

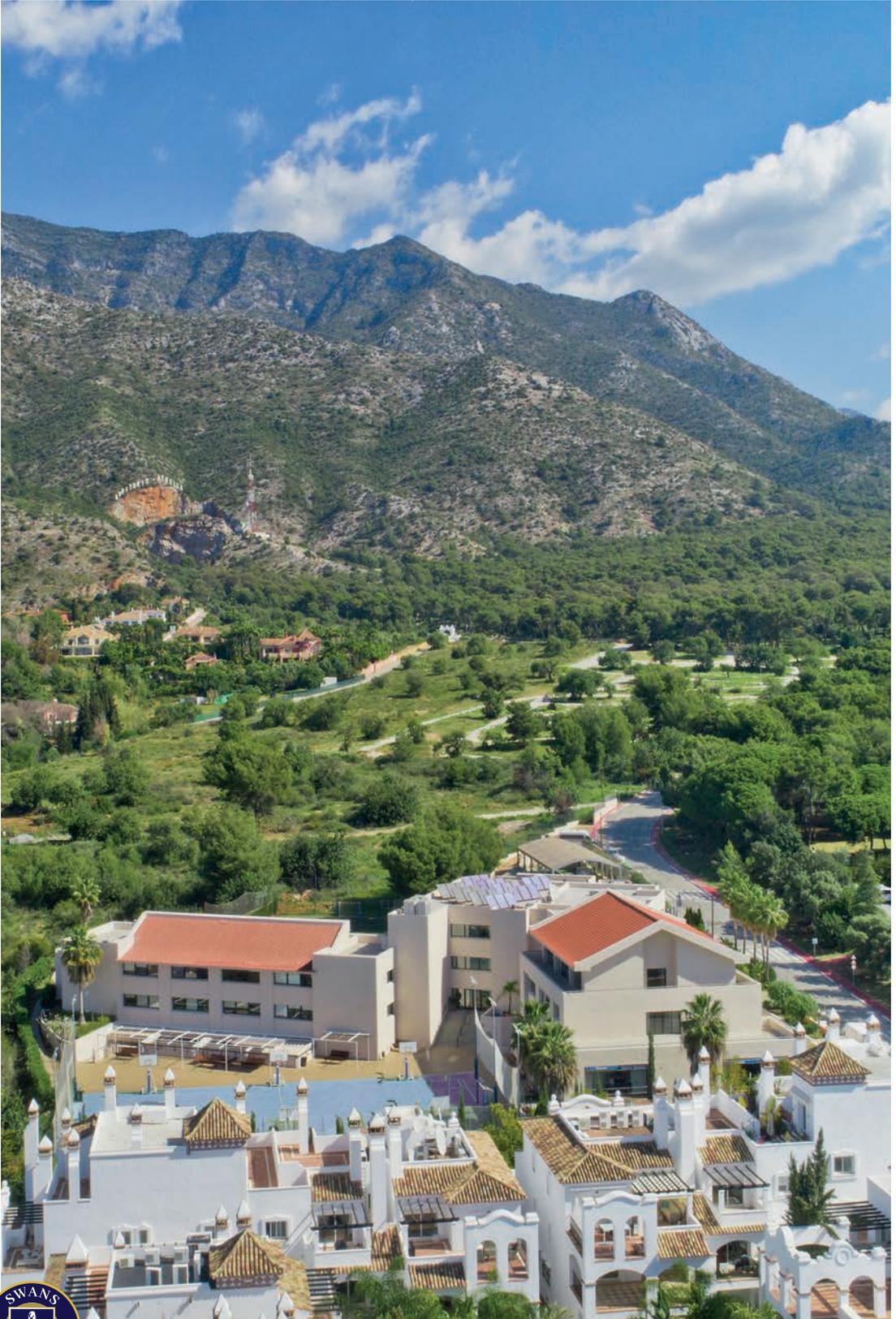
PARENT HANDBOOK

A SECONDARY SCHOOL ORIENTATION GUIDE



Dedicated to teaching and learning for over 50 years

Version 2024/2025



AN INTRODUCTION TO SWANS SECONDARY SCHOOL

“ It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and your child to Swans International School, Sierra Blanca. Located at the foot of the La Concha Mountain, it is an outstanding example of a truly international educational establishment. As the oldest and most established international school in Marbella, we offer a wide variety of curriculum options that enable our students to progress to the very best universities and professions. We are particularly proud of the continuing strength of our IGCSE and International Baccalaureate courses which offer diverse options for study, both traditional and modern, and always with the highest academic expectations. The school has enjoyed great success across the subject range and ensures excellent future prospects for our students.

Swans delivers a comprehensive education to students aged 3-18. In Years 10 and 11, the school offers (International) General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) courses and, in Years 12 and 13, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB).

Alongside this, Spanish nationals and those with native Spanish language also follow the Spanish curriculum (EP and ESO). Following an education at Swans International School, our students have been accepted into some of the world's best universities in the UK, Spain and abroad, including the University of Cambridge, London School of Economics, the



Mr Rob Maldonado
Headteacher Swans Secondary School

University of Edinburgh and the University of St Andrews.

We have an exciting and well-established provision of extracurricular activities including a variety of sports, performing arts, debating and a vast range of educational and residential visits. As we prepare students for the global opportunities available to them, our programme of educational visits, locally, nationally and abroad, provides students with a greater understanding of different cultures and traditions, as well as an awareness of the country in which they live and study.

Our pastoral care system is a traditional strength of the school and provides outstanding care, guidance and support for

students, ensuring that they and their families are well known and have an identity within our community. A team of dedicated tutors, Heads of Year and a Deputy Head of Pastoral Care ensure that students are listened to, advised and cared for throughout their time at Swans. Our school thrives on working in partnership with parents to maintain the high standards that we expect of all our students and that make our school the institution that it is.

The school puts high quality teaching and learning as its top priority. We have a team of highly experienced, well qualified and skilled teachers whose aim is to provide your child with the best possible education. Partnerships are crucial in achieving the best learning and support for students and we are very proud of the outstanding parental engagement we have throughout a student's school career, which we seek to harness and celebrate at every opportunity.

I look forward to working with you and your child and know that your journey with us will be a successful and fulfilling one.

”



Kind regards

Rob Maldonado, Headteacher



OUR AIMS AND VALUES

School philosophy

Swans International School aims to provide a rich environment for the development of well educated, confident and caring young people who are committed to making a significant contribution to the world in which they live, helping them to develop into considerate, principled and active members of society. The school seeks to foster a spirit of enthusiasm for learning and thereby encourage all students to become effective, life-long learners.

To achieve these aims, the school will strive to:

- provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum within a stimulating and supportive learning environment which will challenge, motivate and excite all students;
- equip students with the necessary intellectual, practical and social skills to allow them to make a valuable contribution to society and fulfil their potential in life;



- encourage students to develop open and enquiring minds with the ability to question and debate thoughtfully and rationally;
- help students to appreciate and celebrate international and cultural diversity, having respect for the different values, moral and religious beliefs of others;
- promote the qualities of excellence, perseverance, self-discipline and thoughtfulness among the whole school community;
- nurture and develop the intellectual and creative talents of every student.

Learning principles

Our learning principles form our school aims and are based upon the shared understanding that learning is most effective when:

- Students are healthy, caring and have the self-confidence to learn from their mistakes, the perspectives of others and form their own opinions
- The learning environments and educational resources that students use are accessible, stimulate curiosity and

embrace the dynamic possibilities of digital technologies

- Students explicitly understand learning intentions and success criteria
- Students are critical thinkers and construct their own knowledge and understanding through an inquiry-based approach
- Curriculum content is meaningful to the student and leads to interdisciplinary and conceptual understanding
- Thinking is visible and students collaborate effectively and respectfully with their peers and others
- Students explore and apply a variety of strategies to organise and approach their learning
- Students receive effective feedback based upon pre-set criteria and are intrinsically motivated to learn
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum through which students can experience success in a variety of different ways
- Education and the ethos of the school are valued and encouraged in the family home.



KEY DATES

AUTUMN TERM 2024
<p>Wednesday 4th September - Friday 20th December</p> <p>Half Term: Monday 28th October - Friday 1st November</p> <p>Public holidays: Friday 6th December, Monday 9th December</p>
SPRING TERM 2025
<p>Wednesday 8th January - Friday 4th April</p> <p>Half term: Monday 24th February - Friday 28th February</p>
SUMMER TERM 2025
<p>Monday 21st April – Friday 27th June</p> <p>Public holiday: Thursday 1st May, (Puente) Friday 2nd May, (Local Holiday) Wednesday 11th June</p>

THE SCHOOL DAY

TIME	EVENT
08.45- 09.05	Registration
09.05-09.55	Period 1
09.55-10.45	Period 2
10.45-11.35	Period 3
11.35- 11.55	Morning Break
11.55- 12.45	Period 4
12.45- 01.35	Period 5
01.35- 02.30	Lunch and Afternoon Break
02.30- 03.20	Period 6
03.20- 04.10	Period 7
04.15- 05.00	After-School Activities

YEAR GROUPS

AGE	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
YEAR	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
KEY STAGE	KEY STAGE 3			KEY STAGE 4		KEY STAGE 5	
EXAMS	END OF YEAR INTERNAL EXAMS			(I)GCSE		IB	
SPANISH EQUIVALENT	CEIP	1º ESO	2º ESO	3º ESO	4º ESO	1º BACH	2º BACH



DAY-TO-DAY ORGANISATION

Lockers

All students will be allocated with their own locker, close to their form room. This is large enough to hold exercise and text books. They will be given a combination for their locker, which they keep for the academic year and should not share this with other students.

The school cannot take responsibility for any loss of valuable items. Students must take care of their own property and take full responsibility for it. Valuable items such as personal mobile phones should not be brought into school and may be confiscated.

We understand that many students carry mobile phones for safety's sake on the journey to and from school. However, all students know that they must be turned off and must not be used for the duration of the school day. Mobile phones may be confiscated if this rule is broken and, for repeat offenders, phones will be kept in the school safe until a parent can collect it.

Please note that senior members of staff have a master key if we need to open lockers.

Lost property

If students lose something, they should first ask to look through 'lost property'. All items brought to school, including uniform, should be clearly labelled with the child's full name. They can then easily be identified and returned. Due to limited storage space, unclaimed lost property will be donated to local charity organisations, at the end of each school year.

First aid and the medical room

The school has a well-equipped medical room where your child can go for first aid, if needed. If your child is taken ill or has an accident, you will be contacted and your help sought in arranging for your child to be taken home or accompanied to hospital. Helicopteros Sanitarios will be contacted for any serious ailment or doubt.

Staff members are not permitted to administer medication to a student. The school will only administer medication if written permission has been given by parents, in which case it will be administered only by the School Nurse. Any medication which needs to be taken by a student during the day must be given to the School Nurse (either directly or via the school



office) and may not be held by the student.

If your child is unwell or taking medication for an ongoing illness, we would generally expect that they should remain at home until fully recovered. If your child is absent from school as a result of illness, please inform the school office by telephone (tel: 952 902 755 or email: absences@swansschool.net), indicating how long they are likely to be absent.

In the case of an accident at school, the school will always hand over the school accidents policy and the child must go to the assigned hospital (in this case Hospital Quiron in Marbella). If a parent opts to use another clinic or independent specialist, the school insurance will not be able to cover the cost.

Fire evacuation procedures

Copies of the school's fire evacuation procedures are posted in every classroom and the school has a number of fire drills each year to ensure that students are familiar with the procedures for evacuating the school as rapidly and safely as possible. The fire alarm consists of a high-pitched continuous alarm.

If you are visiting the school premises when the fire alarm sounds, you should evacuate the building by the shortest and quickest route, assembling in the Nagüeles Car Park opposite the school entrance, where the register (including the signing in/out register for visitors) will be called, to ensure no one is left inside the buildings. If in doubt, please follow instructions issued by staff members.



STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

Years 7 - 11 should bring a pencil case holding:

Blue, green, black and red Pilot pens
Pencils, rubber and sharpener
Coloured pencils
30cm ruler, protractor, set square
Pair of compasses
Scissors
Sellotape

Glue stick
Casio scientific calculator as directed by maths department
A4 lever arch file for English and ICT
A4 ring binder file for students of Spanish language and literature
Home Language/English Translation Dictionary

Years 12 - 13

Any additional requirements specific to the subjects that your child is studying will be informed by the subject teachers.

Spanish books

Spanish books will be on sale at Swans Secondary School prior to the start of the Autumn term and your child must have the books for the first day of the academic year. If your child joins Swans School during the academic year, the office can provide the direct contact details of where the books can be purchased.





IT REQUIREMENTS

Years 7 - 8

Students of Year 7 and 8 require an iPad. We recommend the iPad 8th generation or later as previous versions may experience some compatibility issues. Please also ensure that all iPads have a durable protective casing and are named. The iPad should be provided completely blank and will then be correctly configured to include school WiFi access and the appropriate curriculum-related apps. During term times the Apple App Store will be disabled from the iPad for security reasons. Also, social media sites are blocked within the school environment.

Years 9 - 13

Once your child enters Year 9, s/he will require a more powerful device. We recommend a

MacBook Air that is no older than 3-4 years.

Email

A school email address will be created for your child which enables communication with their teachers and peers. This email is: firstname.surname@swansschoolinternational.es and remains the property of the School.

Students will be given a login and password for access to the school computers. Please make sure that this is kept confidential. Every student at Swans International signs an E-safety contract so please use the system safely and sensibly. Students are advised to check their email regularly as teachers will send classwork and home learning via this method.

ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY AND ABSENCE

All students should arrive at school by 8.40am
All students should be in their tutor room by 8.45am. Registration closes at 8.50am after which a student will be recorded as a late arrival.

Research shows that children who attend school regularly are likely to be more successful in their education. A student who misses a day of school, each week, misses an equivalent of two whole years of their school life. This obviously leads to huge gaps in their learning.

The school expects excellent attendance and punctuality as a prerequisite for successful and engaged students. It is important that your child does not miss lessons and fall behind. All students should aim for 100% attendance and full attendance is celebrated with positive comments and special prizes.

Below is a table showing the impact of absences on the number of lessons a child misses over the academic year when absent:

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9	1.5 weeks	56
90%	17	3.5 weeks	119
85%	26	5 weeks	182
80%	34	7 weeks	238

If your child is ill, we require you to telephone/email the school on each day of absence (absences@swansschool.net). If we do not receive a message and a medical note, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised. On their return to school, we must have a note explaining the cause of the absence. It is your child's responsibility to catch up with any work they have missed.

For prolonged absence due to illness, your child's work will be accessible via each subject's Google Classroom through which they can also contact their class teacher.

We are unable to authorise family holidays during school time. Parents should write to the Headteacher for a request to be considered but only in exceptional circumstances.



What reasons will the school accept for absence?

The school will only authorise absence for the following:

- Illness (when medical note provided)
- Emergency dental/medical appointments.
- Family bereavement

Any non-emergency medical appointments must be arranged for after school or during school holidays.

Can we take family holidays during term time?

Parents are reminded that full attendance is expected up to, and including, the final day of each term. Early departures for family holidays/travel will not be authorised. We highly recommend that students in examination

years (10-13) use the school holiday periods as a time for preparation and reflection in readiness for the next term. House and sports activities are often planned at the end of term. These are important opportunities for students to socialise and develop in a less academic setting. These should not be seen as less important than academic study and attendance is required at all events.

What if my child's attendance is low?

Low levels of attendance could result in the school insisting that they repeat the academic year so as to cover the necessary course content. Particularly if the student is in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11).

As with all schools, we are obliged to inform local social services if your child's attendance is concerning.



UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE

The school expects students to take pride in their appearance. We have carefully selected a uniform that is smart and modern. Students wear uniform in Years 6 to 11. The uniform code also applies to journeys to and from school. The Headteacher reserves the right to make the final decision on what is appropriate in terms of school uniform.

Make up and jewellery may not be worn (except for a wrist watch and one pair of small stud earrings). Extreme hairstyles (e.g. shaved) and hair colouring are not acceptable. Long hair must be tied back in a tight ponytail using a blue, black or brown bobble (refer to the school rules).

In poor weather conditions, students may wear dark blue or black 'sensible' coats or waterproof jackets of their own choice, but these must be removed inside the school building and hung on pegs provided. Scarves and hooded tops may not be worn during lessons under any circumstances. Sixth Form students are not required to wear regular school uniform but instead are permitted to wear business wear. Beach wear, flip flops, short skirts/shorts, sportswear and revealing clothes are not suitable for a work environment. Please encourage your child to dress sensibly, wearing clothes appropriate for a working environment.



School uniform

Blazer (with logo), tie (with logo), jumpers/ cardigan with logo, white shirt/blouse (with logo), navy blue trousers/ skirt (length must be at the knee), flat black or navy shoes (no decoration, not trainer-style), black or navy socks.

Sports uniform:

Yellow t-shirt with logo, navy shorts with logo, school tracksuit (girls may wear navy blue leggings, not black), white socks, white sports shoes (not canvas nor skate style), hooded sweatshirt with logo.

Additional sports requirements:

Football boots are required for ALL students when playing on the astro pitch.

Navy blue/ black swimming trunks/ swimsuit, swimming cap, goggles, towel, plastic shower sandals, long white football socks.

Please refer below for visual reference. If there are any doubts, visit the uniform shop.

Uniform shop opening times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9.15am - 10.00am.



FOOD POLICY

School lunches

Students eat their lunch in year groups via a daily rota. Lunches generally include a soup starter with bread, a main course with fresh vegetables and/or salad and a healthy dessert and/ or sliced fruit. A vegetarian alternative is also available. Students with specific dietary requirements or food allergies are also catered for. (Please ensure that the School Nurse is informed of any allergies). All food provided is freshly prepared in the school kitchen. Filtered water is available to drink.

In order to minimise waste, students are expected to finish the food on their plates, especially where they have asked for second or more helpings. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate good table manners, using their cutlery in an appropriate way and clearing their own place at the end of each meal.

Snacks

Students may, if they wish, bring a healthy snack to eat during break time. This may include fruit, raw vegetables or a healthy sandwich. Unhealthy options, such as sweets, chocolate, crisps and biscuits, are not allowed and, if seen by staff, will be confiscated and disposed of. In addition, students may not bring, or consume in school, any nuts, chewing gum or any seeds with shells (such as 'pipas').

Drinks

The only drink that students are permitted to consume in school is water. Students may not bring in fruit juices, fizzy drinks or energy drinks – this is not only because many of these drinks contain unhealthy levels of added sugar and other artificial ingredients, but also because spillages have in the past caused damage. Filtered water is freely available from various locations around the school. Bottled water (in reusable spill-proof containers) may be brought into most lessons at the teacher's discretion.



DISCIPLINE, REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The school's ethos emphasises rewarding students for positive behaviour, achievement and effort, rather than sanctioning inappropriate behaviour.

School merit system

As well as verbal praise and encouragement, staff members also make use of the iSams comment system to recognise and reward positive behaviour. Positive comments can be awarded for a wide range of academic and non-academic achievements. They are entered by teachers onto the school's iSams system which directly informs parents.

A running total of positive comments is kept by the school. Students who have achieved various milestones are acknowledged with certificates awarded at the end of each term at a Rewards Breakfast.

Roll of honour, subject awards, student of the year and other achievements

Alongside the merit system, the school also maintains a Roll of Honour; which is compiled at points during the academic year. Admission to the Roll of Honour is based upon academic excellence, measured either via ongoing teacher assessment or using the results of internal whole school exams. Students in Years 7 to 13 must achieve six or more A grades (level 7, 8 or 9) to be admitted to the Roll of Honour while IB students must obtain 36 points or more. Students can also obtain a place on the Roll of Honour by obtaining six or more effort grades of E (Excellent) (IB =7).

A Student of the Week from each year group is announced by their Head of Year. This is awarded to the student(s) with the highest number of positive comments (no negatives) and they receive an early lunch pass that week, for themselves and a friend.

In addition to the merit system and Roll of Honour, termly Reward Breakfasts are held for the top 5 students who receive the most positive comments. Alongside this annual awards are also issued at the End of Year Assembly for attainment in individual subject areas, as well as awards recognising those students who have demonstrated consistently outstanding effort over the year. There is also a trophy for the overall 'Student of the Year'. Sporting and other achievements (such as an excellent attendance record) are also acknowledged, with the award of certificates and trophies. The Headteacher's Award is presented to students on a termly basis in recognition of their excellence in both learning and commitment to the Swans ethos.



Scholarship

During the Spring Term, students from the relevant Year Groups can apply for one of two scholarships, the Key Stage 3 Tessa Swan Scholarship and the Key Stage 4 Jayne Hunter Scholarship. The awards are designed to celebrate academic success and commitment to the school. Students are asked to apply to the Headteacher, including a letter explaining why they would be a suitable candidate for the award. Successful shortlisted applicants will then present a letter of recommendation from a member of staff and be interviewed by members of the Senior Management Team, who will then make a decision as to who will receive the award. The names of scholarship students will be announced in the final school assembly on the last day of the year.

There is also a yearly IB scholarship, awarded by Mr. Ray Liggan, to students completing Year 11, who have not only performed impressively in their IGCSE examinations, but who represent our school in an exemplary manner. The decision will be reached after the publication of the GCSE results and an interview with members of the Senior Management Team.



Discipline

The Swans Community agrees to follow our Code of Conduct.

Code of conduct

We work hard to ensure that every student at Swans International School understands and follows our school code of conduct and shows respect to each other and to adults in the community. Our school code of conduct is at the centre of what we believe is an essential set of values that guide all that we do.

Members of the school community have the right to:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect
- Work in and enjoy a safe, secure and clean working environment
- Teach and learn without disruption
- Achieve their potential
- Have their property respected
- Be proud of their achievements
- Receive regular and developmental feedback about all their work

Members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- Show respect and courtesy to others
- Keep the school environment safe
- Ensure there is no disruption to another person's teaching and learning environment
- Develop their potential and to assist others in doing the same thing
- Respect students, staff and school property
- Ensure that their actions do not discredit the school

In summary:

- Respect yourself
- Respect each other
- Respect all staff
- Respect the school environment
- Respect that this is a place where people come to learn and work.

The Code of Conduct is based on mutual care, courtesy and respect for others and for our school. We want all of our students to recognise that everything we do or say has an effect on others and that all members of our school community have the right to do their work and be happy at school.

The school's discipline code is clear, strongly upheld and is based on common sense and fairness. It exists in order that staff and students can foster good working relationships. Students are expected to be punctual, in correct uniform and to have with them the necessary equipment for the day's work. Our expectation is that all students should behave in a manner that is considerate to others and allows everyone to achieve and ensures that everyone feels safe at school.

We do not accept bullying, racism, anti-social behaviour or any form of physical violence in our school. Students who do not follow our Code of Conduct will face consequences ranging from being asked to move seats or attend detentions to, in extreme cases, exclusion from school.

Swans International School has a clear Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Policy which states that students bringing illicit substances into school, or attending school under the influence of drugs or alcohol, will face permanent exclusion. Physical violence according to our Anti-Bullying Policy may also result in permanent exclusion.

If a student is found to have either: (a) brought into school, or (b) consumed in school or while on a school trip or activity, any alcohol, cigarettes or other smoking material or illicit drugs or unreported medication, they may be subject to immediate and permanent exclusion from the school. The school must be informed of any medical issues and drugs which are prescribed for use during school time or trips. The same approach applies to



other dangerous material that could cause harm to themselves or others or inappropriate material brought into school, such as knives or other implements that represent a danger to public safety, or offensive images or material. Any inappropriate behaviour in the local community, whilst wearing Swans uniform, or online activity that brings the school's name into disrepute, will be met with the highest level of sanctions.

If your child falls below the standard expected by the school, we use the iSams information management system to record the incident and this will be shared with you. These negative comments indicate that we are concerned about homework, progress, or behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour will result in teacher, department, or school detention, at break, lunchtime or after school, depending on the level of the incident. Parents/carers are encouraged to log on and track the behaviour record for their child. Neutral comments may also be issued as a method of communicating or alerting a parent to a concern.

For persistent or more serious breaches of school rules or norms of behaviour, a student may be placed on a report card. This requires the student to carry a report card, containing their target expectations, with them to each lesson and to obtain a signature and comment from the subject teacher at the end of each lesson. The report card should then be shown to, and signed by, parents at the end of each day. The purpose of the report is to

monitor behaviour throughout the day and

to determine whether the student concerned is taking steps to rectify inappropriate behaviour. If there is no improvement shown, parents will be informed of these actions, and a meeting with the Headteacher will be requested.

The Head of Year will review the report card at the end of each week and, in consultation with the form tutor and Deputy Headteacher for Pastoral Care, determine whether the student should continue on report and/or whether more severe sanctions should be imposed.

Suspension and permanent exclusion

The school reserves the right to suspend or permanently exclude students from attendance at school for serious breaches of school rules and norms of behaviour. In addition, students who fail to modify their behaviour after having been placed on report may also be subject to suspension or permanent exclusion from the school.

Whilst we do not make such decisions lightly, parents need to understand that we cannot tolerate behaviour that prevents or disturbs the learning of other students. It should be noted that, where a student is permanently excluded, the school reserves the right not to refund any deposit or similar payment which might otherwise be re-payable when a student leaves.

School policies

Please contact the school office for a detailed list of policies.



COLLECTING STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE DAY

Parents are requested to collect their children from inside the Nagüeles car park, opposite the school, at the end of the day. Students leave via the main school entrance and cross the road using the crossing, following the directions of the person in charge.

Important: Do not to stop in the middle of the road outside the school to pick up your children, as this exposes students and other road users to considerable danger. Please also do not park on or near to the pedestrian crossing. In addition, when driving inside the Nagüeles car-park, please exercise extreme caution.

Staff members are on duty at the main school entrance for approximately 15 minutes after the end of the school day. To ensure the safety

of your children, after 4:15pm, students who have not been collected will be asked to return inside the school gate. Parents who are driving will therefore need to park in the Nagüeles car park and enter the school to collect their children.

The crossing is generally manned until approximately 5.00pm, and parents should understand that the school cannot accept responsibility for the safety or welfare of the students once they have left the premises, at the end of the day.

If you know that you are likely to be late in collecting your child, please inform the school office in advance so arrangements can be made for your child to be supervised.



THE CURRICULUM

The following is a very broad summary of the curriculum offered to students at Swans. If you would like to discuss the curriculum in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact the Headteacher, Mr Robert Maldonado, who will put you in contact with the appropriate person.

Years 7, 8 and 9 - Key Stage 3

All students in Years 7, 8 and 9 (known as Key Stage 3) study the five core subjects set out below, as well as Art, Drama, Music, French and Physical Education:

Core Subjects: English Maths Science Spanish (EP, ESO or Second Language Spanish) and ICT.

First-language Spanish students in Year 7 follow the Spanish EP programme, which comprises Lengua y Conocimiento del Medio; in Years 8 and 9, these students follow the Spanish ESO programme, which comprises Lengua and Sociales. Students not following the EP or ESO programmes have separately timetabled lessons in Geography and History.

Years 10 and 11 - Key Stage 4

At the end of Year 11 (and earlier, for certain subjects), all students sit GCSE or (I)GCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) exams. These are public exams set by independent examination boards in the UK. Therefore, before starting Year 10, all students must select the (I)GCSE subjects they plan to study in Key Stage 4.

In Key Stage 4, all students are required to study the five core subjects as follows:

English: Most students will study (I)GCSEs in First Language English and English Literature.

Spanish: Students follow either the ESO programme (comprising Lengua, Literatura and Sociales) or Second Language Spanish. All students take (I)GCSEs in either First or Second Language Spanish; in addition, some students may also take an (I)GCSE in Spanish Literature.

Maths: All students study (I)GCSE Maths - this is a core requirement for progress onto IB.

Science: Students select at least one science and have the option to study two more.

ICT or Computer Science: Students choose either ICT (practical and theory) or Computer Science (programming and logical thinking).

Global Perspectives: Students who study Second Language Spanish will also take the Global Perspectives (I)GCSE.

In addition, students select either two (in the case of ESO students) or three (non-ESO students) further (I)GCSE options from a range which currently includes Art, Business Studies, Drama, French, Geography, History, Media Studies, Music, Physical Education and Psychology.



More details of the available (I)GCSE subject options are communicated to parents and students during the Spring Term of Year 9. At that time, students and parents are provided with an options booklet which details the different subject choices available and the selection procedure.

Year 11 Mock (I)GCSE Examinations take place at the beginning of January. These are extremely important examinations and give an insight to both students, parents and teachers of the potential performance in the final examinations.

Years 12 and 13 - Sixth Form

Swans is an IB World School and offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme to all students in the Sixth Form. The Diploma Programme requires students to select and study six subjects from a range of disciplines, including First and Second languages, Sciences, Humanities, Maths and the Arts. Students must also follow core studies in TOK (Theory of Knowledge) and CAS (Creativity, Activity and Service) and complete an Extended Essay on a chosen topic.

The Diploma Programme is highly-regarded among many of the world's best universities and is an excellent platform for post-18 study. However, owing to the academically rigorous nature of the Diploma Programme, entry to the Sixth Form at Swans is subject to students achieving at least six passes (Grades A* to C or 9-5) at (I)GCSE, including English and Maths.

During Years 10 and 11, parents will be invited

to attend presentations which provide an introduction to the Diploma Programme and review the options available to their children. These are important, informative events and we strongly recommend that all parents attend, along with any other family member who may be interested.

During the Spring Term of Year 11, students and parents are requested to inform the school whether they plan to continue into the Sixth Form after completing their (I)GCSEs and to provide a preliminary indication of the subjects they would like to study.



WRITTEN REPORTS

At various points in the school year we will inform you about your child's progress.

YEAR GROUP	MONTH
Years 11 and 13	October (grade only)
Years 7, 10 and 12 and Spanish ESO & EP	December
Years 8 and 9	December (grade only)
Years 11 and 13	March
Years 8 and 9	March
Years 7, 10 and 12	April (grade only)
Spanish ESO & EP	April
Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 and Spanish ESO & EP	June

Detailed written reports on students are issued twice a year, while grade-only reports are distributed at the end of October (for Years 11 and 13) and at Easter. These reports will be sent electronically, via our iSams parent portal, although the summer reports are also printed and handed directly to parents or guardians by staff members on the last day of the year. Reports which remain uncollected at that time may be collected at a later date, from the school office.

Year 11 and 13 written reports are distributed after the mock exams in January. Please note that Spanish reports are distributed in December, March and June, in accordance with the Spanish system.



THE LIBRARY AS A CENTRE FOR LEARNING

The school library enjoys a whole variety of uses - individual study, whole-class use, small group or individual research for projects and homework, word-processing, information seeking on the internet and recreational reading in a calm environment with resources and help always on hand.

To encourage a love of reading and writing in all students at Swans International School, the full-time librarian organises whole school literacy events and initiatives, including breakfast book clubs for our keenest readers, an annual Book Week, an after-school creative writing group, and a student magazine which is published termly. Students are also instructed in good research strategies, with IB students receiving fortnightly lessons on effective research skills, academic honesty and information literacy, that are so crucial at this level.

The library is also proud to run, in conjunction with the English Department, Accelerated Reader, an exciting programme used by all Swans students up until Year 11. Students earn points for every book they read and successfully quiz on. They have a termly points target, and their success is celebrated with certificates when they reach or exceed it. The first form group to meet all their targets for the term is also awarded with a party, where they eat pizza and listen to music. Since the implementation of the programme here at Swans, we have seen

reading ages (which are tested termly) rise rapidly and, more importantly, we have seen the numbers of students reading for pleasure grow exponentially. This is vitally important, as reading ages are shown to directly link to academic success across the curriculum. To ensure continuing progress in this arena, we really appreciate parents' support in providing students with at least twenty minutes in which to enjoy a good book each night, and also in personally modelling that all-important love of reading within the home.

Children have to reach an acceptable reading age to be able to fully access (I)GCSE exams. Need to be 15.0+. Good reading skills also better prepare students for university.



THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

At Swans International School all children are valued and respected as equal members of the school – an inclusive recognition of a neurodiverse world. We celebrate the many different ways students learn, and provide opportunities for all children to succeed.

The school adheres to the United Kingdom's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice and seeks to raise achievement, remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access to all.

What are special educational needs?

According to the SEND Code of Practice (2015) children have a learning difficulty or disability if they have:

- a. A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children of the same age.
- b. A disability or other condition which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in a mainstream school.



A student should not be assumed to have special educational needs just because they have fallen behind in their learning. For any child who does fall behind, support strategies will be put in place to bring them back on track.

Early identification

We ensure that students with specific learning needs are identified and provided for in a prompt, professional and caring manner. Some students come to Swans with specific difficulties already identified; the subject teachers and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) will monitor, track and review these students and agree on the level of support required. In other cases, a student's special educational needs may be identified by the school's Educational Psychologist, or in partnership with a private Educational Psychologist.

Holistic service

The Learning Support department exists as an additional service beyond the school's mainstream curriculum. We have established an excellent track record of providing the highest quality of service. When working with the department, students and families receive a holistic and individual support package that is designed to coordinate a child's educational progress across the curriculum. The extra staffing and resourcing costs associated with these services dictate our policy of charging extra school fees.

English as an additional language

The support needs of students requiring extra English are quickly identified and catered for through a multilayered inclusive approach. Where necessary, dedicated classes with reduced student numbers, give pupils the opportunity to confidently practise the four



essential skills needed to acquire a language - speaking, listening, reading and writing. The overall objective of extra English is to facilitate the students to fully partake and succeed in the mainstream curriculum.

Examination access arrangements

In some circumstances, examination boards will allow certain students special concessions in their examinations that can include: additional time, someone to help with reading and writing (a scribe), use of a digital reading device, use of a word processor, rest breaks, modified examination papers, as well as the use of coloured overlays and prompts. Our Educational Psychologist is qualified and recognised by the Joint Council for Qualifications to both conduct the assessments and write the reports to satisfy the examination board requirements. Please note that the school makes an additional charge for this service.

Highly able (gifted and talented) – high performance learning

Children are the most inspirational thinkers and we are honoured and proud to witness their numerous moments of brilliance. We have high expectations of all our students, and believe every individual has the potential to achieve excellence. Enrichment activities and curriculum challenges offer many of our highly able students opportunities to develop, explore, and fulfil their potential. Pre and post-school clubs, such as breakfast book clubs for avid readers, creative writing workshops, debate clubs and involvement in organisations such as the European Youth

Parliament are just some of an ever-increasing array of specialist activities. Throughout the year, we also embed specialist High Performance Learning investigative project days, that challenge the students involved to work collaboratively and creatively to solve complex real life problems.

Additional external services

At Swans we make a point of developing professional links with local professional expertise. The following services are available to students of Swans through outside agencies:

- Occupational therapist
- Speech and language therapists
- Child psychologists and psychiatrists



HOMWORK

At Swans, we attach great importance to homework. Homework provides an opportunity for students to work independently, to research, to carry out specific tasks and to complete work started in class; most importantly, homework is a reinforcement of learning and an integral part of the programmes of study being undertaken.

As a rough guide, students in Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) should expect to spend from 60 to 90 minutes per evening on homework; for students in Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and the Sixth Form, up to two hours per evening is appropriate, although this may increase, especially in the lead-up to internal or external exams, when students should allocate more time to revision.

Whenever a student has no formal homework set, they should instead use homework time to read, either a novel or reading around a subject area and reviewing the lesson content.

Although not always the case, students typically have several days to complete a homework task set. Whilst it is up to individual students to organise their own time with regard to completion of homework, we recommend that tasks are completed as soon as practicable after they are set; this avoids a build-up of homework and any last minute rush to get it completed on time.

Students who fail to complete homework, without valid reasons, may be subject to a number of sanctions – the first being a

negative comment from the subject teacher.

Homework Recording

All students have an electronic device which provides them with access to each subject teacher's Google Classroom. The subject teacher will set homework via their Google Classroom. All parents/guardians are electronically invited to join these classrooms, where they will be able to see subject content and a list of homework assignments set with a due date.

Parents are welcome to discuss any issues regarding homework completion with the subject teacher or the Head of Department.

Accelerated Reader

At Swans, we are proud users of the Accelerated Reader program. This means your child's reading age will be regularly tested to help them choose books that are exactly the right level to challenge and extend their reading skills. When they have finished, their knowledge of it will be tested with a special computerised quiz. For passing this, students earn points towards a termly target, all with the aim of continually improving their skills.



AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The school offers a wide range of after-school activities which generally run for forty five minutes (from 4.15pm to 5.00pm), between October and June each year. Activities may include sporting, dramatic and other extracurricular pursuits.

A list of each year's after-school activities is published in mid-September, January and April. As places for certain activities are sometimes limited, they are normally made available on a first-come, first-served basis. A charge may be applicable and this will be published, together with the activity list.



SCHOOL TRIPS

The school organises a variety of educational visits for students. Where these trips comprise part of the curriculum (e.g. science or geography field trips, museum or gallery visits, etc.) students are expected to attend. A charge may be applied in order to cover transport costs and entry fees.

The school also organises recreational and other visits which, although not part of the formal curriculum, promote social integration and enhance subjects. A charge is applied to cover transportation, board, accommodation

and other costs. Written details of any such visits, together with an estimated cost, will be provided to parents in advance. Trips are organised with minimal disruption to the normal curriculum.

Please note that, if the Senior Management Team are concerned about a student, they reserve the right to withdraw them from attending a trip (e.g. for behavioural issues in school). Parents will be informed prior to the event.



COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL

Parent contact

The school seeks to operate an 'open door' policy, under which parents are encouraged to consult with staff both informally and formally, as the need arises.

The first point of contact, in most instances, is the form tutor. The most efficient and direct way to communicate with the form tutor is via email.

You are welcome to speak to any of your child's teachers, so please feel free to make an

appointment to speak with a member of staff through the school office (tel: 952 902 755 or email: admin@swansschool.net).

Parents are also warmly invited to attend school functions, including parents' receptions, concerts, school productions and other events, which take place from time to time. Details of forthcoming functions are included in regular mailings, sent out by formal school letters or via the school's social media and website.



Parents evenings, in respect to each year group, generally take place once a year (except for Years 7, 11 and 13 who have two). We strongly encourage you to attend these meetings as they provide an important opportunity to discuss your child's progress with subject teachers.

Electronic communication

The school makes appropriate use of social media to share the successes of our students and the events run within the school. Direct communication is not made with parents through social media and we encourage parents to think carefully about the sharing of information via these mediums, eg Whatsapp groups.

Whilst these groups are generally used by most parents in a positive way (e.g. to share information relating to their child's year group) there are occasions when negative comments are posted that can be viewed as "gossip". The school takes any sharing of personal information or opinions about students and teachers very seriously. If any such posts are felt to be reputationally damaging to the school or members of its community, parents may be asked to remove their child(ren) from the school. Any concerns or issues that you may wish to raise should be made directly to the school via the correct channels.



Written communication

All general written communication relating to the school is distributed by e-mail through the iSams Parent Portal. As well as being a more secure and direct method, e-mail also reduces considerably the amount of paper waste. It is therefore clearly important that you have given your up-to-date email contact

details to the school office and regularly read the school's correspondence.

For more general information about the school, you are also welcome to access the school website at www.swansschoolinternational.es



Visiting the school

Parents are most welcome to visit the School, however, we do ask that you observe several important rules relating to access.

After 9.00am, the front gate to the school is closed, with access only available via the intercom system operated by the school office. If you visit during normal school hours, you will be asked to sign in and out, using the signing in book at the reception desk. You will then be issued with a visitor's badge which you should wear for the duration of your visit and return to reception upon leaving.

You are welcome to drop your children inside the school at the start of the day, but must not go beyond the reception area (unless you have signed in and been issued with a visitor's badge and are accompanied by a member of staff). Similarly, if you are waiting to collect your children (for example, after extra activities) please wait in the courtyard/reception area and do not enter the main school.



If you do need to visit the office (e.g. to collect correspondence, make appointments, etc.) please see the receptionist at the front desk and wait in the reception area until called forward.

It is very important for the security of all concerned that all visitors (including parents) sign in and wear a badge, even if you are going to the uniform shop. It is the only way in which staff and students can identify those that have a legitimate reason to be in school.

Similarly, in the event of a fire or other emergency, signing in and out ensures that all visitors can be accounted for and no one need take additional risks to search for people who may have already left the premises.

iSams parent portal

The school also communicates information to parents via the iSams information system. If you have provided us with an up-to-date email address, you will receive notification when information about your child is posted on the system. You can log into the system and view comments made by your child's teachers, as well as access school reports and other progress data. Please follow the link on the school website to access the system. There is also an iSams application available for your mobile device.

If you have any questions about logging into the system, please contact the school office.

WORKING WITH US TO ACHIEVE YOUR CHILD'S BEST

We are often asked what parents can do to support their child's learning. Here, we have outlined some suggestions.

Help your child develop a routine

In the evenings, establish a routine of doing homework, having dinner, watching TV together, reading, getting their school bag ready for the following morning and getting plenty of sleep, which will all help in developing a study focused environment. Arrange a table or desk that your child can use to do their homework away from their bedroom. Take an interest – ask questions, suggest help and encourage.

In the mornings, having breakfast helps to speed up the metabolism, which makes children more alert and ready for learning.

Regularly look at your child's Google Classroom pages

You will be invited to your child's google classroom. Here you can see what homework has been set for each subject area on the classroom pages. It also gives you the opportunity to write messages to staff and is a way that we can communicate with each other.

Do not give in to complaints of illness if you see no physical signs

Help your child to develop the right habits

for the world of work, where absence and lateness are rarely tolerated. If you are unsure, please alert/contact the school nurse (nurse@swansschool.net). Remember, we have a qualified nurse on site at all times.

Reward your child

We reward your child at school for good attendance, effort and attainment. You could add your own rewards at home to show that we share these same values.

Have books available in the home

Having English and Spanish language books and magazines available around the home will help to develop your child's vocabulary as well as their inference and analysis skills. Remember that your child has access to the school library, which is well stocked with fiction and non-fiction works. The school librarian and your child's English and Spanish teachers are available to talk to you about suitable titles.

Monitoring your child's use of social media:

Currently, the minimum age to open an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok and Snapchat is 13. YouTube requires account holders to be 18, however a 13-year-old can sign up with a parent's permission.



There is an ever increasing number of children using social media networks – whether compliant with these published age restrictions or not, and with or without their parent’s knowledge and consent.

As such, it is vital that parents and/or guardians have as much knowledge as possible about their child’s online activity. We recommend that you speak with your child about their social media usage, to include:

- Age appropriate content
- Privacy and security settings
- Revealing personal information
- Being respectful to others
- Stranger contact

We also recommend that you check your child’s devices regularly and use parental control apps to monitor screen time and restrict inappropriate content.

School Address & Contact Details

Swans International School
C/ Lago de los Cisnes s/n
29602 Marbella - Málaga

Tel: 952 902 755
admin@swansschool.net
www.swansschoolinternational.es





Swans Secondary School
C/Lago de los Cisnes, s/n
29602 Marbella, Malaga, Spain
www.swansschoolinternational.es

SI-SC-ACAD-Handbook-Parent-2024-2025