to abilities and national origin.

Each year group generally consists of one class with one classroom teacher and a support teacher. On occasion when there are two parallel classes in the same year group, various considerations are taken into account when compiling the groups. These include: boy-girl ratio, native languages, prior knowledge of English, students who have already attended ISR and new students, and teacher suggestions regarding the dynamics of student interactions.

## The Castle system

At ISR, all students and staff belong to one of four castle teams which are all represented by a colour and Latvian castles: Cēsis, Bauska, Rundāle, and Turaida. Family members are always placed in the same castle. The castle system encourages children to develop a sense of good sportsmanship and team spirit through positive competition. Students can achieve points for their castles for participation in competitive events such as school assemblies, sports days, or break-time tournaments organized by students and staff.



Bauska



Cēsis



Rundāle



Turaida

# TEACHING & LEARNING

## Curriculum overview

ISR is an International Baccalaureate World School and Cambridge International Centre. Early Years and Primary school students study using the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP). Middle School students in Grades 6 - 8 follow the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). High School students study the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Grades 9 and 10; the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP) in Grades 11 and 12.

The school is accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the Latvian State Education Quality Service. The school is authorised to offer IB PYP and IB DP by the International Baccalaureate (IB) and is a Cambridge International Examinations Centre.

### International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)

ISR currently implements the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) in Primary. Learning in the PYP is underpinned by six transdisciplinary themes, each selected for their relevance to the real world. Students explore the commonalities of human experience and investigate these themes in what teachers call a Programme of Inquiry. Each grade level's Programme of Inquiry can be found on the school website [here](#).

# IB Learner Profile

ISR strives to support each student's intellectual, personal, emotional and social development. This goes hand in hand with the philosophy of the IB programmes. The IB Learner Profile supports students in developing international-mindedness and in taking action for positive change. IB learners strive to be:

## **Inquirers**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning through life.

## **Knowledgeable**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## **Thinkers**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## **Communicators**

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## **Principled**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## **Open-minded**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## **Caring**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and the world around us.

## **Courageous**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## **Balanced**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives - intellectual, physical, and emotional - to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

## **Reflective**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## We Learn

10% of what we READ

20% of what we HEAR

30% of what we SEE

50% of what we SEE and HEAR

70% of what is DISCUSSED with OTHERS

80% of what is EXPERIENCED PERSONALLY

95% of what we TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE

Therefore, there is always a significant amount of partner and group work happening in every primary classroom.

Additionally, the IB's inquiry-approach to learning is woven through all learning engagements. Inquiry, as the leading pedagogical approach of the Primary Years Program (PYP), recognizes students as being actively involved in their own learning and as taking responsibility for that learning. Inquiry nurtures curiosity and promotes enthusiasm for life-long learning. Effective inquiry encourages students to think, challenge and extend their ideas; it prompts students to reflect and take action. Through the inquiry process, students develop and demonstrate/practice the approaches to learning and attributes of the learning profile. Inquiry is purposeful and authentic. It incorporates problem-solving and supports students in achieving personal and shared goals. Inquiry extends students' learning when the exploration of initial curiosity generates new questions and wonderings. By situating inquiry in meaningful contexts, connections are made between personal experiences to local and global opportunities and challenges.

## Overall expectations

Overall Expectations have been set as part of the Primary's scope and sequence of learning objectives and the International Aero Standards in Math, English, Social Studies along with The Next Generation Science Standards. This is a continuum of children's development and outline expected grade level benchmarks in each subject area. We recognize that each child's learning is an individual developmental process, not always linear and age related. The Overall Expectations are available on Engage. After signing into the Portal you can access these by clicking on the My DMS menu at the side of the page then selecting ISR Curriculum Documents in the Category drop-down menu in the middle of the page.

## Forest program

The Forest Program is an integral part of ISR pre-school and kindergarten curriculum. The Forest lessons provide a learning environment which complements that of a school environment; it helps to facilitate ideas and inquiries which address the essential elements of the curriculum.

Depending on the weather, students spend a shorter or longer part of the school day in the forest, approximately twice each month. The planned forest trip dates are communicated to parents before the Program begins and parents/guardians are asked to give permission for their children to attend these trips.



Sometimes parents send requests to the teachers for keeping their child at school instead of joining the forest trip. Generally, if a child is well enough to come to school, s/he is considered well enough to participate in this trip. Similarly to any other learning experiences, if your child is not well enough to participate in the forest trip, please keep him/ her at home.

The lessons help to foster children's social skills, motor skills, self-esteem, and acquisition of knowledge. Academically math, language and science are also embraced. For some children, the Forest lessons offer a setting where they feel freer than in the school building. Children who are more reserved in the class have been seen to open up more and express their thoughts more readily. This program provides a natural foundation whereby students explore the true nature of inquiry as the outdoor environment lends itself to ongoing problem solving, sorting, and exploring. "Increasing evidence shows that positive experiences in nature lead to numerous cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits. Children have better concentration, show improved academic performance, have less aggression, and are at a reduced risk for obesity when they have opportunities to spend time in nature (American Institutes for Research 2005; Faber Taylor & Kuo 2011). All of these factors underscore the importance of providing children opportunities to connect with nature on a regular basis." (Michelle Rupiper, an Associate Professor of Practice, Assistant Department Chair for Child, Youth & Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.)

The Forest lessons also help students learn about their host country in greater depth. Children are able to have the first-hand experience of the neighborhood woodlands. They are able to see various species here in Latvia and how these species interact with one another. The proposed program would, therefore, help develop a sense of belonging and ownership associated with where the children are living.

With the depletion of natural resources, global warming, and an overall environmental degradation, it is our responsibility as educators to encourage a healthy relationship with nature before we can expect children to want to care for it. We want to provide opportunities for our students to explore the world outside their windows. We want to help them become passionate about the world around them.

# Forest PROGRAM



## Extended Day Program (Little Explorers Club)

The Little Explorers Club is an extended day program for our Early Years and Grade 1 students which runs each school day in the afternoons from 15:15 till 18:00. Parents can sign their child(ren) up for this program each trimester along with the Afterschool Activities. If a student is signed up for Afterschool Activities as well, s/he joins the Little Explorers club after the activity ends. Parents can pick their child(ren) up at any time until 18:00.

## Assessment

At ISR, we believe that knowing our students as individuals is essential for helping each child work to his or her potential. This is achieved through the learning journey each child undertakes from their initial enrollment at ISR until they leave our school for other experiences. Throughout each year, ISR assesses students regularly on different levels according to the assessment policy, and uses this information in supporting and encouraging each student to reach their individual potential.

At ISR we assess the whole child in all areas of their education, academic skills, social skills and transdisciplinary skills which transfer across subjects. All students excel in different ways of sharing their knowledge, skills and understanding during their learning journey. Thus, we offer students different ways to demonstrate what they know and to what depth they reach. This offers each student the opportunity to excel in their own way. Regardless of how the assessments are structured, they are always done with care and thought to the students and how to support them in their learning. "Assessment is to be seen as a moment of learning, and children have to be active in their own assessment and to picture their own learning in the light of an understanding of what it means to get better." (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p30). It is recognised that learning is an individual journey and that the understanding of the process is equally as important as the end result.

## Written reports

Each student's achievements and development are recorded in written reports at the end of each semester. Academic performance is assessed against the grade level expectations in each subject. A description of the student's learning and performance in each unit of inquiry is provided as well as an overview of their approaches to learning and personality development. Beginning in Kindergarten effort marks are given to reflect each student's commitment to learning and their attitude. Explanations of achievement and effort marks are included in the reports. The student reports are released to parents on the ISR Portal.

How to access the reports on the Parent Portal (Engage):

- When you are logged in you will see the details of your child(ren) enrolled at ISR. You can access the student report by clicking on 'View Details' of each child.
- In the next window click on Assessment Report and the PDF for the report will be sitting there. You can click on the report to read it on your screen. You can also print and/or download the report to your own computer.

## Portfolios

At ISR student portfolios are a purposeful selection of each student's work to show an overview of his/her development in the learning journey undertaken. Student portfolios are used by all Primary grade levels at ISR. We use Seesaw platform for electronic student portfolios to share students' learning. Each year classroom teachers invite students' parents to join their child's class to view their children's work, comment on it, and communicate with teachers.

In addition to the Seesaw portfolios, Linden and Maple students use physical portfolios with student work compiled in binders that are kept in students' classrooms.

## MAP Testing

Twice each school year (in the autumn and spring), Grade 2-5 students take standardized MAP Tests in Reading, Language Usage, Science and Mathematics as a tool for monitoring each individual student's growth. Although standardized tests can't show all aspects of a child's development, they are one measure of an individual's development and diagnostics to identify gaps in a child's learning. Because it is a diagnostic tool that measures one part of the child and not the whole child, we value reports and input from teachers alongside the information given by the tests. The autumn test results are shared and discussed during the settling-in conferences.

The spring test results are e-mailed to parents. Parent/Teacher meetings to discuss the test results are held as needed and can be initiated by either the teacher or the student's parents/guardians.

## Learning Conferences

The Primary schedules Settling-in Parent/Teacher Conferences within the first months of the school year, and two Student-led Conferences, one per semester. Learning conferences are arranged to identify, discuss, celebrate and/or address the student's progress, achievements and areas of difficulty across all curriculum areas.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences:

- This is a meeting between the student's parents/guardians and one or more of the student's teacher(s).
- Settling-in conferences are held during the first part of the school year (usually in October). Homeroom teachers meet with each student's parents/guardians in order to discuss how the child is performing and has started the year, any concerns and any action that needs to be taken, both at home and at school.
- Additional Parent/Teacher meetings are held as needed and can be initiated by either the teacher or the student's parents/guardians.

## Student-led Conferences:

Two Student-led Conferences are scheduled each school year, one per semester. The goal of Student-led Conferences is to empower students to be responsible for their own learning through reflection and sharing their learning process as well as setting goals for future learning.

The Teacher's role:

- to prepare students ahead of time in the skills necessary for the conference
- to help students select work which reflects their learning
- to help steer the conference through questions if the student is experiencing difficulties in hosting the conference

The Student's role:

- to prepare themselves fully for the conference
- to select work that accurately reflects the learning that has taken place
- to be clear on all learning objectives and stages of learning to be shared
- to set goals for future learning

The Parents/Guardians' role:

- to listen attentively to your child (we request phones be turned off)
- to actively engage in the conference with questions and discussion so your child feels this as a real celebration of their learning
- to identify ways in which you will help support future learning for your child, including setting goals

The conference takes place in the homeroom. Students and their families are also encouraged to tour the school visiting the specialist classes where students will also have prepared work to showcase their learning. The PYP Coordinator is available during the conference day to answer any questions pertaining to the school's curriculum.

## Homework

I ISR believes that homework can foster positive attitudes and habits in learning and can serve as a vital link between the school and family. However, in Primary, it is very important for children to balance long school days with rest and 'downtime' in the evenings, so homework is kept to a minimum and should always be meaningful.

Homework for pre-school students includes spending time together with their families, having discussions about the day at school, looking at the Seesaw posts together with parents/guardians, listening to nightly bedtime stories and similar activities. Beginning in Kindergarten, reading homework becomes more formalized. Please consult your child's teacher for details. In primary classes, homework includes nightly reading and may also include math, spelling practice, or unit of inquiry assignments.

Students who take native Latvian language lessons will have weekly reading homework in Latvian. Please consult your child's teacher for details.



## Language philosophy

At ISR, the language of instruction is English, therefore it is our priority to get each child's level of English up to an age-appropriate level as quickly as possible in order to help each student access all areas of the curriculum and achieve his/her potential in learning. In line with language development research, ISR encourages students to continue to develop their mother tongue as well.

In Primary classes, most of the English language support happens through the English Language lessons, which take place in the classrooms and are linked to the units of inquiry when possible but are tailored to students' ability levels which are re-evaluated at several points throughout the school year. Additional English language support for those students who require it is provided during scheduled French/Latvian lessons for Grades 1-5 students. The school takes the decision to transfer students out of EAL lessons when their Language Arts work is to an appropriate level for that student's grade level, and may make the recommendation to transfer a student back into EAL lessons if their progress is dropping off. As per International School Law all ISR students take Latvian language lessons either as a foreign or native language.

## Overview of the weekly schedule

The weekly schedule is organized to give students lengthier blocks of time in their classroom with homeroom teachers, allowing them to deepen their learning through inquiry-based learning engagements. Each day there are some specialist lessons and throughout the week grades 1-5 students have the following lessons with specialist teachers: 3 PE lessons, 2 Music lessons, 2 Art lessons, 3 Language lessons (Latvian, French, or additional English). Preschool and Kindergarten students have the following lessons with specialist teachers: 2 PE lessons, 2 Music lessons, 2 Art lessons.

Children need fresh air and exercise every day to help them stay healthy and to be alert and receptive to classroom learning activities. Preschool and Kindergarten students need longer time to change before and after outdoor recess. To accommodate this they have one longer outdoor recess time and grades 1-5 have two 30 minute breaks- once mid morning for a snack break and then again at lunch time.

The days at school are busy for all students. Preschool children get their much-needed downtime for growth and rejuvenation during daily quiet time. Some students fall asleep during quiet time while some students quietly relax in their beds while reading books.

Those students who are not falling asleep, get up after about 30 - 40 minutes of quiet relaxation and engage in quiet learning activities. You can read more about the necessity of such downtime [here](#).



## French/Latvian/EAL

During specialist Language lessons, students whose English is still developing attend EAL (English as an Additional Language) lesson, while Latvian speaking students attend Latvian lessons and all other students attend French lessons. Requests for Latvian students to learn French or non-native Latvian speakers to learn Latvian can be made by individual families in the form of a written request submitted to the PYP Coordinator. Permission is granted on a case-by-case basis, considering what is in the best interests of the student's learning. In cases where individual families are particularly keen on developing their mother tongue, the school will explore the opportunity to collaborate with the family in providing time and space during Foreign Language lessons to work with an individual tutor financed by the family. Requests for this option should also be submitted to the PYP Coordinator.

## Visual Arts

Visual Arts allow students to explore and construct a sense of self and develop an understanding of the world around them. Through arts, the students are stimulated to think and to articulate their thoughts in new ways, through a variety of media and technologies.

In the Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms students engage in creative arts experiences almost daily. The Visual Arts teacher joins the Preschool students in their classrooms twice a week and offers additional arts experiences to extend their learning and to encourage creativity. Kindergarten students have scheduled lessons in the Art room.

## Music

Music enables students to communicate in ways that go beyond their oral language abilities. Music delights and stimulates, soothes and comforts us; music allows students to communicate in a unique way. Musical experiences support students' learning in a wide range of areas, including language and mathematics. In Preschool and Kindergarten Music is a part of everyday life and it is not limited to scheduled lessons with the Music teacher. Although, the students do have two scheduled Music lessons each week.

## Latvian Culture

All ISR students learn about our host country, Latvia, through the field trips, getting ready for and participating in school events, as well as through their daily learning. Latvian Culture is mostly incorporated in the PYP units of inquiry. As per International School Law, the National Center for the Education Republic of Latvia has set learning outcomes that students need to reach when learning about Latvian culture, history, and geography.

## Library

The ISR Library welcomes students, teachers, and parents. The Library supports the ISR curriculum, encourages reading and helps to prepare students for lifelong learning. Primary students may borrow up to 3 books for a period of two weeks. Books may be renewed or returned by bringing them to the library circulation desk by the due date or before that. If a book is lost, parents will be asked to replace the book with a new one. Official school records cannot be released if accounts are unsettled. ISR parents may apply for a library account at the library circulation desk and may check out up to 6 books at a time.

Preschool students do not have their own library accounts, therefore we encourage you to check out books together with your child. Books may be renewed or returned by bringing them to the library circulation desk by the due date or before that. If a book is lost, parents will be asked to replace the book with a new one. Official school records cannot be released if accounts are unsettled.

## Physical Education (PE)

The Physical Education program is designed to offer students a variety of learning experiences and is a regular and important part of the curriculum. It stresses the development of physical, social and mental well-being.

Beginning in Kindergarten students are required to wear clothing suitable for physical education. This includes gym shoes, shorts or sweatpants, and a T-shirt and/or sweatshirt. Weather permitting, PE lessons may be held outdoors. If a student is to be excused from physical education classes for an extended period of time, s/he must have a written statement signed by the family physician. Students who are excused for a single lesson must present a valid written excuse signed by his/her parents.

## Assembly

Each Friday morning our Primary School gathers together as a community we celebrate learning through classroom presentations, build common understanding about a certain aspect of our school life or curriculum, or enjoy a movement morning or singing together. The assemblies allow students to practice their presentation, public speaking and performance skills. Several times during each semester, all students will gather for friendly competition during Castle events. Students are asked to wear their Castle colors on these days. School events are often started and/or concluded with assemblies to put additional emphasis on the learning that happens through these events. Parents are always welcome to join all assemblies and celebrate learning together with us!

## Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of the educational program at ISR and participation is expected. They support the PYP units of inquiry and offer a variety of authentic opportunities for students to learn. Through field trips students develop their self management skills and acquire such life skills as safety, appropriate behaviour in unfamiliar places, learning and working in new settings. Each primary class may take an overnight field trip to particularly foster our students in developing their independence. For each field trip information will be sent home by the classroom teacher and parents/ guardians will be asked to give permission for their child to attend the trip.

## Learning Support

Each child needs different levels of support and challenge to grow in their own personal learning. Strong communication and collaboration with parents and among all of the child's teachers allows us to know each student more completely. At different times in their learning journeys, students may need additional support, either in the short term or through longer term, more extensive support. Our Learning Support Coordinator oversees and coordinates this support which may be provided by classroom teachers and assistants. As appropriate, additional assistance may also be provided through an individual learning support assistant (at an additional cost) or more personalized resources and individualized learning plans.



# SPORTS DAY

# COMMUNICATION

ISR uses a variety of communication tools for various purposes. Our aim in communication is to provide timely, relevant and streamlined information to ensure parents are best able to support their child's learning and actively participate in the ISR community.

## Face-to-face communication

Here at ISR we encourage face-to-face communication, especially in Primary where many parents still drop off and pick up children each day. The most convenient times for a quick discussion with your child's teacher are before registers are taken at 8:15 or just after the end of the school day at 15:15 (although some days teachers may need to directly go after school activities or meetings). If you'd like a lengthier discussion, please set up a separate time for an individual meeting with your child's teaching team.

We also remind our parents that the classroom is a professional environment. Please be mindful that in the classroom everyone is being watched by the children, and some discussions may be more appropriate to have outside the classroom.

## ISR Portal (Engage)

The ISR Portal gives users access to relevant information about students. The portal can be accessed at <https://isrigaportal.engagehosted.com>.

## Parent portal

On enrollment to ISR, parents will be given access to their portal account. All children in one family can be accessed through one account. The following information is accessed through the account:

- School Calendar
- School messages (such as Monday Memo, Director's communication, teacher messages)
- Relevant whole school documents through the DMS
- Students' subject and teachers
- Timetable
- Assessment reports
- Student details
- Attendance

The parent portal is also used to sign your children up for parent-teacher and 3-way conferences. You will always receive an invitation through the portal when the sign-up session has been opened.

## To sign up for afterschool activities:

1. Log into the parent portal (Engage).
2. Select "book activities" in your daughter/sons' profile (next to their pictures). Please note that you will be able to do that only when the sign-up period is open.
3. Choose what day you would like her/him to attend. Once you click on one of the days, you should see the activities she/he is able to join.
4. Check the activity details at this point, you can find all the important information, such as short description, location, cost, etc. Once you have decided, click on and drag the activity you like best to the empty box on the right-hand side.
5. Select the next day, if you are interested in more than one, and follow the previous step.

Once one activity has reached the maximum amount of students allowed, it won't be possible to be dragged any longer, and it will be in red color. Please note that, depending on the age of the students, different activities will be available for them.

## To sign up for parent-teacher conferences:

1. Log into the parent portal (Engage).
2. Under each child's name is a button Book Parents Evening.
3. Click on that to make the bookings by selecting an available date and time that is most suitable for you.

## ISR's Social Media

The official school hashtag is #loveisriga. Use it when tagging the school on your personal social media pages.

### ISR's Website

<https://isriga.lv/> The website has key information about the school. All ISR staff members, their roles can be found on the website. The school calendar on the school website gets updated on a regular basis.

### ISR's Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/isriga> The Facebook page is used to promote upcoming events and the learning that happens at school. Only the students whose parents/ guardians have given permission to appear on social media can be seen on Facebook posts.

### ISR's Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/loveisriga/> The instagram account is used for photos and videos, and is handled from time to time by students.



## Emails from teachers

All classroom teachers send bi-weekly email updates about whole class learning in the classroom through ISR Parent Portal. Individual emails regarding the particular needs of each student are sent as needed. Parents are encouraged to communicate with classroom teachers through email.

## Monday Memo from the Director

Each Monday the Director sends parents/guardians an email with a brief overview of the whole school activities and upcoming events. Sign-up forms and surveys that require responses from parents are added to Monday Memos. Parent preferences for the amount and nature of communication they wish to receive are quite diverse and at ISR the best common ground seems to be sending as much key information as possible via the weekly update in the Monday Memo. Therefore, as it comes just once a week, we encourage all parents to take a few minutes to read carefully and decide what information is relevant for their family.

## Google Classroom and Seesaw

Google Classroom and Seesaw are used in our classrooms to post assignments, communicate with parents, submit work and to leave feedback.

Additional information on how Google Classroom and/or Seesaw is/are used in your child/s classroom can be obtained from their classroom teacher.

When the students receive their school email addresses and begin using Google Classroom, all students and their parents sign ISR's Educational Technology Responsible Use Guidelines. The school may restrict, suspend or terminate any user's access to the school's technology systems and network for not respecting these guidelines.

## Urgent messages

Our teachers' priority is to work with students and they might not be able to check emails until the end of the school day. If an urgent message has to be sent during the school day, please send it to the homeroom teacher and the PYP Coordinator, stating the matter of urgency. If you do not receive confirmation that the message is received, please call the PYP Coordinator's office +371 6789 3639 or the School Nurse Mrs. Sarmite +371 2844 4829.

There is no mobile/cell phone use for the Primary students during the school day! If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian for any reason during the school day, s/he may do so using the PYP coordinator's phone.

Important message from the school to parents will be sent by phone, email and/or SMS.

# GENERAL PROCEDURES

## Arrival

- 8:00 am - 8:15

Parents/guardians are welcome to bring their child in from 8:00 and students in Grades 1-5 stay on the playground for a bit of fresh air and exercise in the morning. Preschool and Kindergarten parents are welcome to walk their child(ren) in at 8:00. At 8:15 the school bell rings and students go inside to be in class promptly by 8:20 for registration. Preschool registration is taken at 8:30 am. We emphasize being prompt at ISR, and parents will be notified if students are chronically late. Late arrivals are also reported on students' progress reports. During the coldest months of the year (typically December through March), students have the option to go into the lunchroom for quiet reading or to stay outside on the playground until 8:15.

## Pick-up

- 15:15 - 15:20 – All students who do not have after school activities should be picked up at this time.
- 16:00 - 16:05 - Preschool and Kindergarten afterschool activity participants should be picked up from the classrooms the activities take place.
- 16:15 - 16:20 – Afterschool activity participants should be picked up at this time from the football pitch.

If parents give written permission, students from the age of 7 and above are allowed to walk independently to and from school both in the morning and afterschool. If written permission has not been given, Grade 3-5 students must also be picked up by an adult.

## Authorized pick-up

If a student is to leave school with someone other than their parent, guardian, nanny, usual driver or on the bus, please let the classroom teachers know the name and phone number of the person who will be picking the child up.

Parents/Guardians are required to indicate the name(s), relationship and contact information of anyone other than themselves who is permitted to pick-up their child after school. The School will not allow your child to leave with any person who does not have prior authorization. This is in the best interest and safety of your child. The alternate pick up person may be asked to show photo identification if they are not known to the teacher. By Latvian law, only children age 13+ may pick-up siblings who are under the age of 7.

Please do not give pick-up permission to anyone who is unfamiliar to your child. If a child indicates to a teacher that they do not know the person who has arrived to pick them up, the School will not permit the child to leave until we have reached you by phone. If necessary, police will be called for assistance.

## Early sign-out

If a student is picked up from school before the end of the school day, including being picked up before the end of scheduled after school activities, please send an email to the homeroom teacher and the student must be signed out by an adult in the School Nurse's office.

## Late sign-out

If a student has not been picked up by 15:20 or 16:20, s/he will be brought down to wait for an adult to pick him/her up by the School Nurse's office. There is a late sign-out book which will need to be signed. We understand that there can be extenuating circumstances which prevent the occasional timely pick-up; however, we strongly ask our parents to respect the pick-up times so that our staff members are able to complete their daily responsibilities at the end of the school day.

## Attendance

Regular attendance is a fundamental factor of a student's success in school. All daily learning experiences build upon and reinforce previous learning, thus the learner must be in attendance to receive the most he/she can from the instructional program. Learning is a social process as the students gain knowledge, develop skills and new understandings in collaboration with their teachers and peers. Particularly with ISR's emphasis on collaborative learning and inquiry-based experiences, learning engagements are often designed in such a way that it is not conducive to make up the work at home. A significant number of absences can have an impact on student learning and may prevent a student from demonstrating readiness for promotion to the next grade. In reviewing individual cases, the reasons for each absence will be considered. We encourage each family to schedule routine appointments outside of the school day to the extent possible. Family holidays should be planned in line with school holidays. Student involvement in training for or participation in organised sports competitions may be taken into account, provided that parents give sufficient written notice of student absence and students complete any work the teacher may assign. Prior to or following an absence, it is expected that a family will consult with the teacher about any work that can be completed. Attendance, absences, and tardies are reflected in the school's written reports.

A significant number of absences can have an impact on student learning and may prevent a student from demonstrating readiness for promotion to the next grade

## Reporting absences

If your child is absent, please send an email to the classroom teaching team. If your child is not at school, and the classroom teaching team has not received an email informing them of your child's absence by 9:30, an ISR staff member may call parents/guardians to clarify the absence. A doctor's note is required if the child has been absent for 3 consecutive days due to illness. If you plan to miss several days, please notify your child's teacher in advance. For emergency reasons, please notify the school also on the occasions when all primary caregivers are out of the country, leaving the information about the contact person until the parents/guardians return.

## Snacks and lunches

All students should bring a packed snack to school for morning break time at 10:00. A healthy snack is important for giving students the energy boost to continue their learning until lunchtime.

Students may order a hot lunch which is catered to the school (details will be provided by the School Registrar) or they may bring a packed lunch from home that can be warmed up in a microwave oven. In order to keep food fresh, the lunch should be packed in a thermal bag with a cold-element.

At ISR we recognize that we play an important role in supporting our students in developing mindful and healthy eating habits. The teachers will communicate concerns about a child's eating habits and choices to the parents as appropriate, particularly students who take the catered lunch at school and serve their own portions.

- We can empower children to become thoughtful and reflective about their food choices so that they are mindful about eating in a balanced and healthy way. We can help children to learn and reflect on taking appropriate portion sizes by listening to their own hunger cues.
- We encourage our students to eat enough so that they will be alert and focused, ready for academic learning and to put their best selves forward socially. We encourage our students to be courageous and try new foods (in small portions) with the idea that our food preferences change and evolve as we grow.
- We prompt our students to consider global issues with food waste and to take this into consideration when reflecting on their own eating behaviors. We model and expect respectful behavior surrounding food and eating - both through words and actions.

## Daily outdoor recess

Children need fresh air and exercise every day to help them stay healthy and to be alert and receptive to classroom learning activities. Hats, mittens, warm coats, boots, and snow pants are required in cold weather. For the spring and fall seasons, pupils should have appropriate rain gear. Parents are responsible for dressing their children appropriately.

Unless it is raining heavily or unusually cold, students are required to go outside during morning and lunch breaks. The teachers on duty monitor the weather on the playground and, if needed, bring the children indoors earlier.

If the temperature is below negative 10 C, children younger than 3 years will not be taken outside. Sometimes parents send requests to the teachers for keeping their children inside during the recess period. Generally, if a child is well enough to come to school, s/he is considered well enough to participate in outdoor play. If, however, there are extenuating circumstances for why your child should not take part in outdoor play, please let us know so we can keep him/her inside with the School Nurse. If this is to be for more than one day, a doctor's note should be provided. The note may be provided retrospectively.

## Personal belongings

Students are responsible for all personal items that they bring to school, whether in lockers or not. We strongly advise that parents not send large amounts of money or valuable personal items to school with their children.

**The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen property, including mobile phones or other electronic devices.**

NOTE: Students are NOT allowed to bring real or toy weapons, electronic games, portable stereos, matches, or lighters to school. Mobile phones and smart watches may not be used during the school day or during any overnight school events, unless specific permission has been granted by a staff member. Any phone calls home during the school day must be made through the PYP Coordinator's or nurse's phone.

Each student must keep one pair of indoor shoes at school. Be sure clothing, outerwear, boots, gym shoes, and personal belongings are plainly marked for easy identification. There is a space near the Library for Lost and Found items which students and parents should check if an item is missing. These items will be displayed periodically throughout the school year. Any items which are in good condition and still unclaimed at the end of each semester will be donated to charity.

Preschool students need a toothbrush and toothpaste to be kept at school for brushing their teeth after lunch. Toothbrushes have to be changed every three months.

Currently, the cubby space at school is really tight and therefore it is important for each student to keep his/her space well organized and tidy.

We suggest you keep at school only the items that are absolutely necessary.

## Book bags

We recommend that students use a book bag to keep books, papers and supplies neat, clean and dry. Use of a book bag can be helpful to a student in organising her/his school materials and may even help her/him to remember to bring her/his books and assignments to and from school.

## Health, illness & injury

As per Latvian law, all students must have completed Latvian medical forms by a local doctor. It is the parents' responsibility to update these forms as applicable (new vaccinations completed, new conditions diagnosed, etc.).

### School nurse

ISR has a registered nurse on duty throughout each school day. In the event of an accident or illness, the nurse will make every effort to contact the parents immediately.



## Medication

Medication can only be administered by the School Nurse, and only with the written consent from the parent (Authorization to Administer Medications Form). If special medication is required for any student, the following procedure should be carefully noted:

- The medication should be in a container labelled with the student's name and the contents.
- The nurse should have written permission from a parent authorising her to dispense the medicine, including the name of the medication, reason for its use, and time it is to be given.
- The medication and the permission note must be brought to the nurse upon arrival at school.
- The above applies to all medication, including painkillers and other over-the-counter items.
- Parents are responsible for medical insurance coverage for their children.

If the School Nurse is absent, an administrative staff member will be designated to administer medications. All medications will be kept in the medicine cabinet in the Nurse's Office. Exceptions are made for medicines for allergic reactions and asthma inhalers, which can be kept in the classroom or in the child's backpack.

## Allergies

Parents/Guardians must notify both the School Nurse and classroom teacher regarding any severe allergies that their child may have. An Allergy Action Plan form is kept on file with the School Nurse. The School Nurse will alert all staff members of students with severe allergies and will train applicable staff members in the use of EpiPens. (Epinephrine, form of adrenaline for allergies).

## Injuries

Students injured during the school day are to go to the School Nurse. The School Nurse will initiate first aid treatment whenever necessary. Following first aid, the student will be placed under the care of her/his parent/guardian, upon whom rests the legal responsibility for subsequent treatment. Any injury that occurs at home should be seen by the student's own physician.

## Emergency response

In the event a student becomes seriously ill or injured, the School Nurse will initiate first aid treatment and will activate our emergency response system – (calling for an ambulance, notifying the parents, beginning CPR or life-saving techniques). In the event of the School Nurse's absence, a trained staff member will initiate first aid treatment and will activate the emergency response system as above.

## Illnesses and transferrable conditions

Students who arrive at school ill or who become ill at school will go to the School Nurse. When applicable, the School Nurse will notify parents/guardians to take the child home. Until parents/guardians arrive, the School Nurse will take appropriate measures in caring for the child.

Children with any of the following ailments will be sent home immediately:

- Communicable Diseases – e.g. scabies, chicken pox, measles, mumps, rubella, scarlet fever, pertussis, parvovirus. Children must provide a doctor's note and must be fever and symptom free prior to returning to class.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – red, itchy eye(s) with yellow discharge. The student may return to school after using antibiotic eye medication for 24 hours.
- Fever - temperature over 37 Celsius. The child must be free of fever (37 degrees) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Head Lice (Pediculosis) – Children found to have lice or nits (eggs) will be sent home from school and must remain at home one full school day after successful treatment. After treatment and removal of all lice and nits, the child - accompanied by a parent/guardian – must be examined by the School Nurse prior to re-entering the classroom. School-wide head checks are performed during the first week of school and following each extended school break.
- Respiratory (common cold or flu) - fever, chills, runny nose, nasal congestion, frequent coughing, fatigue, sore throat, and/or headache. No symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Rashes of known origin – impetigo (honey-crusted lesions), tinea corpora (ringworm). Must provide a doctor's note and may return to school 24 hours after beginning proper medication.
- Rash of unknown origin – requires a doctor's note identifying the rash. If deemed not contagious, may return in 24 hours.
- Sore Throat – if the School Nurse clinically suspects a strep throat infection, then a proper diagnosis by the child's doctor, using rapid strep test and throat culture, is required. If determined to be strep throat, a child may return to school after taking antibiotics for 72 hours, and must be fever and symptom free.
- Unusual irritability, restlessness, listlessness – are usual signs of oncoming illness in children.

**Children who are out sick from school for 3 or more days require a doctor's note to be handed in to the School Nurse upon their return.**

## Physical or sexual abuse

If a teacher suspects a child (children are classified as under 18 years of age) is being physically or sexually abused, he/she is required (by Latvian law) to inform the Rīgas Pilsetas bērnu tiesību aizsardzības centrs (City of Riga Children's Rights Protection Centre) at 6733 4441. The school has developed a comprehensive Child Protection Policy, which is available on the ISR website.

A person of 18 years of age and more is not considered a child anymore, although some students are 18 while finishing secondary school. Should the school suspect that a student age 18 or older is suffering from physical or sexual abuse the school has the option of encouraging the person to report the case of abuse to the police him/herself or reporting the case of abuse to the police. In case the person in question has minor siblings, the school will have to report the case to the Latvian Orphan Court, since the abuse can probably affect other children too.

## Sexual harassment

As ISR provides a safe environment for everyone, all students have the right to be free from sexual harassment of any sort, verbal, or physical from either adults or other students in the school or during school events off-site. Staff and students do not have the right to sexually harass either adults or students verbally or physically either on-site or off-site.

Read the full ISR Child Protection Policy [here](#).

## Visitors

We warmly welcome visitors at ISR. Visiting students who are not enrolled at ISR must obtain special permission from the PYP Coordinator for a one (1) day visit one (1) week before such a visit. All school rules and regulations for students also apply to visitors. For security reasons, all visitors must first check in with the PYP Coordinator or the Child Protection Officer.

## Pets

In general, there are no pets allowed on the school premises including during special school events. If a parent or student would like to bring a pet to school for educational purposes, they must first receive permission from both the classroom teacher and the Principal. The school is not liable for any problems that may arise while a pet is visiting.

## Evacuation procedures and drills

The purpose of evacuation drills at ISR is to train students and staff members to exit the building in the quickest, easiest, and safest way possible if a fire, smoke, carbon monoxide or other emergency occurs. This helps students and staff familiarise themselves with the sound of the evacuation alarm and evacuation routes. The lockdown procedures are practiced in order to learn how to keep oneself and others safe in the occasion of internal or external threats.

Fire drills take place at least three times a year, following the requirements of Latvian legislation. The first one is done within the first week of school. From October to April included blankets will be given to the students by staff members. Parents will always be notified when a planned or unplanned evacuation has taken place.

# GENERAL GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

It is our priority to create a safe and respectful atmosphere that is conducive to every child's learning and sense of wellbeing. Students are expected to develop individual responsibility for their behavior. At ISR we strive to do this through positive reinforcement and have several systems in place to facilitate this. Two key questions guide all decisions and actions taken to facilitate the development of a child's behavior: How does my behavior impact my own learning and well-being? and How does my behavior impact the learning and well-being of others? Every child has the right to feel safe and to learn.

Staff, students, parents, and visitors to ISR are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with the ISR mission statement.

The following outline lists inappropriate behavior which is considered out of line with our expectations. Our behavior policy details the intervention guidelines for resolving behavior incidents.

Inappropriate classroom behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- plagiarism/cheating</li> <li>- inappropriate dress (see dress code in handbooks)  </li> <li>- disrupting class</li> <li>- rude and disrespectful behavior</li> <li>- disrupting the learning process</li> <li>- not respecting one's work and the work of others</li> <li>- not following classroom agreements</li> <li>- bringing games/toys or electronic equipment that are not permitted in the school or not permitted to be used during school hours (refer to Student / Parent Handbook)</li> </ul>
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**\*\*Any of the mentioned behaviors will be considered bullying if they are done in a targeted way with repetition.**

## Bullying

The definition of bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or online.

Bullying is not:

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

ISR prohibits acts of harassment or bullying. Harassment or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusal to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide a positive example for student behavior.

Bullying is often hidden from adults, therefore it is important that the students seek adults' support and speak openly about their feelings. If a student speaks at home about the acts of harassment, it is important that the parents communicate all details they know to the classroom teachers.

The same guidelines for resolving behavior incidents will be followed as outlined in ISR's behavior policy. It is essential that the student who is perceived to be doing the bullying has the concerns communicated to them explicitly as at times students are not aware of the severity of their behaviors. In genuine cases of bullying, children who are intentionally hurtful to others show no sense of regret or remorse even when the targets of bullying or someone speaking on their behalf express their hurt or tell the aggressors to stop. Teachers and administrators will follow up vigilantly to ensure the bullying behaviors do not continue, and will immediately move forward with the intervention guidelines as needed.

As appropriate, teachers and administrators will also educate students about the role of bystanders and empower all students to take care of one another.

## Playground expectations

All students have been instructed on how to use our playground equipment safely and properly. They are also expected to follow these expectations when using the equipment after school under parent supervision. Parents need to make sure that their child follows these expectations when playing on the equipment after school hours. The expectations are in place for your child's safety. The playground climbing equipment is designed for students who are 4 or older.



- Four children at a time on the large swing.
- The sidewalk by the classroom windows is out of bounds.
- Please stay off grass while it is still growing.
- One child on the slide at a time.
- No walking up the slide (redirect to the climbing ramp).
- One child on the monkey bars at a time.
- No sitting on top of the monkey bars and on top of the closed, round slide.
- No use of personal scooters/bikes during the school day.

The playground is a space where the children develop their gross motor skills, learn to evaluate their abilities and take risks. They learn to overcome difficulties and develop perseverance. When you see a child taking risks, instead of saying “Be Careful!” see it as an opportunity to help your child foster greater awareness of their environment and their bodies by saying things like:

Notice how... these rocks are slippery/the log is rotten/that branch is strong. Do you see... the poison ivy/your friends nearby?

Try moving... your feet slowly/carefully/quickly/strongly.

Try using your... hands/feet/arms/legs.

Can you hear... the rushing water/the singing birds/the wind?

Do you feel... stable on that rock/the heat from the fire?

Are you feeling... scared/excited/tired/safe?

Read more about this at <https://www.backwoodsmama.com/2018/02/stop-telling-kids-be-careful-and-what-to-say-instead.html>

If a student is injured, a supervising teacher will escort the injured student to the School Nurse. Serious injuries will be communicated to the parent by the School Nurse.

Families are welcome to stay with children and use the school playground at the end of the school day. After school, parents must supervise their own children as they are then responsible for their child's safety. We ask everyone to respect our common environment and clean up the toys, tables, chairs etc. before leaving the playground.

## ISR Child Protection Policy

The primary responsibility for care and protection of children rests with parents. However, the school recognizes that this responsibility transfers to the school when the parents entrust the school with the child's care during school days, trips, and events.

ISR aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all of our students. Our Child Protection Policy supports Article 3.1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, which states that, “in all actions concerning children the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”. We are committed to preventing child abuse and protecting children within our community.

Read the full ISR Child Protection Policy [here](#).

## Child abduction prevention

- Each year ISR Staff Members receive proper information and advice about how to prevent abduction situations.
- Each year students at ISR receive information and advice about how to avoid and escape potentially dangerous situations.
- ISR ensures adequate security measures are in place to protect children on school grounds:
  - Security guards are located on-site and supervise the campus at the key times of the school day.
  - A security guard is on the Primary Campus to control the entrances of the o building throughout the school day.
  - The campus is surrounded by fences. All gates and building entrances o are equipped with security codes that are known only by the ISR community members.
  - The ISR Primary campus is equipped with a domafon to see who is requesting access to the campus without knowing the door code.
  - The Primary campus is monitored 24 hours/day by security cameras.
  - Students' attendance is registered every morning and every student leaving the campus during school time has to sign out in the appropriate registers.
  - Precise communication procedures between parents and teachers are in place in case of student absence. The parents must inform the school in case of absence and the school will contact the parents right after registration time in case of any unannounced student's absence.
  - Parents have to sign a form to allow their children to go home on their own. This is allowed only from Grade 3.
  - Parents have to notify the school if their children are collected from school by a third person.
  - All ISR staff members complete a criminal backgrounds check performed by a specialized company.
  - School internet is protected by different systems.
  - ISR students have been taught to address any concern any trusted staff member.

## Grievance policy

If a parent/guardian has concerns about his/her child's academic progress, physical or social wellbeing, s/he should first contact the classroom teacher. Should the concern remain unresolved, a special conference with the Principal, teacher(s), and parent/guardian will be scheduled. Students attend such conferences on a case by case basis. A closed meeting between the Director and the parent/guardian shall take place should the concern remain unresolved after the evaluation of the special conference. A Member of a Meeting of Representatives may attend at the request of the parent/guardian or Director.

## Dress code

It is important that children are dressed at school in clothes that allow them to be comfortable when moving around the school and on the playground, working on the carpet and sitting at tables. All students need a pair of indoor footwear for wearing the classrooms all through the year regardless of weather being dry and warm outside. Clothing choices and messages on clothing must be appropriate and respectful.

## Bus service

Bus service is provided for a fee. Please contact our Executive assistant at [info@isriga.lv](mailto:info@isriga.lv) for bus routes, times, application and other bus related information. Please note that unused bus service will not be refunded.

## Arts, Sports, Activities and Academics (ASA's)

The ISR Arts, Sports, Activities and Academics program is designed to offer learning experiences outside of the curriculum. It is intended to form an integral part of the education and learning for our children. The aim is to produce an ASA program which allows the child to explore potential new hobbies and to introduce them to new areas of interest that they might not necessarily be exposed to in the curriculum.

After school activities comprise a variety of art, sport, language and other creative activities. In the past, these activities have included storytime, dance, swimming, music, folklore, sports and many more. The activities are optional and are organized in response to demand. Students are signed up for the activities through the Engage Parent Portal. The number of participants for each activity is limited and places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Some activities involve additional costs. These costs will be invoiced and should be paid by direct bank transfer.

A minimum of seven participants is required to run an activity. If the demand is smaller, the activity will not run and families will be asked to sign the children up for different activities that have not reached the maximum number of participants.

Keeping in mind that the days can be very long and tiring for some students, regardless of age, the teachers will carefully observe how each student participates in each of the activities. In case your child is too tired to participate, not interested in the activity or cannot access the activity for any other reason, the teachers will speak to you and request that you take your child out of this particular activity. After school activities are offered as an addition to the daily program and they should be enjoyable for all participants. There is no need for a child to struggle through nearly an hour long activity if s/he is not ready for it. After school activities begin at 15:20. Therefore, students have time to eat a light snack. Most activities end by 16:15. Some after school activities take place offsite, meaning that the pick-up time and place will be different.

For further information about the Arts, Sports, Activities and Academics program please contact Jason Romey: [jason.romey@isriga.lv](mailto:jason.romey@isriga.lv)

## School closures and force majeure

Unless instructed to do so by government authorities, ISR has no intention of closing the school due to outside temperatures.

In the event of force majeure, which causes a student or students to withdraw from the school or otherwise miss regularly scheduled school days, tuition fees already paid for the school year will not be refunded. Force majeure is defined as an event such as an act of God, accident, fire, flood, war, riot, civil unrest, act of terrorism, chemical or biological contamination, strikes, industrial disputes, outbreak of epidemic or pandemic of disease, extreme weather, construction/facility defects, cyber-attack, compliance with any law or governmental order, rule, regulation or direction (including that of a local authority), failure of utility service or transportation, that cannot be reasonably anticipated or controlled by the school.

## Social invitations

If parents wish to contact other families in order to organize social events (for example, birthday parties), we encourage personalized invitations. The invitations can be shared with other families at/ through school either by email or by handing out personalized invitations only on the occasions when the whole class is invited. We understand that the birthday parties are the celebrations which students want to enjoy together with their closest friends. If this is the case for your child's birthday, please hand out the invitations personally without involving the school. In general any child is welcome to celebrate his/her birthday in class by bringing a treat. The teachers will find an appropriate time for this.

## Re-enrollment

Online re-enrolment invitations and the updated Tuition & Fees Schedule for the subsequent school year will be sent to currently enrolled families in late January/early February. Families who wish to re-enrol should complete the online re-enrolment form and submit the designated re-enrolment prepayment by the indicated deadline, in order to hold the student's place for the subsequent school year. Families who do not meet the deadline requirements for re-enrolment are not guaranteed a place for the following school year but will retain priority for any place that does come available.

## Optional Services

### Hot Lunch

For those parents who would like the service, the school provides hot lunches provided by an outside caterer, for a fee. Lunches are ordered per quarter. Please contact Executive Assistant at [info@isriga.lv](mailto:info@isriga.lv) for a sample menu, application and other information related to hot lunches.





# MAIN EVENTS & FESTIVALS

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At ISR, we have many special events throughout the year which are all carefully designed to support various aspects of our students' development. Attendance on these days is an expectation as they are important parts of participating in the full ISR learning experience. Parents are warmly invited to join the events as active members of our community.

Some of the school events require different dress codes. Among those are dressing as a book character, wearing traditional national clothing, dressing in national colours or house shirts / colours. It is advisable to have a set of more official/festive clothes, for example, have a white shirt, black bottoms and dark dress shoes. As ISR provides an inclusive and caring environment for everyone, it is expected that students who dress up in costume for any school event are respectful towards people of all cultures, physical abilities, physical traits including skin colour and size, religions, languages, ages, genders, sexual identities, and social statuses.

Following is a brief description of each of the main events. Other events will be advertised as they are organized.

## First/Last Day of School

The first day of school starts in homeroom classrooms when students meet their teachers followed by a whole Secondary school assembly. Parents/guardians are welcome to join the assembly.

On the last day of school all K118 campus students gather for an assembly to celebrate the year and wish good luck to the students who are going to continue their learning journey in other schools and countries. The last day of school is a half day with dismissal at noon.

In Latvia and several other countries it is customary to greet the teachers with flowers on the first and last day of school. This is certainly not an obligation at ISR but you may see students following this tradition.

## Back to School Night

Back to School events are informational sessions which give parents the opportunity to meet the homeroom teachers, discuss routines, schedules, expectations and other logistics of the particular grade. It is important that parents attend this event and the teachers look forward to meeting all of you!

## Sausage Sizzle

The Sausage Sizzle is a community event at the very beginning of the school year. Parents are invited to join us for a barbecue to meet other parents, teachers and ISR staff members in a social atmosphere.

## International Day

A celebratory, learning-focused event with a real emphasis on international-mindedness and the ethics of thinking as a global citizen. We celebrate our own identities while learning about and appreciating other cultures as well. Teacher-led workshops focus on international-mindedness and ethical decision-making. There is a Parade of Nations which the entire community is welcome to attend. Everyone is invited to wear their national dress or colours for the parade, which takes place outdoors (weather permitting). Students also have a chance to learn about different countries and cultures by visiting display tables that are set up by parents.

## Latvian Independence Day Celebration

This is a whole school event celebrating a day that is significant for our host country and our Latvian heart. In our understanding, an important part of international-mindedness is respect for and connection to our host country and this is a day for students to really feel a sense of belonging in Latvia through song and dance performances. The dress code for this event may depend on the theme of the event and will be communicated by the organizing committee.

## Book Days and the Sleepover

'Book Days' are a community-building event for growing our love for books and celebrating our culture of reading. This even kicks off with a parade of book characters. Therefore your child will need to dress up as a character from a book. The school sleepover is optional but warmly recommended and highly popular among our students from Kindergarten and up. This prepares younger students for overnight field trips during the second part of the school year. As many of them might be sleeping away from home for the first time, it allows them to first experience this in the familiar setting of school with people and surroundings they know well.

## Winter Festival/Bazaar

Historically this is the oldest event at ISR, drawing a large crowd. It includes a bazaar of artisans and a lottery coordinated by the PTO. Children's performances include songs and dances based around a chosen winter theme.

## Winter Solstice

Winter Solstice is the time when many cultures around the world celebrate the return of the light. In Latvia, just like in other places, this celebration is filled with various symbols and traditions. Our students celebrate it on the last day before the Winter holidays by dressing up as animals or birds (bear, sheep, horse, crane and others), household and farm items (broom, hay-stack), people (tall wife or short man) and pulling a log around the school, thus collecting all the problems of the previous year. This celebration including traditional songs, dances and games takes place outdoors.

## Jāņi - Latvian Midsummer Festival

This is a celebration of an important traditional event in our host country at the end of the school year - very much enjoyed by everyone as we participate with songs, dances and preparing traditional dishes. Everyone is invited to dress up for the festival in the traditional Latvian style. Your child might like to wear his/her traditional national clothing for this day. Weather permitting, the celebration takes place outdoors.

## PTO Organised family events

Community-building social events for families to meet new community members and get to know each other better are organised throughout the year. These events are often organized during the weekends and outside school hours.

## Focus weeks

Once a year, there is a special focus week when off-timetable learning experiences are organized around a certain theme. For several years this has been a STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) week which has allowed the students to engage in hands-on practical experiences. Parents are warmly invited to participate in this week by leading their own activities with our students or supporting teachers in practical learning engagements.

A photograph showing several children in traditional Latvian folk costumes, including white knitted sweaters and green skirts, dancing outdoors. They are wearing flower crowns and holding hands. The background is a blurred crowd of people and trees.

Latvian  
HEART

## Parent & Student Acknowledgement of the ISR Handbook Content

We have read and understood the contents of the ISR Student / Parent Handbook. We understand that ISR makes every effort to provide a safe and secure learning environment, but that the student is responsible for her or his behaviour at all times. We understand and agree with ISR that students should follow the school rules and guidelines at all times and that the school assumes that parents will support the school in the application of all reasonable rules and guidelines.

We acknowledge that we have read, understood, and agree to the policies and procedures detailed in the ISR Child Protection Policy

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print this agreement and, after it is signed by students and parents, return this page to the homeroom teacher. Please refer to the previous pages at home for reference.**





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