

The
IB (International Baccalaureate)
PYP (Primary Years Programme)
At GAIS



**What you always wanted to know
about the PYP and were afraid to ask?**

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**“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having
new eyes.”**

—Marcel Proust



What is the International Baccalaureate Organization?

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 as a non-profit educational foundation. At its heart the IB promotes intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century.

The IB offers three programs of international education for students

- **The Primary Years Programme (PYP)** for students aged 3 to 12 focuses on the development of the whole child in the classroom and in the world outside.
- **The Middle Years Programme (MYP)** for students aged 11 to 16 provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills, achieved through embracing and transcending traditional school subjects.
- **The Diploma Programme (DP)** for students aged 16 to 19 is a demanding two-year curriculum leading to final examinations and a qualification that is welcomed by leading universities around the world.



What is the mission of the IBO?

- to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people.
- to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- to work with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.
- to encourage students worldwide to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Regardless of location, size, or make-up, an IB school strives to develop an internationally minded person.



How is this visible at GAIS?

It means our students are taught WHY they should know something and how it connects to other subjects and the world around them. It means high quality teaching and learning—challenging instruction and worldwide knowledge “at home” (so to speak, in whichever country where you live and go to school). It also means great opportunities to study abroad for college/university, as well as opportunities to make friends with other students at IB schools around the world.



What is an Internationally-minded Person?

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

The PYP believes that an internationally minded person is someone with the attributes and dispositions described in the Learner Profile. The ultimate goal of our program at GAIS is to support our students in developing this set of attributes and dispositions within themselves.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



What is the Primary Years Programme?

At GAIS we are trying to meet the widely varying needs of our international student body. We know that our students, as well as teachers, come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and bring many different beliefs and expectations to school. Our goal is to create a program that will not only meet the needs of this diverse group, but also benefit from the richness of the diversity.

A group of international educators who were working on the same problem, combined their own knowledge and expertise with the best practice from the many national systems, and created a new way of thinking about curriculum. The Primary Years Programme, or PYP, adopted by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) in 1997, was the result of their work.

The PYP is an international curriculum framework created for students between the ages of 3 and 12 years. It is a transdisciplinary program of international education designed to foster the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

The PYP focuses on the total growth of the developing child, touching hearts as well as minds and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare.

The PYP combines the best research and practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools to create a relevant and engaging educational framework for all children.



What will my child be learning?

At the heart of the PYP philosophy is a commitment to structured inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning. Six trans-disciplinary themes provide the framework for the exploration of knowledge. Teachers and students are guided by these themes as they design curricular units for exploration and study. These units of inquiry make up the GAIS Programme of Inquiry (POI). Students explore subject areas through these themes. In the process, they develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop particular attitudes and learn to take socially responsible action.

The written curriculum incorporates five essential elements:

The first four essential elements: concepts, skills, attitudes and actions, are relevant in and across all subject areas and provide the framework for structured and purposeful inquiry. They can have different applications and interpretations, depending on the subject area. The fifth element – knowledge, is considered to a conceptual understanding of ideas, not merely the acquisition of facts and skills.

CONCEPTS There are eight fundamental concepts expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units -called units of inquiry, but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas.

The concepts are:

Form: What is it like?

Function: How does it work?

Causation: Why is it like it is?

Change: How it is changing?

Connection: How is it connected to other things?

Perspective: What are the points of view?

Responsibility: What is our responsibility?

Reflection: How do we know?

SKILLS There are five sets of trans-disciplinary skills acquired in the process of structured inquiry.

These are:

Thinking Skills:

- Acquisition of Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation
- Dialectical Thought (2 thoughts at the same time)
- Metacognition (thinking about thinking)

Communication Skills:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

- Viewing
- Presenting
- Non-Verbal Communication

Social Skills:

- Accepting Responsibility
- Respecting Others
- Cooperating
- Resolving Conflict
- Group Decision-Making
- Adopting a Variety of Group Roles

Research Skills:

- Formulating Questions
- Observing
- Planning
- Collecting Data
- Recording Data
- Organizing data
- Interpreting Data
- Presenting Research Findings

Self-Management Skills:

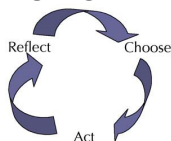
- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills
- Spatial Awareness
- Organization
- Time Management
- Safety
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Codes of Behavior
- Informed Choices

ATTITUDES The PYP promotes and fosters a set of 12 attitudes we want the Students to feel, value and demonstrate. There are twelve in total.

They are:

- **tolerance**
- **respect**
- **integrity**
- **independence**
- **enthusiasm**
- **empathy**
- **curiosity**
- **creativity**
- **cooperation**
- **confidence**
- **commitment**
- **appreciation**

ACTION



The students are encouraged to reflect, to make informed choices and to take action that will help their peers, school staff and the wider

community. In this way the students demonstrate a deeper learning through service and positive action.

KNOWLEDGE: The PYP recognizes that it is inappropriate, and not desirable in an international setting, to define any narrow, fixed body of knowledge as the essential content, which every student should know. So rather than designing a fixed syllabus, the PYP has set out to identify themes – areas of knowledge, which are used to organize the six units of inquiry, taught each year from Early Childhood – Grade 5.

The organizing themes are:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet

As much as possible subject knowledge is integrated into the six trans-disciplinary themes of the curriculum model.. The current GAIS Programme of Inquiry is found under Academics Pre-School and Elementary School.



What actually is a “Unit of Inquiry”?

A Unit of Inquiry usually lasts 5- 6 weeks with each grade level K-5 covering all 6 themes throughout the year. For example, during the Unit of Inquiry “Sharing the Planet” students use their time looking at the rights and responsibilities people have as they share natural resources. They might look at how people around the world deal with their garbage. Students will answer a causation questions like: What are the consequences, when people don’t deal with the garbage they produce? Or a function question, how do people recycle used items in order to reuse them? These concepts and questions move across all school subjects (i.e. math-(graphs), English, geography, etc.) and apply to real life and the world around us.

These themes or Units of Inquiry, provide a framework on which our teachers build students’ knowledge. With the IB PYP, the priority is not on using a set of textbooks, but rather the emphasis is on a wide variety of resources from which teachers and students extract knowledge, develop understanding, and explore ways of applying that to real life.



What resources does GAIS use?

Because the IB PYP philosophy believes that students learn best through authentic inquiry. While there is certainly a place in the curriculum for textbooks and workbooks, GAIS uses a wide range of resources that best cater to our students’ individual needs and learning styles. The IB PYP also recognizes that it is not knowledge alone that makes a

learner successful, but the skills and attitudes they develop along the way. That is why and GAIS teachers and administrators spend a lot of time researching, creating and collecting a variety of recourses that are stored in our library, in the classes and on the computer. All classes also use many guest speakers and fieldtrips to allow for authentic inquiry related to real life issues.



How will I know how my child is doing?

The PYP promotes the use of a range of assessment strategies, which are designed to give a clear picture of your child's progress. This progress will be reported to you regularly, both orally and in writing. There are teacher-led conferences and student-led conferences scheduled during the year. We believe in open communication between home and the school. You are encouraged to play an active role in supporting your child's learning. Students will also receive a progress report mid year as well as at the end of year.



How can I support my child's learning?

We at GAIS strongly believe that learning is a partnership between student, parent and school.

You can help your child by:

- be on time for school
- maintaining regular contact with your child's teacher and school
- sharing books with your child
- supporting your child's mother tongue through speaking, reading and writing
- assisting your child with research projects and expressing interest in what they are learning
- attending information sessions at school and parent/teacher conferences
- providing an appropriate setting and structured routine for doing homework



Will the PYP help my child fit into another school?

Although no school or curriculum can guarantee a perfect fit when children transfer to a new school, particularly a school in a different country, it is important to note the following:

Transfer to schools offering a national curriculum

- close attention is paid to a range of national curricula when developing the PYP curriculum

- students transferring international schools usually have no trouble with standards of national schools

Transfer to other schools offering the PYP

- Students in other PYP schools will have common learning experiences in terms of conceptual development, skill acquisition, positive attitudes and meaningful action. There will be less uniformity of specific content in certain areas, since schools will naturally wish to reflect the nature of their own locations.
- The PYP is working towards agreement on a common set of assessment, recording and reporting strategies, which will facilitate the transfer of students.



How is the PYP evaluated?

All authorized schools are revisited and their programs evaluated three years after the date of authorization and five years thereafter to offer the PYP. This service is designed to review the effectiveness of the delivery of the program at the school. The evaluation team consists of knowledgeable professionals familiar with the program in the school. The evaluation process does not assess individual students or teachers.

The evaluation process identifies the strengths and weaknesses of our program and the degree of success with which we have implemented the PYP. It will follow up on any recommendations made during the authorization visit and later on the evaluation visit. The information provided will assist us in the further development of an effective program and support us on the path of continuous improvement.



What shall I do if I still have questions?

If you have questions with regards to the PYP at GAIS, please feel free to make an appointment to discuss your questions with:

- your child's teacher
- the PYP coordinator Maike Silver
- the Head of School Hans Peter Metzger

The IBO website is www.ibo.org