

The International School of Latvia Middle School Parent Handbook

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year at the International School of Latvia (ISL). Please read this document carefully to ensure you are familiar with all ISL rules, procedures and beliefs. Should you have any questions, please contact a member of the faculty or the Middle School Assistant Principal, Ms. Jaime Pustis (jpustis@isl.edu.lv) .

Vision Statement

Learn here. Use everywhere.

Mission Statement

We are a community, learning for an ever-changing world.

- *We are an inclusive **community** that believes in being **equally different**;*
- *We encourage everyone to strive for **personal excellence through the IB framework**;*
- ***We teach for understanding** rather than knowing, and we guide rather than instruct;*
- *We recognize the world is a dynamic place which demands a **growth mindset**.*

Community Values

Caring

We support people around us and act on behalf of those in need.

Honesty

We act with integrity.

Respect

We behave in a way that is courteous and mindful of our environment and each other.

Open-mindedness

We act with the understanding that people are equally different, with their own ideas and beliefs.

We encourage open-ended discovery, while promoting the development of personal principles.

All Students, Parents and Staff at ISL...

- take personal responsibility for their actions;
- use English as a common language;
- are involved in activities in our school community; and
- arrive on time to school and class.

Members of our school community who choose to act otherwise will have consequences determined by the staff.

All students sign:

- our Academic Honesty agreement;
- our Acceptable Use of Technology agreement; and
- our Student Handbook document.

This signifies that they have read, understood and agreed to both the content and spirit of these documents.

ISL Calendar

The school calendar 2016-2017 has been posted on the school website as of February 2016. Please plan your vacations based on the school holidays as missing too many days of school may jeopardise a student's promotion to the next grade. The link to the school calendar is [HERE](#). Paper copies of the school calendar are also available at the front desk.

The School Day

School begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:30pm.* The Middle School day is divided into eight class periods. All Middle School students have a 40-minute lunch break and a 15-minute afternoon break.

** except for professional development days and other special days as marked in the school calendar.*

Arriving and Leaving School

- The doors open at 8:00 am. Supervision by teachers will begin at that time.
- Whether dropping off students or picking up students, parents/drivers are encouraged to use the curb service. **Cars are never to be parked in this area!**
- When students are dropped off in the morning they may go to either the Media Center, cafeteria or playground depending on the weather and time of year.
- By 8:20 am, all Middle School students should be inside getting ready to be in their classes, which start promptly at 8:30 am.
- To ensure the safety of our students, any parent or visitor who enters the school after 8:30 am should wear a Visitor pass available from security.
- Any students who arrive after 8:30 am must report to the Front Desk for a tardy pass.

Attendance at school is essential; nothing can replace working in school with teachers and fellow students. Promotion to the next grade is contingent upon several things and one of those is attendance. A significant amount of absences, whether excused or unexcused, will impact student learning.

Attendance Guidelines

Attendance at school is essential; nothing can replace working in school with teachers and fellow students. Promotion to the next grade is contingent upon several things and one of those is attendance. A significant amount of absences, whether excused or unexcused, will impact student learning.

- For every absence, parents must notify the front desk by 9:00am. They may email frontdesk@isl.edu.lv or call +371 67755146.
- If a student is absent for three days in a row or a total of 10 school days, the front desk staff will contact you.
- If a student misses 20 days of school, you will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your child's eligibility for the coming school year. Please be aware that Latvian Law also expects

students to attend school.

Parents/guardians who choose to schedule their vacations outside of the scheduled ISL vacations jeopardise their child's promotion to the next grade. [The school calendar](#) is published at least 6 months ahead of the new school year and is available on the school website.

Pick-Up authorization and transportation

You or your child must notify Mrs. Erliha (merliha@isl.edu.lv) about any changes to their bus service no later than noon on the day of the change. Please know that we may not be able to accommodate every change or request.

Food Service

The school has a cafeteria that serves a healthy, delicious choice of breakfast, lunch and snacks. For more information, visit our school website under [About Us, Cafeteria](#).

Healthy Food Guidelines

- Everyone at ISL is encouraged to follow a healthy, well-balanced food plan and parents are strongly encouraged to send in healthy snacks and lunches from home.
- Our Food Service providers follow local Latvian law which provides strict guidelines and limitations for food content and preparation that offers food and drinks that are healthy, low in salt and low in sugar.
- Other food sales by students and the Parent Teacher Organization will be encouraged to promote healthy food item sales and will need to be approved by the appropriate Principal and School Nurse at least 2 weeks before each event.
- All food is to be consumed in the Cafeteria only during designated times.
 - Elementary School: Snack (10:00-10:30), Lunch (12:30-13:30)
 - Middle School & High School: Lunch (11:35-12:20), Break (13:50-14:10)
- We respect of all school rules associated with the use of the cafeteria, respect cafeteria support staff, property and help to keep it clean.
- Everyone is encouraged to limit food waste and to recycle whenever possible. Students are expected to have their own water bottles at school that they can refill when necessary.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found bin is located by the stairs on the first and second floors of the school building. Lost and found items are displayed in the lobby on the last Friday of every month. If items are not claimed at the end of the year, they are donated to a local charity.

Communication

Chain of Communication

At ISL, everyone is encouraged to speak freely with each other. It is best to speak to the person directly responsible for whatever you want to talk about. For instance, a discussion about homework or something that has occurred in class should be had with the teacher. If further discussion is required, speak with the Assistant Principal, and then if necessary see the Director. Following the chain of communication is the best way to promote our core values of honesty and respect. While the ISL Council leaves the day-to-day operations of the school to the Director and the staff, if need be they can be contacted after you have spoken with the Director.

Contact Information for Staff

All staff can be reached via email by using their first initial and last name, followed by @isl.edu.lv. (example John Smith would be jsmith@isl.edu.lv) For a complete listing of school administration and school staff, please visit: www.isl.edu.lv.

Financial Obligations

It is essential that school fees are paid promptly for the smooth operation of the school. Tuition and other fees are set annually, generally in the Spring, for the coming academic year. Parents paying full school fees themselves may apply for a semi-annual or quarterly payment schedule that is accepted by the school's Council. Fees for students who leave the school before the end of the year are based on the percentage of school attended. Additional information on the financial obligations of attending ISL is available on the ISL website [Admissions, School Fees](#).

Health and Safety

Fire and emergency information is posted in every classroom and in common spaces. In an emergency situation or during a drill, follow the instructions posted as well as directions provided by the staff. ISL regularly practices fire, lock-down and evacuation drills. More information regarding the drills will be shared with you throughout the year.

Your family's health is important to us. Feel free to ask for help when you need it from any staff member.

No one is allowed to bring any dangerous items to school which may harm them or other members of the community such as: weapons of any kind, alcohol, or drugs. If a person chooses otherwise, they may be asked to leave our community.

Please note that ISL is a non-smoking campus. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the campus.

For the safety of the community, ISL is a closed campus. Students are supervised by staff during school hours (between 8:00am and 3:30pm) and during After-School Activities. Parents are responsible for supervising their children on campus at all other times, especially during ISL community events such as: International Day or Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences.

If a student would like a friend to visit the school, they must complete the Permission Form [HERE](#) at least one day before their friend comes to school. To complete [the form](#), a student should enter all classes they would like their friend to visit, ask each teacher's permission and collect their signatures. Then, the student should check with security and the Principal and finally, hand the form in to the Front Desk.

All parents and visitors are asked to register with security and wear their visitor badge at all times. Parents are not required to register during drop-off and pick-up of their children.

Medical Emergencies and Health Services

Medical Emergencies

In the event that a student becomes seriously ill or injured, the staff will initiate ISL's *Medical Emergency Procedure*. All staff at ISL have had basic first aid training. ISL is equipped with a portable Automated External Defibrillator (AED) located in the gym and all staff have been trained in its use. Detailed health information can be found on the school's website under [Student Support, Nurse/Health](#).

You should notify the Front Desk when your child is unwell. Students who are ill for more than three days require a doctor's note explaining their absence. You will be notified in the event of an ISL student being diagnosed with a contagious illness. ISL respects and maintains all students' medical confidentiality.

Medical Problems

It is your responsibility to notify the school nurse of any current medical problems (allergies, asthma, etc.) that your child may have, as well as any daily medications that (s)he may need. The school nurse is the only person who can dispense medication during the school day. If your child has any medical issues, you must fill out additional forms which can be found on the school's website under [Student](#)

[Support, Nurse/Health.](#)

Medical information Requirements

Each student must have their medical information updated before the start of every school year which includes:

- a complete set of Medical Forms with a current physical exam;
- updated vaccinations for: Hepatitis B, *H. influenza* Type B (HiB), diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and
- proof of a negative tuberculosis test (BCG vaccine, chest X-ray or PPD).

All medical forms can be downloaded from the school's website under [Student Support, Nurse/Health.](#)

All student health records are kept confidential.

Child Safeguarding Guidelines

Here at ISL we take child protection seriously. As a school we are required both morally, and by Latvian law, to report any suspected physical, emotional or sexual abuse. If you suspect anything of this nature, please contact the Counselor or the Nurse. If you have any questions, please contact the School Counselor.

Reporting of Physical/Emotional/Sexual Abuse

In accordance with Latvian law, if an ISL staff member suspects a student is being physically, emotionally or sexually abused, she/he is required to immediately notify the School Counselor or direct supervisor.

Steps following this initial reporting to include:

1. School Counselor will meet with student.
2. School Nurse may be called in to check for any physical marks and to document this.
3. Principal is informed;
4. As soon as possible, convene a meeting with the Director, Principal, School Counselor, involved classroom teacher, and School Nurse to discuss further steps on a case-to-case basis that are in the best interest of the child. During this meeting, a well-thought out plan will be formulated that may involve notifying the local police, the Latvian Orphan court or other healthcare professional.
5. Parents/Legal guardians will be called in to meet with the Principal and School Counselor to discuss what the School will request of the family in a combined effort to support the child.

As defined by Latvian law,

- **Physical abuse** – is the knowing use of force that directly threatens the health or life of a child. Examples of physical abuse may include:
 - talk of or witnessed displays of physical violence like kicking, slapping, biting, pinching, shaking, using a belt, or throwing objects;
 - physical evidence of suspicious bruises, marks, abrasions or repeated injuries.
 - sexual abuse is any sexual act or sexual contact with a child performed by an adult or an older child.

It should be noted that physical abuse can be identified without the presence of obvious marks.

- **Emotional abuse** – is any act that causes a diminished sense of identity, self-worth, and dignity. Also referred to as psychological abuse. Examples of emotional abuse may include:
 - verbal harassment, threats, swearing, jeering, unduly criticizing, humiliating, etc.
 - refusal of the child's emotional needs in the form of rejection, isolation, and neglect.

For more detailed information regarding the Latvian law on child abuse, please see [this link.](#)

School Counseling, Advisory and Transition

Love Latvia Transition Program

ISL's transition program, *Love Latvia*, helps students, parents and teachers arrive, stay and leave well. The transition program is key to maintaining the health and happiness of our community.

Middle School Advisory

ISL's Middle School Advisory program supports the social and emotional part of a student's life. It plays a critical role in students' development.

The Middle School Advisory program:

- ensures that each student is known well by a teacher.
- helps students be successful in academics and in life.
- promotes healthy communication.

Advisory takes place once a week for 45 minutes, led by faculty advisors.

Academics

Student Support

We have a vibrant English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program with staff specifically assigned to work with our students and colleagues to support English Language learning.

We also have a Learning Support program designed to help students with special needs.

For additional information on the [Learning Support program](#) and [EAL](#) please click on the links.

Promotion/Retention of Students

To best support your student's learning needs, we place our youngest students by age. In later grades, we place them according to previously completed years of school. In order to be promoted to the next grade, students need to successfully learn the content and skills covered that year. If this does not happen, ongoing discussions will be held with parents, teachers, the Assistant Principal, Counsellor and other staff members. In some cases, it might be in the student's best interest to spend another year in the same grade. Though the final decision is the school's, our partnership with parents ensures we will be able to reach the best decision for each student.

Graduation Requirements for the ISL High School Diploma

All students are ISL High School Diploma candidates, and subject to the following graduation requirements:

To obtain an ISL Diploma, a student must:

- Successfully complete all courses that meet ISL's credit requirements from Grades 9 to 12 ([See link](#)). In Grades 11 & 12, this means achieving at least a 3 in Standard Level (SL) subjects, and at least a 4 in Higher Level (HL) subjects, on the IB scale, each semester. In Grades 9 and 10, this means achieving at least a 3 in all subjects at the end of the year. If a student fails a class, they must make up the credit. This can be done by successfully completing an online course or successfully attending an accredited summer school approved by the Principal.
- complete and pass an Extended Essay/ Senior Project in Grades 11 & 12. If a student is not doing the Extended Essay, he/she will work in conjunction with his/her advisor and the DP Coordinator to determine a suitable Grade 12 project.
- Complete the Personal Project in Grade 10 with a passing grade of 3 (if attending ISL for Grade 10).
- fulfil Creativity Action Service (CAS) requirements and Theory of Knowledge (TOK) requirements (essay and presentation) in Grades 11 & 12.
- not be absent from school for an excessive amount of time in any one academic year. If a student is absent for more than 20 days a year, their eligibility for promotion to the next grade or graduation will be reviewed by the High School Principal and the Director.

Option 1: ISL Diploma

A student may choose to pursue an ISL Diploma, completing ISL classes without registering for IB Course Certificates. The ISL Diploma is well-recognized by many universities around the world. This would be most suited for a student with needs for more customized course options, e.g. an online course that ISL doesn't offer, a course taught by a private tutor liaising with the school, or a modified course within the school.

For the ISL Diploma student, an Extended Essay is **not** required. Instead, a Grade 12 Project will be determined together with the student's advisor and DP Coordinator and completed by May 1st of Grade 12. CAS progress and TOK assessments will not be sent to the IB. They will, however, be assessed internally by the CAS Coordinator and the TOK teacher in order to meet ISL's graduation requirements.

Option 2: ISL Diploma + IB Course Certificates

In addition to being candidates for the ISL High School Diploma, students in Grade 11 taking IB courses may be considered IB Course Certificate candidates in the IB courses that they choose. This means that they may be registered for one or several Higher Level/Standard Level courses, based on which levels provide an appropriate balance of challenge and success. For example, a student may choose to do all their subjects at Standard Level. They will complete IB exams and IB assessments, and receive certificates and grades for each course completed. They do not need to be full IB Diploma candidates in order to receive these certificates.

In order for a student to continue in a course at Higher Level past the first semester, a student must earn at least a 4 in the subject for their Semester One grade. If a student receives a 3 or less in Semester One, the student must continue the subject at Standard Level.

This option is designed for the student that will be applying to university based on their ISL High School Diploma, but who desires certification and recognition that they have taken and completed a selection of IB courses and met the external requirements of the IBO.

Just as for the ISL Diploma student, an Extended Essay is **not** required. Instead, a Grade 12 Project will be determined together with the student's advisor and DP Coordinator and completed by May 1st of Grade 12. CAS progress and TOK assessments will not be sent to the IB. They will, however, be assessed internally by the CAS Coordinator and the TOK teacher in order to meet ISL's graduation requirements.

IB Option 3: ISL Diploma + Full IB Diploma

If a student wishes to pursue the full IB Diploma, they will need to be registered for at least 3 Higher Level subjects out of their 6 subject choices. They will also need to meet IB requirements for the Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge and CAS.

Qualified ISL students who would like to pursue the full IB Diploma are officially registered as full IB diploma candidates with the IBO in September of their 12th grade year. Until this time, all students pursuing the full diploma are considered to be **Conditional Diploma Candidates**. Students must complete all requirements below in order to qualify to become **Registered Diploma Candidates**.

Requirements to Become a Registered Diploma Candidate

1. Students must have completed $\frac{2}{3}$ of their CAS requirements by September 1st of their 12th grade year. All CAS progress and reflections must be correctly documented on *ManageBac* and approved by the CAS Coordinator.
2. Students must maintain semester grades of 4 or above in all of their HL courses and semester grades of 3 and above in their SL courses at the conclusion of their 11th grade year.
3. Students must meet all deadlines and requirements relating to the TOK course.

4. Students must meet all deadlines and requirements relating to the Extended Essay.
5. Students must not have any significant violations of the *ISL Academic Honesty Agreement*.
6. Students must not have any major disciplinary infractions.

Before any school records can be shared, all tuition fees and other school fees must be paid in full.

Students Joining ISL in Grade 12

If a student joins ISL in Grade 12, he/she must complete a minimum of four school courses, combined with a maximum of two approved online/correspondence accredited courses. All ISL Diploma requirements are applicable except for Theory of Knowledge (TOK), since the bulk of the TOK course is taught in Grade 11. Your student will also be required to successfully complete a Senior Project, planned in conjunction with their advisor and the DP Coordinator. Finally, students will complete a modified CAS program planned in conjunction with the DP Coordinator and CAS Coordinator.

Homework

Meaningful homework is used to reinforce what students learn in class, master skills, and develop individual interests. Homework is a learning activity that increases in complexity as the student progresses from grade to grade. Students are responsible for contacting teachers to get assignments missed while absent for any reason. Grades 6 through 8 are assigned one to two hours of homework, on average, per school night.

If there are any questions about homework, please encourage your student to speak with their teacher. Both students and parents have access to our online learning platforms, ManageBac and Moodle.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an integral part of who we are. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Students are required to follow the Academic Honesty guidelines. All students sign a copy to ensure they have read and understood the guidelines. The guidelines are available here: [Academic Honesty Guidelines](#).

Use of Technology at ISL

We use technology to meaningfully enhance education at ISL. Students are encouraged to bring their own devices to be used in classes. ISL provides sets of tablets and laptops. It is important to note that technology used during classes is for educational purposes only. We work with our students to develop appropriate mobile phone and wireless network use. The full Acceptable use of Technology at ISL Document can be found [HERE](#).

Bring Your Own Laptop Program in Middle School (BYOL)

Every Middle School student will be required to bring in a laptop computer and a charger that can be used in school on a daily basis in the 2016-2017 school year. Participation in the BYOL program is not optional.

The system requirements/hardware specifications for student laptops are as follows:

- WiFi capable
- Attached keyboard
- Less than 3 years old
- USB and headphone jack
- Battery lasts at least 5 hours

If there are any questions about purchasing a laptop, or questions about whether the laptop your student is currently using will do, please contact Seth Hendrickson at shendrickson@isl.edu.lv. Please see the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) section on the ISL website..

Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences

Any day can be a Parent-Student-Teacher conference day with prior arrangement. The conferences in the Fall give the opportunity to discuss your student's progress.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of a child's education. They provide opportunities to explore the local culture and community, and to take part in activities. There may be additional costs for these activities. At the beginning of the year, parents will sign a general permission form, allowing their child to participate in field trips throughout the year. Parents will be informed by the teachers in advance of any field trips their child will be taking. Special trips such as overnight trips or adventure trips will involve separate permission forms.

Personal Accident Insurance

The International School of Latvia does not provide personal accident insurance for its students. Please also be advised that the school has no liability insurance for students riding the bus both on field trips and trips to and from school.

Student Records

Student information is treated in a confidential manner. If you need school records because you are applying to another school, please provide ISL with contact details for that school so that the records may be sent directly to that school. We are also happy to provide hard copies for you to take with you. No student's records, transcripts or ISL/IB Diploma will be released unless all school fees have been paid.

Use of Student Images in Videos, Photographs

During the school year, your student's image may be used in a variety of communications, including but not limited to the school newsletter and school website. As a matter of practice, ISL does not identify students when their image is used in either print or video communications.

The International School of Latvia Association

All parents of students at ISL automatically become members of the ISL Association. The supervisory institution of the Association is the Council, which is composed of 7 representatives elected from among the members of the Association and one non-voting member appointed by the US Ambassador. The Council represents the interests of the members during the time period between the members' general meetings. More information can be found on the school website.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Parent support is essential to ISL's success. The PTO is a group of parents and teachers who help the school by arranging community activities and fund-raisers. To take part in PTO activities, please contact the Front Desk for details or visit the ISL website. [Community, PTO](#)

Parent Information Sessions

School Principals and the School Counselor, along with other faculty on occasion, will hold meetings with parents to share information about school activities, and discuss topics that are important to student learning. Announcements will be made to let you know when and where these sessions will be held.

After-School Activities and Athletics

ISL is a member of the Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA). After-school activities provide a wide variety of wonderful opportunities for students. A full list of this season's offerings and the complete ISL Athletic and Activity Handbook is available on the ISL website [Learning, Activities or Athletic](#).

Middle School Student Council

Participating in the Middle School Student Council provides: leadership opportunities, promotion of

school spirit, and a forum to express opinions about school-related issues. Students are encouraged to take part in activities organized by the Middle School Student Council. More information can be found on the ISL website [Learning, Middle School, Student Council](#).

Updated August 8, 2016

**Middle School Parent Handbook
and
Middle School Student Handbook**

Acknowledgement Form

After reading and discussing all the information in the handbooks, parents and students must sign and return this form no later than the first week of school for the student.

Family Name _____ **(Please print)**

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Printed Name of Student | _____ Signature of Student | _____ Date |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|

| | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Printed Name of Parent | _____ Signature of Parent | _____ Date |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|

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Acceptable Use Agreement (all students must complete)

Student: I have read, understand, accept, and will follow the rules and procedures regarding my use of the Internet and the computer technology at ISL. I understand that the computer use is designed for educational purposes only. I understand the failure to follow the procedures listed above may result in suspension or loss of the right to access the Internet and/or use the ISL technology and may result in other disciplinary or legal actions as noted above. I will not hold my teacher, other ISL personnel, or ISL responsible for or legally liable for materials distributed or acquired from the Internet or network. I also agree to report any misuse of the Internet or network to a teacher or administrator.

Accepted and Agreed: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Student

Accepted and Agreed: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian