

Upper School

Comprehensive Guide

2023 – 2024



Welcome

Dear parents,

ISB strives to educate and develop the whole person in a student centred learning environment. Our philosophy and practices work to enable students to become critical thinkers, as well as confident, responsible learners.

We offer a comprehensive international programme covering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP).

In upper school, our curriculum, the MYP, focuses on skill development and formative learning: a learning that does not educate in a vacuum but relates knowledge and thinking skills from subject to subject, building from grade to grade. This is evident in the MYP "Approaches to Learning".

The ultimate aim of ISB is that students develop a sense of inquiry matched with a love of knowledge to inspire students with the ability to apply knowledge in practical situations leading to a wiser, more globally aware student at the end of their journey.

At ISB we work to build a true Learning Community, balancing academics with activities in the rich environment of Bergen and the western coast of Norway.

This handbook is intended to answer frequently asked questions and useful information. Please keep this booklet at hand for future reference.

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Reporting to Parents

Communication with parents is of prime importance at ISB. The following is our reporting and communication scheme:

Parent information evening:	late August
Progress reports:	November and March/April
Formal report cards:	late January and last day of school (Grade 10 students receive their final report cards at the beginning of June)
Parent-Teacher Conferences:	November and March/April

Managebac

Managebac is ISB's learning platform specifically designed for the International Baccalaureate courses. Students have a subject page with lessons, files, assignments etc. It has chat and email, and serves as a delivery method for assignments and communication of unit information and assessment. It also has an IB approved plagiarism check for student work. Parents receive passwords, and can keep track of school assignments, submission and levels awarded for individual pieces of work and projects.

Homeroom/ Assembly

All grades are assigned to a homeroom with a class teacher. Students meet their homeroom teacher once a day at 9 AM. The homeroom teacher is responsible for keeping attendance and is the first person you should come to with most problems. Upper School meets in assembly once a week, This takes place during a rotating period throughout the year to ensure that no one lesson is overly impacted. These are very important times to come together, communicate, and share ideas.

Lockers

At the start of the academic year students are allocated available lockers to be used for storage of books, clothing, etc. Items should be kept inside the lockers, not on top or around the locker area. Students should not deface or damage the lockers in any way. Lockers are optional and students may choose not to have one. Students need to purchase a padlock in order to secure the locker. It is recommended not to get one with too thin a loop.

Assessment

Students are assessed formatively and summatively through class work, homework, tests, projects, and exams. Teachers of the various subjects will provide further information about assessment in their subject areas. Information is posted by teachers on It's Learning.

Assessment is criteria-related and follows the International Baccalaureate MYP guidelines for each subject. Each subject group assesses the students using four criteria. These vary from subject to subject but cover the knowledge, skills and understandings specific to that subject. On the report cards students receive a grade for achievement on a scale of 1 to 7 based on the levels achieved prior to the reporting period.

Standardised Tests

Standardised tests are administered to students in Grades 7 and 9 in the second trimester of each school year, normally immediately before the winter break. These tests are part of the International Schools Assessment (ISA) and have been specifically designed for students who attend international schools. Students in Grade 8 and 9 take part in the local Norwegian national tests.

Graduation

At the end of Grade 10, students who have completed a minimum of two years of the International Baccalaureate MYP are awarded an ISB Certificate of Achievement in addition to a Norwegian diploma, Vitnemål for Grunnskolen, which recognises their achievements within the curriculum of the Norwegian state education system.

Further Education

After completion of Grade 10, ISB students have the following possibilities for further education:

- Norwegian videregående skole: a 3-year course (VG1-3). Applications are processed through the County Admissions Office. For private videregående skoler applications are made directly to the individual schools.
- Pre-diploma course in English at Bergen Katedralskolen
- International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Norwegian or international schools.

IB Middle Years Programme

ISB was the first school in the world authorised to offer the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students in grades 6 –10. This curriculum is offered under the auspices of the International Baccalaureate Offices in The Hague. Assessment is continuous and internal and is monitored by the regular submission of work to the International Baccalaureate Curriculum and Assessment Centre in Cardiff. All grade 10 students complete a culminating project called the Personal Project which demonstrates their inter-disciplinary learning, as well as their Approaches to Learning skills. Students are awarded a school certificate of achievement at the end of Grade 10.

The MYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning that encourages students to become creative, critical, and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement – essential qualities for young people who are becoming global leaders.

Unlike many other educational programmes the curriculum, our subject content, is not prescribed by one government or national agency, and student learning is not measured against a set of standards but through a framework of learning. This framework of learning encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers, and is flexible enough to accommodate national requirements in a wide variety of countries. It is built upon the knowledge, skills and attitudes developed in the PYP and prepares students to meet the academic challenges of the Diploma programme. As with any dynamic programme, it is regularly reviewed and updated in order to best meet the needs of its users.

The IB Middle Years Programme:

- Addresses holistically student's intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being
- Provides students opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need in order to manage complexity and take responsible action for the future
- Ensures breadth and depth of understanding through study in eight subject groups
- Requires the study of at least two languages to support students in understanding their own cultures and those of others

- Empowers students to participate in service within the community
- Helps to prepare students for further education, the workplace and a lifetime of learning

MYP Distinctive Features

At the core of all IB programmes is the IB Learner Profile: 10 attributes fostered in students that promote international mindedness and their development as responsible members of their local, national and global communities.

Global Contexts

Provide shared starting points for inquiry into what it means to be internationally minded, framing a curriculum that promotes multilingualism, intercultural understanding and global engagement.

The global contexts are:

- Identities and relationships
- Orientation in space and time
- Personal and cultural expression
- Scientific and technical innovation
- Globalization and sustainability
- Fairness and development

Each unit of work that students study in the MYP will have a global context as its starting point, and students will cover all contexts in each subject group throughout their course of study. By having the curriculum grounded in authentic world settings, events and circumstances it encourages students to see the relevance of what they are learning and to actively promote global engagement.

Key and Related Concepts

These are big ideas, which form the basis of teaching and learning in the MYP. They ensure breadth and depth in the curriculum and promote learning within and across traditional disciplines.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL)

This is a unifying thread throughout all MYP subject groups, and are skills which help students manage their own learning and provide a foundation for success in further education and the world beyond the classroom.

Service as Action is an essential components of the MYP, which set out clear learning outcomes that grow from student's participation in local and global communities. Service as Action activities reflect the developmental stages through which the student progresses.

Some examples of service projects are:

Grades 6 and 7: Students may take part in activities which help at home and at school e.g. recycling paper, class monitors.

Grades 8 and 9: Students may take part in activities of a more complex nature e.g. tutoring younger students, organising fund raising for charities.

Grade 10: Students may take full responsibility for their activities e.g. running the school milk sale, becoming a member of a humanitarian organisation such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International etc. Students have full agency in organising their overseas S&A trip.

All students are encouraged to become active members of the Student Council and may stand for election as class representatives to serve on the Student Council or as a House Captain or Vice Captain.

The Personal Project

This required component, completed by students in MYP 5 (Gr 10) as a culminating experience in which they apply their approaches to learning skills to complete an extended, self-directed piece of work, provides opportunities for creative and truly personal demonstration of learning. Students need to identify a goal, based on areas or topics that are of interest to them. During the project they must document their thinking, their research process and the refining and development of their initial ideas.

The personal project starts in August, with a first draft submitted in December, and a final deadline in February. Students work on them in their own time, supported in their process by a supervisor. Students are encouraged to select their own supervisor who must be a member of staff currently employed at ISB. They should meet with their supervisor on a regular basis, for guidance and help, and their supervisor will also provide written feedback on the first draft of their project.

The personal project is assessed on three aspects: Investigating, Planning, Taking action Applying Skills and Reflecting. There are three components that contribute to assessment: The focus on the topic leading towards a product or outcome, the process journal and the report. The written report, which is assessed using all the criteria can be in a written, electronic, oral or visual format. If it is one of the first two it must be between 1,500 and 3,500 words, and if the latter two then between 13 and 15 minutes long.

Examples of possible projects are:

- An informative talk on a topic such as "What is the matter with anti-matter?"
- A creation of a Japanese anime and a survey of the understanding of peers to this genre
- An awareness campaign about the struggle for water in developing countries
- A research essay on how online identities impact offline relationships
- A 3d model of the Euclidean space perspective of the universe.

After the projects have been submitted, each student presents their work to the school community in a celebration of their hard work and achievements.

Curriculum

The MYP consists of 8 subject groups:

- Language Acquisition, French Norwegian English
- Language and Literature, Norwegian English
- Individuals and Societies,
- Physical and Health Education,
- Design,
- Mathematics,
- Arts ; Performing Arts and Visual Arts
- Sciences

As well as accumulating subject-specific knowledge and skills, the MYP aims to help students develop their emerging sense of self and understand their responsibilities in the communities that they are part of. This is achieved in two main ways: Teaching and

learning is put into context, and students develop a conceptual understanding of what they study by exploring big ideas that transcend individual disciplines or cultures. How it all comes together can be illustrated in the following programme model diagram;

All MYP students are required to study the eight curriculum areas listed below.

Grades 6 – 7

Language & Literature: English, Norwegian* per language	3 hours a week
Language acquisition, phase 1 – 6: French	2 hours a week
Individuals & societies: Integrated Humanities	3 hours a week
Mathematics	4 hours a week
The Sciences	3 hours a week
The Arts (Visual Arts, Performing Arts)	3 hours a week
Design	2 hours a week
Physical and Health Education	2 hours a week

*some students may also follow norwegian language acquisition as an alternative to language & literature 3 hours per week

Grades 8 – 9

Language & Literature: English, Norwegian* per language	4 hours a week
Language acquisition, phase 1 – 6: French	3 hours a week
Individuals & societies: Integrated Humanities	3 hours a week
Mathematics	4 hours a week
The Sciences	4 hours a week
The Arts (Visual Arts, Performing Arts)	4 hours a week
Design	2 hours a week
Physical and Health Education	2 hours a week

*some students may also follow norwegian language acquisition as an alternative to language & literature 4 hours per week

Grade 10

Language & Literature: English, Norwegian* per language	4 hours a week
Language acquisition, phase 1 – 6: French	3 hours a week
Individuals & societies: Integrated Humanities	3 hours a week
Mathematics	4 hours a week

The Sciences	4 hours a week
The Arts (Visual Arts, Performing Arts)	4 hours a week
Design	2 hours a week
Physical and Health Education	2 hours a week

*some students may also follow norwegian language acquisition as an alternative to language & literature 4 hours per week

General Grade Descriptor

Grade	Boundary guidelines	Descriptor
1	1 – 5	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	6 – 9	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
3	10 – 14	Produces work of acceptable quality. Expresses basic understandings of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical or creative thinking. Is often inflexible in use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
4	15 – 18	Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understandings of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical or creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
5	19 – 23	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understandings of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical or creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar real-world situations.
6	24 – 27	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical or creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
7	28 – 32	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical or creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.

