LEARNING AT CAISL

2026/2027

INTRODUCTION

At CAISL we take seriously our responsibility to ensure that each student is welcomed and valued, and, at the same time, challenged with a curriculum which inspires him/her to achieve. Those who achieve in any field of endeavor are those who are striving for excellence, who are always questioning and demanding the best of themselves and of those around them. It is this atmosphere of enthusiasm for and commitment to learning that we work to create.

CAISL's Core Value, also mentioned above, says "CAISL is a student-centered educational community in which we challenge ourselves and each other to do our best and to make positive contributions to our diverse and ever-changing world."

"Doing our best" requires effort and personal responsibility. Success in school as in life is not achieved without these. CAISL students are expected to exhibit these qualities. Young children will be learning them for the first time and, as students grow and mature, their levels of effort and personal responsibility grow along with their knowledge and skills. As a student nears High School Graduation, these qualities are expected to have become fundamental parts of their lives.



MISSION

CAISL is a student-centered educational community in which we challenge ourselves and each other to do our best and to make positive contributions to our diverse and ever-changing world.

ASSESSMENT

Guiding Principles

Assessment of student work and the assignment and reporting of grades/achievement levels must be—and be perceived to be—accurate, fair, and as objective as humanly possible. Students and their parents will be provided with information as to how student work will be assessed and how student achievement will be reported.

Shared Beliefs on Assessment

- Assessment uses a variety of methods and happens frequently—not just occasionally.
- Assessments measure understanding and skills, not just knowledge, and tracks improvement over time.
- Assessments are meaningful and relevant; criteria and expectations are communicated in advance.
- Students are given time to prepare and can use clear feedback to self-assess and improve.
- Assessment is part of learning, not separate from it, and allows for unexpected demonstrations of growth.



Shared Beliefs on Re-Assessment

Re-assessment can play an important role in promoting student learning. As students progress through the grades, the responsibility for initiating re-assessment gradually shifts from the teacher to the student.

In the Elementary grades, teachers routinely re-assess key skills to monitor and support student growth. In Middle School, teachers may recommend that a student redo a test or assignment and will offer strategies for improvement. If the student is unresponsive, teachers may communicate with parents, though redoing the assignment is not mandatory.

By High School, students are expected to take ownership of their learning by approaching teachers about possible re-assessment opportunities. Teachers may still encourage or suggest a redo, but unless the accuracy of an assessment is in question, the initiative should come from the student.

Regardless of grade level, teachers retain the authority to require re-assessment if, in their professional judgment, it is necessary to better understand a

student's strengths or areas for growth. Such re-assessments are mandatory and serve to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the learning evaluation process.



HOMEWORK

Guiding Principles

Homework is defined as work completed outside the direct supervision of the teacher. Its primary purposes include extending classroom learning, practicing skills, gathering information for in-class use, and contributing to long-term projects. Homework is intended to *support* learning — not to serve as a final demonstration of mastery.

Homework that reinforces or introduces concepts is considered *formative* and is not included in a student's grade. These assignments provide valuable insight for teachers to better support student learning. While feedback will be provided, such tasks often reflect a student's effort and work habits more than their academic achievement. Homework assignments may not be the same for all students in the same class, as teachers may adapt tasks to meet individual learning needs.

Elementary Homework

EARLY CHILDHOOD & KINDERGARTEN

Students in our Early Childhood and Kindergarten programs do not have regular daily homework. However, we strongly encourage families to support early literacy by borrowing books from the Library each week and reading with their child(ren) daily, ideally in the family's native language.

GRADES 1 - 5

Most students in Grades 1 through 5 are expected to do a little homework each day. This can range from 10 minutes to an hour, depending on the grade level, plus extra time for reading. It is never the intention of the school that homework should be burdensome or negatively affect family time. If your child is spending excessive time on homework, or experiencing difficulties with assignments, please communicate with the teacher via their homework diary.

Occasionally, homework will contribute to a larger assessment—such as a project, presentation, or research paper. In these cases, the final assessment may be included in the student's grade, as it reflects what the student has learned at the conclusion of a unit of study.

Secondary Homework

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 6–8)

Homework in Middle School is designed to reinforce or introduce key concepts. Students should expect some homework each day, averaging **60 to 80 minutes**. Most assignments are *formative* in nature and help both teachers and students monitor progress and identify areas for growth.

HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12)

In High School, the focus begins to shift from daily homework to more long-term assignments, such as projects, research, and presentations. While daily tasks for review or preview of concepts still occur, students are expected to demonstrate increasing levels of independence, organization, and time management.

Students in Grades 11 and 12 face especially high expectations. They must learn to balance deadlines and responsibilities across multiple demanding courses. Homework that is intended to inform learning — rather than demonstrate mastery — remains *formative* and is not included in the academic grade.



CURRICULUM

Guiding Principles

CAISL's curriculum is grounded in the "best practice" standards from the United States. For core academic subjects such as English, Math, and Science, CAISL has adapted the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) through Grade 10. For Portuguese (Native Language), CAISL follows the standards set by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. All other subject areas are guided by discipline-specific standards published in the United States and internationally recognized education frameworks. For students in the IB Diploma Program (Grades 11 and 12), the curriculum is based on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program syllabi, ensuring academic rigor and global recognition.

Full curriculum documentation, including Curriculum Overviews by grade level and guides for both the High School Diploma Program and the IB Diploma Program, can be found on CAISL's website.

Curriculum Format

Each subject area is organized using the following components:

Discipline The subject or academic area (e.g., English, Math, Science, Music).
Strand The broad topic/domain within a discipline. (e.g. Writing is a strand within English)
Level When students are grouped by achievement rather than grade level, curriculum standards are associated with a performance level (e.g., Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, or Level 1, 2, 3, 4).
Performance Indicator A clear learning objective for a specific grade or level. For ex ample: A Kindergarten Writing Performance Indicator might be: "Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces, in which the student tells a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, and states an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., 'My favorite book is...')."

Shared Beliefs on Instruction

Instruction at CAISL fosters character, empathy, and ethical responsibility.

Students are guided to understand multiple perspectives, act with integrity and contribute positively to their communities. Instruction references CAISL's Hidden Curriculum as a lens for developing a strong sense of social and moral responsibility.

Instruction at CAISL prioritizes positive teacher-student relationships.

Teachers foster safe, respectful and trusting learning environments where students can thrive, build positive self-esteem and develop resilience.

Instruction supports diverse learners.

Lessons at CAISL ensure that each student's unique learning needs and strengths are met through differentiated, inclusive methods.

Instruction at CAISL combines the art of teaching with the science of learning.

Teachers blend proven practices with innovative, modern strategies to meet the evolving needs of students. Teachers develop their own unique and creative approaches to teaching which are research-informed and developmentally appropriate.

Instruction at CAISL empowers student agency, voice and leadership.

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning to express their ideas and make positive contributions to our school community and beyond.

Instruction at CAISL reflects high expectations combined with high levels of support and care.

Teachers challenge students while providing the guidance and encouragement needed for student success.

Instruction at CAISL cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving.

Students are regularly challenged to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. Instruction encourages curiosity, logical reasoning, and creative solutions to complex, real-world problems.

Instruction at CAISL is collaborative and cooperative.

Students are consistently given opportunities to engage with their peers and the broader community in pursuit of both personal and shared goals.

Instruction at CAISL is reflective.

The reflective process is an integral part of instruction. Teachers and students engage in regular self-assessment to refine their practices.

Instruction at CAISL is authentic with real world application that sparks life-long learning.

Teachers intentionally develop knowledge, skills, understandings and dispositions that are both relevant and transferable to students' current and future needs.



REPORTING ON ACHIEVEMENT

Report Cards

Report cards are made available to parents and students through the password-protected PlusPortals platform two times per year, typically about one week after the end of each academic quarter. The specific release dates are listed on the school calendar, which is accessible through the Parent Portal on CAISL's website. High School students have continuous access to their PlusPortals accounts and may check their test results and academic progress at any time.

Reporting Procedures

CAISL uses two methods to determine and communicate student achievement, depending on grade:

- Standards-Based Reporting is used from Early Childhood to Middle School (EC3 to Grade 8).
- Grade Averaging is used in High School (Grades 9 to 12).

STANDARDS-BASED REPORTING (EC3 through Grade 8)

Standards-Based Reporting is a system in which students are assessed on individual "Performance Indicators" (in simpler terms, "skills" and "knowledge"). Rather than assigning students a single grade for any given subject, student progress is reported by "Strands", which are collections of related performance indicators within a certain subject area.

Our goal in using Standards-Based Reporting is to accurately identify—through "Achievement Levels"—both what the student has learned and what they have yet to learn. Student progress is conveyed through these achievement levels, which reflect the teacher's assessment of the student's understanding and application of taught content.

Achievement Levels

Exceeding The student demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the content and the ability to apply the processes and skills accurately in different and new situations.

Meeting The student demonstrates a solid understanding of the content and the ability to carry out processes and skills accurately.

Approaching The student demonstrates limited understanding of content and/or emerging ability to apply processes and skills but does not yet have full and independent mastery of either.

Not Meeting The student demonstrates minimal knowledge or understanding of content and/or makes significant errors when applying processes and skills.

Further Reporting Codes

X Not Assessed This shows Strands which have not yet been covered during the year.

IE Insufficient Evidence Used when there is not enough information to determine an "Achievement Level." This may occur if a student joined the class late, was absent for an extended period of time, or did not submit required assessments



Student progress for each Performance Indicator is determined through teacher-generated assessments. Performance Indicators are usually written as end-of-year expectations. Throughout the year, these are developed via the learning objectives taught each quarter, which make up the components of the Performance Indicator. The Achievement Level reported for each quarter reflects the student's progress on the specific learning objectives to date.

Four times a year, teachers determine an overall Achievement Level that best reflects the student's progress for the year to date, based on all the Performance Indicators within a Strand. During the year, a student who is progressing toward proficiency may receive a "Approaching" level. To be considered successful for promotion to the next grade, students need to be "Meeting" in all strands by the end of the year. Students with "Not Meeting" or "Approaching" levels in any strand at the end of the year are not considered ready for the next grade.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year for Elementary: once in the fall and again in the spring. Secondary has one Parent-Teacher (and Student) conference in the fall. At the fall conference, teachers outline students' strengths and weaknesses and discuss individual goals for improvement. Above Grade 3, students are invited to participate in these conferences. The spring conference reviews progress toward those goals outlined in the fall. Teachers share results from standardized MAP tests and samples of student work. Major assignments, projects, and tests are usually sent home to parents after teachers have provided feedback to students.

Students enrolling after the first day of school but before the start of the second quarter are expected to cover and be assessed on the full curriculum. Students entering later in the year must demonstrate proficiency in critical skills and content areas of core subjects.

Beginning in Middle School, students take end-of-year final exams to demonstrate proficiency. Because each student's strengths and areas for growth vary, these final exams are individualized. Students answer questions tailored to their level of performance.

Codes for "Effort and Areas of Personal Development, Work, and Study Habits" Note: full definitions of these codes are in the appendix

EXC (Excellent)
GOOD
NI (Needs Improvement)
U (Unsatisfactory)

WORK HABIT RUBRIC

	Work Habits Indicators	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Effort	Preparedness	Always	Consistently/Usually • Comes to class with all materials • Uses all class resources • Homework is complete • Takes measures to make up missed work	Inconsistently or Sometimes	Rarely
	Time Management	Always	Consistently/Usually • Is in class on time • Turns work on time • Works productively during class	Inconsistently or Sometimes	Rarely
Conduct	Perseverance and Problem Solving	Always	Consistently/Usually • Asks productive questions • Takes initiative to solve problems individually • Attends office hours when needed • Learns from self-assessment • Applies feedback for improvement	Inconsistently or Sometimes	Rarely
	Work Ethic	Always	Consistently/Usually • Follows all directions • Produces quality work • Respectfully collaborates with others in class	Inconsistently or Sometimes	Rarely

Information for Early Childhood

In Early Childhood classes, most Performance Indicators refer to foundational skills, knowledge, and understanding. While proficiency is the goal by the end of the year, we recognize that our youngest students are developing at their own pace and will acquire new skills when they are ready. Each child should progress individually at their own pace, without pressure.
Student progress is primarily assessed through observation and recorded regularly. Record-keeping strategies include portfolios with samples of children's work and observation rubrics. Report cards include information on the child's developmental and academic level, along with comments on progress and conduct. Samples of student work are regularly shared with parents so that they can see the progress their children are making in school.

Portfolios

Portfolios are collections of student work that illustrate individual effort, progress, and achievement over time. They highlight each child's unique learning journey and focus on what students are doing and learning, rather than what they have not yet mastered. Teachers ensure that portfolios reflect all developmental domains as well as major curricular areas.

Portfolios serve multiple purposes, including:

- To plan for instruction, and to assist in program evaluation.
- To show the process by which work is done, as well as the product,
- To document achievement, and demonstrate growth,
- To communicate with parents, with the next classroom teacher

Portfolio contents typically include: written observations recorded while students are engaged in daily activities, annotated work samples, checklists identifying specific skills or concepts related to the curriculum, and parent input (as we recognize the shared responsibility between home and educational environments for the child's education).



Portfolios reflect an approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes a comprehensive view of the child, encourages collaborative teaching practices, and fosters strong partnerships with parents. At the end of each school year, parents may keep the contents of their child's portfolio. Selected samples may also be retained by the school in digital format for documentation and reflection purposes.

AVERAGING OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADES (Grade 9 through Grade 12)

CAISL's High School operates on a continuous, year-long reporting system, except for semester-long courses. For year-long courses, each semester is weighted at 40%, and the final exam counts for 20% of the overall course grade. Student behavior and work habits are assessed separately on the report card, but it should be noted that late work and academic malpractice will negatively impact the academic grade. CAISL High School students use the following Grading scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Range	GPA
A +	98 – 100%	4.33
A	93 – 97 %	4.00
A –	90 – 92 %	3.66
B +	87 – 89%	3.33
B	83 – 86%	3.00
B –	80 – 82%	2.66
C +	77 – 79%	2.33
C	73 – 76%	2.00
C –	70 – 72%	1.66
D +	67 – 69%	1.33
D	60 – 66%	1.00
F	0 – 59%	0.00

CAISL does not report class rank. However, data on overall class achievement may be made available upon request. High School GPAs are calculated on a **4-point scale**, with letter grades converted as follows: A = 4.0, B = 3.0, C = 2.0, D = 1.0, F = 0.0. Course grades are averaged to produce a **Grade Point Average (GPA)**.

Academic Integrity

Work submitted must accurately reflect what a student has learned. Any action which leads to a misrepresentation of a student's true skills and understanding is considered academic malpractice.

Examples of academic malpractice include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to attempt source citation
- Collaboration on assignments which are intended to be completed independently
- Plagiarism (not giving credit for another's ideas),

- Cheating on non-graded assignments,
- Plagiarism (direct copying or “copy/paste”),
- Cheating on tests or other graded assignments.

In the case of malpractice, a score of zero is entered into the grade book until the student has demonstrated learning through an alternative assessment. This could include an oral assessment, a second version of the assessment or another method approved by the teacher and the Secondary School Principal. The recorded score will be the average of the original and alternative assessments.

Late Work

Assignments submitted after the due date will incur a deduction of one letter grade per calendar day, including weekends and holidays. Assignments submitted more than three calendar days late will not be accepted. In such cases, students will be given a supplemental assessment to complete outside of regular class time. This assessment will be scored, and three letter grades will be deducted from the final mark. Teachers may use their judgment to adjust this policy if the assignment cannot be submitted electronically.



Students Entering After the Beginning of the Year (Grade 9 through Grade 12)

Students who enroll at the beginning of—or early in—the second semester will have their semester grade weighted as follows: 2nd Semester Grade: 80%, Final Exam: 20%. Students entering at the start of the second quarter are **not required** to submit assignments from before their arrival but **will be responsible** for the core skills and content included on the final exam.

PROMOTION, RETENTION & PLACEMENT

Guiding Principles

CAISL's general policy is to encourage and support each student in progressing along a continuous path of academic growth, in

alignment with their social and emotional development. Decisions about promotion, retention, or acceleration take into account the combined input of teachers, counselors, principals, the student, and their parents. Factors considered include classroom performance, standardized test results, assignment completion, and accumulated credits. The overarching philosophy is to do what is in the best interest of the student. Final decisions rest with the Division Principal.

Early Childhood

In Early Childhood, performance indicators focus on developmentally appropriate skills and understandings. Students reach readiness for learning at different times; therefore, students are **not typically retained** if they are demonstrating growth and progress during their three years in the Early Childhood program. To be ready for Grade 1, students should be proficient in the Kindergarten academic curriculum. If a student is not yet proficient or is still developing core academic skills, retention in Kindergarten may be considered. Families will be contacted in a timely manner if a child is at risk of retention.

Elementary School (Grade 1 through Grade 5)

Promotion to the next grade is based on readiness in three key areas:

1. Academic performance
2. Behavior
3. Social and emotional maturity

Retention may be suggested if concerns arise in any of these areas. Students are expected to be proficient in the academic curriculum to advance to their next grade. If students are not proficient or still developing skills in academic areas, they may be subject to retention. Parents will always be notified should their child be at risk of retention based on their academic performance.

In certain cases, a student may be “placed” in the next grade — rather than formally “promoted” — when the Division Principal, in consultation with the educational team and parents, determines that social or emotional needs outweigh academic concerns. If similar academic challenges continue into the next school year, this may indicate unsuccessful intervention, and the student may be retained or not invited to return.

A child may only be retained once.

Behavioral or emotional immaturity is rarely the sole reason for retention or placement in the following grade year, but these factors are considered. While we aim to work in partnership with parents to reverse or change poor behavior in students, those who cause serious disruption to learning may not be invited back to CAISL for the following academic year.

Transitioning from Grade 5 to Grade 6 involves increased expectations and a shift in school culture. Promotion to Middle School requires appropriate academic and behavioral readiness. Admission to Elementary does not guarantee promotion to Middle School.

Middle School (Grade 6 through 8)

Middle School students must be proficient in all academic areas to be promoted. If a student is not progressing sufficiently, retention may be considered based on teacher and/or parent concerns. Parents will always be notified should their child be at risk of retention.

In some cases, a student may be "placed" in the next grade when social or emotional development supports such a move, even if academic proficiency has not been achieved. However, if the same academic challenges persist the following year, the student may be retained or not invited to return. In rare cases, students who consistently show below-average academic achievement and poor effort, despite interventions, may not be invited to return the following school year. In such decisions, the student's full academic history, work habits, and any prior retention or placement decisions are considered by the Division Principal.

Students may only be retained once. The final decision on promotion or retention is made by the Division Principal after consultation with the educational team and the student's family.

High School (Grade 9 through 12)

Promotion in High School is determined by a combination of credits earned, credit distribution across subject areas, overall Grade Point Average (GPA).

Students may be retained if they earn a final grade of "D" in both English and Math, or in **three or more core subjects** (those with a final exam), even if they technically meet the credit and GPA requirements. This decision is at the discretion of the Secondary Principal.

Promotion to	Credits Earned (minimum)	Distribution of Credits Earned	GPA (minimum)
Sophomore year (Grade 10)	6	Must have earned 1 credit in English and 2 credits from among Math, Science, or Social Studies.	2.0
Junior Year (Grade 11)	12	Must earn no more than 2 credits in any discipline	2.0
Senior Year (Grade 12)	19	Must earn no more than 1 credit in any discipline	2.0

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

Guiding Principles

The primary goal of the EAL program at CAISL is to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where students can develop strong communication skills and appreciate the value of multilingualism.

Students identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) in Grades 1–8 receive support to help them acquire academic English and succeed in their classes. This support may include small group instruction, scaffolding strategies, specialized materials, immersion experiences, sheltered classes, and, when appropriate, monitoring.

ELL students in Grades 1–8 receive achievement reports based on individual language goals, which are determined collaboratively by the EAL and Language Arts teachers. Once a student demonstrates English proficiency sufficient to meet grade-level English Language Arts requirements, they are removed from the EAL program. Exit decisions are based on a combination of language assessments, classwork, and teacher observations.

As a student-centered school, we value the diversity of our students. This includes the wide range of languages and linguistic capabilities of our multi-national student body. Respect for and curiosity about other cultures and languages is encouraged as a part of lifelong learning and as a response to our “diverse and ever-changing world”.

PORTUGUESE AS ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (PAL) & LINGUA PORTUGUESA (LP)

Guiding Principles

Portuguese, the language of our school’s host country, is taught at CAISL to all students—from beginners to fluent or native speakers. All students are required to study Portuguese through Grade 10, unless they are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Instruction is adapted to the students' proficiency level and can take the form of PAL (Portuguese as an Additional Language) or LP (Língua Portuguesa for native/fluent speakers).



STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Student Support Services comprises the Counseling, Learning Support, and Foundations of English Language Programs. The Student Support Team is a collective of school professionals committed to: identifying students experiencing academic and/or socio-emotional difficulties within the school community; creating and executing tailored strategies to assist these students; and continuous monitoring the progress of identified students to inform ongoing interventions.

Learning Support Program

The Learning Support Program is committed to promoting the academic, social, and emotional development of all students by providing individualized support for those with mild to moderate learning needs. The goal is to ensure that every student admitted to CAISL can succeed in the regular classroom and meet academic expectations.

At CAISL, Learning Support teachers hold specialized qualifications and bring expertise in supporting diverse learning needs. The program is based on a tiered model, beginning with strong Tier 1 classroom instruction and extending support as needed.

Key elements of the Learning Support Program include:

- Small group instruction and targeted interventions for specific learning needs
- Ongoing monitoring of student progress to adjust strategies as needed
- Implementation of formal accommodations to ensure equitable access to the curriculum
- Development of executive functioning/literacy skills
- Collaboration with teachers, parents, and external specialists to create Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)
- A commitment to inclusivity and to fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among all learners



Counseling Services

The Counseling Program at CAISL supports students' holistic development through a comprehensive, multitiered approach that addresses personal, academic, social-emotional, and career growth. Counseling services are both proactive and responsive, creating a nurturing environment for students from Early Childhood through Grade 12. In collaboration with teachers, administrators, and families, counselors tailor their support to meet each student's needs. The program is designed to be equitable, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with best practices in school counseling.

CAISL's school counselors are qualified professionals with expertise in academic, career, and social-emotional development. They play a vital role in supporting students at every stage of their educational journey.