

# Elementary 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 policies, procedures and beliefs, and contact your child's teacher should you have any questions.

## 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](#) is posted on the school website. Please ask your parents to plan your vacations based on the school holidays. 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 Elementary School day is divided into eight class periods. All Elementary School students have a 60-minute lunch break and a 30-minute mid morning 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. In case of bad weather, students may go to the gym.
- By 8:20 am, all High 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 8:30am 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](mailto:frontdesk@isl.edu.lv) or call +371 67755146.
- If your child is absent for three days in a row or a total of 10 school days the front desk staff will contact you to remind you of our attendance policy.
- If your child misses 20 days of school, you 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 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.

## Afternoon Pick-up Procedures

The school day ends at 3:30 pm. If your child attends after-school activities, these end at 4:50pm.

We ask parents to use the curb service for picking up their children. **Cars are never to be parked in this area!**

All students will walk out to the front of the school for dismissal with their teacher. Once the teacher has made eye contact with the parent/guardian then the child will be allowed to leave their line with the parent/guardian.

Please be sure that you pick up your child on time. Any Elementary School students who are not picked up by 3:45 pm will be taken to the Front Desk where their parents will be called. They will wait there for your arrival.

## Busing

Students who take the school bus will be escorted from the bus in the morning and to the bus at the end of the day. You must notify Mrs. Erliha ([merliha@isl.edu.lv](mailto: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.

## Elementary Daily Outdoor Recess

All Preschool and Elementary School students spend recess time outdoors every day, weather permitting. Therefore, it is important that students come to school with proper outdoor clothing for daily outdoor recess. If your child is too ill to participate in daily school activities (i.e. recess or Physical Education), then they should not attend school until able to participate.

## 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 are respectful 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 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, 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 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](mailto:@isl.edu.lv). (example John Smith would be [jsmith@isl.edu.lv](mailto:jsmith@isl.edu.lv)) For a complete listing of school staff, please visit: [www.isl.edu.lv](http://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 runs 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 (8:00am - 3:30pm) and After School Activities. Parents are responsible for supervising their children at all other times, especially during ISL community events such as International Day and Parent Teacher Student 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 into the Front Desk.

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

## 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 student 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 student 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 student 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;
- proof of a negative tuberculosis test (BCG vaccine, chest xray 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

Our School Counselor works with all students in all grades, and is responsible for the academic and affective lives of our students. The School Counselor also coordinates our Advisory Program in the Middle and High school. For additional information on our School Counselor click [HERE](#)

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.

### **Elementary School Counseling**

In the Elementary School, the school Counselor meets with the students from Kindergarten every week to work with them on topics such as communication, friendships, bullying, stress management, and decision making skills.

## **Emergency Closing Procedures**

The Director will make the decision if the school needs to be closed due to an emergency. You will be contacted via SMS. ***Please make certain that your contact details are always up to date***. Contact the Front Desk if you need to update your information.

## **Academics**

### **Student Support**

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

### **Homework Guidelines**

Meaningful, regularly assigned 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. Kindergarten can be assigned up to 30 minutes (most of which is reading with parents) which can progress to 1 hour 30 minutes of homework in Grade 5. If you have any questions about homework please feel free to contact your child's teacher.

### **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. 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 wireless network use. The full Acceptable use of Technology at ISL Document can be found [HERE](#).

### **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 child's progress.

### **Student- Led Conferences**

The conferences in the Spring are student-led and are a facilitated opportunity for your student to demonstrate their learning.

### **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, you will sign a general permission form, allowing your student 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 your child is 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 child'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. 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 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 occasions, will hold meetings with parents on a regular basis to share information about school activities, and discuss topics that are important to student learning. Announcements will be made to let you know when these sessions will be held.

## **After School Activities**

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](#).

## **Elementary School Student Council**

Participating in the Elementary 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 Elementary School Student Council. More information can be found on the ISL website [Learning, Elementary School, Student Council](#).

*Updated July 18th 2016*

**Elementary School Parent Handbook  
and  
Elementary 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
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_____ 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