Autumn 2025

DragonNews

Strong Core, Strong Minds

The hidden key to helping kids learn and thrive at school and in life

May the Best Book Win

Lower School 'Battle of the Books'

Culture of Success

Winning on the court and in the community





Did you know?

2002 HIS was founded by the International Schools Foundation (ISF) as a non-profit, independent, day school in Hangzhou, China

ISF operates four international sister schools: two in Shanghai (SCIS Hongqiao and SCIS Pudong), HIS in Hangzhou, and the American International School of Cape Town (AISCT) in South Africa

2007 HIS celebrated its first graduating class, of 3 students

2022 HIS relocated to our new, purpose-built campus in Binjiang
Covering over 50,000 square meters, the HIS campus redefines education through open, shared, and multi-functional learning and leisure spaces. It is characterized by the two main buildings:
The Cocoon (ECE Campus) and The Lantern (Main Campus)

2025 HIS had a graduating class of 38 students, our largest ever

2025-26 We passed 1000 students for the first time!





We are HIS

Community Diversity **Opportunity** Engagement **Excellence** Purpose

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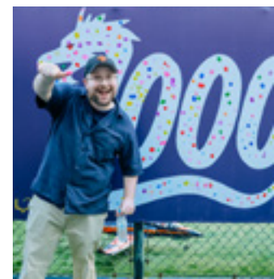












Welcome from the Superintendent

Dear HIS Community and Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of DragonNews for the 2025–26 school year. This year marks our 24th year in Hangzhou, and we began with great energy, welcoming over 1000 students from more than 50 nationalities. Our annual "Welcome Back" BBQ was a joyful reunion, a celebration of the vibrant and diverse community that makes HIS so special.

At HIS, community is our foundation. Our school motto, Communitas, Latin for "together, a gift", perfectly captures the spirit of our school. We believe that the strength of our school lies in the people within it: our students, parents, faculty, and staff. Together, we create a nurturing, inclusive, and dynamic environment where every member is valued and supported.

This edition of DragonNews celebrates that theme, Community. From the smiling faces of our students to the dedication of our faculty and the support of our families, we honor the collective effort that makes HIS a place of belonging and excellence. Whether it's through thoughtful program design, beautiful campus aesthetics, or the shared vision that guides our learning journey, HIS is a place where everyone contributes and grows.

We are proud of our academic achievements, including outstanding IB results and university acceptances over the summer. But more than that, we are proud of the caring culture we've cultivated, one that prioritizes personalized attention, resilience, and lifelong learning. From our youngest learners transitioning into the main campus to our graduating seniors setting sail toward university, we celebrate every step of their journey.

As a community school, we believe in providing opportunities that match each student's potential, interests, and aspirations. We welcome the involvement of parents and external partners, knowing that collaboration enriches the learning experience. We also support our families through forums and guidance, and invest in our faculty's professional growth—all with the goal of improving student learning and fostering excellence.

Aristotle once said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." At HIS, we believe excellence is achieved through community, opportunity, and care. We celebrate our successes, learn from our challenges, and remain committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where every student can thrive.

Thank you for being part of our journey. We hope this edition of DragonNews reflects the color, spirit, and strength of our HIS community.

As always… GoooOOO Dragons!!!

Jeffry R. Stubbs
Superintendent









Important Contacts

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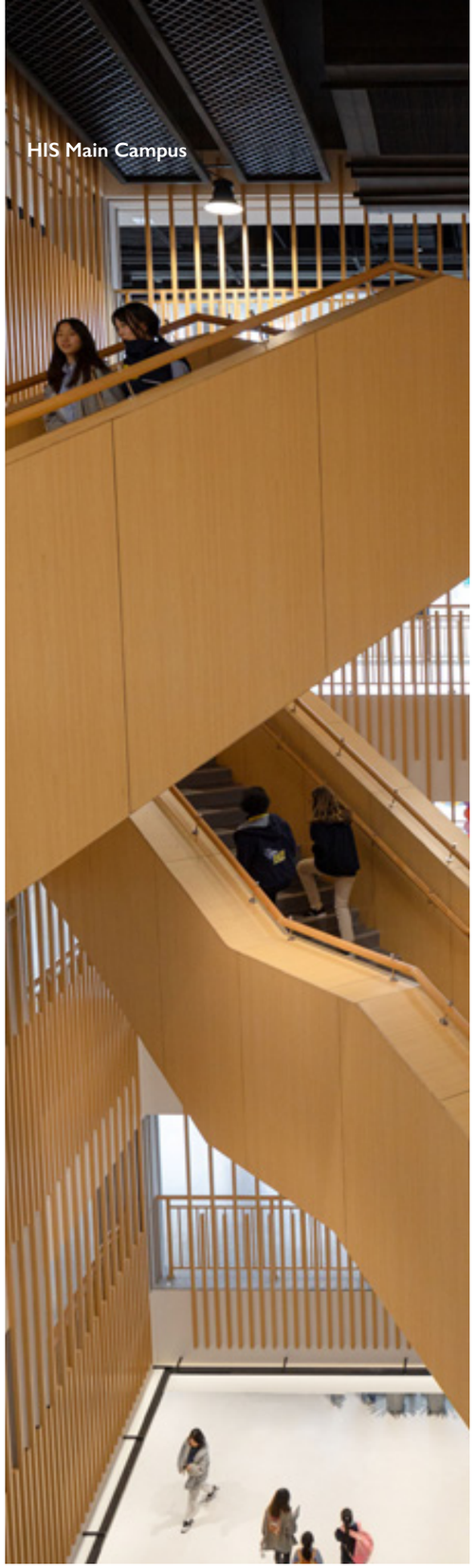
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Transportation
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HIS Main Campus

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Larry Balli
Board Chairperson

Kristy Dewi
Board Director

Michael Dougherty
Board Director

ADMINISTRATORS



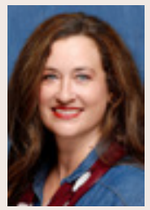
Jeffry Stubbs
Superintendent



Aaron Ayers
Deputy Superintendent



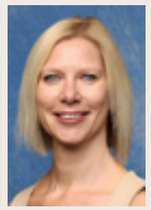
Jeff Hart
Lower School Principal



Jessica Johnson
Lower School Vice-Principal and PYP Coordinator



Rene Smal
Lower School Vice-Principal and ECE Coordinator



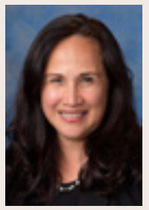
Cynthia Wissman
Upper School Principal



Jason Benton
Upper School Vice-Principal and DP Coordinator



Dave Gates
Upper School Vice-Principal and MYP Coordinator



Andrea Stubbs
Director of Admissions and Community Relations



Filipe Nogueira
Director of Athletics and Activities



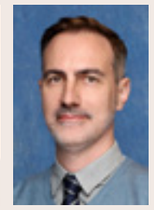
Danie de Beer
Director of Technology



Francis Lai
Director of Business



Lily Wu
Director of Finance



Simon Ostheimer
MarCom Manager

FACULTY



Carolina Perdomo
Early Years



Emma John
Early Years



Melissa Van Niekerk
Early Years



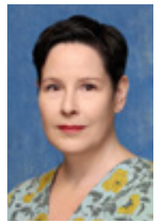
Kira Bowe
Early Years



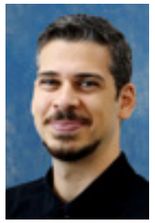
Simay Bastedo
Pre-Kindergarten



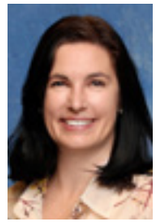
Maria Dutari
Pre-Kindergarten



Melanie Hart
Pre-Kindergarten



Adnan Fathi
Pre-Kindergarten



Kiomi Yeoman
Kindergarten



Alice Pagel
Kindergarten



Avital Kaplan
Kindergarten



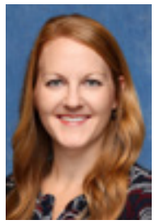
Max Pellant
Kindergarten



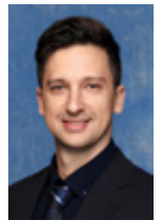
Axel Soos
Grade 1



Elise Eplin
Grade 1



Heather Plotz
Grade 1



Jason Shapiro
Grade 1



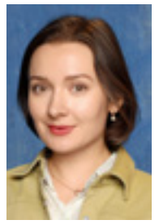
David Hatton
Grade 2



Shannon McLaughlin
Grade 2



Savannah Gerhard
Grade 2



Veronica Simova
Grade 2



Martin Brader
Grade 3



Maria Gimeno
Grade 3



Enda Meade
Grade 3



Matthew Ruiz
Grade 3



Jessie Xue
Grade 4



Colin Gonzalez
Grade 4



David Young
Grade 4



Joel Bastedo
Grade 4



Patrick Wells
Grade 5



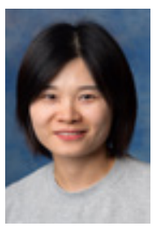
Alison Tremblay
Grade 5



Tim Kearns
Grade 5



Megan Everett
Grade 5



Julie Zhu
Mandarin Co-Teacher



Sunny Sun
Mandarin Co-Teacher



Maggie Xie
Mandarin Co-Teacher



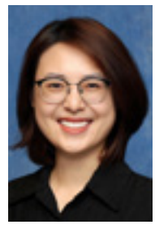
Avery Zhang
Mandarin Co-Teacher



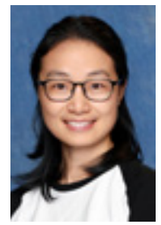
Joyce Chen
Mandarin Co-Teacher



Zoey Yu
Mandarin Co-Teacher



Audrey Yu
Mandarin Co-Teacher



Alpha Shen
Mandarin Co-Teacher

Jasmine Huang
Mandarin Co-Teacher

Caelyn Chen
Mandarin Co-Teacher

Yanni Liu
Mandarin Co-Teacher

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Grade 1 Learning Support and EAL

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Grade 1 Learning Support and EAL

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Vanessa Kearns
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Counselor

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Chelsea Wood
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Lisa Worsley
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Merryn Atkins
Occupational Therapist

Andrea Shen
Mandarin

Bella Mao
Mandarin

Hilda Hu
Mandarin

Kay Xu
Mandarin

May Peng
Mandarin

Melanie Lu
Mandarin

Vivian Zhang
Mandarin Coordinator

Ellené Venter
Classroom Teacher

Rachel Ford
Physical and Health Education

Sean McSheffrey
Physical and Health Education

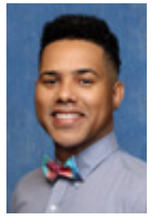
Rachel Jackson
Physical and Health Education

Farina Lim
ECE Rhythm and Movement

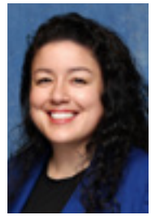
Francis Jaramillo
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Justin Cox
Peforming Arts

Tara Tidbury
Visual Arts



Emlyn Majoos
Design Technology



Sheena Rubet
Design Technology



Ingrid Majoos
Librarian



Ria Marais
Librarian



Ivy Zhang
ECE Co-Librarian



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Teaching and Learning Assistant



Eunice Chen
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Vera Wu
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Cynthia Chen
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Emma Zhong
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Vicky Gao
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Tracy Sun
Teaching and Learning Assistant



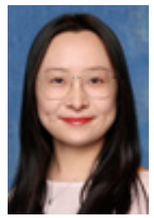
Nicole Wang
Teaching and Learning Assistant



Sia Wang
Physical and Health Education Assistant



Anna Wang
ECE Rhythm and Movement Assistant



Nancie Su
Performing Arts Assistant



Sissie Zhang
Visual Arts and Design Technology Assistant



Tina Wang
Library Assistant



Natalio Liares
Aquatics Coordinator



Cheryl Philp
Aquatics Coordinator



Rob West
Assistant Aquatics Coordinator



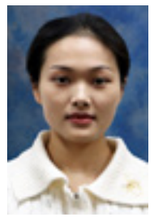
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Aquatics



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Aquatics



Lynn Lu
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Cathy Feng
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Tony Bachmann
Physical and Health Education



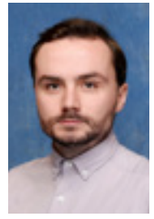
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Emily Blalock
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Alejandra Botero
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Lewis Braithwaite
Social Studies



Bart Brzezicki
Social Studies



Zach Callahan
Mathematics and Science



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Physical and Health Education & Sport Science



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Austin Coolidge
Science



Emer Cordoba
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Suresh Dass
English Acquisition and Learning Support

Joshua Davis
Design

Imogen Elliot
Music

Tim Fletcher
Dance

Jodi Fulwood
Science

Anna Galushka
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Zach Gerhard
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Sophy Jin
Mandarin

Chanmi Joo
English Acquisition

Ciarra Judson
Physical and Health Education

Eric Kent
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English Acquisition

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Mathematics

Matt Kushner
Mathematics

Justine Kushner
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Mandarin

Lily Lin
Mandarin

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Janet McGifford
Visual Arts

Ellen McMahon
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Paulo Miguel
English Acquisition and Learning Support

Tia Moen
Drama

Julie Morrow
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Allan Ngetich
Librarian

Zachary Ober
Social Studies

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Mathematics



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Akira Sugata
Social Studies



Dylan Tidbury
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Lindsay Vaughan
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Gregory Venter
Mathematics



Brian Vincent
Music



Elly Wafula
Film and Drama



Vera Wang
Learning Support



Karlene Wong
Music



Gillian Wu
Mandarin



Lucia Wu
Mandarin



Adeline Xie
Mathematics



Claire Ying
Mandarin



Iris Zhang
University Counselor

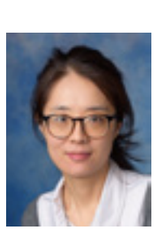


Lily Zhou
Mandarin

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Secretary to the Superintendent



Kerri Liang
Admissions Secretary



Lily Fan
ECE Secretary



FLora Li
Lower School Secretary



Vivian Wang
Upper School Secretary



Elsie Zhang
Admissions Assistant



Nancy Pan
Secretary to Director of Athletics and Activities



Tracy Zhu
Transportation



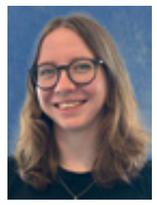
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Lisa Kerry
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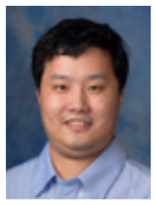
Gabby He
PR and Marketing Officer



Harper Girdner
PR and Communication Specialist



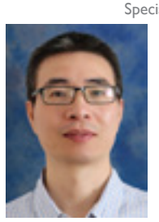
Jacob Zhang
Technology Specialist



Fred Ling
Technology Assistant



Jason Zhang
Technology Specialist Assistant



Scott Li
Technology Systems Engineer



Shalom Massalay
Junior Programmer and Cloud Specialist



Ping Li
School Nurse



Jennifer Pan
School Nurse



Mandy Lai
School Nurse

MEET THE NEW 2025-2026 JADE DRAGONS

Jade Dragons are longstanding community members who are entering their 8th year or more at HIS

Double Jade Dragon Legends are those who are entering their 16th year or more at HIS or will be completing all available grade levels since joining

Please join us in congratulating this year's

Jade Dragons

We are so proud of you!

GRADE 12



Eshaan Dhanwani
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Leo Huang
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Micah Lu
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Yolco Mao
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Irene Pan
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Sanyukta Shewakramani
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Justin Xu
HIS Dragon since Grade 5



Yolcy Zhang
HIS Dragon since Grade 5

GRADE 11



Joshua Xinmin Cui
HIS Dragon since Grade 4



Shark Gao
HIS Dragon since Grade 4



Joey Lee
HIS Dragon since Grade 4

GRADE 10



Andrea Loretta Juarez Leynez
HIS Dragon since Grade 3



Aditya Sharma
HIS Dragon since Grade 3



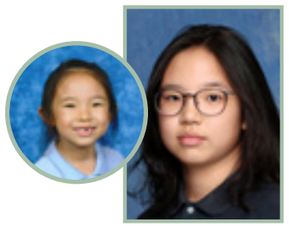
Melanie Shou
HIS Dragon since Grade 3

GRADE 9



Harveer Shewakramani
HIS Dragon since Grade 2

GRADE 8



Anna An
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Angel Fan
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Justin Gao
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Yi-Chen Eachann Lu
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Naomi Tu
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Liangliang Yang
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Jason Zhang
HIS Dragon since Grade 1



Antonio Zhao
HIS Dragon since Grade 1

GRADE 7



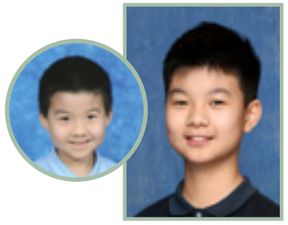
Henry Hsieh
HIS Dragon since Kindergarten



Vivian Jiang
HIS Dragon since Kindergarten



Ted Lee
HIS Dragon since Kindergarten

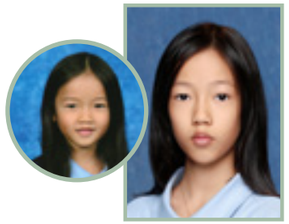


Delun Shou
HIS Dragon since Kindergarten



For-Hiu Amy Wang
HIS Dragon since Kindergarten

GRADE 6



Oia Cheung
HIS Dragon since Pre-K



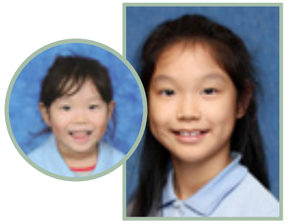
Reyhaan Hiranandani
HIS Dragon since Pre-K



Kelvin Li
HIS Dragon since Pre-K



William Lu
HIS Dragon since Pre-K



Esther Wang
HIS Dragon since Pre-K

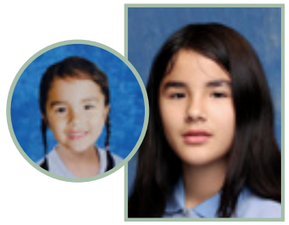


Bonny Xu
HIS Dragon since Pre-K

GRADE 5



Vincent Chin
HIS Dragon since Early Years 2



Eva Durix
HIS Dragon since Early Years 2



Eli Huang
HIS Dragon since Early Years 2

GRADE 4



Jackson Bai
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Leo Durix
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Mike Lou
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Maisie Xia
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Terrance Tong Xu
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



William Xu
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Yufeiyang Yangyang Ying
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Max Zhang
HIS Dragon since Early Years 1



Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon!

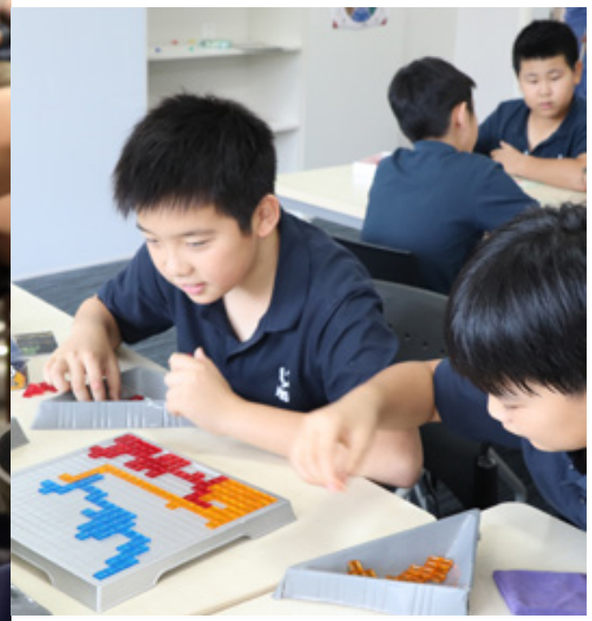


COMMUNITY

New Family Orientation

Following our summer break, we welcomed our more than 100 new students and their families to attend our Orientation Day. This event was a great way to connect all those new to HIS with the school and the community. We also had many vendors and stands in the, which gave our new families a chance to connect to the wider Hangzhou community.





Game Day

Grade 6 Design classes spent time analyzing existing board games in preparation for their upcoming unit, “Games for Others: Designing Games for a Digital-free Zone.” The students were instructed to play and analyze the games to find out what aspects of the game make them fun, imagining how they would design a game themselves.

Back to School Nights

Back to School Nights were a great way for parents to connect with teachers at the beginning of the year, where our faculty had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share their learning expectations. Parents in turn were able to learn more about the classrooms and what their children will be experiencing in the year to come.







PAFA Fitness

The HIS Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) put on a Zumba Fitness activity for the community in The Box, as a way to stay active, healthy, and stress-free through dance. In another week, PAFA also held another fitness day focused on badminton. Go PAFA!



Welcome Back Lunch for Parents

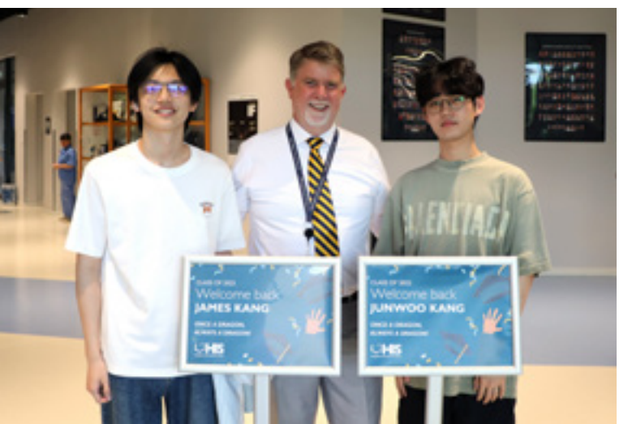
The PAFA Welcome Back Lunch for parents was a great way to start off the school year by connecting and reconnecting parents from the HIS community. Held at Le Meridien hotel, the lunch offered a great opportunity to build the community outside of the school.



Student Art Exhibition

An HIS 6th grader, Bonnie, had a solo art exhibition during the summer, where she was able to show off her work to the community. The exhibition, entitled “BLUEPLANET 邦妮•蓝星计划” had more than 40 art pieces and had many visitors from the HIS community.





Alumni Return

We’ve had multiple alumni visits so far this year, with previous graduates coming back to see how the school has changed since they left. It’s always interesting hearing about what our dragons get up to on their adventures after HIS. Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon!



University Visits

There have been multiple university visits this year as our High School students start to plan for their futures. So far in 2025 we have had visits from the University of British Columbia and Acadia University in Canada, School of the Art Institute of Chicago from the US, and the UK’s University College London. Stay tuned for the annual University Fair!

First Day of School















The first day of school welcomed back all our returning students and new students to start off the school year. The energy was truly back in the school as the students met up with each other in the newly renovated spaces and got to know their teachers for the year.

by Gabby He
PR & Marketing Officer

What's in your school bag?

I'm pretty good at backstroke



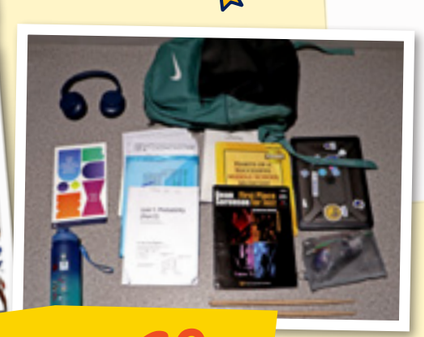
CCAs: Instrumental Music-Flute, Rebounding Trampoline, Ballet, Tadpole Swim Program
Outside of school: Take piano lessons
Homework routine: 30-40 mins each day



Juliana, G2

My favorite thing to do is to play sports





CCAs: Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, Track and Field, MUN, Band
Outside of school: I have extra math and English lessons.
Homework routine: 40 mins each day

Vidhan, G9

I enjoy reading a lot. The book I'm reading this week is The Picture of Dorian Grey.



CCAs: Instrumental Music-Guitar, MUN
Outside of school: painting, book club
Homework routine: 1.5 hours



Claire, G10

WELCOME BACK BBQ

The Welcome Back BBQ brought more than 1,300 people to campus to celebrate our special HIS community with an evening full of fun and friendship. From delicious food and refreshing drinks to performances, kite flying, and even several bouncy castles, it was a day to remember and great start to the year.







BOOK WEEK



Read-a-thons









Character Parade

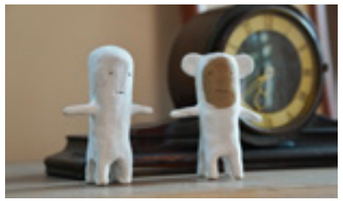
There were many events in Book Week this year, including a book fair, a 10-hour readathon, a door decoration competition, and the much-anticipated costume parade. Everyone in the school was able to participate in some way, connecting everyone to the world of books.

Book Week Door Decor



West Side Story

by Yuko Yanagimoto
HIS Parent



How moving from West Lake to Xianghu helped an HIS parent to see beyond the past

My name is Yuko, I'm originally from Japan, and I'm a parent at HIS.



Once, I worked in a business that sells time and space - resort hotels. What guests pay for is experience. So, I used to think hard about what 'experience' is made of.

I was living either on the property or within walking distance during the 10 years of my time there. And I realized that I had never lived in one place for such a long time. I had become more of a resident than a worker of the place. It was a place of stories and legends - it was the west side of West Lake.

Every morning started early for me. I was always with my guests, sometimes leading them in chanting at Lingyin Temple, going sunrise boating on West Lake, or to the misty Meijiawu tea plantations even before the first tea-picking ladies started to work.

Evenings finished late too. In the corner of the restaurant or at the bar counter, over cups of Chinese tea or glasses of wine, I would be sharing with guests my life in the west of West Lake or some exotic experiences in the other parts of the world I had worked before, and they would share theirs. My attachment to the place must have been built like this – as I talked or guests talked, thousands of words about the place just accumulated inside me, like snow or dust accumulates on the ground.

But eventually, as a family, we had to move on in life, and left our home by the lake, to move closer to my children's school, HIS. My earlier life had been a series of relocations, but in my middle age, for the first time in life, I got to know what it feels like to leave a 'hometown.'

The first impression of our new home close to Hangzhou's other, but less famous lake, Xianghu, was that it was new and spacious. Our new house was again on the west side of the lake. Having left my hotel job, I no longer had guests to explore with. Instead, they were replaced by my two kids.

Having lived so long by West Lake, the name of Xianghu was unfamiliar to us, and the place looked as scarce of stories and legends as it was free of tourists and souvenir shops.



Xianghu is the larger lake near HIS, the other smaller lake is called Baimahu (White Horse Lake). Xiaoshan is the district that includes most of Xianghu. Although HIS is very close by, it's technically in Binjiang district. Kuahuqiao is the name of the local Neolithic civilization discovered only in the early 2000s but said to have 8,000 years of history.

The very long history of Xianghu

Believe it or not, Xiaoshan has 8,000 years of history – or so it is written, so gigantically that it's almost out of balance, inside the humble Kuahuqiao Site Museum. In fact, every presentation in the museum's halls struck us with surprise.

For instance, the oldest jade in southern China was discovered in Kuahuqiao, and it was also the earliest region to domesticate pigs. This civilization also invented the first wooden canoe in China, which happened to be one of the earliest in the world too.

The panels and objects in this small museum were there to boldly tell us that, at the bottom of this peaceful Xianghu Lake, lay the oldest civilization we could imagine.

"Xiaoshan nurtured the Southern Chinese civilization; that's where it comes from," said Mr. Gao proudly, a local worker who often helped us with repainting and renovations of our new house. He lives in Laohudong Village, where we sometimes go to buy seasonal vegetables. His recent concern is, soon in the future, the government will relocate all the local villagers as the tourism development of Xianghu Scenic Area expands.



Exploring the other side of the lake

Soon, I found myself other people to explore Xianghu with.

One was PAFA Fitness, as the dedicated HIS parents' group organized various activities around Xianghu – picnicking on the grass, walking around the lake, and cruising on a boat. On weekday mornings, we had the whole lake and shores just for ourselves, and more importantly we also had the whole time for ourselves.

Though our conversations were still mainly about our kids and school life, and we all knew that we had to leave before pick-up at the end of the school day, we were like happy and easy-minded Cinderellas who were at least reassured that this dreamlike time could be repeated often.

The other was the 'Walking on the Hills' group that I organize with two other HIS parents, a hiking group open to everyone – locals, expats, students, and tourists.





With the accumulation of so many routes throughout the year, some paths had become so familiar they felt like an extension of our own feet while others still brought new scenery which we paused to take in, in-between our engrossing conversations.

This weekly routine of random mountain climbing among the peaks of West Lake and Xianghu, as well as other areas of the city, somehow helped me to fill the distance between my 'old world' and 'new world'.

Building a new family home

It's no exaggeration to say that, for our kids, school is their entire world. At least, that's how I felt when I was their age. The kids were most excited to move closer to campus, so that our family life could be more incorporated into their world with easy access to after-school activities, time with friends, and weekend sleepovers.

In this still scarcely populated part of Xiaoshan, it was not difficult to find a relatively spacious house with a garden. We picked the first house we saw because we liked the fact that it was empty with no standing objects or furniture, but it had a character in its air. From the old house, we brought our antique furniture, collected half from the historical village near West Lake and half from the rest of the world.

Then, repainting, renovations, cleaning and organizing all started at the same time. In that hectic two-month period, the formidable amount of work over four floors was done entirely by myself with Mr. Gao, the worker from the local village. At times, I had flashbacks of hotel openings I'd done in a previous life, and I was strangely driven by a feeling that I had to do it all with my own hands to be able to start a real 'story' here.

"In my middle age, for the first time in life, I got to know what it feels like to leave a 'hometown'"

A journey through time and space

The kids soon found their favorite cycling route - leaving the house on bicycle, they'd pick up friends one by one from the neighboring compounds and end up on the west half side of Xianghu.

At the end of the 1.5-hour ride awaits the Zhejiang Modern Ceramic Art Museum, with its tall, old chimney, where they sometimes stop for pottery-making. They enjoy the spontaneous workshop with the two young art teachers who always speak softly and patiently, akin to hermits who have just come out of a cave.

I can hardly catch up with my children when they cycle - I never rode fast in our old home or other parts of the city, with the narrower streets, more people and e-bikes. But I'll never forget the first time I just let loose the brakes while going down a long and winding road.

We were the only fast-moving life in the whole wide road as far as we could see. The hands were almost off the handles and the feet off the pedals. But the wind against the face and the sense of gravity were telling me I was safely in balance. And the constant, subtle friction of the wheels against the road kept me aware of the direction.

It felt to me that we were riding through time and space. And the freedom – it was like improvising with an instrument, with my eyes closed, to a totally unknown song.

The slope ended and the road flattened out, but my bicycle was still in motion pushed by an invisible force. When the kids called me from far away, I recalled the words of a hotel guest in my younger, distant days.

Upon departure, he said: "I've come to stay at the most luxurious hotel, but what is true luxury? For me it's time and space, and freedom of mind. They are intangible things, but they belong to us. But because they are intangible, we need an 'experience' to feel them. So, I thank you for all the experiences you have created for us.

"I hope you will have a nice family one day and share experiences with them" D







Strong Core, Strong Minds

by Merryn Atkins
Occupational Therapist

Discover the hidden key to helping kids learn and thrive at school and in life

So, what is an 'Occupational Therapist' I hear you ask? School-based occupational therapists focus on improving students' access to education by supporting their functional performance across school-based occupations, such as participating in classroom routines, engaging in learning tasks, and navigating the school environment.

We aim to remove barriers to participation - whether that means helping a student strengthen their core for writing, regulate their energy for group work, or develop the coordination needed for playground games, so they can fully engage in their learning and school life. I'm excited to collaborate with staff and families to support meaningful participation for every student.



Ms Merryn with her family





Did you know your child's ability to focus, write comfortably, and enjoy playtime may be linked to their core strength? There's a strong yet often overlooked connection between physical development and learning.



What is core strength, and why should you care?

Imagine a tree trying to grow tall without a sturdy trunk. That's what learning can feel like for a child with weak core muscles. Core strength—centered around the abdomen, pelvis, and back—is what helps children sit upright, move with ease, and stay engaged in both classroom tasks and playground adventures.

With more time spent sitting, whether in classrooms, cars, or in front of screens - many children aren't getting the daily movement needed to build essential core muscles. The impact? Slouching, fidgeting, fatigue, and challenges with handwriting, sports, and coordination. When kids are working hard just to stay upright, there's less energy and focus left for learning and play

Signs your child might need a core boost

Core weakness can show up in subtle ways. Here are some signs to watch for:

- Slouching or leaning heavily on the table while writing
- Using one hand to prop up their head
- Constantly shifting in their seat or struggling to stay focused
- Getting tired quickly during writing or physical play
- Avoiding playground equipment or rough-and-tumble games
- Difficulty getting up from the floor or climbing

If you've noticed any of these, don't worry - there are plenty of fun ways to help!

Easy and fun core-building activities for home

Core strength doesn't come from sit-ups; it comes from play! Try these simple, fun activities to help your child grow stronger every day:

- Heavy Lifting Helpers: Let kids carry groceries or laundry baskets
- Playground Power: Encourage climbing, swinging, and balancing
- Animal Walks: Crab, bear, frog, inchworm, and wheelbarrow walks - do this from the bedroom to the bathroom!
- Wobbly Fun: Sit on a yoga ball while playing catch or board games
- Twister & Obstacle Courses: Use pillows and chairs for indoor adventures
- Family Movement: Go for walks, bike rides, or dance breaks together

Little and often is best! Just a few minutes of active play each day can make a big difference in your child's growth, confidence, and ability to learn.

Global Citizens

Meet the HIS teachers who also used to be international students

by Harper Girdner
PR & Communications Specialist

"You have to be kind to everyone whether you like them or not because your school is your home away from home, and everybody deserves to feel like they belong"

As an international community of more than 50 different nationalities and 1,000 students, every year HIS welcomes new students from around the globe. After graduation, they then head off to study at universities in all corners of the world.

This international life is something most of us are used to, especially for the many HIS faculty who used to be international students themselves.



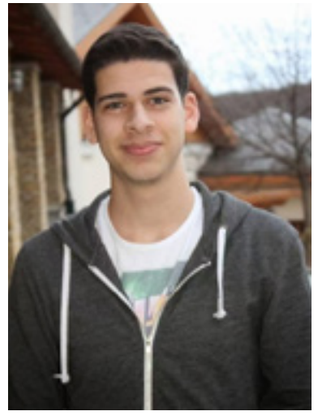
Adnan Fathi

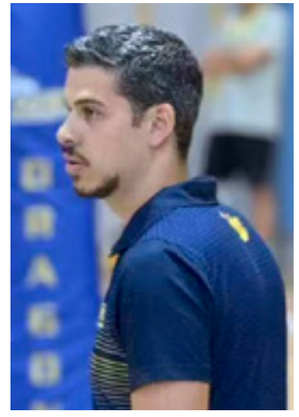
ECE Teacher



From: ***Egypt***

Studied at:
American International School of Budapest, Hungary





What is one of your favorite memories about attending international school?

My favorite memory would be hanging out with all my friends who all came from different places in the world. There was a time when we were still in middle school where we were teaching each other funny phrases from our home countries, and as well as being quite funny it also gave us an example of how although we're from very different parts of the world, there's a lot of similarities between our languages, cultures, weather and food.

Would you change anything about your experience at international school?

I don't think so. My experiences made me who I am, and I'm quite proud of who I am. I know there's still a lot to work on, but I don't think that being in an international environment was a negative thing. In fact, it was quite a positive time in my life.





Akira Sugata

Economics Teacher



From: ***Japan***

Studied at:

International School Bangkok (Thailand), Dover Court Preparatory School (Singapore), Canadian International School, International School Manila (Philippines), Nagoya International School (Japan)





Do you have any advice for new students who have just joined our international school?

My advice for students going to international schools would be to step out of your comfort zone and to diversify your friendship group. I think my friend groups in international schools were very diverse, and from that, I gained so much exposure to different opinions and perspectives and ideas. It's also really inspiring to see all my friends work overseas now.

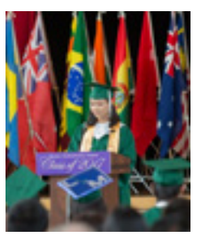
What made you then want to come and work at an international school?

I wanted to come work at an international school because it's kind of like paying homage to the environment that I grew up in as an international school kid. And I think being an international school kid has affected my teaching in two different ways.
The first one would be that when I was a lot younger, from first grade to third grade, I really didn't have somebody who looked like me in my classroom or as a teacher. And it really was a difficult thing for me to find a place of belonging.

So I think first, I really think about if the environment that I'm creating for the students in my classroom is a safe environment for my students to thrive in.
And the second thing is that I was a DP student as well. So I understand the hard work and the rigor that goes into the DP program. And I try to balance out the fun and then move forward with academic content to make sure that grade 12s are ready for their exams.

Would you change anything about your experiences at international schools?

I always fantasized about going to a local Japanese high school and wearing the uniform. And as much as I romanticize that, I don't think I would change anything for the world, because I think the way that I am today, the way that I present myself, the way that I communicate with other people, the way that I show up for other people, and my perspective and my worldview, has all been curated because of my international schooling.



Ingrid Majoos

Lower School Librarian



From: ***South Africa & Austria***

Studied at:

Le Bocage International School (Mauritius)







What did you learn or gain from the experience of attending international school?

I definitely feel I was exposed to so many different cultures. Mauritius itself has many different cultures and so just going to an international school there, it really opened my mind to different ways of doing things, different festivals and all of that. So it was really, really interesting and it really broadened my horizon.

What made you want to come and work for an international school yourself?

So I never imagined myself working for an international school, but we always wanted to travel, so it definitely did spark going to an international school. Being around different cultures did spark my desire to travel and to live somewhere else. One thing led to another and we were so excited when we then got the opportunity to work at HIS.



Julie Morrow

English B Teacher



From: ***Australia***

Studied at:
Faith Academy (Phillipines)







How did the community of international schools impact your outlook on the world?

I think that it gave me a really tangible firsthand account of seeing how different cultures lived and what was important to different people from different places.

I think it's one thing to read it in a book, but to go on sleepovers and see how different families work was really, really cool. And I'm so glad that I had that experience.

What is one of your favorite memories about attending international school?

I have great memories from being at international school, but I also have great memories from being an adult afterwards. I was in Los Angeles last year and wasn't planning to see any of my friends, because none of my friends lived in L.A.
But while I was there, I saw one of my friends from my high school post on her Instagram story that she was actually in L.A., and I was able to text her and be like, 'Are you in LA right now?', and she was shocked because she didn't even know I was in the US.

We were able to really quickly organize to see each other, and then we just hung out all night and got to bond over all these great stories, all the challenges, all the things that we thought were normal that definitely weren't normal. And I think those memories are so important to me.

Ruth Viader

Lower School Counselor



From: ***Spain***

Studied at:
International School Frankfurt (Germany), Lycée International de Saint-Germain-en -Laye (France)



What did you learn from the experience of attending international schools?

First of all, I learned English, which has opened so many doors for me, especially now working in an international school and living abroad.

But especially I remember just being very aware of different cultures. You know, being seven years old and suddenly I have friends from all around the world, very naturally being curious about geography and different cultures. It was very, very interesting.

How did attending international schools affect your career choices?

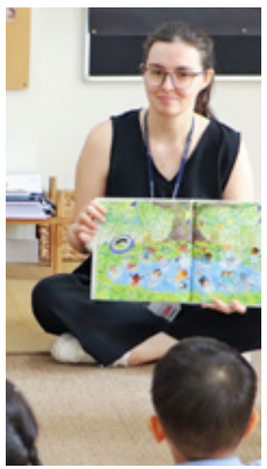
I think it was very interesting to be exposed to many cultures growing up, to many languages, but it definitely had a big impact on me because I wanted to continue traveling and I wanted to continue meeting new people and going new places, which is why I ended up in China.

Would you change anything about your experience at international schools?

I really don't think I would change anything. I really enjoyed my experiences. Changing schools and making new friends was hard at times, but it really opened up a lot of doors for me.







Suresh Dass

Student Support



From: ***Malaysia***

Studied at:
Kolej Tuanku Ja'afar (Malaysia),
Alice Smith School (Malaysia)



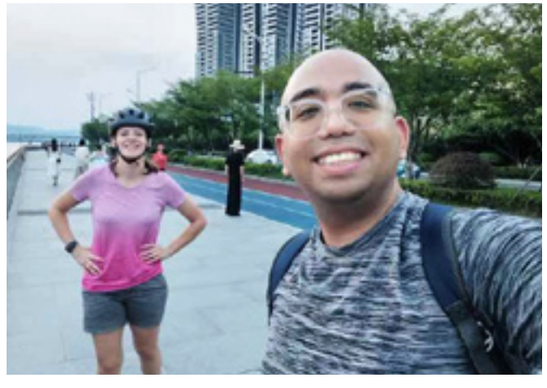


Do you have any advice for students who have just joined our international school?

You have to be kind to everyone whether you like them or not because your school is your home away from home and I feel like everybody deserves to feel like they belong.

What made you want to come and work for an international school yourself?

An international school opened up in my home-town in southern Malaysia, and I joined the school because I was interested to see what was being offered to students. I was also a freshman graduate at that time. It was supposed to be a two-year gig. Now it's my 17th year in international teaching. D





Hidden Hangzhou

Unlock the city's secrets and share the HIS magic with the Bon App photo competition



by Tane McLeay
Bon App Hangzhou

What if your favorite HIS memory could win you dinner, a staycation - and show you Hangzhou like you've never seen it before?

Bon App Hangzhou has mapped more than 15,000 real places in this city, from secret dumpling spots to mountain parks with zip lines. Now it's your turn to light up the map.

How it works

Scan the QR above to open the HIS page inside Bon App. Tap 'Photo' to upload your favorite HIS moment, or 'Review' to tell the story behind it. Just a few taps - and you're in.

(Important: please make sure you have consent from anyone you take a photo of, or instead just get a nice photo of the campus with no people!)

Prizes to win

For the most memorable posts, we've got prizes worth bragging about:

- **A night for two at MUMIAN Hotel (Hyatt's Unbound Collection)**
- **Dinner for four at L'oste al 23**
- **Bright yellow Bon App frisbees - your new park day essential**

(Winners announced two weeks after publication)

Who can join?

Students, teachers, families, alumni, friends - if HIS is part of your world, this is for you. No forms, no fuss - just post, and you've claimed your space in the city story.

Bon App's Guide to Hidden Hangzhou

Bon App's 'Hidden Gems' list is full of places you might not believe exist in Hangzhou. Here's a taste.

(While you can't always book tickets or seats, you can see place names and addresses in both languages and click the map to call a Didi).

F2 International Go Kart Track

Race real gas karts on a multi-level track above the Auto Mall, with a separate electric course for kids. After your laps, stay for karaoke, VR, archery, and arcade games. A full day or evening of fun - open late.

FLYSKY Trampoline Gym

Bounce, slide, dive into foam pits - full-body fun for all ages. Bonus: Cirque du Soleil's X Show is nearby.

North Peak Cable Car

Ride up for sweeping views, then hike through forest paths past Lingyin Temple and ancient grottoes.

Hangzhou Safari Park

Drive-through animal zones, panda viewing, giraffes, and big cats. It's an extremely well laid out zoo worth spending a whole day in.

Dama Lane

Stroll through one of Hangzhou's most lived-in streets - fruit stands, seafood vendors, soy milk, and Chinese chess. Come early for Michelin-rated snacks, and keep walking to find an air raid shelter, city wall ruins, or the old fire watch tower. A living museum of old Hangzhou and just a short walk to Hefang Street.

Wushan Night Market

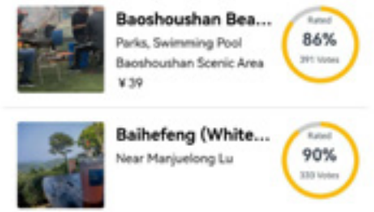
Open nightly with more than 100 stalls, this compact classic is a lively alternative to Wulin Night Market.














What's Bon App?

Looking for a 'family-friendly spot' or 'top photography spots,' but never sure where to start? Bon App doesn't rely on search bars - we rely on walking the city. From 'Top 20 Pet-Friendly Spots' to 'Local Hidden Restaurants' and Community Favorites,' Bon App's curated lists are where the magic happens. Browse, save, and explore.

World Ice Arena

Real ice rink in the MixC Mall (one of six ice rinks in Hangzhou) with beginner-friendly rentals and lessons.

Baihefeng

Hike up to this breezy hilltop rope swing (from Pillow Books Cafe), for city views, and photo ops - then descend to Manjuelong for cafés and caves.

Xiaoshan Robot Expo Center

Battling bots, mechanical arms, and family-friendly tech displays.

Party Day

More than indoor activities - from bowling and VR to archery and karting - all under one roof.

Chinese Hangzhou Cuisine Museum

Next to Jiangyangfan Ecological Park, this food museum lets you eat, learn, and watch live demos of local cuisine.

Powerlong Art Center

Gallery-sized exhibits with family-friendly shows - think dinosaurs, Da Vinci, Egypt, and more in interactive science-art-engineering mashups.

China Knives, Scissors & Swords Museum

On special occasions, catch live blacksmithing. A surprisingly fascinating museum. Arrive by water bus from Wulinmen or walk along the canal afterwards to a cafe or gallery in an old fuel tank at Xiaohe Park.

Jianghemei Ocean Park Aquarium

Inside the 'children's mall': 180 degree walkthrough, global fish displays, feeding tanks, and a mermaid show.

LEGO Flagship Store

Hangzhou's LEGO flagship with build zones and rare displays, right in the heart of the city near Hamley's Toy Park.





We Are One

The school year begins with spirit of parent togetherness at annual PAFA Welcome Lunch

by PAFA
HIS Parents

We were thrilled to kick off the school year with our annual Hangzhou International School PAFA Welcome Lunch! PAFA stands for Parents and Friends Association, and has been part of HIS since its founding in 2002.

With more than 90 parents gathering to celebrate and connect, it was an afternoon filled with warmth, laughter, and the unmistakable spirit of community.

Upon arrival, each parent was greeted with a personalized name tag, inviting them to share their name and their child's grade. This small gesture created an immediate sense of belonging, helping everyone feel right at home.

To help everyone stay organized and prepared for the year ahead, we also gifted each family with a colorful school calendar and a handy PAFA fridge magnet.





The PAFA social lunch team consisting of Anuja, Katie, Kristine, Aman, Rajni, Vanessa, Lulu, Stefanie, Naziha and Yilan, extended a warm welcome to the whole community marking the beginning of the event. The delicious buffet spread, featuring a variety of delectable dishes, was a highlight that fueled the friendly chatter among parents.

One of the evening's most enjoyable moments was the engaging questionnaire game, where parents had the opportunity to connect with others from their child's class. This fun-filled activity sparked conversations, shared stories, and fostered new friendships, making it easier for everyone to bond.

Following the game, Ms Andrea, HIS Director of Admissions & Community Relations, took to the stage to articulate the mission and values of PAFA. She emphasized that it is about nurturing friendships, supporting one another, and enhancing our vibrant school community.

By engaging with PAFA, parents not only contribute to their children's experience but also enrich their own through shared experiences. Ms Andrea also outlined the various ways parents can get involved in PAFA activities, which include:

- *Fitness Sessions: Get moving and stay healthy while connecting with other parents*
- *Book Club: Dive into captivating literature and engage in stimulating discussions*
- *Kitchen Team: Learn new recipes from all over the world and also share yours as you make new connections*
- *Cheer Squad: Join in the excitement and support our school events with enthusiasm*
- *Luncheons: Participate in organized gatherings that provide an opportunity to relax and socialize*

Whether you want to spearhead an activity or simply participate, there is a perfect fit for everyone at HIS PAFA. As the event came to a joyful close, we captured the spirit of our gathering with a group photo that showcased the beaming faces of our community.

We are truly excited to welcome all new parents into the HIS family and are eager for what lies ahead. Throughout the year, we invite you to take part in more PAFA events and initiatives.

Together, let's make this a memorable year for our children and create lasting connections as parents. Here's to an incredible school year full of growth, friendship, and fun.



Class of 2019

Deeyah Harwani

by Harper Girdner

PR & Communications Specialist

"The IB grind was real, but it made everything after feel possible..."

"That's the thing about HIS, the community truly stays with you, even years later"

Deeyah Harwani is an HIS Alumni who joined the HIS community in 7th grade and graduated in the Class of 2019.

During her time at HIS she was greatly involved in the community, including participating in different sports such as the girls soccer team.

Currently making waves in marketing, her time at HIS influenced her journey for the better as she took the lessons she made here and applied the to the future.

Just Enjoy It

Deeyah Harwani spills the beans on her favorite school memories

Can you share more about your experiences and journey at HIS?

My years spent at HIS were truly unforgettable. From learning with some of the most passionate and supportive teachers to traveling across China, to playing sports with my classmates, HIS shaped a huge part of who I am today.

What are some of your favorite chool memories?

Some of my favourite memories were the school trips across China. They brought us closer, not just as classmates, but as real friends. The sports seasons were another highlight. I played both basketball and soccer, and one of my proudest moments was winning the ACAMIS Girls Soccer Championship. I still remember the energy, the teamwork, and the celebration. It was pure joy from start to finish.

What kind of CCAs (Co-curricular Activities) did you join at HIS? How did these help you in your life after graduation?

I was always involved in CCAs, especially sports, and those experiences gave me so much more than fun memories. They taught me how to lead, how to collaborate, and how to stay confident. These are skills that have helped me in university and beyond.

After graduating, what university did you attend? Did you feel well prepared?

After graduating, I studied at the EU Business School, Barcelona, majoring in PR and Communications. I also earned a Business Administration degree from the University of Derby in the UK.

The IB at HIS prepared me well, not just with academic knowledge but with time management, creative thinking, and a strong work ethic. The IB grind was real, but it made everything after feel possible.

What are you currently up to?

After university, I started working in Dubai at the region's first SO/Hotel, a fashion and art-led property, as part of the marketing team. It was an exciting space that really aligned with my creative side.







I now work as the Marketing Manager for Lyda Beauty, an award-winning beauty brand that I absolutely love. I am also the producer of the 'Spill The Coffee With Us' Podcast. I plan to keep growing in these industries and hopefully build something of my own in the future.

What advice would you give to current HIS students?

My one piece of advice to HIS students is to enjoy it. Yes, study hard, but also make memories, laugh a lot, and hold onto the little moments! They're the ones that stay with you.

Have you kept in touch with any of your classmates from your time here?

Yes, I'm still in touch with many of my classmates.

That's the thing about HIS, the community truly stays with you, even years later. And it's not just the friends, but also the teachers.

I'm so grateful to have learned from some of the best. Their support, energy, and passion made learning feel exciting and meaningful every single day.



ALUMNI STORIES

Class of 2020

Maria Gimeno

by Harper Girdner

PR & Communications Specialist

"It's okay to try, it's okay to get it wrong, because that's how we learn..."

"At HIS, you're never just on your own; there's always someone ready to support you, talk to you, and help you out"

Maria Gimeno is a former HIS student and graduate from the Class of 2020, who has now travelled full circle and become a classroom teacher at HIS.

During her time as a student, she grew through exploring her interests, and was a part of many activities such as swimming, National Honors Society, and student tutoring.

Now, Maria works as a 3th grade teacher, connecting her many experiences as an HIS alumni to her students, making the classroom a supportive and uplifting atmosphere for students to learn and grow, many of whom she first taught as a trainee in kindergarten.

The Comeback Kid

After graduating from university, alum Maria Gimeno knew there was only one place to go

When did you attend HIS and for how long?

I attended HIS from 2016 until I graduated in 2020. I then started working here last year right after university, and this is my second year back!





What sort of things did you get involved in after school?

I was part of the Swim team at HIS, which helped me to manage my time and stay healthy, giving me a break from academics. I also participated in the National Honor Society, which helped me develop teaching skills early on as I tutored younger students at HIS.



Was it difficult joining HIS in a later grade?

I started in 10th grade at HIS and joined a class of people that had mostly grown up together. Despite that, they never made me feel left out, and I created strong friendships from studying here.

I was really shy when I first joined HIS and wasn't the type to raise my hand in class or speak up much, but the teachers here always encouraged us to share our opinions and made it feel safe to try, even if you got something wrong.

HIS also gave me the opportunity to explore my interests. I remember in my visual arts class I was determined to combine my passion for history and literature within my artworks.

At first, my art teacher was a bit apprehensive about the idea, but instead of discouraging me, she challenged me to find creative ways to make it work. That support not only helped me grow as an artist but gave me the confidence to take risks and trust my own ideas.

The most significant activity for me though was when we graduated.

It was the Covid years, HIS was running a summer school and provided internships for alumni. A few of my classmates and I worked in various roles across the school.

As I already knew I wanted to be a teacher, I was placed in kindergarten and worked alongside the teachers there. This was the best experience I could have had as it strengthened my passion for teaching.

After the internship, what university did you attend?

I went to the Netherlands and attended NHL Stenden university where I studied in the International Teaching Education Program. Going through the whole IB process had prepared me more than I realized. Every DP teacher tells you their practice papers and projects prepare you for university, but it was only after my first assignment that I realized how much the IB had built my foundation in research and essay writing.



What brought you back to work at HIS?

After graduating from university, I was looking for an opportunity to get my postgraduate education certificate while working in the classroom.

I had already been teaching in international schools in Europe, and considered working there, but as I was searching, I learned HIS could offer exactly what I needed. I was placed in a 5th grade class and began teaching while studying for my postgraduate course.

Coming back was an interesting experience as it felt like 'coming home' but also completely different. A new campus and only a few familiar teacher faces helped to make it feel like a fresh start. But the HIS feeling of community was still there, despite a much larger number of students in the school.

Looking back on your time at HIS as a student, and now as a teacher, what values or lessons do you still carry with you today?

A lesson I hold onto is the importance of just trying. At HIS, mistakes weren't treated as failures but as part of the process. That was difficult for me at first, but over time it helped me build confidence.

Now, as a teacher, I try to give my students that same reassurance: it's okay to try, it's okay to get it wrong, because that's how we learn.



As a student and now teacher, I am reminded that balancing academics, passions, and interests are important. We strive to have students explore all their interests and not to only focus on the academics. That has shaped how I see classrooms today where we incorporate student ideas and interests into their learning.

Lastly, I carry the value of community. At HIS, you're never just on your own; there's always someone ready to support you, talk to you, and help you out. I find that this still holds true as a student and a teacher. I try to bring that same feeling into my own classroom now.

What are some of your favorite memories from your time so far at HIS?

My favorite memory I have is the first day I realized which group of kids I would be teaching.

As they all came in, I kept thinking these kids looked so familiar to me. It took me a while to realize that a large portion of my class I had taught during my summer internship in kindergarten.

None of them really remembered me from back then aside from being 'the woman in the back of the classroom,' but I did.

From kindergartners to 5th graders, I couldn't help but notice how their personalities had stayed the same this whole time. It will be a favorite memory of mine, being able to be in the classroom with the kids who first inspired me to become a teacher. I hope they remember me this time!



What advice would you give to current HIS students?

Enjoy being in school, which coming from a teacher sounds obvious. The IB years can feel tough when you're in the middle of them, but they really do prepare you for what comes next.

Try to enjoy your EE and IA topics—choose something that excites you rather than just what feels easiest, because I guarantee it makes the process much more rewarding.

My history teacher once told me 'You're marrying this topic so make sure you love it.' Don't be afraid to take risks and try new things either, because that's often where you discover what you're truly passionate about.

Have you kept in touch with any of your former classmates?

I still talk to a few of my classmates from HIS who are spread all over the world. I've built strong friendships here, and despite not seeing them every day or even every year, we still manage to be a part of each other's lives. Some of them even attended my university graduation!

I think that's one of the unique things of being an international student—you say goodbye a lot, but the connections you make can last a lifetime.



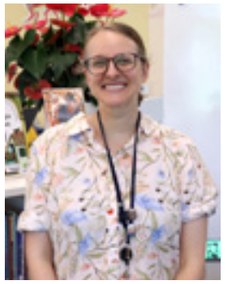


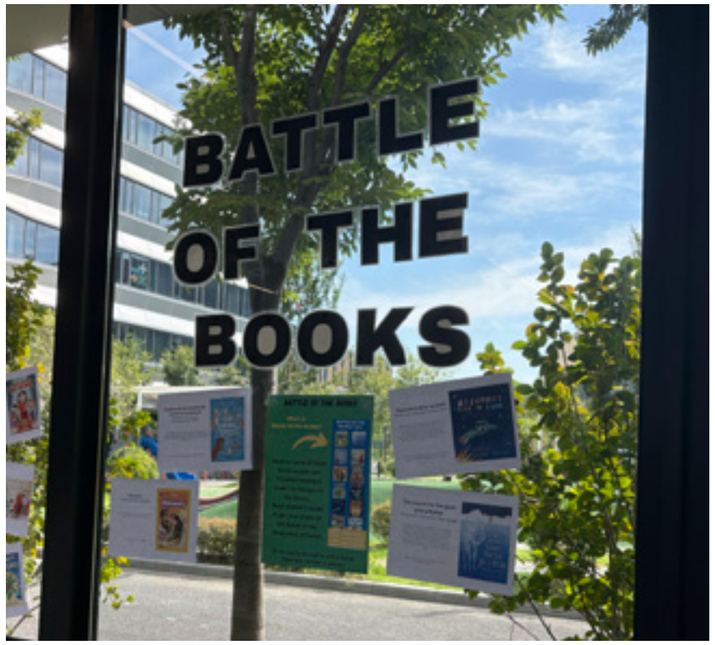
LOWER SCHOOL

May the Best Book Win

How the Lower School 'Battle of the Books' aims to build our community through promoting reading

by Ingrid Majoos
Lower School Librarian





In the Lower School Library we host a special activity each semester, for grades 2 to 5, to inspire reading and collaboration and it is called the 'Battle of the Books'.

What is the Battle of the Books?!

The first round of this activity takes place from August to December and the second one is March to June. In each round 12 different books are selected and compete to see what book will come out as the favorite for the students, staff and community.

The books are balanced and include titles that are non-fiction, chapter books, graphic novels and picture books. Another goal is to include international authors (old and new) and to cover a diverse range of themes. This allows students to find books that appeal to them but also to challenge them to try new books and genres and collections.

One of the best ways to engage with your child is through reading.

The activity of storytelling, be it through speaking, reading, pictures or actions, has been bringing people and communities together since the beginning of time. We can share experiences, extend our learning and grow together in new and amazing ways.





All students from Grade 2 to 5 are welcome to join in and they can work independently or with a buddy or even two. The buddy can be a classmate, friend, teacher, parent or guardian. Last semester 135 students completed at least one quiz, while 97 students completed five or more quizzes and this means over 500 quizzes were checked in the Lower School library in one semester.

How can you enter the Battle of the Books?

Read as many of the 12 books as you can - some books have yellow stickers and those are intended for students in Grades 3 to 5.

Finished reading a book? Come and do the book quiz in the library. There are specific computers in the library where you can do the quiz. Remember the first time you take the quiz, that score will be counted, so try your best.

If you read at least five books, you to get your photo on the Battle of the Books Wall of Fame - come and check it out in the library.

How do we decide which book is the favorite?

At the end of November, students will have a chance to vote for their favorite books. Students from grades 2 to 5, will also be rewarded for their dedication to the activity, number of books read and quizzes completed.



What does the activity aim to achieve?

To inspire reading and student collaboration in a fun way. The students are also reading the quiz questions and practising their typing skills on the computer.

Hopefully they also feel proud to see their faces on the Battle of the Books 'Wall of Fame' and want to share their reading with other classmates, teachers and family.

Stronger Together

Building community in Personal Social and Physical Education through team teaching

by Rachel Ford, Sean McSheffrey & Rachel Jackson

Lower School PSPE Teachers





At HIS, we have brought together three PSPE teachers to collaboratively teach Lower School PSPE classes.

After considering research on best teaching practices, we believe this collaborative approach holds benefits that go beyond traditional teaching methods, a belief also held in 2009 study, 'An educational psychology success story', who support that this innovative approach allows for better differentiation within class, while helping students develop communication skills and caring attitudes.

"Building community in Personal Social and Physical Education through team teaching"

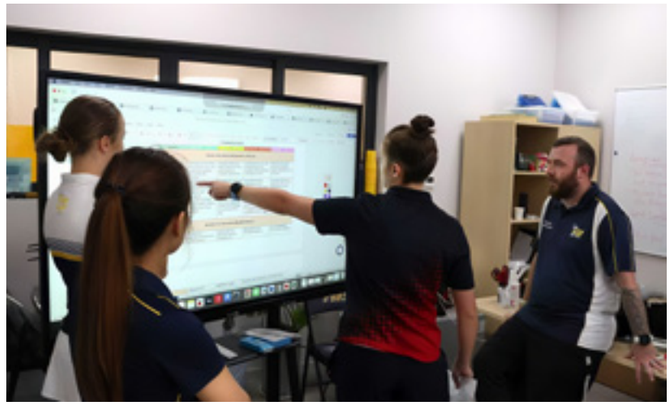
As a Lower School PSPE department, we believe we have worked together to create a dynamic and engaging curriculum with the goal of meeting the needs of all students, whilst motivating and inspiring healthy, active lifestyles.

As educators, we have found that team teaching offers a unique opportunity for professional growth and development. We can learn from each other's experiences, teaching styles, and expertise.

This constant collaboration of ideas and exchange of constructive feedback has challenged us to continuously improve our teaching practice and strive for excellence. This way, we can offer students the best possible educational experience.

In addition to our professional growth, team teaching has allowed us to provide a wider range of learning experiences by increasing the number of sports and physical activities our students are educated in.

Differentiation has also improved as a greater number of teachers allows for a greater choice in access to learning, whether this be through activity stations, differentiated equipment or activity design, students can still



receive personalised feedback and achieve learning outcomes. We believe team teaching has led to the goal of creating the best possible learning experiences for the students.

Students shared their opinions on our new team-teaching approach to PSPE:

"I enjoy having a rotation between different PSPE teachers because I experience different types of teaching. I enjoy tournaments and playing against different classes"

— Lewis 5D



This is particularly true in Grade 5 classes, as team teaching two classes at a time has allowed us to plan a Sports Education unit which would not be possible with a single class and a single teacher.

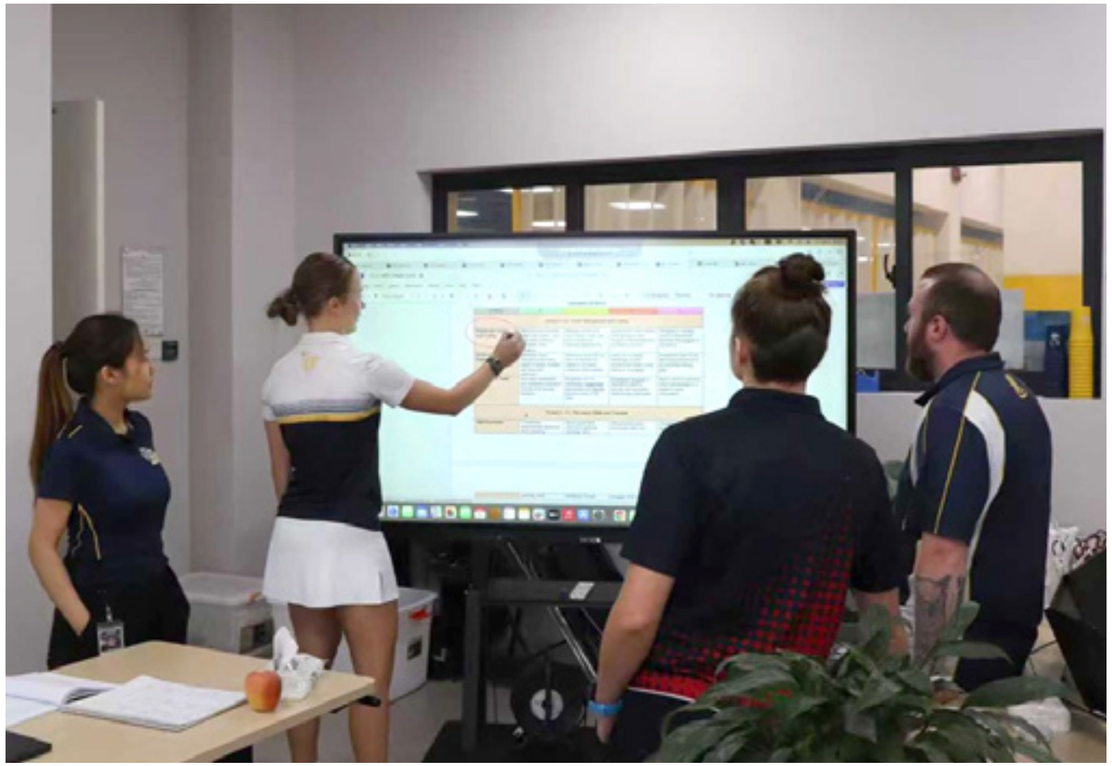
"In PSPE class we are learning about different invasion games, like ultimate frisbee and floor hockey. Different teachers teach us different games, so we can learn about more sports and play against more teams"

— Maggie 5C

"I enjoy playing two different sports with different teachers so I can learn how to play frisbee and hockey at the same time"

— Jake 5C

Jake continued to add that he hopes the collaboration time between students will continue to increase.



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Students and teachers can agree that team teaching in PSPE is a powerful tool for building community, fostering collaboration, and enhancing the overall learning experience for students.

A 2015 study 'Can cooperative learning achieve the four learning outcomes of physical education?' supported that this approach not only benefits students by providing a more personalized and engaging learning experience but also empowers us, as educators, to grow both personally and professionally.

Stronger together, through team teaching, we can create a brighter future for our students.

Lessons of Hope

Reflections on a summer of service to others, learning, and global citizenship

by Philip Z-K
HIS student





During the summer holiday, I embarked on a journey that would profoundly shape my perspective on service to others, empathy, and global citizenship.

Invited by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), I joined a group of international volunteers in Nepal to participate in various projects aimed at supporting local communities and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Representing Hangzhou International School (HIS), I was one of 30 volunteers aged between 10 and 18, united by a shared purpose to make a difference.

My experiences in Nepal, and subsequent reflections in Madrid, Spain and Hangzhou, China, have left an indelible mark on my understanding of what it means to be a volunteer and a compassionate global citizen.



Arrival in Kathmandu: Orientation and Insight

Our journey began in the bustling heart of Nepal, Kathmandu. Upon arrival, our team gathered at the UNDP head office for an orientation session that laid the foundation for our volunteering experience.

The meeting introduced us to the pressing challenges facing Nepal: poverty, limited resources, and infrastructural hurdles. We learned about the SDGs adopted by the United Nations - universal goals designed to ensure peace and prosperity for all people, regardless of nationality or background.

The staff emphasized the importance of safety precautions and teamwork, preparing us for the realities we would encounter. We discovered that Nepal, while a developing nation, is home to resilient and kind-hearted people who strive for a better future despite adversity. The orientation instilled in me a sense of responsibility - not just as a volunteer, but as a representative of HIS and a young ambassador for positive change.

Volunteering Projects: Education, Creativity, and Cultural Exchange

Our team initiated the first project by painting the interior of a local secondary school. The task was not only about aesthetics but symbolized the renewal of hope and pride in the learning environment.

The smiles of students and teachers as they saw their revitalized classrooms underscored the impact of even small contributions.

Next, we were invited to participate in activities at a school of hospitality. Here, we learned about traditional Nepalese cuisine, cooking techniques, and the culture that surrounds food in Nepal. This experience was a celebration of local heritage and an opportunity to engage in meaningful cultural exchange.

However, the most touching part of my journey came during our visit to the Orphan and Helpless Children Development Society. Witnessing the lives of children growing up without parents or basic resources was both heartbreaking and inspiring.

Our team organized English lessons and sessions of cultural exchange, offering the children opportunities to broaden their horizons and express themselves. Many times, I had to compose myself to hold back tears, as the innocence and curiosity of the children moved me deeply.

During quiet moments, I sat with the kids as they asked questions about my daily life and school. They listened in disbelief as I described HIS - a school with students from more than 50 nationalities, all studying happily together in an environment of diversity and acceptance.

Their reactions reminded me of the privileges I have and the importance of sharing those experiences to inspire hope.

"They listened in disbelief as I dscribed HIS - a school with students from more than 50 nationalities, all studying happily together in an environment of diversity and acceptance"







Sharing Experiences: Madrid and the Power of Storytelling

Just five days after leaving Nepal, I traveled to Madrid, Spain, and visited the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) with my sister.

In a meeting room filled with professionals dedicated to global development, I shared the stories and insights I had gained in Nepal. The discussion focused on the SDGs, especially the role of education in empowering youth and breaking cycles of poverty.

Sharing my experiences was both a responsibility and a privilege. It allowed me to give voice to the children and communities I had met, to advocate for their needs, and to emphasize the resilience and optimism that characterizes Nepal. It also helped me recognize the universal desire for dignity, respect, and opportunity - values that transcend borders.

Personal Reflections: Lessons Learned Outside the Classroom

The time I spent volunteering in Nepal provided lessons far beyond the confines of a classroom. Meeting children without parents challenged me to reflect on gratitude for my own upbringing, the support of my family, and the caring environment at HIS.

Poverty in Nepal is real, but so is resilience. The children in the orphanage may have fewer material resources, but they still laugh, study, and dream. Their joy and perseverance in the face of hardship taught me that happiness is not dependent on possessions, but on human connection and hope.

"Happiness is not dependent on possessions, but on human connection and hope"

The lack of clean water and basic supplies was an everyday reality for many of the children. Our small gesture of donating writing materials brought genuine happiness to their school. Despite language barriers, we discovered that smiles are universal. We played and laughed together, creating memories that transcended words.

These experiences fostered a deep sense of empathy and compassion within me. They made me realize the importance of being globally aware and involved - not just for the sake of those in need, but for my own growth as a person who cares about the wider world.

Looking Forward: Commitment to Service

My journey has inspired me to continue volunteering in developing countries. I look forward to returning to Nepal, and to seeking out new opportunities to serve, learn, and grow.

Volunteering is more than an act of giving; it is a journey of becoming more aware, compassionate, and understanding of the diversity of human experiences. This commitment extends to my daily life.

In Hangzhou, upon my return, I was asked what advice I would give based on my real-life experiences. The most important lesson I learned is to ask questions first before assuming what people need.

n the orphanage, I discovered that most of the children valued friendship and human connection more than material school supplies. Sometimes, the simplest act - such as sitting with someone who is eating alone - can make a profound difference.





Conclusion: Building Bridges Across Cultures

Representing HIS as an international volunteer in Nepal was a transformative experience. It deepened my understanding of global challenges, strengthened my commitment to service, and broadened my perspective on what it means to be part of a diverse and interconnected world.

The memories of my time in Nepal - the laughter of children, the spirit of teamwork, and the exchange of cultures - will remain with me always.

As I aspire to continue volunteering and advocating for positive change, I carry with me the lessons of humility, gratitude, and empathy.

My journey is a testament to the power of international cooperation, the importance of asking questions and listening, and the enduring impact of kindness and friendship.

About UNDP

UNDP works in about 170 countries and territories, helping to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and exclusion, and build resilience so countries can sustain progress. As the UN's development agency, UNDP plays a critical role in helping countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Musical history!

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Community Matters

For one HIS teacher, the lessons of the past have informed her inclusive philosophy

by Akira Sugata
Economics / Social Studies Teacher





"What this brought to my classroom was not only a sense of belonging but also a sense of community"

Growing up in a predominantly white international school environment, I always felt a little out of place.

Especially during my elementary school years, where I developed a huge attachment to one of my American-German friends and desperately wanted to change my name from Akira to "Jewel" to match her middle name.

It was a strange experience to go from a Japanese kindergarten in central Tokyo to a classroom full of students in a foreign country, who not only looked different but also spoke in what I assumed back then was complete and utter gibberish.

One of the main reasons I became an international educator was due to my childhood experience as an international school kid. I distinctly remember what it was like to feel like I didn't fit in. I remember what it felt like to look different, speak differently, and even eat differently. It took a while for me to accept my own differences.

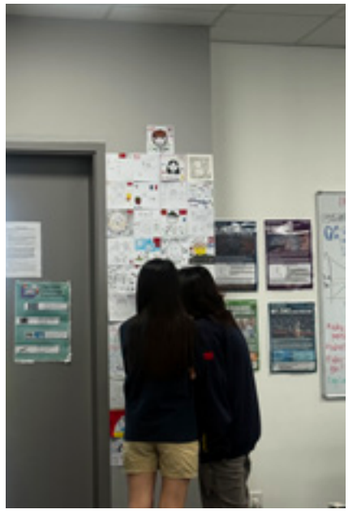
I was always going to have brown eyes and hair. My mother was never going to pack me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch. And my family was always going to be Japanese - no matter how hard I prayed.

During my two years at HIS, I have focused on ensuring that my students feel a sense of belonging in my classroom - something I was not entirely sure I had while growing up.

One way I have done this is by taking a 20-to-30-minute chunk of my first day of classes for all students - no matter their age - to create personality tiles that then decorate my classroom walls.

With this activity, each student was encouraged to draw their own self-portrait (creativity was encouraged), write their preferred name, and decorate their tiles with things that represent them and their identity.







What this brought to my classroom was not only a sense of belonging but also a sense of community.

This year, I have the joy of teaching both middle school and high school students with Grade 8 Social Studies and Grade 11 and 12 DP Economics. As I hung up the tiles on my classroom wall, I had middle school students inquire about the high school students and their tiles. Other students came in during break time to show their tiles to friends from another class.

Most of the time, students would come into class a little early to admire everyone's artwork - including their own. It was a nice way to see the different grade levels connect through their work, creating a small community of learners within my classroom.

As I start my third year in Hangzhou, I hope to continue fulfilling my purpose of creating belonging and community within my small classroom.

Unlike my own experience of feeling out of place, I want my students to look up and see a reflection of themselves in the classroom walls. It is with intention that I conduct activities like the personality tiles, to celebrate the individuality of my students.

By fostering this sense of belonging, I hope to create a supportive community where students feel valued and connected - just as I wished for during my own school years.

The Power of Song

An immersive journey with Estonia's singing communities

by Emer Cordoba
Music Teacher



"Singing not only communicates stories and perspectives, it also connects us with one another"

Why do people sing? How does singing change the lives of people?

You're in a concert with your favorite singer. You could stand still silently, but you feel the influence of music running free throughout your being. Before you know it, you just feel an impulse to start humming or singing along with people around you.

Singing together can be a powerful musical and social experience, creating community as it unfolds around our ears, guiding our shared perception, stirring up our emotions, making our feet tap along, and synchronizing our hearts, beat after beat after beat.







The Singing Spirit of a Nation

From the first Song Festival held in 1869, to the multiple massive singing gatherings across the Baltic region, to the numerous high-quality choral ensembles and orchestras that thrive in modern Estonia, singing has undeniably influenced the destiny of this country.

At the Festival, I witnessed the brave spirits of a nation passionately singing, listened to an ocean of voices celebrating their most beloved songs, and experienced the thrill of being surrounded by 100,000 souls singing harmonies in the rain.

This year, under the motto 'Iseoma' ('My Own'), the festival also welcomed back several dozens of Estonian choirs established in other countries, all returning to their homeland to sing with their own people.

After decades attending choral competitions and festivals around the world, this was the largest group of trained singers celebrating their national identity that I had ever witnessed, truly an inspiring moment.

Many years ago, I heard about a legendary musical celebration in Europe, the Estonian Song and Dance Festival, where a massive crowd of a hundred thousand people sing their hearts out in choral harmony. Such a scene was unimaginable for me back then.

In Estonia, singing is deeply rooted in their national identity. For centuries, Estonians have expressed their unique language, culture, and heritage through song.

This festival with over 150 years of tradition, is celebrated every 5 years. Due to its cultural significance, the event has been designated by the UNESCO as a 'Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'.

This summer, I finally traveled to Estonia; firstly, to experience that massive singing celebration, secondly, to partake in a professional opportunity with world-class mentors and musicians.









Masterclass with a World-Class Choir

Following the Festival, I attended 'Leading Voices', a symposium organized by the European Choral Association.

I was particularly thrilled about participating in a choral conducting masterclass with the internationally acclaimed Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (EPCC) under the guidance of Estonian Maestro Risto Joost. The Choir was named one of the 'World's 10 Best Choirs' by BBC Music magazine. They also won the Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance twice and have been nominated 16 times.

Out of the many applicants who auditioned, only nine active participants were chosen, and I was honored to be counted as one of them.

In the masterclass, we studied complex choral works in Estonian, Italian, French, Russian, Finnish, Latin, and English. Also, each conductor was assigned a different choral work to perform in concert.

Surprisingly, I was assigned the only choral work in Estonian language in the list, a picturesque song set with the title 'Sügismaastikud' (Autumn Landscapes), written by the famous Estonian composer Veljo Tormis.

My task: Unlocking the richness in meaning within Estonian language lyrics, as well as the musicality laid out in a vocally demanding composition, while simultaneously working with the undisputed choral music ambassador of Estonia.

What an opportunity to strengthen our IB ATL (Approaches to Learning) Skills and Learner Profiles: Creative Thinking, Collaboration, Reflection, Transfer, Risk-Taker, Knowledgeable, Communicator, the list goes on and on.

Studying under Maestro Risto Joost's caring guidance, evocative musical ideas, and refined conducting artistry was genuinely an enriching experience. The masterclass became a celebration of growth among all participants, bringing out our strengths, showcasing the Chamber Choir's top-notch musicianship, and creating long-lasting bonds within our international cohort of conductors.





Traveling to these musical celebrations was a dream come true. The events are evidence that singing not only communicates stories and perspectives, it also connects us with one another, it nurtures our shared humanity, it even creates bonds stronger than tangible things, and it transcends timelines.

Today, the world embraces a digital life, yet singing will remain a deeply human activity for the ages. As John Rutter says about choral singing, "… [it] goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community."

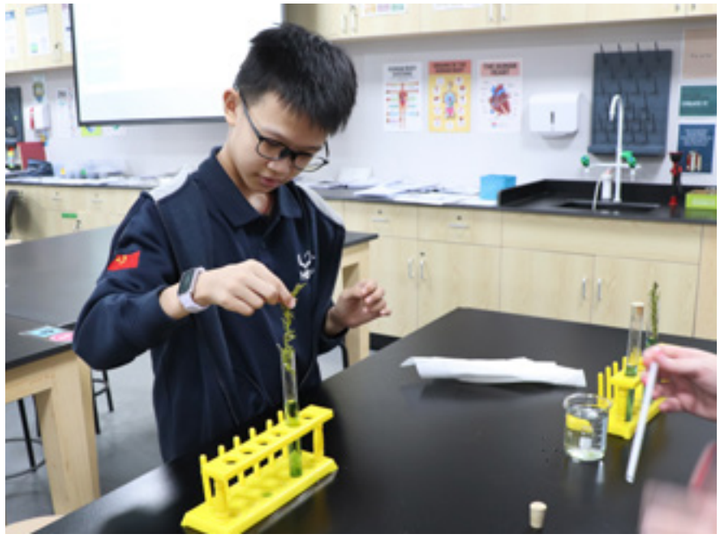
If you are interested, don't miss the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir perform in China!

31 October, 7.30pm, Cadillac Shanghai Concert Hall

by Kingsley C
HIS student

First Impressions

A new HIS student discovers a welcome community full of respect and collaboration



"The content-rich and rigorous classes are thoughtfully designed to make learning enjoyable. For a new student, this is encouraging: curiosity is rewarded"

Arriving at a new school always comes with a mix of excitement and curiosity. From my very first day at HIS, I observed that students and faculty communicate with one another to create an environment where academic prowess is fostered and personal identity thrives thanks to ample opportunities.

The classroom is one of the most evident places where these impressions solidify. In particular, the science lessons stood out as a strong example of how the school combines rigor with accessibility.

Rather than simply focusing on memorization and knowledge, the science curriculum nurtures critical thinking and encourages students to test ideas scientifically and tackle problems creatively. What makes this especially valuable is the way lessons connect to the real world.

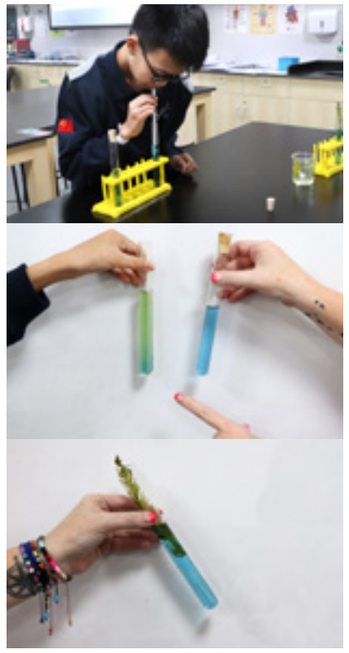
Experiments and simulations are designed not just to illustrate theories learned in class, but to encourage students to ask why something matters and how it might apply beyond the classroom. It also helps struggling learners to break down difficult concepts into more easily grasped ideas.

The content-rich and rigorous classes are thoughtfully designed to make learning enjoyable. For a new student, this is encouraging: curiosity is rewarded. The academic environment here shows a balance one very rarely finds in other schools.

Lessons are challenging, with high expectations and a clear orientation. Teachers encourage consolidation, engage in meaningful discussions, and adapt lessons to the needs of different students, which helps make the challenge of academic work feel less daunting and more rewarding.

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Opportunities are abundant during the lesson, from completing classroom activities to exploring personal interests. This flexibility stretches across other subjects too; language classes encourage meticulous communication while still allowing room for creativity. Social studies lessons promote debate and analysis, widening students' views by introducing unexpected perspectives.

Not only does the school strongly value academic success, but it also guarantees that students are able to learn in their strength and style. This makes it clear that learning at HIS is not about conforming into a strict framework but exploring different pathways to grow both as a student and a global citizen. Just as academics encourage flexibility, the school's values extend naturally into its community and extracurricular life.

A further value that quickly becomes evident is community. The heavy emphasis on this lies in students' willingness to collaborate, share ideas, and support one another in ways that make the school feel connected.

This sense of community stretches beyond typical academic discussions: it can be felt in the manner with which students treat and interact with each other outside of the classroom, the willingness to share and accept advice, and the way students celebrate each other's successes, big or small.

The community also thrives on its diversity. Students from different nationalities bring fresh perspectives; this inclusiveness ensures that everyone has a place and voice. For a new student, such an environment is reassuring, because while individual effort matters, it is the collective effort that defines a school's identity.

The emphasis on this value strengthens the entire school by fostering an inclusive atmosphere where ideas are respected, challenges are faced together, and group achievements are celebrated. For someone experiencing the school for the first time, it's clear that this is a place where relationships matter as much as results.

"For someone experiencing the school for the first time, it's clear that this is a place where relationships matter as much as results"

Extracurricular opportunities also play an essential role in shaping these impressions. For example, the Model United Nations (MUN) club offers a chance for students to debate pressing international issues, analyze the status quo, and sharpen their skills in public speaking, creativity, and critical thinking.

The MUN encourages students to listen to different viewpoints and craft solutions that balance results with realism. It's not only a debating exercise but also nurtures diplomacy and empathy - qualities which prepare students for challenges far beyond the classroom - and teaches them lessons they do not typically get to learn in a classroom.

For many, the MUN is also where they find their voice, gaining confidence that carries into classrooms and beyond.

Similarly, the Student Council provides an effective bridge between students and faculty. It is organized, efficient, and ensures that students' voices are not only heard but also acted upon.

Beyond communication, the council organizes initiatives and events that build school spirit, from cultural celebrations to student-led projects, ensuring that the community feels lively and connected.

In the years to come, I see not only the opportunity to learn but also the chance of giving and being a contributing presence in the community, be it through academics, a club such as the MUN, or the collective voice of the Student Council.

Although first impressions are never the whole story, they often reveal what matters most. At HIS, what comes across immediately is a commitment to learning and a shared experience of growth. It is an impression that leaves me hopeful and eager to see how this journey will unfold.

by Preston R, Gabriel L, Oscar Z, and Fedex X
HIS students

Mind over Matter

HIS Chinese Debating team discovers the power of ideas at Global Championship







The Global Chinese Debate Championship is a tournament that invites teams from High Schools and Middle Schools from all over the world, including from countries such as Singapore, China, the USA, and Australia. With 40 teams altogether, including our team from Hangzhou International School, more than 400 students were involved.

In this tournament, we were invited to participate in the Under 21 competition (students under 21 years old but older than 16). This was the first year for the HIS debate team to participate in this tournament, and most of the students in our team were over 17 years old, which made us one of the youngest teams in the division.

The team included Preston R (G11), Gabriel L (G12), Oscar Z (G12), and Fedex X (G12), with two other students from Hangzhou and guided by our director, Ms. Vivian Zhang.





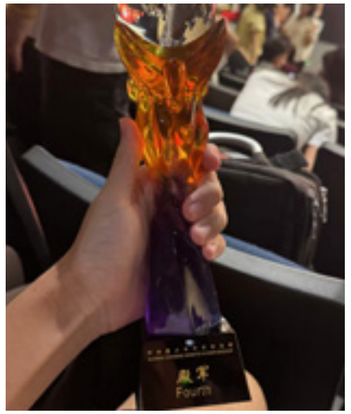
> ***"Debate is never about arguing against each other, but instead about creating a scene with your own words of what you believe happened, and convincing others of its validity"***

In the HIS Chinese Debate Club, Ms. Vivian believes in fostering student leadership and agency, and encourages students' independence.

The Global Chinese Debate Championship was hosted in Zhuhai during the summer holiday. Student leader Preston R from Grade 11 led the team effectively under Ms. Vivian's remote guidance, which was a great success and showcased the students' agency, success, independence, and leadership.

Initially, as we were joining for the first time, we expected to just gain experience. However, we did a great job in our first two games in the group knock-out session, only just losing out to the team who won second place in the tournament by 4-4.5, the Xin Bei White Crow Team from Taiwan (新北市白乌鸦辩论队), and beating Tianjin's Nan Kai School (天津南开中学) by 5-3.5.

Gaining confidence, they were excited to prepare for the following games, and made it to the semi-final, where unfortunately they lost to the High School Affiliated to Beijing Normal University (北京师范大学附属中学), who ended up winning the championship in the final.



During the tournament, even though we secured fourth place, we gained valuable experience that is hard to acquire in daily life. Through competing against the eventual champions and runner-up, we gained valuable insights into how to convey our ideas more effectively.

That is the point of debate: to learn how to express yourself better. It is the most essential technique that debate can teach you.

It is also a key lesson we learned from such a big event: debate is never about arguing against each other, which can make it seem like you're quarreling, but instead about creating a scene with your own words of what you believe happened, and convincing others of its validity.

> ***"That is the point of debate: to learn how to express yourself better"***

by Henry T, Wendy Z & Amy C
HIS students

No One's an Island

How a journey to a remote isle in the Indian Ocean led to a change in life perspective

> ***"The world is changed by your example, not your opinion"***
>
> ***— Author Paulo Coelho***

Preparing for success

This summer, the HIS International Volunteering Club, went on a trip to the small island of Rasdhoo in the Maldives, some 60 kilometers west of the capital, Male.

We pared up into teams, and led lectures to the under-privileged children, and conducted research about the implementation of various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The volunteers even cooked a dinner for local families on the island. It was an unforgettable experience that we will never forget.

Weeks before the trip, the volunteers were sitting on the HIS campus and thinking about what to teach the children in Rasdhoo. With millions of ideas in their minds, they were finding it difficult to choose the best ones.

The club leaders, Wendy, Amy, and Henry, decided that the lessons should all be connected in some way, to have the most impact, with possibly a performance in the last lesson to finish off the trip.

With this decided, we quickly figured out our topics. We had singing, dancing, tea history, and rubbing. These topics were skills that we already knew, and that many of us have been learning for years.





Learning on the island

The under-privileged local children were our targeted students, however, given the Maldives is a major tourist destination, our classes were also likely to attract many tourists as well. Indeed, Henry performed the ancient Chinese art of rubbing to a few European tourists.

Over several days, the local students learned a little bit of every skill, and on the last day, they performed it for our group. It was the end to our teaching time, but it was only the start for their interest on these topics.

As young students, what you can do individually is limited. This can be due to your skill, the responsibilities you hold, and the privileges you have. However, together, as a club we can accomplish great things.

As a volunteer, teaching and giving lectures are only a drop of water in the ocean. We plan to support the people in places we volunteer in. In Rasdhoo, the volunteers conducted research about the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We investigated about the island's energy system, economy, and water sanitation.

> ***"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away"***
>
> ***— Artist Pablo Picasso***

Everyone wrote a research essay about their topic and found ways they can support the Maldives government to accomplish it. Once we identified a problem, we then sent letters to the local government to be aware of it.



Apart from teaching and writing, we also left a piece of our club on the island. Our local tour guide gave us a big board to paint on, which was for the decoration of the walls on the street. The images that we painted represented peace, volunteering, China, and the Maldives.

Looking at the painting, you can identify the blue ocean, turtles, the Chinese knot, and a person cleaning the coast. In the center of the painting, one of our volunteers wrote the Chinese character "龍", which means Dragon, Hangzhou International School's mascot.

Similarly, the volunteers also left behind the flavor of China. On the last evening, the volunteers cooked a meal for two families on the island. The locals had a chance to taste some Chinese food, and we even gave them a gift of Chinese snacks for them to try later. We sincerely wish that they have the chance to visit China at least once.



> ***"Not everyone can do great things, but we can all do small things with great love"***
>
> ***— Mother Teresa***

Reflections on the journey

In conclusion, our time on Rasdhoo was not just about imparting knowledge, it was a profound exchange of culture, skills, and goodwill.

The smiles of the children as they performed their newfound talents will forever resonate in our hearts, reminding us of the impact we can create when we come together with a shared purpose.

As we painted vibrant images representing our cultures and values, we also painted a brighter future for the community, one that reflects the spirit of collaboration and understanding.

Our journey may have ended, but the relationships we've built, and the lessons learned will continue to inspire us. As we return to our own lives, let's carry forward the essence of volunteering and strive to make the world a better place, one small act of kindness at a time.





SPORTS

by Meg Shaul
Assistant Aquatics Coordinator

Heart of the Team

Meet Coach Natalio Liares IV, Aquatics Coordinator, extreme racer, and family man



Coach Nat with the HIS Dragon



Competing in the Urban Ultra Extreme 3, a 140km race over 45k at night, 40k in the desert and 55k technical trial, in which Natalio came overall 4th place

If you've spent any time near the HIS pool, you've likely heard the joyful chorus of "Coach Nat! Coach Nat!" echoing across the water.

That energy - warm, magnetic, and full of purpose - is the signature of Natalio Liares IV, our Aquatics Coordinator and the heartbeat of the swim program.

With over 17 years of international experience in aquatics, emergency management, and education, Nat brings a depth of knowledge that quietly powers everything he does.

He's worked across the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and China, shaping aquatic programs with a focus on safety, excellence, and joyful learning. At HIS, he's managed to build an environment where students feel secure and inspired to grow, both in and out of the water.

But Nat is more than his impressive resume. He's a generous soul, a nurturing presence, and a tireless worker. When Nat sets his mind to something, it gets done - and it gets done with care.

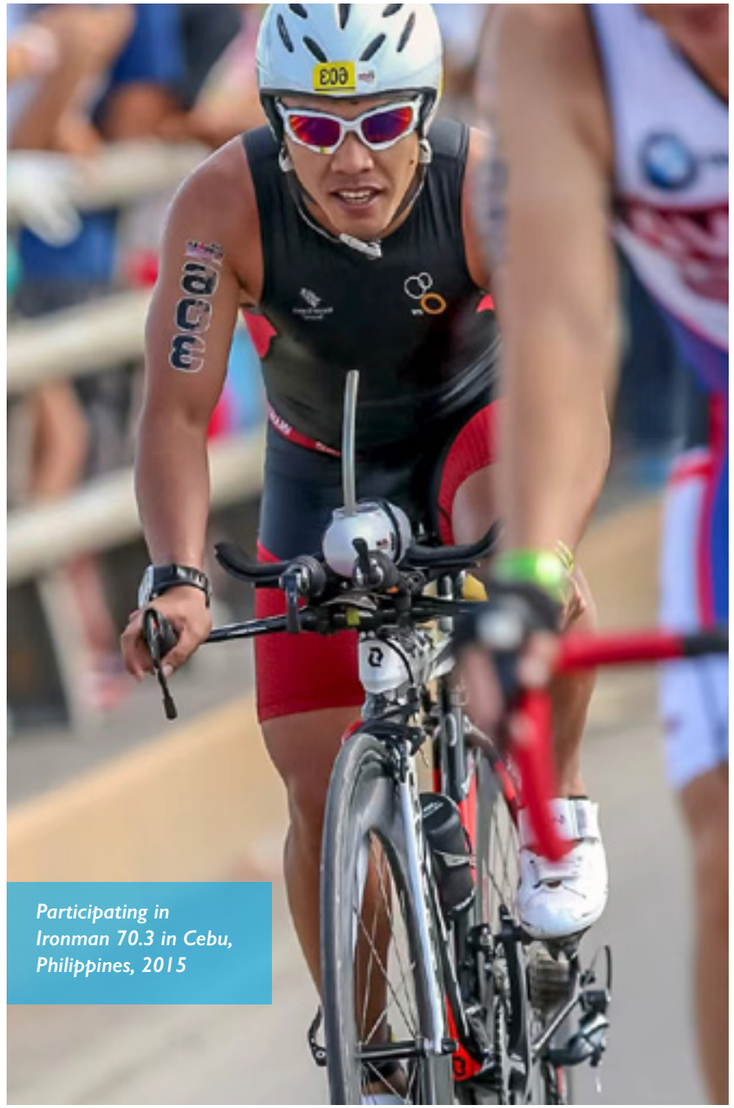
His colleagues often marvel at how he manages to pour energy into every corner of the department: from the pool deck to the staff office, from lesson planning to lifeguard training. But somehow, he still has enough left to take home to his family.

Outside of work, Nat is a man of many passions. He's a devoted father, a musician whose love for guitar once came with long flowing hair and a stage presence that wouldn't have looked out of place in a rock band. He's also an endurance athlete who's conquered Ironman races, ultra-marathons, and adventure races.

Just when you think you've got him figured out, he'll casually mention his kayak touring certification or his podium finish in a multi-stage ultra - and you'll realize there's always more to admire.

Coach Nat's strength lies not only in what he knows, but in how he shares it. He teaches with heart, leads with humility, and lifts those around him with quiet confidence.

HIS is lucky to have him, and we know it. His passion, drive, and unwavering care make him not just a coach, but a cornerstone of our community.



Participating in Ironman 70.3 in Cebu, Philippines, 2015



Coach Nat with the Aquatics team



Playing in the band at the Welcome Back BBQ

Culture of Success

Winning on the basketball court and in the community

"To be a Dragon is to be part of a family. Our success comes from every single player, we play for the name on the front of the jersey, and we achieve our goals together"





by Jamie Cattran

Upper School Physical & Health Education Teacher

It has been a privilege and an honor to lead our HIS Girls Basketball program, alongside such a dedicated and passionate coaching team.

The impeccable character of our student-athletes truly inspires me. They are a group of resilient, strong, and dedicated young women who bring spirit and competitiveness to every practice and game - coaching them is a joy every time.

This year we have a new initiative in our HIS Athletics program, where the Varsity head coaches are leading the Grade 4 and 5 CCAs alongside our High School student-athletes.

Going from strength to strength, this is another way we can build on our sporting success and increase participation in basketball at HIS.

This is an opportunity for our students on the Varsity teams to help pass on their experience and knowledge while building their leadership skills and giving back to the community. Indeed, it provides meaningful service opportunities for their DoE and CAS portfolios.

It also gives the younger students an opportunity to learn the fundamental skills of the game of basketball and learn what it really means to be an HIS Golden Dragon, about friendship, teamwork and supporting the pillars of our team culture.

You cannot tell the true story of our team without showcasing the amazing student-athletes who continuously build the HIS team culture with their drive, spirit and personality.

We asked them what it means to be a part of the HIS Girls Basketball program:



Natalia Stubbs
Former player and coach

Natalia is an excellent role model for our community and has the perhaps unique distinction of experience as both a player and a coach in our basketball program.

As a coach she always brought energy and toughness to our practices and helped solidify our Junior Varsity team bringing their A-game at the tournament in Nanjing last winter

"As a player, so much of your energy is focused on improving your own skills and contributing to the success of your team, but as a coach, you get to step back and see that growth from a whole new perspective.

"What amazed me the most was watching the varsity girls not only strengthen their skills but also grow into supportive teammates and confident leaders throughout the season.

"The greatest privilege of coaching is seeing that growth also extend beyond the game, in the way the girls carry themselves with kindness and respect for others off the court."



Ruth Viader
Coach

A leader in our community, Coach Ruth has been an integral part of our basketball coaching staff for three years with her steady leadership, commitment and tech wizardry and creativity with our team playbook."

Basketball has been a huge part of my life since I was 7 years old. Whether I was on a team with weekly practices and games, or just playing at the park with strangers, I loved every moment.

"Basketball gave me great friends (some of whom I still see more than 15 years later!) but it also taught me to be a better teammate, the importance of practice and commitment, and to enjoy the game no matter the result.

"Now, as a coach, I get to share the love of basketball with the next generation of girls. No matter the age or skill level, it's amazing to see them improve as players, learn to play as a team, form friendships, and enjoy the game."



Yolcy & Yolco
Twins for the Wins

Having Yolcy and Yolco, 'our 'twins for the wins' on the floor together is our team's superpower, the way they communicate and see the floor together is next level.

Yolco is a scoring machine with her sweet outside shooting, and creativity on the offense. With her hard work and practice she has been a key contributor on defense and our press.

"Playing basketball for me has always been about the team. Leading and playing alongside not just my teammates but close friends has been the highlight of this sport. I feel truly accomplished to witness my teammates grow and succeed.

"The HIS Varsity Basketball Team has always been and will be about friend ship and trust in each other. I hope we continue our legacy and passion onwards."

Yolcy is already a three-time basketball MVP for HIS. Her talent and toughness embody our team culture. She elevates her teammates through her balanced attack and fills the whole stat sheet, with steals, rebounds, assists and points.

"I wanted to thank everyone that is and has been in the Varsity Basketball Team for playing such an important role in my life. This sport has gifted me lifelong friends and a team I know will always have my back."

Alumni All-Stars - all studying now at the University of Toronto in Canada



Saanvi T

Co-captain and role model on and off the court through her determination and integrity, Saanvi was the high scorer in our Green Division ACAMIS tournament last year in Xi'an and won the Coaches award for her leadership - not to mention the highest academic score of her graduation class. Embodying the true meaning of balance with her excellent success in athletics, academics and service.

"Being a part of the basketball team genuinely gave some of the best memories from High School"



Lucia W

As co-captain, Lucia demanded respect and acted as the vocal leader on our team, always giving 100 percent effort and pushing her teammates to dig deeper. She was the well-deserving recipient of the Female Athlete of the Year in 2024-2025.

"As the saying goes, 'The strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.' Win, lose, or draw our HIS team always fights the hardest and I know the girls can bring back ACAMIS gold this year!"





Sarah K

Sarah always kept it real with her reflections and maturity. Through her determination and focus Sarah constantly improved while making the team better in practice and game day.

"Through basketball I was able to be friends with my cute teammates and create unforgettable memories"

Senior Leaders



Haeun R

The hardest worker on the team, Haeun is always in the gym refining her shot, and she is courageous taking shots when the game is on the line. Haeun is helping to coach the Grade 4 and 5 Girls in the Basketball CCA. An excellent role model with a team-first attitude.

"The moment the ball leaves my hand, it's on 99 percent of believing in us from the past and 1 percent luck. But put together, we are 100 percent HIS



Jun-Wen Z

Jun-Wen was a standout player on our Junior Varsity team last year and is making the step up to the Varsity squad. She improved continuously and helped coach the Middle School squad and is now helping with Grade 4 and 5 girls in the basketball CCA.

"To be a Dragon is to be part of a family. Our success comes from every single player, we play for the name on the front of the jersey, and we achieve our goals together."

Sophomore Successes



Lydia Y, Prisha H, Bryony K

Lydia, Prisha, Bryony made the Varsity team as freshman last year because of their mental toughness and talent. They will all be taking on even a bigger role in the upcoming season as sophomores.

Prisha: "Talent wins games, but community, teamwork and support wins championships"

Bryony: "No matter the sport, work to improve not to impress"

Lydia: "Playing in the team, I experience the perfect dynamic between competition and camaraderie"





HIS
Hangzhou International School
GIRLS, HIS
FOOTBALL & BASKETBALL
NEEDS YOU
Discover the benefits of teamwork, learn new skills and represent HIS with pride.
Registration open now:
Lower School Girls Football
Mondays: 3:15 - 4:15
Lower School Girls Basketball
Thursdays: 3:15 - 4:15
For girls in Grades 3, 4, and 5.
All abilities are welcome!
TO SIGN UP SCAN QR CODE OR JOIN THROUGH SCHOOLSBUDDY

Know Your HIS Acronyms

At HIS, you will notice that administrators, students, teachers, and parents frequently use acronyms in our publications, news, announcements, and conversations. Here's a helpful list of the most common acronyms used.

EY	EARLY YEARS
LS	LOWER SCHOOL
MS	MIDDLE SCHOOL
HS	HIGH SCHOOL
US	UPPER SCHOOL
ECE	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
HL	HIGHER LEVEL
SL	STANDARD LEVEL
CAS	CREATIVITY ACTIVITY SERVICE
IB	INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE
MYP	MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (GRADE 6-10)
PYP	PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (EY-GRADE 5)
DP	DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (GRADE 11&12)
EAL	ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE
PHE	PHYSICAL HEALTH & EDUCATION
MCT	MANDARIN CO-TEACHER
GLL	GRADE LEVEL LEADER
SSS/ SST	STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES/ STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
STEAM	SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING ART MATH
DT	DESIGN TECHNOLOGY
CCA	CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
TOK	THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE
TLA	TEACHING LEARNING ASSISTANT
EE	EXTENDED ESSAY
IA	INTERNAL ASSESSMENT
PAFA	PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION
ACAMIS	ASSOCIATION OF CHINA AND MONGOLIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS
CISSA	CHINA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS SPORTS ASSOCIATION
SISAC	SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
HISA	HANGZHOU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION
HISAC	HANGZHOU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
EARCOS	EAST ASIA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SCHOOLS
SEASAC	SOUTHEAST ASIA STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE
MUN	MODEL UNITED NATIONS
GIN	GLOBAL ISSUES NETWORK
GLT	GENERAL LEARNING TARGETS
NWEA	NORTHWEST EVALUATION ASSOCIATION

Hangzhou International School
杭州国际学校

School Calendar 2025-2026

SEMESTER ONE

JULY

M	T	W	TH	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

AUGUST

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

OCTOBER

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

DECEMBER

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

IMPORTANT DATES:

SEMESTER ONE

JULY	30-31	New Faculty Inservice (no school for students)
AUGUST	1	New Faculty Inservice (no school for students)
	4-11	All Faculty Inservice (no school for students)
	12	New Family Orientation Day & Open House
	13	**First Day of Semester One**
SEPTEMBER	12-13	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
	29-30	October Break
OCTOBER	1-3	National Day Holiday
	6	Mid-Autumn Festival
	7	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
	10	**Mid-Semester Progress Reports**
	14	Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences
NOVEMBER	28	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
DECEMBER	19	**End of Semester One & Semester Reports**

SEMESTER TWO

JANUARY	12	Professional Inservice (no school for students) & New Family Orientation Day
	13	**First Day of Semester Two**
FEBRUARY	16-20	Chinese New Year Holiday
	23	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
MARCH	13	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
	27	**Mid-Semester Progress Reports**
APRIL	6-10	Qingming "Tomb Sweeping" Festival Holiday and Spring Break (no school)
MAY	1	Labor Day Holiday (no school)
	4	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
	26	Student-Led Conferences
JUNE	17	**End of Semester Two & Semester Reports**
	18	Professional Inservice (no school for students)
	19	Duanwu "Dragon Boat" Festival Holiday

SEMESTER TWO

JANUARY

M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27

MARCH

M	T	W	TH	F
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

APRIL

M	T	W	TH	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

MAY

M	T	W	TH	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

JUNE

M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

New Family Orientation Day
Beginning/End of Semester
New Staff Inservice (no school for students)
Legal Holidays (no school)
School Holiday (no school)
Professional Inservice (no school for students)
Conferences

Total Student Days: 180

University Acceptances *2007-2025*

KEY

- TOP 100
- RUSSELL GROUP
- IVY LEAGUE
- ★ TOP 10 ART & DESIGN

UNITED KINGDOM

Aberystwyth University
Aston University
Birkbeck, University of London
Birmingham City University
Brunel University London
Buckinghamshire New University
Cardiff University
City St George's, University of London
Durham University
Falmouth University
Goldsmiths, University of London
Heriot-Watt University
Imperial College London
Keele University
King's College London
Lancaster University
London Metropolitan University
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University
Newcastle University
Nottingham Trent University
Oxford Brookes University
Queen Margaret University
Queen Mary University of London
Queen's University Belfast
Royal Holloway University of London
The Glasgow School of Art
The London School of Economics and Political Science
The University of
The University
The University of Manchester
The University of Warwick
Ulster University
University of the Arts
University on
University College London
University of Cumbria
University of Bath
University of Bedfordshire
University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Dundee
University of East Anglia
University of East London
University of Essex
University of Glasgow
University of Greenwich
University of Kent
University of Leeds
University of Leicester
University of Liverpool
University of Nottingham
University of Portsmouth
University of Reading
University of Roehampton
University on
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University of South Wales
University of Surrey
University of Sussex
University of the Arts London ★
University of West London
University of Westminster
University of York

ASIA

CHINA

City University of Hong Kong
China Medical University-Shenyang
East China Normal University
Hong Kong Baptist University
Istituto Marangoni, Shanghai
Lingnan University
Les Roches Jin Jiang International Hotel Management College
Macau University of Science and Technology
New York University, Shanghai
Peking University
Shanghai Jiao Tong University
SCAD Hong Kong
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
The Education University of Hong Kong
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
The University of Hong Kong
University of Nottingham Ningbo China
Tsinghua University
Wenzhou- Kean University
Xi'an Jiao Tong University
Zhejiang University

JAPAN

Akamonkai Japanese Language School
International Christian University
International College of Liberal Arts
Ritsumeikan University
Temple University, Japan Campus

PHILIPPINES

Ateneo de Manila University

SINGAPORE

Nanyang Technological University
National University of Singapore

SOUTH KOREA

Chung-Ang University
Hanyang University
Korea University
Kyung Hee University
Pusan National University
Seoul National University
Sungkyunkwan University
Yonsei University

UAE

American University in Dubai
Heriot-Watt University Dubai
Middlesex University Dubai
University of Birmingham Dubai
University of Wollongong in Dubai

CANADA

Acadia University
King's University College
Lakehead University
Laurentian University
McGill University
McMaster University
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Nipissing University
Queen's University
Simon Fraser University
St. Francis Xavier University
The University of British Columbia
Toronto Metropolitan University
University of Alberta
University of Guelph
University of Northern British Columbia
University of Ottowa
University of Toronto
University of Waterloo
University of Windsor
Western University
York University

AUSTRALIA

Australian National University
Deakin University
Griffith University
Monash University
RMIT University
University of Technology Sydney
The University of Melbourne
The University of Queensland
The University of Sydney
The University of Western Australia

SOUTH AFRICA

University of the Witwatersrand

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Academy of Art University
Arizona State University
ArtCenter College of Design
Babson College
Baylor University
Berklee College of Music
Binghamton University
Biola University
Boston College
Boston University
Bryant University
Buffalo State University
California College of the Arts
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Central Washington University
Cornell University
Cornish College of the Arts
DePaul University
Drew University
Drexel University
Emerson College
Emory University
Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts
Flagler College
Fisher College
Florida Institute of Technology
Florida Southern College
Fordham University
Georgetown University
Gonzaga University
Hawaii Pacific University
High Point University
Hofstra University
Houghton University
HULT International Business School
Indiana University Bloomington
Iowa State University
Ithaca College
Kapi'olani Community College
Laguna College of Art & Design
Loyola University Chicago
Maryland Institute College of Art
Menlo College
Miami University
Michigan State University
New Jersey Institute of Technology
New York University
Northeastern University
North Bennet Street School
Occidental College
Oregon State University – Cascades
Otis College of Art and Design
Pace University
Parsons School of Design
Pepperdine University
Pitzer College ★
Pratt Institute
Portland State University
Purdue University ★
Rhode Island School of Design
Ringling College of Art and Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rutgers University
Saint Louis University
San Diego State University
Santa Clara University
Savannah College of Art and Design
School of the Art Institute of Chicago ★
School of Visual Arts
Seattle Central College
Seattle Pacific University
Seton Hall University
Spelman College
St. Mary's University
St. Olaf College
Stony Brook University
Syracuse University
Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University
The Evergreen State University
The Ohio State University
The New School
The Pennsylvania State University
The University of Arizona
The University of Iowa
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
The University of Tulsa
Tulane University
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Merced
University of California, Riverside
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of California, Santa Cruz
University of California, San Diego
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Connecticut
University of Delaware
University of Georgia
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
University of La Verne
University of Maryland
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska
University of North Texas
University of Notre Dame
University of Oregon
University of Oregon- Cascade
University of Pennsylvania
University of Portland
University of Rochester
University of San Francisco
University of South Carolina
University of Southern California
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin- Madison
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest University
Washington State University
Western Washington University
Westmont College
William and Mary
Wheaton College
Whittier College

EUROPE

AUSTRIA

Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien

CZECHIA

Charles University Faculty of Medicine Hradec Kralove

DENMARK

Aarhus University
Copenhagen Business School
University of Southern Denmark

FRANCE

Les Institut Universitaire de Technologie
Toulouse Business School
EDHEC Business School
ESSEC Business School

GERMANY

Berlin School of Business and Innovation
CODE University of Applied Sciences
Technische Universität Dresden
Technische Universität München

GREECE

Mediterranean College
The American College of Greece

HUNGARY

University of Pécs

ITALY

Bocconi University
LUISS University
Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti

NETHERLANDS

Avans University of Applied Sciences
Design Academy Eindhoven ★
Erasmus University Rotterdam
Fontys University of Applied Sciences
HAN University of Applied Sciences
Hanzehogeschool
Academie Minerva
Leiden University College The Hague
NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences
Saxion University of Applied Sciences
Tilburg University
University of Amsterdam
University of Groningen
Universiteit Utrecht

RUSSIA

Higher School of Economics

SPAIN

ESIC University
EU Business School
IE University
Saint Louis University Madrid
Universidad CEU San Pablo
Universidad Europea

SWITZERLAND

Culinary Arts Academy
International University, Geneva
University of Geneva
University of Zurich

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If you would like to contribute an article, have a suggestion for content, or want to ask a question, please email: hismarketing@hisdragons.org.cn

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STUDENT DRAGON WECHAT STICKER SET

by Anna Z, HIS alumni

Scan the QR code to use the stickers!





Once a Dragon, Always a Dragon!

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Founded in 2002, Hangzhou International School was the first international school in Hangzhou and remains the only non-profit, WASC accredited, IB World School in Zhejiang province.