



Inspire Achieve

**Renaissance**

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SAIGON



# EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY **HANDBOOK**

*Our mission is to inspire excellence in international education so that our students achieve lifelong success, happiness and respect for all.*

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## Welcome Message From THE HEAD OF PRIMARY AND EARLY YEARS

*Welcome to the Renaissance family! Allow me to introduce myself.*

I am a Canadian trained educator with 16 years of combined teaching and leadership experience, working in both Canadian and international schools. I joined the Renaissance community in 2015 and quickly fell in love with the boutique nature of the school itself where the strong family atmosphere is ever present, and our students are individuals with their own stories.

My philosophy of education is quite simple: it's all about the students. Every decision made for education should be focused on bettering the students we work with. They say that it takes a village to raise a child, and I feel that the same can be said for education; it takes every member, working together, to empower and educate children so that they become positive global citizens in today's world.

At Renaissance, we are united in the belief that all children can learn if we take the time to bring the learning to their level and build up from that point. The key is to find the way in which our students learn best, to let them have a say in how they learn, and to help them to make meaningful connections between what they are learning and their own lives and experiences.

This Handbook has been compiled for your convenience and provides an overview of the operations of the Primary School at Renaissance. Please take the time to read through it carefully so that you know how to best support your child in their learning journey. Cooperation regarding school policies and procedures will help you and your child experience a successful year.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Ms. Jennifer Longmuir**  
Head of Primary and Early Years



### OUR CORE VALUES

At Renaissance, we are united by our shared mission to inspire excellence in international education so that our students achieve lifelong success, happiness and respect for all.

Our shared mission is driven by our four CORE VALUES:

- \* The pursuit of academic and personal excellence;
- \* A student-centred teaching and learning environment;
- \* A strong family focus; and
- \* Respect for ourselves, our planet and each other

### THE EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY TEAM

The overall responsibility for the leadership of the Early Years and Primary is delegated to Ms. Jennifer Longmuir in her role as Head of Primary and Early Years.

The Head of Primary and Early Years is supported by three Key Stage leaders who have the responsibility for the day-to-day running of their respective sections of the school.

Ms. Cate Low is responsible for the oversight of the Early Years, whilst Mr. Jeremiah Wright is responsible for Key Stage 1 which incorporates Years 1, 2 and 3 whilst Ms. Daniella Raposo is responsible for Key Stage 2 which incorporates Years 4, 5 and 6.

# THE EARLY YEARS

At Renaissance the Early Years encompasses three age based groups – Early Years 1 for students aged 3, Early Years 2 for students aged 4 and Early Years 5 for students aged 5. Placement in each group is aged based with the cut-off date being 01 September of any given year.

The Early Years curriculum is based on the Development Matters Framework of the National Curriculum of England.

It is underpinned by the premise that students learn better when they are active and engaged. Play is an integral component of the Early Years model at Renaissance as is exploration and learning by doing.

The Early Years programme provides equal opportunities for all children to develop skills and competencies and ensures students enjoy greater success with the consistency and natural progression of skill development to support a smooth transition into Primary School.

## EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Early Years Programme is broken down into seven areas of learning areas.

Personal, Social and Emotional	Refers to the personal development of the students with a focus on learning how to work and play with others, understanding feelings, learning about right and wrong and developing independence and a stronger sense of self.
Language and Communication	Refers to how students speak, listen and understand language using non-verbal clues to support meaning and developing the confidence to express themselves.
Physical Development	Focuses on physical development related to coordination, control and movement. There is an additional emphasis on having students appreciate the importance of physical activity and to making health food choices.
Literacy Development	Reading and writing provide numerous opportunities to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words in a range of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books.
Mathematics	Understanding number, measurement, pattern, space and shape through exploration, play and discussion.
Understanding the World	Through observation and inquiries about people, places technology and the environment students will learn about the physical world.
Expressive Arts and Design	Involvement in musical and movement activities, drama, art & design and role play provide students with a variety of experiences across the creative, visual & performing arts.

## ASSESSMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

Assessment practice in the Early Years and Primary is underpinned by the notion that assessment should be for learning as opposed to of learning – although there is scope for summative assessment when necessary.

Assessment for learning is a continuous process which involves the seeking and interpreting of evidence for use by students and their teachers to decide where students are in their learning, where they need to go next and which is the best way to get there.

In the Early Years and Primary, there is a significant focus on formative assessment which includes, but is not limited to the following practices;

- Sharing and involving learning intentions at the beginning of the lesson.
- Involving pupils in self-evaluation against the stated learning intentions.



- Focusing oral feedback around the learning intentions of lessons and tasks.
- Organising individual target setting where appropriate, in order that pupils' achievements and targets are based on previous achievements at the same time as aiming for the next level.
- Appropriate questioning, raising self-esteem via the language of the classroom and ways in which achievement is celebrated.
- Self and peer assessment of learning both orally and in writing; and
- Providing constructive verbal/written feedback to learners relating to the lesson criteria.

## SPECIALIST INSTRUCTION

Early Years students have a designated class teacher. Specialist instruction is provided in Music, Physical Education, Vietnamese and Library.

## SWIMMING

Swimming is an integral part of the Early Years Programme and all students receive one period of specialist instruction in swimming.

## REPORTING IN THE EARLY YEARS

Student progress is linked to a specific age band that indicate the age bracket a student fits into according to their development.

The age bands are broad to reflect that fact that students learn at a different rate from their peers.

Emerging	Meets some of the assessment statements.
Developing	Meets many of the assessment statements
Secure	Meets most or all of the assessment statements.

## PARENT AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

We believe that an effective school is one where there is a positive and meaningful engagement between the school and home.

The school provides numerous opportunities for parental engagement and uses Tapestry as a communication tool to update parents on activities and events.



# THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AT RENAISSANCE

At Renaissance, in addition to a creative approach to curriculum delivery and strong cross-curricular approach, there is an equally strong focus on academic rigour, on the integration of technology and on developing and enhancing research, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Core instruction is in Mathematics, Language and the associated IPC units; specialist teachers provide instruction in Music, Physical Education, Swimming, Vietnamese Language / Vietnamese Language and Culture and Library. French and Chinese are offered as third languages from Year 2.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The Primary curriculum is based on the National Curriculum of England but modified to suit the needs of an international school population across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. There is a fundamental focus on literacy and numeracy and the integration of technology through the curriculum as a tool to support learning.

Our approach to the teaching of reading is phonetically based with students receiving instruction in phonics from Early Years 3. This approach continues, in some cases, into Year 3 but it is our intention that students will be reading at an age appropriate level by the end of Year 2.

There is also a strong focus on speaking, listening and writing across the Primary and this follows on from the strong fundamentals that have been developed in the Early Years.

In the Primary, the school uses the Abacus series as its framework for Mathematics. This programme is well aligned to the National Curriculum of England and provides materials that are aligned to the needs and ability levels of all students. Supporting the use of Abacus, is a focus on learning by doing and students are involved in hands on learning activities that help them better understand and practice the mathematical skills and concepts.

Whilst the National Curriculum forms the basis of the instructional programme, it is supplemented by the highly acclaimed International Primary Curriculum (IPC) developed by Fieldwork Education and adopted by hundreds of schools around the world.

Through the IPC, students study six thematic based units a year. These units are predominantly Humanities, Art or Science based and are underpinned by the school's focus on guided inquiry. Wherever possible, the IPC units are linked to what the specialist subjects – Music, Vietnamese or Vietnamese Language and Culture and Physical Education and are supported by the teacher Librarian. By so doing students are able to make meaningful connections between and across subjects thus enhancing their overall understanding.

## ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

The approach to assessment at Renaissance is based on the premise that students need to understand the purpose of assessment, why and in what form they are being assessed and that teacher feedback in relation to their progress is ongoing.

Formal reports to parents are provided in January and June whilst a brief interim report is made available in October. Student achievement is reported on a 1 through 6 scale and is based on specific descriptors whilst their level of engagement and categorized in four ways.

CE	Consistently Engaged
FE	Frequently Engaged
SE	Sometimes Engaged
NE	Not Engaged

For further information on assessment please refer to the school's Assessment and Reporting Handbook.

## COMMUNICATION

Effective communication to and from parents is a priority at Renaissance. In this regard the school uses Seesaw across the Primary as its main communication platform.

## CURRICULUM INFORMATION EVENINGS

Information related to the curriculum is provided at programme specific information evenings at the beginning of each academic year as well as during Parent Coffee mornings that are held on a regular basis.

## ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

Students who are in need of additional English language, will be enrolled in the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Programme. Students are placed in one of three EAL levels depending on their level of English language proficiency. Students in the EAL Programme in the Primary do not take a Modern Foreign Language.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school offers a diverse range of Extra Curricular Activities (ECA's) which aim to provide students with a broad educational experience beyond the classroom. The activities on offer include participation in national and international school competitions for Upper Primary students, The possibility of sporting trips through our involvement with the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (FOBISIA) as well as art, drama and music.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

From Year 2 all students apart from those enrolled in the EAL Programme, study a Modern Foreign Language. In Year 2 students study a semester of French and Chinese whilst in Year 3 they will study either French or Chinese for their remaining time in the Primary.



## ROUND SQUARE

Round Square is our character education program where students learn critical soft skills that help them to become:



Character education is an integral component of our programming and is embedded throughout each unit of study in addition to assemblies and school/sporting events.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a tool to support student learning and is integrated through the curriculum from Year 1. The school's technology provision is excellent with one to one school provided laptops from Year 3 and two to one iPads provided in Years 1 and 2.

Student learning in the area of technology is supported by a designated Technology Integrationist who works alongside students as they use technology to support their learning.

## VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE AND VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Mother tongue speakers of Vietnamese are provided with Vietnamese language instruction by a specialist Vietnamese language teacher. All other students are involved in the school's Vietnamese Language & Culture Programme.

## WHO TO SEE AND FOR WHAT IN THE EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Renaissance we believe that the first point of contact should always be the classroom Teacher as he/she should be able to handle most issues when they arise.

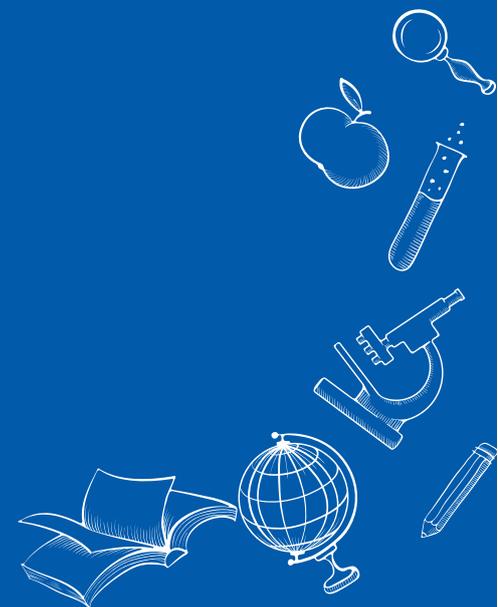
If matters are not addressed at this level, then please refer to the table below.

Who to See	Meets some of the assessment statements.
For general matters related to Early Years & Primary	Ms. Jennifer Longmuir, Head of Early Years & Primary <a href="mailto:jenniferl@renaissance.edu.vn">jenniferl@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Early Years	Ms. Cate Low, Early Years Coordinator <a href="mailto:catherinel@renaissance.edu.vn">catherinel@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Key Stage 1	Mr. Jeremiah Wright, Key Stage 1 Leader <a href="mailto:jeremiah@renaissance.edu.vn">jeremiah@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Key Stage 2	Ms. Daniella Raposo, Key Stage 2 Leader <a href="mailto:daniella@renaissance.edu.vn">daniella@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Extra Curricular Activities	Ms. Tania Nieuwenhuizen, ECA Co-ordinator <a href="mailto:tania@renaissance.edu.vn">tania@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Physical Education and Swimming	Mr. Paul Watson, Head of Physical Education <a href="mailto:paul@renaissance.edu.vn">paul@renaissance.edu.vn</a>
For matters related to Admissions	Ms. Quynh Tu, Admissions Manager <a href="mailto:quynhnt@renaissance.edu.vn">quynhnt@renaissance.edu.vn</a>





74 Nguyen Thi Thap, Binh Thuan Ward, District 7, HCMC  
(028) 3773 3171  
[www.renaissance.edu.vn](http://www.renaissance.edu.vn)



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