



The

IB

(International Baccalaureate)

PYP

(Primary Years Program)

At GAIS

A Booklet for Parents

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What is the Primary Years Program?

At GAIS we are trying to meet the widely varying needs of our international student body. We know that our students, as well as teachers, come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and bring many different beliefs and expectations to school. Our goal is to create a program that will not only meet the needs of this diverse group, but also benefit from the richness of the diversity.

A group of international educators who were working on the same problem, combined their own knowledge and expertise with the best practice from the many national systems, and created a new way of thinking about curriculum. The Primary Years Program, or PYP, adopted by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) in 1997, was the result of their work.

The PYP is a curriculum framework created for students between the ages of 3 and 12 years. It is an international transdisciplinary program designed to foster the development of the whole child.

The PYP focuses on the total growth of the developing child, touching hearts as well as minds and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare.

The PYP combines the best research and practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools to create a relevant and engaging educational framework for all children.

What is a PYP School?

A PYP school is one that, regardless of location, size or constitution, strives towards developing an internationally minded person.

What is an Internationally-minded Person?

The PYP believes that an internationally minded person is someone with the attributes and dispositions described in the Student Profile. The ultimate goal of our program at GAIS is to support our students in developing this set of attributes and dispositions within themselves.

The PYP Student Profile is the foundation of our program. Regardless of the PYP School to which a student may transfer around the world, these characteristics remain.

The Learner Profile

Inquirers	Their natural curiosity has been nurtured. They have acquired the skills necessary to conduct purposeful, constructive research. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to make sound decisions and to solve complex problems.
Communicators	They receive and express ideas and information confidently in more than one language, including the language of mathematical symbols.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations without anxiety and have the confidence and independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are courageous and articulate in defending those things in which they believe
Knowledgeable	They have spent time in our schools exploring themes, Which have global relevance and importance? In doing so, They have acquired a critical mass of significant knowledge
Principled	They have a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning. They have integrity, honesty and a sense of fairness and justice.
Caring	They show sensitivity towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a sense of personal commitment to action and service.
Open-minded	They respect the views, values and traditions of other individuals and culture and are accustomed to seeking and considering a range of points of view
Balanced	They understand the importance of physical and mental balance and personal well-being.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and analyze their personal strengths and weaknesses in a constructive manner.

The Learner Profile at GAIS

Here at GAIS, we have take the Learner Profile one step further. We have worked together as a staff to develop specific learner profile descriptors for the students throughout the Elementary School that are meaningful and appropriate to the different ages.

For more information about the GAIS Learner Profile descriptors and those appropriate to your child's grade level, please contact your child's teacher.

What will my child be learning?

At the heart of the PYP philosophy is a commitment to structured inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning. Six trans-disciplinary themes provide the framework for the exploration of knowledge. Teachers and students are guided by these themes as they design curricular units for exploration and study. These units of inquiry make up the GAIS Program of Inquiry. Students explore subject areas through these themes. In the process, they develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop particular attitudes and learn to take socially responsible action.

The written curriculum incorporates five essential elements:

The first four essential elements: concepts, skills, attitudes and actions, are relevant in and across all subject areas and provide the framework for structured and purposeful inquiry. They can have different applications and interpretations, depending on the subject area. The fifth element – knowledge, is considered to a holistic understanding of ideas, not merely the acquisition of facts and skills.

CONCEPTS There are eight fundamental concepts expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units -called units of inquiry, but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas.

The concepts are:

Form: What is it like?

Function: How does it work?

Causation: Why is it like it is?

Change: How it is changing?

Connection: How is it connected to other things?

Perspective: What are the points of view?

Responsibility: What is our responsibility?

Reflection: How do we know?

SKILLS There are five sets of trans-disciplinary skills acquired in the process of structured inquiry. These are: thinking, communication, social, research and self-management skills.

ATTITUDES The PYP promotes and fosters a set of attitudes we want the Students to feel, value and demonstrate. There are twelve in total. They are: tolerance, respect, integrity, independence, enthusiasm, empathy, curiosity, creativity, cooperation, confidence, commitment, appreciation.

ACTION The students are encouraged to reflect, to make informed choices and to take action that will help their peers, school staff and the wider community. In this way the students demonstrate a deeper learning through service and positive action.

KNOWLEDGE: The PYP recognizes that it is inappropriate, and not desirable in an international setting, to define any narrow, fixed body of knowledge as the essential content, which every student should know. So rather than designing a fixed syllabus, the PYP has set out to identify themes – areas of knowledge, which are used to organize the six units of inquiry taught each year from Early Childhood – Grade 5. The organizing themes are:

Who we are

Where we are in place and time

How we express ourselves

How the world works

How we organize ourselves

Sharing the planet

As much as possible subject knowledge is integrated into the six trans-disciplinary themes of the curriculum model. The current GAIS Program of Inquiry is found in the Program of Study Guidebook which can be opened on this page, and will help you learn about the units of inquiry your child will explore at each grade level at GAIS.

How will I know how my child is doing?

The PYP promotes the use of a range of assessment strategies, which are designed to give a clear picture of your child's progress. This progress will be reported to you regularly, both orally and in writing. There are teacher-led conferences and student-led conferences scheduled during the year. We believe in open communication between home and the school. You are encouraged to play an active role in supporting your child's learning.

How can I support my child's learning?

We at GAIS strongly believe that learning is a partnership between student, parent and school.

You can help your child by:

- maintaining regular contact with your child's teacher and school
- sharing books with your child
- supporting your child's mother tongue through speaking, reading and writing

- assisting your child with research projects and expressing interest in what they are learning
- attending information sessions at school and parent/teacher conferences
- providing an appropriate setting and structured routine for doing homework

Will the PYP help my child fit into another school?

Although no school or curriculum can guarantee a perfect fit when children transfer to a new school, particularly a school in a different country, it is important to note the following:

Transfer to schools offering a national curriculum

- close attention is paid to a range of national curricula when developing the PYP curriculum
- students transferring international schools usually have no trouble with standards of national schools

Transfer to other schools offering the PYP

- Students in other PYP schools will have common learning experiences in terms of conceptual development, skill acquisition, positive attitudes and meaningful action. There will be less uniformity of specific content in certain areas, since schools will naturally wish to reflect the nature of their own locations.
- The PYP is working towards agreement on a common set of assessment, recording and reporting strategies, which will facilitate the transfer of students.

How is the PYP evaluated?

All authorized schools are revisited and their programs evaluated three years after the date of authorization to offer the PYP. This service is designed to review the effectiveness of the delivery of the program at the school. The evaluation team consists of knowledgeable professionals familiar with the program in the school. The evaluation process does not assess individual students or teachers.

The evaluation process identifies the strengths and weaknesses of our program and the degree of success with which we have implemented the PYP. It will follow up on any recommendations made during the authorization visit. The information provided will assist us in the further development of an effective program and support us on the path of continuous improvement.

What shall I do if I still have questions?

If you have questions with regards to the PYP at GAIS, please feel free to make an appointment to discuss your questions with:

- your child's teacher
- the PYP coordinator Maike Silver
- the Head of School Hans Peter Metzger

The IBO website is www.ibo.org

