



# Early Childhood **HANDBOOK**

Carlucci American International School of Lisbon

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR MISSION .....	4
Core Value .....	4
Values Statements .....	4
Profile of the Learner .....	4
The Hidden Curriculum.....	4
PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP .....	5
Early Childhood Program.....	5
ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS.....	6
Academic Progress .....	6
Homework .....	6
DAILY ROUTINES & PROCEDURES .....	6
School Hours & After School Care .....	6
Attendance .....	6
Punctuality.....	7
End of Day Procedures .....	7
Bus Routines.....	7
Leaving Campus .....	7
Trusted Adults.....	7
BEHAVIOR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT .....	8
Behavioral Expectations .....	8
Guidance Counselor.....	8
Toys, Games and Items from Home .....	8
HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING .....	9
Food In School and Food Allergies.....	9
Rest Time.....	9
Diapers.....	9
Medications in School.....	9
Sickness .....	10
Safety and Supervision.....	10
FAMILY COMMUNICATION.....	10
Communication .....	10
School to Home Communication .....	11
Meetings with Teachers.....	11
Confidentiality of Academic Achievement .....	11
ADDITIONAL POLICIES.....	12
Dress Code.....	12
Field Trips .....	12
Parties and Celebrations .....	12
School Bags and Possessions.....	13
School Equipment.....	13
Student Access to Social Media .....	13

# OUR MISSION

## Core Value

CAISL is a student-centered educational community in which we challenge ourselves and each other to do our best and to make positive contributions to our diverse and ever-changing world.

## Values Statements

CAISL is committed to

- Providing an enriching, varied and effective program of academics, arts, and athletics that inspires learners to strive for individual and collective excellence.
- Promoting life-long learning in a meaningful context through active inquiry, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
- Providing a caring and safe environment that supports diverse learner needs.
- Promoting active, responsible local and global citizenship.

## Profile of the Learner

The CAISL community includes everyone who shares an interest in the success of our learners. All members of the community strive to help our learners become

- Life-Long Learners who reflect upon their experiences and actively seek the knowledge and skills necessary for continuous personal growth.
- Creative Problem Solvers who use a wide variety of resources and strategies to meet life's challenges.
- Effective Communicators who express and interpret ideas using appropriate means.
- Conscientious Contributors who are committed to service, show empathy, and act to make a positive impact on the lives of others.
- Principled Individuals who take responsibility for their choices, act with integrity, and demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and the environment.

## The Hidden Curriculum

These are the guiding principles of our school. These are behaviors and attitudes we look to model for and nurture in our students:

As a CAISL Community we will...

- Be respectful, welcoming, and well-mannered to everyone.
- Tell the truth and take responsibility for our actions and inactions.
- Leave the space we use BETTER than we found it.
- Return what we borrow in good condition.
- Use resources mindfully.
- Be on time, present, and prepared.
- Give thoughtful consideration to the opinions of others.

# PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP

At CAISL we know that children adapt to school more quickly when they understand that parents and teachers communicate about behavior, achievement and expectations. Teachers at our schoolwork hard to provide learning experiences for our Early Childhood students that will prepare them thoroughly for their roles as cooperative, active and participative learners as they continue through Elementary School and beyond. To achieve this, we need to work in close collaboration with the parents of each student. This part of the rights and responsibilities handbook outlines how parents and teachers should work together to help our children grow and learn.

## Early Childhood Program

At CAISL we run an Early Childhood Program, providing our youngest learners with a learning environment that is social in nature, secure, and generates a stimulating learning climate for all the students. Children are exposed to English and Portuguese language through their classroom activities. There are both English and Portuguese speaking teachers in each of the Early Childhood classrooms.

The developmentally appropriate curriculum is planned for the age span of the children within the group and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of the individual child in a multi-cultural setting.

The curriculum provides for all developmental areas, physical, emotional, social, and cognitive, through an integrated approach. Instruction concentrates on facilitating learning through active exploration and interaction with materials, peers and adults. Experiences interacting with others help to develop interpersonal skills and to work and learn cooperatively.

The program provides a balance of teacher-directed, active and quiet, independent and guided, large group and small group, and individual activities.

Curriculum and instruction are designed to develop self-esteem, a sense of competence and positive feelings toward learning.

The integrated curriculum includes pre-reading and reading skills, library skills, science, mathematics, writing, social studies, information technology, skills, art, music, physical education, and Portuguese.

The curriculum focuses on the development of gross and fine motor skills, visual and auditory skills, language skills, math concepts, reading readiness skills, reading, and the development of personal, social, and classroom skills.

Experiences in learning centers in the classrooms provide children with a choice of activities. They get answers to their questions and construct knowledge by exploring, experimenting, manipulating, and problem solving without being directed by an adult to find one correct answer.

# ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

## Academic Progress

Performance indicators at Early Childhood focus on developmentally appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. Students frequently achieve readiness to learn at different times, and for this reason we do not normally retain students who are showing growth and progress during the three years of early childhood classes. To be properly prepared for first grade, students should be proficient in the academic curriculum by the end of Kindergarten. When students are not proficient or still developing skills in academic areas, then they are subject to retention in Kindergarten. Your child's teachers will contact you in a timely manner if your child is at risk of retention based on his/her academic performance.

## Homework

Students in our Early Childhood classes do not have regular daily homework. However, we encourage our students to bring books home from the Library each week and we recommend that parents read with their children on a daily basis.

# DAILY ROUTINES & PROCEDURES

## School Hours & After School Care

The regular school day is from 8:20am to 3:45pm. An after-hours program is available for parents who have difficulty collecting their EC children at the end of the day. Parents may sign up for this program on a regular or occasional basis via the school's website. This service is offered at an additional cost, and can be found in the Tuition & Fees section of our website.

## Attendance

Regular, daily attendance at school is the best way for children to become comfortable and happy in their school environment and to learn their schedules and routines. Parents should NOT withdraw students from school for holidays or days out with family members when school is in session. Full participation in class activities and projects is vital to a student's education and progress.

Absences for reasons of health or emergency are excused. Absences due to extended vacation, family trips or other non-essential reasons are strongly discouraged and are unexcused. Absences from school can be very damaging to a child's learning. Board policy states:

"A student with a pattern of frequent unexcused absences is not fully benefitting from nor committed to the CAISL core values. This will be taken into account in the school's decision on whether or not the student is invited back for the subsequent year."

Special arrangements can be made in the case of prolonged illness, contagious disease, or family emergency. In these cases, please contact the Elementary Principal.

## Punctuality

The school day begins promptly at 8:20a.m. when all students should be in class for registration. This first session of the day is a very important part of the daily routine for teachers and students. Persistent lateness is unsettling for students and does not help them to feel comfortable in their school environment. It also results in a loss of learning opportunities.

## End of Day Procedures

Classes end at 3:45 PM and all students traveling by bus are dismissed first. Once buses have left campus, students are dismissed. Students in EC3, EC4 and Kindergarten should be collected from the exterior classroom door. Once your child is dismissed to you, please leave campus as quickly as possible to avoid overcrowding. Please note that indoor and outdoor areas are dedicated to students in the After-Hours programs.

Prior to 3:45 PM, you will need an exit pass (“Autorização da Saída”) to leave campus with your child. Please inform the Elementary Office by 2:00 PM if you need an exit pass for your child at the end of the day.

Children who have not yet been collected from class are dismissed to “After Hours” care at 4:00 PM.

## Bus Routines

Many of our students travel to and from school on the buses. It is vital that we have correct information about bus requirements by 2:00 PM to ensure that our lists are updated and amended in a timely manner. Therefore, if you need to request changes to your child’s usual bus route or intend to collect them from school yourself, please email [accounts@caislisbon.org](mailto:accounts@caislisbon.org), and kindly copy the Elementary Office ([elementaryoffice@caislisbon.org](mailto:elementaryoffice@caislisbon.org)) by 2:00 PM at the latest.

## Leaving Campus

Sometimes you will need to collect your child from school before the end of the school day. The safety of our students is our highest priority. For this reason, we issue an exit pass, or “Autorização de Saída”, to be given to the gate guard when your child leaves campus. If you need to take your child for any other reason, you should inform the Elementary Office ([elementaryoffice@caislisbon.org](mailto:elementaryoffice@caislisbon.org)) so that an exit pass can be prepared in advance. If you authorize another parent to collect your child for any reason (a play date, for example), you must also inform the Elementary Office, and they will also be issued with an “Autorização de Saída” for your child.

## Trusted Adults

If you need your child to be collected by an adult unknown to the school or have arranged for your child to go home with another student, please let the school know the name of the person you have authorized. We may request to see identification documents of people who collect your child on your behalf. If you have not given your verbal authorization, we may phone for clarification of your instructions.

# BEHAVIOR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Behavioral Expectations

Each homeroom and specialist teacher will spend the early part of the year establishing rules and guidelines for student behavior. These are usually phrased in a positive rather than negative way. Young children are still learning about the world around them and how to interact with others in a respectful and positive way. Teachers tend to celebrate achievement and successes in preference to highlighting bad behavior. The basic rules for behavior at CAISL are outlined in our Hidden Curriculum, as follows:

As a CAISL Community we will...

- Be respectful, welcoming, and well-mannered to everyone.
- Tell the truth and take responsibility for our actions and inactions.
- Leave the space we use BETTER than we found it.
- Return what we borrow in good condition,
- Use resources mindfully.
- Be on time, present, and prepared.
- Give thoughtful consideration to the opinions of others.

It is inappropriate to punish children severely when they are young, and there are no set consequences for incidents of bad behavior. We do not tolerate fighting or violent outbursts, swearing, dishonesty, bullying or racism from CAISL students. If your child is involved in any such incidents, you will be notified immediately. The consequences of these behaviors depend heavily on the intent, maturity and age of the child. While they are unlikely to lead to detentions or suspension from school in the early years, we expect parents to be cooperative and supportive in helping us to stop unacceptable behavior. When parents are supportive and cooperative in these matters and/or willing to impose consequences at home, the message and expectations are also much clearer to the child. However, if a student continues to demonstrate unacceptable behaviors despite the consequences he or she receives, then the school reserves the right not to invite the student back for the following academic year.

## Guidance Counselor

The Elementary Guidance Counselor, Ms. Mónica Bastos, is always happy to work with children who are experiencing difficulties with their behavior. You should speak directly to her if you feel that a short program of intervention and counselling might help your

child with emotional or behavioral difficulties. Information you share about your child will be treated in confidence and only shared, if necessary, with those directly involved with his or her school welfare. At the same time as we ensure confidentiality of records and information about your child, we ask you to understand that we cannot discuss with you the behavior or academic progress of any student other than your own child.

## Toys, Games and Items from Home

“Show and Tell” is an important part of the Early Childhood program. Talking to their friends in class about special items, possessions and experiences is a fulfilling experience for most students and helps

them to gain confidence in speaking and listening. Parents will be informed by the homeroom teacher of the days when their children are invited to bring something from home to talk about. On these occasions, the teachers are happy to take responsibility for toys and games belonging to individual students. However, on a day-to-day basis children may not bring toys, games and electronic items, including cell phones, to school. These items frequently cause unwelcome distractions in class.

**CAISL WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSS, THEFT, OR BREAKAGE OF SUCH ITEMS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

## HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

### Food In School and Food Allergies

To help protect children with food allergies, certain areas of the school will be designated as “nut-free zones.” The extent of these zones depends on the age of the child and the level of responsibility they can manage. Division Principals will share specific procedures related to your child's classroom or division, if any exist.

We ask families to take extra care when choosing food to send to school. Nut products are not prohibited in lunches or snacks (except in designated nut-free zones), but if your child brings them, they should only be eaten in areas where students do not eat. Families should also keep in mind that food brought in for class celebrations, such as birthday cakes, should be safe for all students.

The school provides the students with a snack each morning. You may want to provide an alternative snack for your child or an extra snack to eat in the afternoon.

### Rest Time

Students in EC3 take naps during the afternoon at school. The school will provide and launder children's bed sheets, but parents should provide a pillow and perhaps a blanket during the winter months.

### Diapers

We run an academic program in our Early Childhood, and we do not offer crèche facilities, nor are we equipped to deal with changing diapers. We expect all students at CAISL to be fully toilet trained, and this is a condition of enrolment in our school. Naturally, young children may have toilet accidents from time to time, and for this reason we ask parents to provide us with a full change of clothing. However, we do not accept students who are still using diapers.

### Medications in School

For safety reasons students are not permitted to carry medications with them during the school day. If a student requires any prescription medication the parent will need to bring the medication to school and supply a note giving the school nurse permission to administer the medication as needed.

Any medication sent in by a parent to be given during the day MUST have written instructions attached to them in order for them to be given. Written instructions should include;

- name of the child,
- name of the medication,
- amount of medication and
- time(s) it is to be administered.
- The container of medication should also be labeled with the student's name.

Medications sent to school improperly packaged and/or without information as listed above will NOT be administered and the parent or legal guardian will be notified.

## Sickness

When children are sick, they must be kept at home until they are well enough to participate in the full school day. This includes recess times and, in most cases, PE lessons. All absences from school should be reported as soon as possible by email to [studentabsence@caislisbon.org](mailto:studentabsence@caislisbon.org) or send a text/SMS to 961 731 998. If your child has an illness which is likely to spread to other members of the homeroom class, you should also inform the school nurse directly on 21 923 9836 or [nurse@caislisbon.org](mailto:nurse@caislisbon.org) so that we can alert other parents if necessary.

## Safety and Supervision

Ensuring a safe environment for our students is a key priority and responsibility. During the school day, CAISL staff work hard to ensure that children are adequately supervised at work and at play, in order to minimize the risks of accidents and injuries. For the same reason, some simple rules apply to students moving around the school building. These include not running or sliding in the hallways, and not swinging items around their heads. We expect the children to keep these simple rules all the time they are in school, and ask that, once parents have collected their child from class, they provide similar supervision while they remain on the premises.

# FAMILY COMMUNICATION

## Communication

Establishing and maintaining a positive atmosphere within the school and among all segments of the school community is the responsibility of each person associated with CAISL.

Communication is only productive when it is

- Addressed directly to the proper person, the one who is most likely to be able to answer the question, provide the insight, or correct the problem.
- Assumes good intentions and goodwill on all sides.
- Courteous and polite at all times.

In almost all situations, questions or concerns are best addressed at the level at which they arise: between student and teacher or between parent and teacher at the classroom level.

## School to Home Communication

Each Friday the Elementary Principal sends out a weekly newsletter to parents by e-mail, containing important information about field trips and school events. It is vital that parents let us have a current e-mail address so that they can receive this newsletter. The Elementary Newsletter is also published on our school website, [www.caislisbon.org](http://www.caislisbon.org). On our website you will also find archived copies of the newsletter, up-to-date calendar information and news about school events.

All children in the Early Childhood section of the school have a “Friday Folder”. This folder is sent home with students each Friday and often contains information about special events, in addition to examples of your child’s schoolwork. We expect parents to check the Friday folder every weekend, read information sent by the school and return the folder to school each Monday morning.

In addition to the Friday folder, each class has a Seesaw page containing information about class projects, newsletters and photos of school activities. This site is passworded for privacy, but the class teachers will share information about access to it early in the year. If you experience problems with accessing the site, please contact our IT team at [1to1support@caislisbon.org](mailto:1to1support@caislisbon.org)

If a teacher has any special concerns about a child’s learning or behavior, he/she will make an appointment to meet with parents. It is the school’s responsibility to inform you of any concerns we have in respect of your child’s health, safety, emotional state, behavior or learning. Similarly, we ask you to inform the teacher if you have any reason to believe that your child may be suffering because of any social, family or school situation. If you need to talk with the teacher, please make an appointment for a time when you can speak privately and without interruptions. These conversations should not take place at the beginning of the school day or at dismissal time when teachers are too busy to give you their full attention.

## Meetings with Teachers

While there are some specific times during the year for scheduled parent-teacher conferences, contact between parent and teacher is not—and should not be—restricted to these times. Often an email to a teacher is sufficient to resolve a question or query but it is possible to make an appointment for a meeting with a teacher according to their schedule. The best way to do this is for parents to email the teacher directly and for a meeting date and time to be established via email. Teachers’ emails can be found in the Contacts section of the [Parent Portal](#).

When contacting a member of staff via email, please recognize that it is not possible—nor desirable—for staff to be monitoring their emails at all times. Teachers will respond to emails within 24 hours (on workdays); there is no expectation that they will do so more often.

## Confidentiality of Academic Achievement

CAISL takes seriously the need to protect the privacy rights of the students in this school. Specific information about individual academic achievement is available only to the student him/herself, to his/her parents or guardians, and to those employed by CAISL with a need to know in their professional capacities. The academic achievements of other students, with or without name identification, are not made available to others.

# ADDITIONAL POLICIES

## Dress Code

The “dress code” for students requires that their attire be neat, clean, in good repair, modest, respectful, and safe. All items of clothing need to be clearly labeled. Tennis shoes and jogging pants need to be worn on Physical Education days. We do specifically request that all shoes should have a built-in back strap, or cover the heel, and sit securely on the feet. Flip-flops, sliders and beach shoes are not appropriate for the school environment. Belts are also not appropriate for students to wear when they are learning how to use the bathroom and dress and undress on their own. Jogging suits and sweatpants are the ideal clothing for students, allowing them to feel comfortable and not restricting their movement. All Early Childhood students need to bring an extra change of clothes and a plastic paint shirt to keep at school.

At CAISL we feel it is our responsibility to encourage students to take care of their personal belongings. However, in spite of our best efforts, many items of clothing are “lost” during the school year and very few are ever reclaimed! If items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child’s name, we can safely return many lost items to their owners. Please help us by labelling your child’s clothes, particularly jackets and coats.

## Field Trips

The students usually go on a number of day field trips during the school year. These include visiting the aquarium, zoo, post office, museums and places of interest in the local neighborhood. The classroom teachers inform the parents in advance of taking a field trip by email. A one-time permission slip for students going on field trips is signed at the time of enrollment at the school. For all field trips, Early Childhood students are required to wear a red baseball cap. In addition, before leaving school for a field trip, each student is given a wristband showing the school’s contact information. Red baseball caps bearing the school’s logo may be purchased from the Admissions Office.

## Parties and Celebrations

We are happy to celebrate each child’s birthday in class by sharing a special, individual snack such as a cupcake, provided by the parents. As time is always limited with a full and busy schedule in school, please arrange these celebrations with the homeroom teachers in advance and keep the celebration simple. No invitations are necessary for these occasions and children should not expect to receive gifts from other students. At school we aim to include EVERY homeroom child in such celebrations.

If you are planning a separate birthday celebration for your child outside school, AND you have invited all the students in your child’s class, we will be happy to give out invitations on your behalf. If you are unable to invite everyone, we ask that you contact the parents of other students, individually, to make arrangements. We know that many parties need to be limited in size. We also know that children who are not invited to birthday parties often feel hurt and disappointed. We aim to minimize unnecessary and hurtful experiences for our youngest students and ask for your cooperation and discretion in this respect. To facilitate arranging parties, parents are offered the opportunity to sign up to a class contact list, indicating permission for us to share your email contact details with other parents. Please note that, unless you sign up to this contact list, we will not share those contact details with you.

## School Bags and Possessions

It is absolutely required that every backpack, PE bag, lunch box (and similar item) be labeled. A simple luggage tag such as one uses when traveling is sufficient. This will help us help your son/daughter stay in possession of his/her property but—and more importantly—assist with security measures which necessitate being able to identify the owner of such bags.

## School Equipment

Teachers frequently let children take home classroom materials and reading or library books to encourage learning. We ask parents to ensure that these items are returned to school in good condition when the teacher requests them. Many of our books need to be ordered from overseas suppliers and it is not simple to replace lost items. While we usually ask parents to pay for books that are lost or damaged at home, we would much prefer to maintain our current stock of educational material.

## Student Access to Social Media

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and other similar tools) have become so widely used that, as adults, we sometimes do not recognize how these tools can present children and adolescents with temptations which they are not sufficiently mature enough to resist and expose them to comments and images they are not mature enough to understand nor process appropriately.

All Social Media sites are blocked on the school network. The only way a student would access such sites at school is through a private cellular connection and this is one of the reasons that use of such private connections is banned at school.

The law also acknowledges and has put in place restrictions on children's and adolescents' access to social media:

European law:

Prohibits absolutely access by any individual to any "social media" prior to the age of 13. Parents who give their under-13 children permission and/or access to social media sites are breaking the law.

Individuals from the age of 13 up until they turn 16 may have social media but only with parental permission. The intent here is that parents supervise their children's use and ensure that their children use these adult tools thoughtfully and carefully and not send or receive anything which is inappropriate.

From the age of 16, students are legally allowed to have social media accounts without parental permission.

Please be respectful of the law and not give your child access to social media sites until he/she is of legal age to have such access and you judge your own child mature enough to handle the challenges which will result.

Much of the conflict, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and inappropriate interactions between children and between young adolescents occurs online, particularly via social media sites. While it is always CAISL's goal to help children through difficult times, CAISL does not take responsibility for incidents resulting from social media use as this does not happen at school and, at times, occurs among children who are legally prohibited from having social media access at all.

CAISL is a student-centered educational community in which we challenge ourselves and each other to do our best and to make positive contributions to our diverse and ever-changing world.

