

EARLY LEARNING HANDBOOK

2020



INTERNATIONAL
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



The International Grammar School (IGS) community warmly welcomes you and your family. IGS recognises the importance of learning and development in the early years. We value the relationship we share with our families. We want to ensure that we communicate easily with each other and support each other in our roles nurturing your child's growth and development.

The Early Learning years provide an amazing opportunity for children to view the world with their enthusiastic and open minds, to formulate theories and refine their thinking, and to prepare firm foundations for their years of compulsory schooling.

Our aim is to ensure that your child has a happy, positive and stimulating early childhood education and that you are comfortable and confident entrusting us with their care and development. We trust that your journey with IGS will be long and rewarding.

CONNECTEDNESS

Every child, family and staff member is connected to and part of the team, as together we navigate our learning journey.

- Buddies
- Community and cultural celebrations
- Learning and sharing
- A sense of belonging to a whole community of learners

DIVERSITY

Secular, co-educational and non-selective, IGS welcomes families from all backgrounds, including Indigenous, rainbow and diverse cultures, in a safe space that respects and reflects our differences.

- Acknowledgement of Country
- International Day and other whole-school celebrations
- Tea ceremonies
- Cultural songs and dances

AUTHENTICITY

Children's unique experiences and special traits help them to connect, create and grow in meaningful ways.

- Honesty and mutual respect
- Child-inspired programs
- Each individual nurtured

PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

At IGS, we offer a guiding hand to hold as together we build the foundations of children's learning and we embrace a sense of pride and satisfaction at key moments.

- Celebrating the ordinary and the extraordinary
- Supporting key steps
- Respecting individual milestones
- Child choice and ownership of their learning
- Deeper learning

VIBRANCY

Our qualified, dedicated and passionate educators love what they do, nurturing each child.

- Spaces alive with wonder and activity
- Wholehearted sharing of ideas
- Multiple language partial immersion
- An ever-changing chorus of English, Mandarin, French, German, Italian, Japanese and music

VALUES

With the motto *Unity Through Diversity*, IGS values authenticity, vibrancy, connectedness, diversity and personal achievement.



ABSENCES

Please notify Early Learning (via phone or email early.learning@igssyd.nsw.edu.au) if your child will be absent, and the reason for the absence, eg. being unwell. This helps us promote a safe and healthy centre and put strategies in place to prevent spread of infective illnesses.

BAGS

Please ensure your child always has a water bottle, a hat and a spare pair of clothing in their bag. We request that lunch and morning tea be packed separately and placed in either the refrigerator (perishable foods) or boxes accordingly.

BEFORE CARE AND AFTER CARE BOOKINGS

Families can book their child on a permanent basis into before and/or after care sessions via Engage. For casual bookings to before and after care sessions, please email or phone reception on 9219 6700 or reception@igssyd.nsw.edu.au by no later than 2pm the day prior to care being required.

BIRTHDAYS

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday in Early Learning, usually by singing Happy Birthday in our different languages.

Some parents may choose to organise small cupcakes for each child. We remind families that any food brought from home needs to be nut free. Please let your child's teacher know in advance of your intention to bring cupcakes or other items to the centre.

CHILD SAFETY, WELLBEING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Wellbeing is a strong focus at IGS. To access services from our Counselling and Wellbeing Team, email counsellors@igssyd.nsw.edu.au or phone 9219 6976, or speak to your child's teacher. The IGS Counselling Suite is on Level 1 near Student Reception.

We aim to minimise accidents by providing active supervision and proactive management of the learning environment. However, accidents do occasionally happen. If your child is injured, a staff member will assist your child and provide first aid. In the case of a serious accident, requiring medical treatment, such as an injury to the head or a bad fall which may result in a brake, sprain or dislocation, parents will be contacted, and, if necessary, an ambulance will be called. All injuries are reported, recorded and kept on file, with parents reviewing and signing the incident forms when collecting their child.

All IGS staff are mandatory reporters for child protection and are obliged by law to notify the Department of Family and Community Services if they are concerned about the wellbeing or safety of any child in their care.

CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

In order to activate the subsidy please email your Customer Reference Number (CRN) and Date of Birth (DOB), and your child's CRN to early.learning@igssyd.nsw.edu.au once you have completed your assessment claim.

CLASS GROUPS

Early Learning is composed of two Preschool classes of children aged three and four, on the ground floor, and two Transition classes, children aged four and five, on the first floor.

When your child commences at age three, they initially start in a Preschool room (either Gold or Green) and remain with that cohort for their Transition year.



Each of our four Early Learning classes is led by a university qualified Early Childhood Teacher who works collaboratively with our language educators. Class groups are confirmed early in the New Year prior to your child's orientation day.

COMMUNICATION

Relationships are an important facet of life at IGS. We encourage our families to be actively involved in meetings, seminars, celebrations and events. The following methods are our most common modes of communication:

Storypark: This online documentation tool allows us to privately share with you photos, videos and learning stories of your child in action, growing and developing. It also allows us to keep you up to date with events and activities. As parents, you can view this information individually or with your child.

InFocus, IGS Notices and the Parent Lounge: InFocus is emailed to all IGS parents and caregivers on Fridays and includes whole-school news and events. It contains a link to IGS Notices, which has other useful information. The Parent Lounge contains useful links, to Engage, the Canteen, the IGS payments gateway, and the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTF).

Email or direct discussion with teachers: Families are welcome and encouraged to share information and discuss any questions or concerns about their child's development or participation in the various programs, including languages and music with their teacher or educators. Appointments can be made for longer discussions.

EXCLUSION

Early Learning has a minimum 24-hour exclusion policy for general illnesses or indicators of infectious disease. Exclusion prevents transmission of the disease to others and also assists in the recovery of the unwell child. Each child must be well enough to attend and participate fully in activities. Children requiring one-on-one attention are best cared for at home. For your child to return to school following an exclusion period, please provide a clearance letter from a medical practitioner stating that your child is fit to return to Early Learning.

Please notify Early Learning if your child has an infectious illness (this includes all types of infections such as conjunctivitis, measles, chicken pox, diarrhoea, vomiting, hand foot and mouth and head lice).

It is imperative that the exclusion periods and communication as set out by the NSW Department of Health are followed.

Clarification of exclusion periods

"After vomiting, diarrhoea or any bowel or stomach upset" means 24 hours clear of vomiting/diarrhoea after the reintroduction and tolerance of a full diet such as full strength milk, fruit, vegetables, bread, meat etc.

"After a temperature" means the temperature has stayed at the "normal" range of around 36°C to 37°C degrees Celcius for 24 hours without paracetamol or any other administered medication.

"After medication" means that children are excluded for 24 hours after commencing a course of antibiotics or antifungals. This gives time for the medication to begin to take effect and allows time to observe any adverse reactions to the medication.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Preschool and Transition program runs from 9am to 3pm/3.30pm during the school term. The extended hours program operates from 7.30am to 9am (Before Care) and from 3.30pm to 6pm (After Care). Between 7.30am and 8am, Before Care is based on Ground Level outside of the Preschool classrooms. Transition Before Care moves to Level 1, from 8am. If arriving in advance of an Early Learning start time, families are encouraged to wait in the playground. See also "Routines".

VACATION CARE

Vacation care is available from 7.30am to 6pm during term breaks (excluding three weeks during December to January) to all children enrolled in Early Learning. Bookings are available and must be made in advance. A note is sent to parents and caregivers prior to the end of each term, via IGS Notices and through Storypark, inviting you to sign up your children for care during term break.

ILLNESS

Staff monitor children who become ill at school and notify the family. If your child has a temperature of 38°C or above, we will give you a call and you will be asked to come and collect your child as soon as possible. If requested, and we have received written permission, we can administer Paracetamol (Panadol) in an attempt to manage the temperature and associated discomfort until your arrival. Your child will still need to be collected as soon as possible as a temperature can be an indicator of an infectious disease. Generally speaking, children who are not well enough to participate in normal activities are not well enough to be at Early Learning, and we will contact parents to collect them.

IMMUNISATION

Your child's immunisation must be up to date to commence and continue enrolment at Early Learning. Families must provide Early Learning with a copy of your child's up to date immunisation schedule. Children who have fallen behind on the schedule may be considered non-immunised by the Department of Health, and exclusion may be required in the event of an outbreak of disease.

MEDICATION

IGS staff can administer prescription medication or products when the request is accompanied by a medication form and written instruction from a medical practitioner, or by a health management plan (see below). All medicine must be prescribed, in the original packaging, clearly labelled with the child's name and doctor's instructions. Always hand any medication to the class teacher on arrival.

In the case of specific medical conditions, parents are required to disclose any information related to past and current medical conditions so that we can ensure appropriate health and safety measures are in place to support your child. At IGS we have specific guidelines related to the management of anaphylaxis, as well as management of asthma and diabetes. If your child has a medical action plan, we will require a copy of this plan signed by your child's doctor and with a current photo attached for identification purposes. We will then establish an individualised risk minimisation plan together with you for your child.

MORNING TEA AND LUNCH

Please pack your child's morning tea and lunch in separate containers to help with general organisation. Due to the number of children with life-threatening allergies, our allergy policy requires that all meals provided be NUT FREE.

Meals can be stored in the basket in the classroom or in the refrigerator. There are no heating facilities for lunches in Early Learning. Orders can be made from the school canteen either online at <https://flexischools.com.au/> or direct at the door. Healthy lunches and snacks are important for active children. Suggestions for morning tea and lunch boxes:

- A good helping of fruit and vegetables (raw vegetable sticks and cherry tomatoes are very popular and fresh fruit is easy to pack)
- Lean protein (boiled eggs, beans or lean meat such as chicken or beef)
- Dairy food (yoghurt, cheese or milk)
- Starchy food (bread, rice and pasta).

Visit www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au for more ideas.

PARENTS, TEACHERS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION (PTF)

The IGS Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTF) warmly welcomes new parents and caregivers, hosts school community meetings and supports the IGS Community Learning Program, social events and more.

PAYMENTS

Payments can be made via the IGS website at www.igssyd.nsw.edu.au or contact School Accounts on 9219 6705.

POLICIES

A variety of IGS policies can be found on the school website at www.igssyd.nsw.edu.au and on Storypark.

PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

Programs and planning webs are displayed in the classrooms and aspects of the program are shared via Storypark. We welcome family feedback and contributions towards our program and daily activities.

A significant aspect of our programs come from cultural celebrations or traditions and the interests of the children. The program is play-based, allowing children to explore, discover, take risks and form theories of their own.

Our five languages (Chinese, French, German, Italian and Japanese) echo through Early Learning, with each child receiving a 30-minute intensive language lesson every day in the target language.

Music plays a large part in all aspects of our program. Our specialist music teachers join our classes for 20 mins each day for singing, dancing and percussion explorations. These music groups incorporate Orff Schulwerk and Kodaly methodology.

RECEPTION

IGS Reception may be contacted on 9219 6700.

REST AND RELAXATION

Children who require a sleep are settled on a mini mattress in the classroom and supervised while they sleep. All other children are given some relaxation time. This can vary from simply resting on the carpet with a pillow while listening to soft music or an audio story to something more involved such as children's yoga and meditation. Once the relaxation session is over, Preschool children move onto other quiet indoor play activities, while Transition children move outside.

ROUTINES

Daily routines vary between our classes, but all follow similar patterns and programs. Working with young children requires teaching staff to be flexible yet consistent, to help establish routine.

7.30am to 8am	Before Care commencing for all Early Learning children in the Preschool Big Space (Ground Floor).
8am to 9am	Transition Before Care moves to Level 1, while Preschool Before Care continues on Ground Floor in the Big Space.
9am to 10.40am (approx)	Preschool classes: Inside play and music group. Transition classes: Outside play and language focus group lessons (30 minutes).
10.40am to 11am	Children eat morning tea, packed from home.
11am to 12.30pm	Preschool: Outside play and language focus group lessons (30 minutes). Transition: Inside play and 20-minute music lessons.
12.30pm to 1.30pm	Group time discussions and experiences, and lunch time.
1.30pm to 2.40pm	Rest and relaxation.
3pm to 3.30pm	Preschool and Transition children are collected from the classroom.
3.30pm to 6pm	Extended Hours Care: For both Preschool and Transition, on the ground floor area, using both indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Afternoon tea is provided for children attending.



SIGNING IN AND OUT, AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Children must be signed in and out by their caregiver daily in keeping with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and to ensure the safety of your child.

Only parents and legal guardians are permitted to drop off or collect children, unless authorised in writing by the child's parents or legal guardian.

An "authorisation to collect" section is included in your child's admission forms. Please update collection information throughout the year as necessary. Email early.learning@igssyd.nsw.edu.au to request additional forms.

SOCIALISATION AND SUPPORT FOR INTERACTIONS

We encourage children to be independent, and actively teach the skills that help children to regulate their emotions and behaviour. We do this in an age-appropriate way and with the understanding that all behaviour is a form of communication.

We aim to help children develop an awareness of self, of their surroundings and of others, and how their behaviours and communication might impact others.

We recognise that for some children, being part of a group may be overwhelming at times. We recognise that some children benefit from having respite from the group or routine. This is supported on an individual basis, in collaboration with the child's family.

SUN PROTECTION

IGS follows NSW Cancer Council SunSmart guidelines. We require children wear hats that protect the neck and ears, such as a broad-brimmed legionnaire or bucket style hat. SPF50+ sunscreen (as recommended by the Cancer Council) is provided when the UV rating index is 3 and above, and hats are required during outside play.

Please notify us in writing if alternative arrangements for use of sunblock are required for your child. We also recommend that children wear clothing that covers their upper body while outside.

What to bring each day:

- Broad brimmed hat
- Morning tea
- Lunch
- Drink bottle
- Sheets for rest time
- Spare change of clothing

(Please label your child's items clearly.)



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