

**An Inclusive
Learning
Community**



Nanjing International School
南京国际外籍人员子女学校

ALL SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

NIS Parent Handbook

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Welcome to Nanjing International School!

The purpose of this handbook is to communicate basic information to parents about core beliefs and procedures that help to make this school an exciting, safe, and inclusive learning community. These are organized into five domains:

1. [School Overview](#)
2. [Student Safety and Wellbeing](#)
3. [Parent Communication](#)
4. [Learning at NIS,](#)
5. [Student Guidelines](#)

The contents of this handbook will rarely provide detailed rules and regulations - in fact, we are pleased to be a school that does not require lists of do's and don'ts. What we do encourage is conversation, and lots of it. Should you wish for more detail on any of the contents of this handbook, or any other matter relating to your children and NIS, please do not hesitate to contact us. Additional resources are hyperlinked when possible and key contact details are listed at the end of this document.

School Overview

NIS is a wholly non-profit school with a student body of approximately 625 students from 35 different nationalities, and 100 teaching staff from more than 20 countries. Our language of instruction and communication is English. We are accredited by the [Council of International Schools \(CIS\)](#) and [New England Association of Schools and Colleges \(NEASC\)](#). We are authorized to offer the [International Baccalaureate \(IB\)](#) and were the first school in China to be authorized as an IB Continuum School.

As an IB Continuum School, we offer three International Baccalaureate programmes: The Primary Years Programme (Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 5), Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10), and the Diploma Programme (Grades 11-12).

As an inclusive school we accept students with a broad range of learning needs if we are able to support their learning. To assist, we have full-time specialist support teachers, as well as a school focus on differentiated instruction and universal design, sustained by our EAL/LSS teachers and counselors.

School Mission: NIS is an inclusive learning community inspiring international-mindedness, personal excellence, and creative thinking.

School Strategy: We've zeroed in on two big, audacious goals.

- [Bursting the Bubble](#)
- [Student Voice and Choice](#)

These goals are essential to all we do. For more information, [please click here.](#)

School Organization: NIS is led by the School Director, assisted in the Senior Leadership Team by the Director of Learning, and the Director of Operations & Finance. The daily academic and pastoral programme is overseen by the Director of Learning, Primary Principal/Deputy Primary Principals, and Secondary Principal/Deputy Secondary Principal.

School Board: The NIS Board is comprised of seven voting members plus one non-voting staff member and the Director. The Board is responsible for the Mission and Strategy, has financial oversight, and hires, supports, and evaluates the Director.

Student Council: At NIS, we have a Primary School and Secondary Student Council. Student Council is made up of interested students who have been chosen by their peers, and is overseen by teachers. Selections for presidents are held in June for the following year, and all other posts and grade level representatives are elected in August.

Houses: Taiping, WuTaiShan, XuanWu: Students, parents, and staff are members of one of our three houses. Friendly competitions are held throughout the year, such as cultural and sporting events. The house that gains the most points at the end of the year is awarded the house shield. The current shield holder in XuanWu.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA): At NIS we are privileged to have an active PTA that works to welcome new families, to organise social events for students, to support sporting events, to enhance the overall experience at NIS. If you are interested in becoming involved in the PTA, please contact the PTA president. Contact information can be found at the end of this booklet.

Charities: At NIS, we have committed to formally supporting a number of charities: Pfrang Association, Hopeful Hearts, The Amy Yang Foundation, and Ray of Light in Cambodia. In order to provide continuous and sustainable support, and to limit overburdening our community with additional requests for fund-raising, additional charities are not normally considered.

Student Safety and Wellbeing

Child Protection: All students at NIS should be always treated with respect and dignity. NIS endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which the host country, China, is a signatory. As such, we have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who need help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. Child protection standards defined by NIS encompass all cultures and international law. When given reasonable cause to believe that these rights are violated, NIS will seek all available resources to restore those rights. Kasson Bratton is our Child Protection Officer. Our Child Protection Procedures are available on our school website.

Peer-to-Peer Safeguarding: We are committed to ensuring that NIS offers a safe, inviting campus to all community members. Peer-to-peer abuse, at any age level, has no place in our community. The distinctions between play, accidents, and bullying, are always reviewed before decisions are made. Our commitment to peer-to-peer safeguarding can be found in our Peer-to-Peer Safeguarding document.

ID Cards: All members of the NIS community must have an ID card that is visible while on campus. This ID card is required when entering the campus and is used to sign out books in the library and to purchase food at Chartwells. Each semester, students' ID cards are charged with funds for printing purposes. In the unusual case that this is used up prior to the end of the semester, additional money will need to be added at the cashier office at parents' expense. As part of our commitment to the environment, where possible, students are encouraged to use digital versions of their work.

Health: If your child has a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, they must stay at home until symptoms have not been present for 24 hours. If your child has lice, please inform the school nurse right away.

All students need to have up to date **vaccinations** for: Polio, DT&P, Meningitis, MMR, and Chicken Pox. The following vaccinations are recommended: Hepatitis A & B, Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), Japanese Encephalitis, Rabies, Influenza, Typhoid.

No Nuts on Campus: NIS is committed to provide a nut-free environment. This includes all items for sale through Chartwells. The full details can be found on our [school website](#). Thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment.

Helmets: Helmets are required for all motorised bikes (electric and gas). Helmets are strongly recommended for pedal bikes for all members of the school community.

Insurance: All students enrolled at NIS must be covered by current and comprehensive medical insurance. In the event of accident or injury while the student is on or off campus, it is the parent's responsibility to cover all medical expenses resulting from the accident, either with the family insurance coverage or family payment, in accordance with regulations and insurance policies. All school trips are supervised by staff members and/or responsible adults who will exercise all reasonable care. The parent agrees that they will not hold NIS, its representatives, administration, or its Board of Trustees liable for any accident.

Living Arrangements for Students: We insist that all NIS Students live with their parents or a named guardian. We do not accept students living alone under any circumstances. If you have questions about this, please contact Mr. Kasson Bratton kassonbratton@nanjing-school.com

Digital Images: Photos of students and community members involved in events on campus may appear in school publications, newspaper and other promotional material, brochures, on the school website, and the school's authorized social media accounts. Students and community members might also be used as subjects for articles and asked to write articles. On occasion, NIS conducts photographic and video shoots for the purposes of promotion of the school. These images are used for this purpose only and, as such, we aim to protect the rights of our students, community members, and the school as an organisation by ensuring that this material is never published out of context or to promote services, products or concepts of other organizations or companies unrelated to our core mission. Participation confers no rights of usage, ownership or copyright on students or members of the community. NIS reserves the right to make use of suitable images and is under no obligation to publish or use all or any of the selected images.

Parent Communication

Face to Face Communication: We welcome the opportunity to meet with parents. There are many scheduled opportunities to meet with teachers on a range of topics, including conferences, coffee mornings, and sessions regarding special events such as **Discover China** (our off-campus week without walls – see *NIS calendar for dates*). Other opportunities focus on understanding the IB programmes, on our partnership with external organizations that help us provide services for learning needs, or on addressing topical learning and development needs.

If you would like to speak with a teacher about your child's progress, please contact the relevant teacher directly. For other questions, a detailed list of contact persons is provided at the end of this booklet. Should you not know to whom you want to direct a particular question, please contact the relevant Principal who will direct your query appropriately.

Weekly Bulletin: NIS publishes a Weekly Bulletin. This will be emailed to you each Friday.

WeChat: If you don't already, please follow our NIS WeChat for regular articles about our amazing school!

Managebac and Veracross: Parent and Student Portals: Your parent portals on Managebac and Veracross will connect you to all your child's teachers, and we expect you to use this to stay in touch. Both can be accessed via the **MyNIS feature of our website**

Your Managebac Portal: This gives you access to learning-related information.

- Your child's calendar, indicating his or her upcoming sporting or cultural events
- Your child's timetable and teacher contact information
- Your child's assignments and units of study
- Your child's report cards as they are issued.

Your Veracross Portal: This gives you access to scheduling and historical information.

- Parent Conferences and Activity Sign-Up
- Your child's reports from previous academic years.
- Contact details for NIS community members.

In order for Veracross and Managebac to be used effectively, personal information must be accurate and up to date. This is particularly important for medical alerts, phone numbers, addresses, and passport details. Accuracy is essential.

E-mail: Your child's teachers may e-mail you for a variety of reasons, ranging from requesting a meeting to informing you about current progress, from keeping you up to date about upcoming events to making special announcements. Please check your email regularly for school communication.

Written Communication: On occasion, NIS may send communication via your youngest child in an envelope. This normally includes important messages from the Director, the Board, or Standardized Testing results. This is accompanied by an e-mail asking you to check for the correspondence with your child.

Conferences: A Back-to-School afternoon takes place in August for parents to meet their child's teachers and learn more about our academic programme. Full day Three-Way Conferences are held after Quarter 1 reports and after Semester 1 reports. Parents sign up through Veracross. An additional half day of Invitational Three-Way conferences takes place in April for students who may need additional support through to the end of the school year. Student-led conferences typically take place in the spring as well. Parents are encouraged to arrange for additional meetings at any time to discuss concerns and strategies to support their child.

Quarter 1 Reports: These reports provide parents with indicators about their child's progress based on skill areas.

Semester Reports: In the PS, semester reports include full comments and the same progress indicators as the Quarter 1 reports based on student achievement. In Grades 6-10, grades are based on subject criteria which are transposed to a 1-7 grade. Students in Grades 11-12 earn an overall 1-7 grade. These reports are accompanied by subject area comments.

Learning at NIS

Definition of Learning: In order to best develop our students' talents for the world in which they live, we define learning as an on-going process that leads to the development of new, deeper understandings which are applied creatively both within and beyond the classroom.

With this in mind, we believe students learn best when they...

- are appropriately challenged.
- have authentic voice and choice in what and how they learn.
- are authentically engaged in the context of their community and host nation.
- are inspired to follow their curiosity and inquire into the world around them.
- are empowered to take risks and learn from mistakes in a supportive, caring environment.

Curriculum: As an independent international school NIS is able to adopt the very best subject-specific curricula from around the world. The purpose of our curriculum is to build a foundation of understanding & skills that supports inquiry, cross-curricular connections, and creative thinking.

IB frameworks provide a great deal of guidance in this regard. Underpinning this are our Student Learning Outcomes, which are our vertically articulated scope and sequence. This is reflected in the student learning outcomes (SLOs) that make up our progression of learning. The IB gives us an inquiry-based framework that supports Mission-aligned learning across the grades. Please see our Learning page for more information.

School Schedule and Calendar: Students attend school for 185 days in an academic year. The school year is divided into 2 semesters. A brief progress report is provided mid-way through Semester 1, and Student-Led Conferences and Invitational Three-Way Conferences take place mid-way through Semester 2. Comprehensive semester reports are provided at

the end of Semester One (January) and Semester 2 (June). It is not possible under any circumstance to provide reports ahead of the scheduled dates.

We have an 8-day rotation which ensures that there is less impact on days such as Friday, which often see many students involved in off-campus activities.

In PreK, **the school day starts at 8:00am** to 1:00pm each day, including lunch time. Please note that students must be out of nappies before being enrolled.

In K1 through to Grade 12, **the school day starts at 8:00am** to 3:00pm, except for Tuesday when school finishes 2:30pm to allow staff to participate in professional development.

School closes at 11:00am on the last day before Winter Break (December) and Summer Break (June).

Homework: A balanced lifestyle that reflects rigorous learning through our classes and opportunities that incorporate physical activity, creativity, personal “passions”, family time, and sufficient time for sleep is important at NIS. If students are feeling overwhelmed by the amount of homework, or if students or parents have any question about an assignment, please make an appointment to see the relevant teacher(s). Please contact any member of the leadership team for our Homework Guidelines.

Exams: Internal exams for students in Grades 8 - 12 take place twice a year.

Distance Learning: At NIS, we believe academic continuity in situations in which campus is not available is an essential part of our program. With this in mind, we have created a plan that aims to provide online learning rooted in our Mission, Strategy, and Definition of Learning. We recognize that there are important differences between in-person and virtual learning, and that all situations in which academic continuity is required are unique. One constant in any eventuality is our commitment to student safety, social and emotional support, and the very best online learning we can provide. [Please click here for more information about Learning Continuity at NIS.](#)

Service: Service learning is an important part of our programme. Students in Grades 6-10 have Service as Action built into their schedules, in addition to their efforts beyond the school day. Students in Grades 11 and 12 complete IBDP Community, Activity, and Service requirements within the NIS Global Citizen Diploma Programme. Primary School students have service built into units of inquiry.

Co-Curricular Activities: NIS offers over 150 school activities for students over the course of 4 cycles. Sign-up for Activities is done through Veracross, directly by students in the Secondary School, or by parents of students in the Primary School. Monitor the weekly bulletin and school calendar for more information. We are *very* proud of our Activities programme, which supports our belief that learning happens everywhere.

Awards: Students are recognised for participation in cultural and service activities throughout the year. In Secondary this is often done within scheduled Awards assemblies. Parents are encouraged to attend these assemblies and there is designated seating. Sports awards are

presented at student-led Awards Nights four times per year. Academic awards are presented at the end of each semester during Awards Assemblies for students in Grade 6-12.

Graduation: Students are awarded a NIS High School Diploma if they achieve a minimum of 24 credits across Grades 9-12 and a certain number of credits per subject area. One credit is granted for a grade of 3 or higher. Students enrolling at NIS after Grade 9 use previous report grades to determine eligible credits.

All eligible Grade 12 students participate in the IB Diploma courses. Students who successfully complete the requirements will be awarded the IB Diploma after examinations in May. For further information pathways to graduation, visit: <http://www.nanjing-school.com/curriculum/diploma-programme/>

Student Support Services: NIS is committed to supporting all students in their learning, and accepting of the fact that students learn at different rates, have their own academic strengths, and learning needs. Teachers differentiate learning to address for these needs.

English Language Support: The model used by NIS focuses on having English Language Learners (ELL) students integrated with fluent English speakers as much as possible. In the Middle School and Upper School English is offered at a range of levels to ensure access to learning for all students. Students in English B Phases 3 or 4 have additional classes to assist them in language, homework, planning and organisation. Students in Grade 10 English B Phase 4 must achieve a final grade of 5 or above in order to be admitted into the Diploma Programme.

Learning Support: Students who require additional modifications to their academic programmes receive assistance from one of our four Learning Support Teachers who provide guidance and strategies, pull-out, and/or in-class support. Under certain circumstances, parents with students who have significant learning needs may be required to pay for a Learning Assistant who will serve in a 1:1 capacity with their child.

Four Guidance Counselors support student learning and well-being. Two of our secondary counselors are dedicated to post high-school career guidance and university/college education placement.

Standardized Testing: NIS participates in standardized testing in order to monitor student progress benchmark performance against national and international standards. International Schools Assessment (ISA) is used for writing in Grades 5 – 10 and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are used for Maths and Reading in Grades 3-10. These assessments do not require any special preparation by students, are not used for promotion purposes, and are not considered in our NIS academic reports. Rather, the reports identify strengths and weaknesses that provide valuable information to further our commitment to differentiated learning. Individual student reports are provided to parents when made available.

Library: Our Library is a centre for learning. We have a full-time librarian. Students are encouraged to visit the library to sign out books for leisure reading and for research. We also have a number of on-line databases that students can access for research purposes. In Primary School classes visit the library regularly.

Technology

NIS is committed to providing the best possible, inclusive learning experience for all our students. One aspect of this is our investment in technology support, teacher training, and software provision. All students in Grades 5-12 are required to purchase a MacBook, and in Primary School, students in Grades 3-4 are required to purchase an iPad. Specifications that support learning are provided by NIS, on our [website](#). The school offers on-campus purchase through a third party, or you may opt to purchase your device elsewhere.

MacBook lifespan is calculated at three years, and iPad lifespan is expected to be five years. Devices that exceed this will possibly not be able to take advantage of software updates and will need to be upgraded.

[NIS's Digital Citizenship Philosophy \(DCP\)](#) provides our students with a map towards learning about safe and appropriate use of technology. More information about our DCP can be found on our [website](#).

Students at NIS are guided on appropriate and safe use of technology, both through Wellness classes (Grades 6-12) and through class teachers in the Primary School. Should students be found using technology in a manner which is not fit for academic purpose, appropriate measures and consequences will be taken to help alleviate the issue at hand. All students on enrollment at NIS are required to sign the Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA). It is your responsibility to review the AUA with your child and acknowledge that you understand and will actively work to be responsible users of technology. Please take the time to review and sign the AUA. The AUA can be found [here](#).

Loaner Computers: Here at NIS we have loaner computers available for students who need to borrow a computer for a brief period. Loaner computers can be checked out at the IT Support Center. Students who check out a loaner are responsible for treating that loaner with respect. The student or parent is responsible for any damage caused to the device while it is checked out. If it is found that a computer is lost or damaged, the IT department will contact parents about the lost or damaged computer and provide options to remedy the situation. If a student needs to borrow a computer for an extended period (2 weeks or more), a parent or guardian needs to come to the IT Department to sign a contract for the computer loan.

Student Guidelines

We try very hard to encourage a community approach to those rules that are in place to benefit our students while at NIS. Rather than create a list of 'Don'ts', we emphasize:

- ***Be Safe***
- ***Be Kind***
- ***Be Helpful***

We understand that this approach results in certain ambiguities. Should there be a need, therefore, please engage in conversation to clarify any questions you may have.

A few areas that do not fall into the guidelines above are:

- **Attendance and Punctuality** is essential.
- **Campus Access** is restricted.
- **Student Dress Code** must be followed.
- **Drones** on campus may *only* be used under a teacher's supervision.
- **Video gaming** are permitted in class, the café, or cafeteria.
- **Mobile phones** can only be used by students in Grade 8 and up.
- **Walking Tech-Free:** We expect everyone on campus to walk tech-free.

Attendance: The NIS school year has 185 academic days. The total number of student absences is recorded and stated on the student report. There is no distinction made for the type of absence, as the focus is to simply state how many days of learning have been missed, without making any judgement on their validity. Should a student miss more than 30 days of schooling, a review may be held regarding the student's status at NIS. No rebate is given in school fees for student absence. *If your child will be absent from school due to sickness, please contact our nurse at: 8589 9111 ext 3030 or by email at nurse@nanjing-school.com.* If your child will be absent for any other reason, please email your child's homeroom/advisory teacher, the relevant section head, and the nurse.

Students need to manage their sport and cultural commitments to ensure balance. Students may therefore have up to 12 days off campus for co-curricular activities and are required to notify teachers of absence and keep up on missed work. Students and parents can track their absences on Managebac.

Punctuality: We expect our students to be in class, ready to learn at 8:00am each day. Daily attendance is taken by teachers at this time. When students arrive in class after 8:00am, they are marked "late." Parents of students that are often late to school will be contacted by members of the leadership team. Secondary students that are late five times per semester may lose campus privileges. Students in grades 11 and 12 that are frequently late will also have this information shared with their university counselors.

Student Dress Code: We are an inclusive learning community with a range of diverse cultures. With this in mind, we expect students to dress in an appropriate and respectful manner for learning. This includes no visible underwear and no clothing with graphics or wording that could offend. Students are trusted to demonstrate good judgement in their choice of attire. Faculty will address related concerns on an individual basis. For PE classes, students are expected to wear their house shirt, provided by the school, shorts or track pants, and running shoes.

Campus Access: We are very proud of our community feel at NIS which extends to parents. The Centre building is designed purposefully to encourage one of our foundational goals at NIS - to be a bridge to China. We encourage parents to feel welcome to use The Cafe and the Centre Gym. All other school social spaces are designed specifically for student use as we extend learning beyond the classroom. As safe use of our facilities is of the utmost importance. Please refer to the guidelines below.

"Supervised": Students have a responsible adult from this NIS community with them.

"Scheduled": The activity has been formally organized or approved by NIS.

Campus Access by NIS Students	
School Days	7:45am-3:15pm (<i>exception</i> : supervised and/or scheduled activities or fitness room access)
Weekends and Holidays	Scheduled and/or Supervised activities only
Fitness Room Access	Grade 10-12 Students only Weekdays: 5:30am-7:45am and 3:00pm-9:30pm Saturday and Sunday: 5:30am-9:30pm
Overall Student Access	Students may only be on-campus for the regular school day, scheduled and/or supervised activities, and/or to use the fitness room (G.10-12). Students are not allowed access to campus between 10:00pm-5:00am.

Specifics	Who?	When?
Centre Cafe	Parents, adult visitors, and parent-supervised children	During the Café's hours of operation.
Cafeteria	All Students	During the school day as directed and after-school until 4:15pm, only if waiting for NIS-scheduled activities*
Gyms	All Students	During class, supervised breaks, and for scheduled and supervised activities.
Design Centres		
Outdoor Areas		
Fitness Room	Grade 10-12 Students and Parents	5:30am-9:30pm
E-Bikes/Powered Scooters	Grade 10-12 Students and Parents	With a helmet!

*Students in **Grades 4-9** who participate in NIS activities starting at 4:20pm may wait in the **cafeteria from 3:15pm – 4:15pm**. **All** other PK-Grade 9 students must be *directly* supervised by a parent from 3:00pm (2:30pm on Tuesdays). Grade 10-12 students may also wait in the Café.

Acronyms at NIS

ACAMIS	Association of China and Mongolia International Schools
AGM	Annual General Meeting (NIS Board)
ATLs	Approaches to Learning
CAS	Creativity, Activity, Service
CIS	Council of International Schools
CISSA	China International Schools' Sporting Association
DP	Diploma Programme (Grades 11-12)

EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EARCOS	East Asia Regional Council of International Schools
EE	IB Extended Essay (Grades 11-12)
ELL	English Language Learner
EY	Early Years (PreK, K1, & K2)
GCD	Global Citizen Diploma
GOA	Global Online Academy
ISA	International Schools Assessment
LGR	Large Group Room (There are two, one in the Centre and one in the Main Building)
LSS	Learning Support Services
MAP	Measures of Academic Progress
MYP	Middle Years Programme (Grades 6-10)
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
PAC	Performing Arts Centre
PP	IB Personal Project (Grade 10)
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PYP	Primary Years Programme (Grades 1-5)
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test (College Board)
SCISAC	Southern China International Schools Athletic Conference
SE	Senior Essay (Grades 11-12)
SISAC	Shanghai International Schools Athletic Conference

Contact List

Topic	Name
School Director	Laurie McLellan
Overall Academic Programme and Child Protection	Kasson Bratton
Operations and Finance	Arek Owczarek
Secondary School (Grade 6-12)	Ruth Clarke
Secondary Counselling	Ruben Joyner Pearl Noh Iryna Shuvalova
Primary School	Adam Dodge
Primary Counselling	Dan Snyder
Admissions	Matt Shean
Athletics and Activities	Danny Clarke Anna Yuen
PTA	Gina Policelli