

The International School of Latvia Middle School Student 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 communicate with your parents to plan your vacations based on the school holidays as missing too many days of school may jeopardise your 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.* Your day is divided into eight class periods, with 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 will be 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 you arrive, you may go to either the Media Center, cafeteria or playground, depending on the weather and time of year.
- At 8:20 am, you should be inside getting ready to start classes promptly at 8:30 am.
- To ensure your safety, any parent or visitor who enters the school after 8:30 am should wear a Visitor pass available from security.
- If you arrive after 8:30 am, you must report to the Front Desk for a tardy pass.

Your 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 your 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 you are absent for three days in a row or a total of 10 school days, the front desk staff will contact parents.
- If a student misses 20 days of school, your family will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your 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 parents must notify Mrs. Eriha (merliha@isl.edu.lv) about any changes to your bus service no later than noon (12:00) 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 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.

Dress Code

Our community values of caring, honesty, respect, and open-mindedness extend to how we present ourselves. Students are expected to dress appropriately for an international academic environment dedicated to maximizing learning and growth. Teachers and the Principal have the discretion to determine what is appropriate.

Examples of appropriate dress include:

- Clothing that is not see-through or revealing, with no undergarments visible
- Shorts and skirts that cover thighs
- Shoes/boots
- Slogans, pictures or sayings on clothing that are school appropriate (ie. no profanity, alcohol, drugs, violence, or sexual references)
- Hats removed indoors

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 regularly in the lobby. If items are not claimed at the end of each quarter, 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, if it is about homework or an event in class, you should talk to your 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.

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.

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 you would like a friend to visit the school, you must complete the Permission Form [HERE](#) at least one day before your friend comes to school. To complete [the form](#), you should enter all classes you would like your friend to visit, ask each teacher's permission and collect their signatures. Then, you 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 you are 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 you are unwell. Students who are ill for more than three days require a doctor's note explaining their absence. Your family 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 family's responsibility to notify the school nurse of any current medical problems (allergies, asthma, etc.) that you 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 you have any medical issues, your parents 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.

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 your life. It plays a critical role in your personal development.

The Middle School Advisory program:

- ensures that you are known well by a teacher.
- helps you be successful in academics and in life.
- promotes healthy communication.

Advisory takes place once a week for 45 minutes, led by two teachers per grade.

Academics

Student Support

We have a vibrant English as an Additional Language (EAL) 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.

Our College Counselor works with all students to provide guidance in successfully applying to their universities of choice. For more information, please visit the [College Counseling site](#).

Promotion/Retention of Students

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 Principal, Counselor 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.

Homework

Assigned homework will be assigned to enhance learning and is meaningful, to reinforce what you learn in class, master skills, and develop individual interests. Homework is a learning activity that increases in complexity as you progress from grade to grade. *You* are responsible for contacting teachers to get assignments missed while absent for any reason. You may be assigned one to two hours of homework, on average, per school night. If you are spending much less, or much more than this on your homework, something is wrong. If you have any questions about homework, communicate with your 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 on the school website [Academic Honesty Guidelines](#).

Use of Technology at ISL

We use technology to meaningfully enhance education at ISL. You are encouraged to bring your 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 will work with you 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. We do set aside time twice a year for more formal conferences. The conferences in the Fall give the opportunity to discuss your progress. The conferences in the Spring are student-led and will be a chance for you to demonstrate your learning.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of a your education. They provide chances 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 you to participate in field trips throughout the year. Parents will be informed by the teachers in advance of any field trips you will be taking. Special trips such as overnight trips or adventure trips will involve separate permission forms.

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 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.

After School Activities and Athletics

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

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. You 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](#).

**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 end of the first full 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
---------------------------------	------------------------------	---------------

