



ISTANBUL
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS PROGRAM

PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE



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IICS

INTEGRITY,
INQUISITIVENESS,
CARING,
INTERNATIONAL
MINDNESS.



SCHOOL HOURS

MARMARA CAMPUS

8:30 - 15:00 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
8:30 - 14:30 Tuesday

HISAR CAMPUS

8:30 - 15:30 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
8:30 - 13:30 Wednesday

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Our Values: Our Philosophy

We believe that:

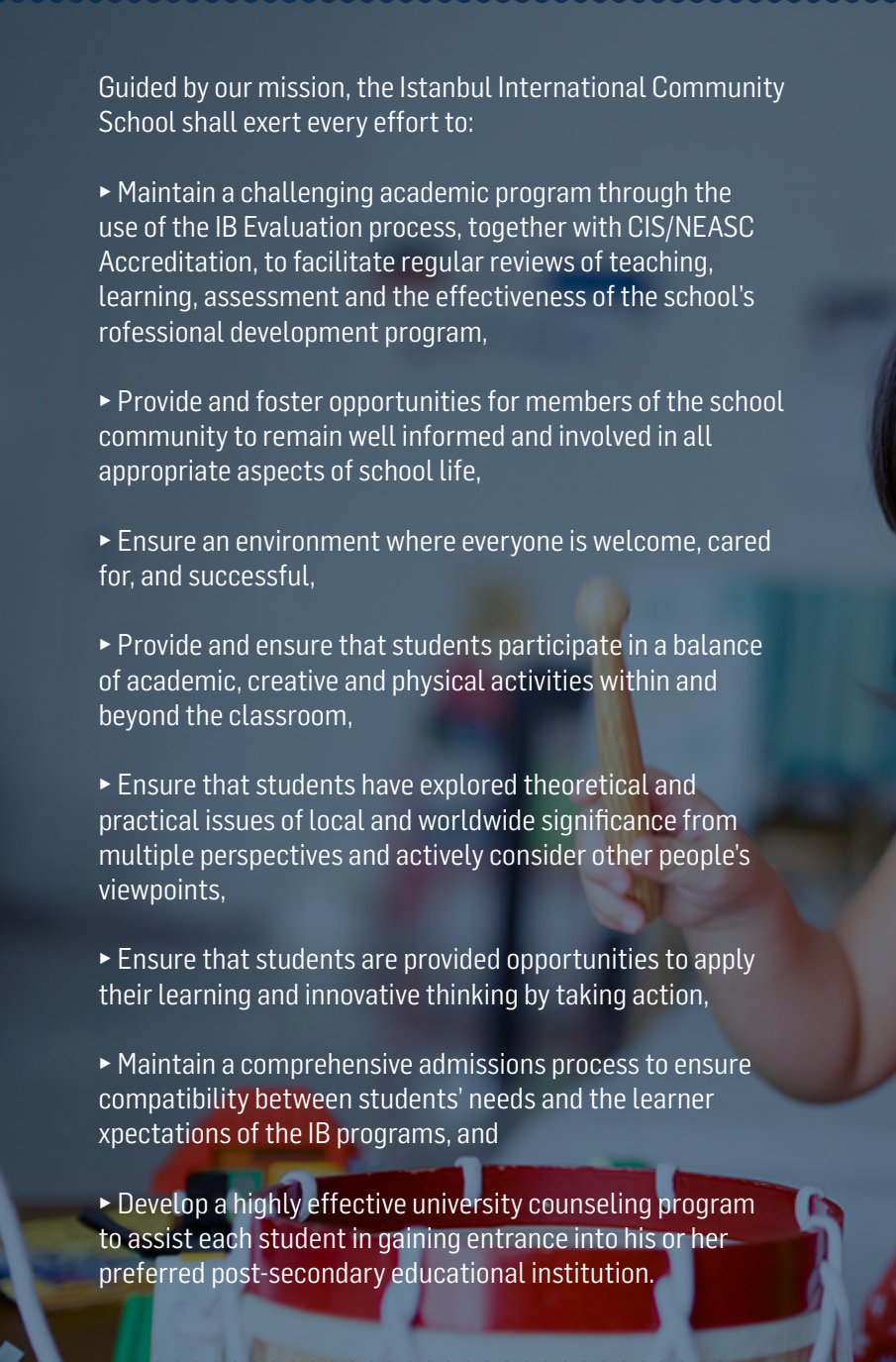
- ▶ The three IB programs are challenging to all learners, and we believe in the importance of the IB Learner Profile (inquirers, risk-takers, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, knowledgeable, balanced, reflective).
- ▶ Healthy relationships and effective communication between all members of the community, especially between students and teachers, are the key to school success.
- ▶ IICS provides a caring environment where everyone involved with the school, including parents, the Board of Directors, staff and students, has an important role in making the school a community of learners.
- ▶ Students learn best when they are happy at school and actively involved in their own learning.
- ▶ Learning is personal as each student is unique in his or her interests, aptitudes, and learning styles.
- ▶ The needs of each individual ought to be met so that each student has opportunities to excel.
- ▶ Internationally-minded people are those who strive to learn about the values and beliefs of their own culture so that they can better understand those found in their host country and elsewhere in the world.
- ▶ Internationally-minded people are world citizens who seek out commonalities and also appreciate differences between cultures so that they can bridge cultural divides and help create a more peaceful world.



Our Values: Our Objectives

Guided by our mission, the Istanbul International Community School shall exert every effort to:

- ▶ Maintain a challenging academic program through the use of the IB Evaluation process, together with CIS/NEASC Accreditation, to facilitate regular reviews of teaching, learning, assessment and the effectiveness of the school's professional development program,
- ▶ Provide and foster opportunities for members of the school community to remain well informed and involved in all appropriate aspects of school life,
- ▶ Ensure an environment where everyone is welcome, cared for, and successful,
- ▶ Provide and ensure that students participate in a balance of academic, creative and physical activities within and beyond the classroom,
- ▶ Ensure that students have explored theoretical and practical issues of local and worldwide significance from multiple perspectives and actively consider other people's viewpoints,
- ▶ Ensure that students are provided opportunities to apply their learning and innovative thinking by taking action,
- ▶ Maintain a comprehensive admissions process to ensure compatibility between students' needs and the learner expectations of the IB programs, and
- ▶ Develop a highly effective university counseling program to assist each student in gaining entrance into his or her preferred post-secondary educational institution.



IICS CORE VALUES



INTEGRITY

We act with a strong sense of fairness, honesty and respect towards ourselves, others and the world around us.

INQUISITIVENESS

We nurture natural curiosity in our learning communities to better understand the world.



CARING

We interact with compassion from a place of empathy assuming positive intent.

INTERNATIONAL MINDEDNESS

We value our common humanity and believe in diversity.



PLAY IN EARLY YEARS

"Learning is a relational place; a process of co-constructing meaning, always in relationship with others. It entails being sensitive to the unpredictable results of children's inquiries and research."

Gunilla Dahlberg, 2012

Our Early Years Program provides an opportunity for students to play, explore, observe, and make connections to themselves, others, and their environment. We know that children learn best when given opportunities to participate in learning experiences that are relevant and connected to their world.

Over the course of the school year, the Early Years Team support students to develop their emerging understandings. They plan learning opportunities within the framework of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. They provide opportunities for students to solve problems, take risks, express their ideas, and communicate their thinking. In order to challenge and extend their theories, students take an active role in planning and reflecting on their learning.

Play In Early Years

As students play and interact with others, the teachers observe, question, and listen. Teachers get to know the students, understand their learning styles, personalities, and the way they communicate with others.

Our youngest students start school with very different experiences and at different stages of development. Teachers building strong relationships with the students plays an important role in ensuring that each child feels safe and confident to learn and that they have the opportunity to develop at their own pace.



Preparing Your Child For Start School

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR START SCHOOL

Starting a school or joining a new school is a major event in the lives of the Early Years child. You can prepare your child for the big event of starting school and a new class by turning it into an adventure. This allows both you and your child to feel stronger about this very important new step in their lives. Even returning students will benefit from being re-acquainted with these tasks after their long summer break.

Our school transition schedule will allow your child to slowly settle into the school timetable with an introduction where you are present for some of it, gradually allowing them to become independent from you in the school environment.



GETTING TO KNOW THE ENVIRONMENT

These steps may help you and your child more easily adapt to school:

- **Familiarize your child** with their new setting or classroom if you have the opportunity. If you are unable to, then please visit the school website and class sites.
- **Attend** workshops, meetings, and open days.
- **Talk positively** about your child's new school or class, even if you may be feeling nervous.
- **Talk about** what your child will be doing at school or in their new class. Read story books about starting school.
- **Allow your child to ask questions** about what will happen at school or in their new class. Answer these questions in a positive way.
- **Discuss** how your child will be travelling to school.
- **Spend some time away** from your child by leaving them with family members and trusted friends.
- **Organize playdates** with other children you may know that will be attending IICS so that your child has a familiar face they know when they arrive.
- **Adjust your child's sleep routine** in the week before your child begins school. It is very beneficial for your child to begin school on time, so they have time to relax and socialize in the garden before the whole class meets.

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE

You can also help your child develop their confidence and independence before starting school by considering some of the following:

- Can your child drink from a cup and use cutlery to cut up food and feed themselves?
- Can your child put on his/her own shoes and fasten them?
- Can they put on and take off their sweater and coats?
- Can they fasten buttons and zips?
- Can they manage going to the toilet by themselves?
- Can they put away their toys and follow through instructions?
- Do they help you with jobs and chores around the house? (Setting the table, etc.)

If you have a nanny, have you discussed with the nanny how you are helping your child get ready for school so that your nanny can help, too?

Opportunities for cutting with scissors, drawing, playing with Playdough, threading beads or doing simple puzzles can be an enjoyable way to help your child develop their fine motor skills.

Children are individuals and will master skills at their own pace. We do not expect them to do all of the skills listed above before starting school. **However, children do need to be able to consistently use the toilet independently before school starts.**

ORIENTATION

Orientation for Early Years 3 & 4 is a different process than it is for the rest of the school. Orientation for Early Years 3 & 4 is designed to give our younger students a more supported transition into school. The Early Years orientation includes a work-shop for parents, individual meetings with students, parents and class teachers; and a half-day program gradually increasing to full days. Full details of this program are sent to parents before the start of the school year.

All parents are welcome to visit the classroom, respecting that it is not practical for too many adults to be in the room at one time. It is our objective to develop children's confidence and self-management skills. Sensitivity to this is important for all adults to keep in mind.

Parents with children who have separation anxiety will be assisted in developing a plan for easing their child into the routine with the teacher. Our aim is to make the transition into the school routine and environment a smooth and positive experience for your child. No parent will be forcibly separated from their child.

THE SCHOOL DAY

At IICS, we believe the interconnectedness of the environment, play, and relationships supports students in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to successfully engage with the written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

The students arrive between 08:20 and 08:30 for Outdoor Learning in the Early Years playground. This is a very important part of the daily schedule, and is planned carefully by all teachers involved. Class Teachers and Assistant Teachers are at times joined by single subject Teachers from Music, Physical Education (PE), and Art to provide learning opportunities for children outside.

Following our Outdoor Learning session, each class has a morning meeting to start the day before moving onto different learning areas. In addition to the homeroom program, students will attend Physical Education, Art, Music and Library. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated into the curriculum through the use iPads, the interactive whiteboards, and multimedia.



WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS

School bag/back pack/rucksack with a loop for hanging (at least 35 cm x 25 cm)
 Indoor shoes (to be left in school)
 Rubber boots (can be left in school)
 Complete change of clothes in a labelled bag (to be left in school)

**Please ensure that all your child's items are clearly labelled with the child's name.
 This helps us identify lost items.**



LUNCH AND SNACKS

We encourage healthy eating habits at IICS. If your child has any food allergy, please inform your teacher on the first day. Children are encouraged, but never forced, to eat a balanced lunch. This means that they will be asked to try vegetables and unfamiliar foods, and will be encouraged to eat enough. Teachers will work with parents of "reluctant eaters", to ensure that each child has a sufficient lunch.

Hot lunches are prepared daily at Marmara Campus by outside caterers and delivered to Hisar Campus. Students eat in their classrooms at Hisar Campus and in the EY common space at Marmara Campus. Hot lunches are included in tuition fees, as is a morning snack (fruit and milk).

Students may bring a snack from home for the afternoon, but it must be healthy. **Please do not send candy, chocolate, cola, chips, crisps or the like.**

We recommend water as the best drink for children at school; water is available throughout the day. The monthly menu is available on the school website for parents to view at www.lunch.iics.k12.tr

EVERYDAY PRACTICALITIES

ASSEMBLY

Students take part in regular assemblies in order to share and celebrate their learning as well as develop public speaking and performance skills. Parents are welcome to attend.

Assemblies are held monthly and families will be informed if their class or children are involved in both campuses. Assemblies are usually held on Wednesday at 09:00 at Marmara Campus and Friday at 09:00 at Hisar Campus.

The IICS Community Calendar is available on our website's resources page: <https://www.iics.k12.tr/resources/>



ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance helps Early Years students adjust to routines and feel comfortable and confident in their learning environment.

At IICS students are expected to attend every day that school is in session. Any absence that is not related to illness (or other excused absences as per that section in the handbook) will be considered as an unexcused absence. Please do not schedule family holidays when school is in session.

When absent from school or when arriving late, students miss participating in discussions, working collaboratively in groups, asking and responding to questions, working with manipulative and other educational materials, interacting with the learning environment, exposure to the teachers' instruction, and social interaction with peers. Assignments completed outside of a classroom cannot fully take the place of actual classroom experiences.

If an unexcused absence is unavoidable while the school is in session, parents are required to email the Primary Leadership team for approval. If absences exceed twenty days, the Principal may request a meeting with the parents to discuss the effect of the absences on their child's learning. It will include a review of whether the child is sufficiently prepared for promotion to the following grade level.

If your child is absent, please email or send a written record the class teacher and notify the school office.



BUS AND TRANSPORTATION

Students come to school either by school bus or by car (parent or driver). School buses serve many parts of Istanbul. Early Years students require a certain degree of independence to travel daily on the bus. Please consult your class teacher for readiness.

Early Years students are delivered to bus transportation at the end of the school day. **Any pre-planned changes to the usual pick-up procedures MUST be announced to class teachers at least 24 hours in advance. Any same day changes to pick-up procedures MUST be processed through the school office before 12:00pm that morning.**

Please remember to visit the school from time to time so that we do not miss the opportunity to meet parents of bus travelling students.

BIRTHDAYS

If you would like to bring a small treat for all the children on your child's birthday, these will be shared at snack time (please let the teacher know in advance). The treat should be such that a child can distribute it independently, such as cupcakes, muffins, or doughnuts.

Invitations to parties can be passed out in class if they include either all the children of the class or all the children of the same gender. Other invitations to select groups should be arranged outside of class to avoid hurt feelings.

PRIVATE EVENT TRANSPORT

Parents occasionally choose to arrange a private bus from school to their child's party.

All arrangements need to be made by the parent concerned, as the teachers and the **school office are not expected to take on this additional responsibility.**

To ensure safe dismissal, the parent of the birthday child must:

One week before:

- **Notify the school office and the child's teacher.**
- Complete IICS's Alternative Transport Dismissal Form.
- Organize and collect written permission from the parents of all students who will ride the bus. **(A sample form is available in the school office)**

The day before:

- Pass the full set of permission slips to the class teacher.

On the day:

- Collect all the children from the relevant classes at home time. (This must be a parent).
- Supervise the party group in the garden until the party bus arrives.
- The parent rides the bus with the students.

Please note:

No students will be permitted to ride the bus without advanced written permission from their parents.

CLOTHING AND SHOES

The days are very busy and can be very messy! The children will be playing outside in sand, in water, with paints, stones, rocks, and sticks. They will climb trees, make dens, and roll on the ground. They will be gluing, cutting, painting, coloring, and eating together.

Please send your children to school wearing practical, comfortable, and washable clothes that are simple to put on and remove. Some suggestions include:

- loose tops so children can roll up sleeves;
- trousers with elasticated waist to allow independence when going to the toilet;
- long hair should be tied back, away from the face;
- elasticated velcro shoes unless your child is able to tie shoelaces independently.

We do not want to restrict children's play with 'best' clothes.

Indoor shoes are essential items and should be left at school. They should be soft or rubber-soled, have backs and cloth uppers, and should be easy to slip on and take off. Please do not send in slippers because in the event of an emergency drill the children go outside wearing their indoor shoes.

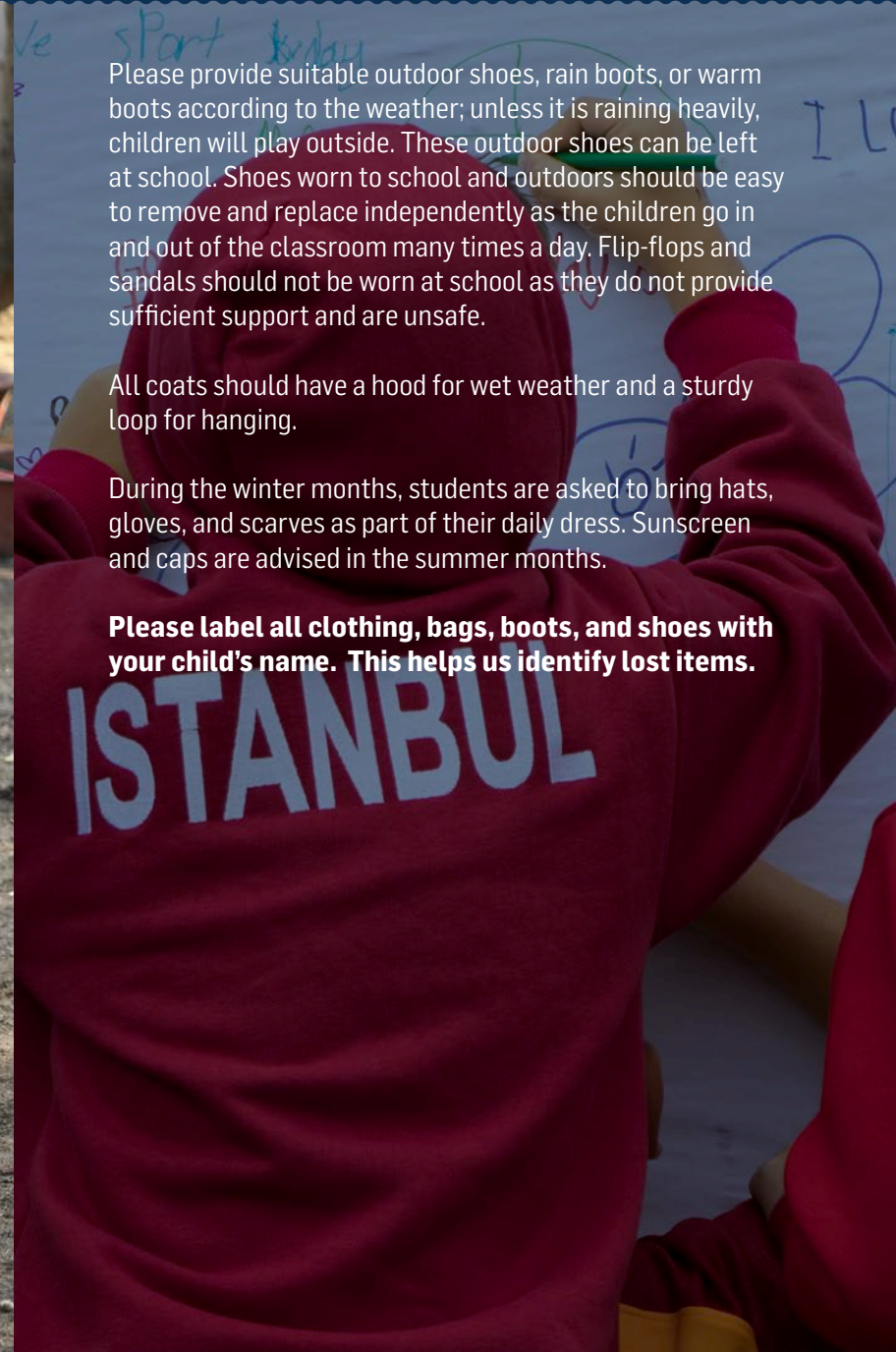


Please provide suitable outdoor shoes, rain boots, or warm boots according to the weather; unless it is raining heavily, children will play outside. These outdoor shoes can be left at school. Shoes worn to school and outdoors should be easy to remove and replace independently as the children go in and out of the classroom many times a day. Flip-flops and sandals should not be worn at school as they do not provide sufficient support and are unsafe.

All coats should have a hood for wet weather and a sturdy loop for hanging.

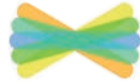
During the winter months, students are asked to bring hats, gloves, and scarves as part of their daily dress. Sunscreen and caps are advised in the summer months.

Please label all clothing, bags, boots, and shoes with your child's name. This helps us identify lost items.



COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

At IICS, we view parents as partners in their child's education. We encourage you to contact us by email if you have any questions, concerns, or information. At times, it may be better to arrange to talk, so please do not hesitate to contact the school office so that we can schedule a meeting or arrange a time to speak on the phone.



SEESAW

Seesaw is a digital portfolio, a new way of sharing what your child is learning at school.

Seesaw gives children and teachers, a place to document and share their learning. Seesaw gives students a creative tools to capture and reflect on their learning – in real time.

This gives parents a window into each of our classrooms and into their student's learning process.

Each child gets their own journal, and with teacher guidance, can add photos, videos, drawings, voice recordings, notes and much more. All students at IICS will have their own Seesaw digital portfolio.

Parents can then sign up and are able to see their child's work right on their phones or computers. It gives parents an immediate and personalized window into their child's life at school. Parents get to see snapshots of their child's learning at school and it gives them a way to encourage their child with specific and positive comments.

Students feel empowered to independently document their learning, and are motivated by knowing that their work has an authentic audience.



COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Strong communication between home and school is important to us. Parents are encouraged to send messages by direct email. While teaching it is not possible to answer emails immediately, we will endeavor to reply within 24 hours. For urgent messages, please call the school office.

WHEN PARENTS ARE TRAVELLING

In the case of parents traveling outside the country, it's very important that you notify the homeroom teacher and the school office, in writing, of the name and contact details of the adult guardians authorized to make emergency decisions involving the child during the parents' absence.

CONTACT CHANGES

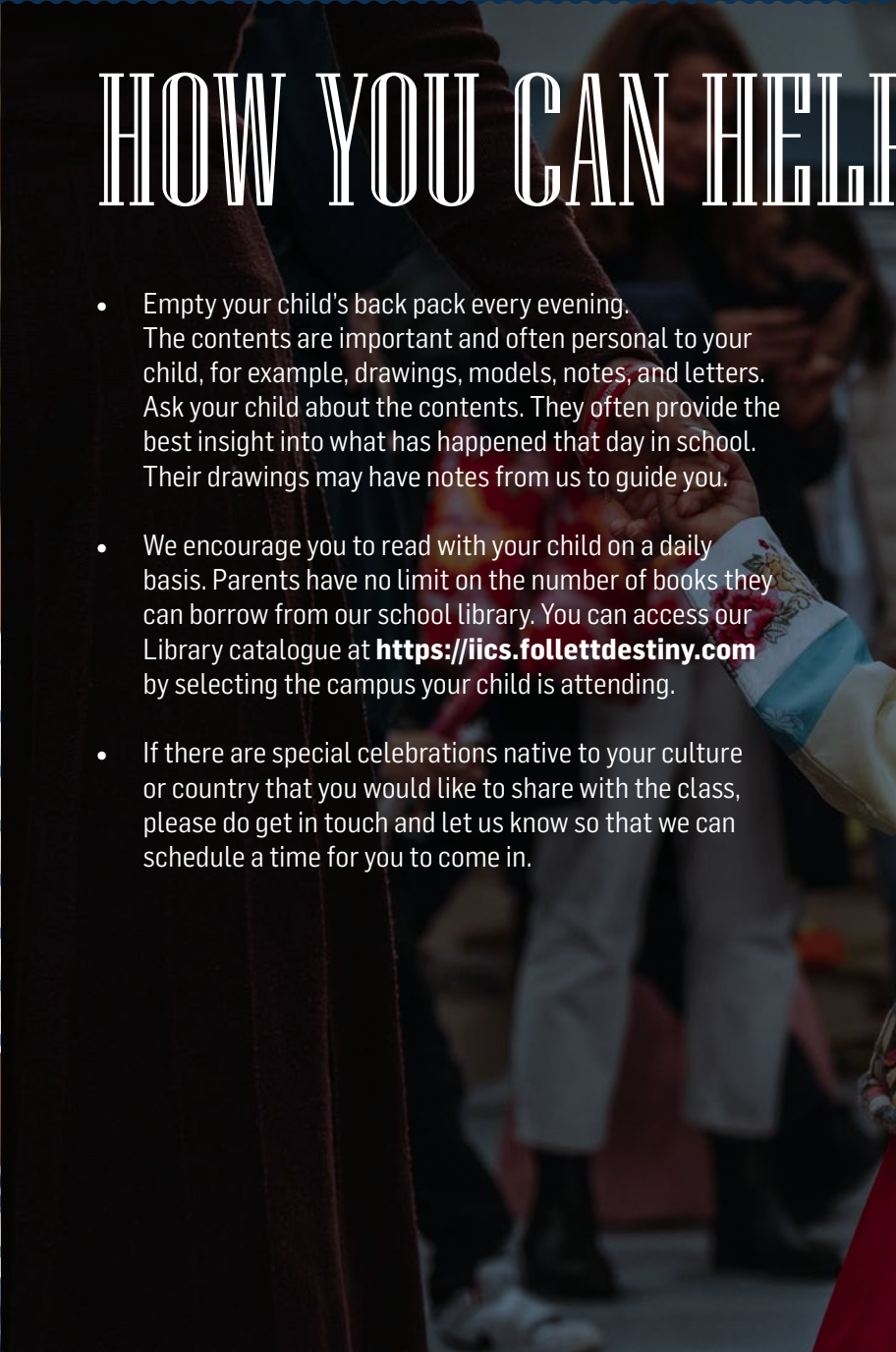
Changes should also be communicated immediately to the Director of Admissions at **admissions@iics.k12.tr** as well as your child's teacher, and the school office to ensure there is no communication gap.

It is essential that the school has your mobile telephone number and a reliable emergency number of a responsible adult who should we be unable to reach you.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Empty your child's back pack every evening. The contents are important and often personal to your child, for example, drawings, models, notes, and letters. Ask your child about the contents. They often provide the best insight into what has happened that day in school. Their drawings may have notes from us to guide you.
- We encourage you to read with your child on a daily basis. Parents have no limit on the number of books they can borrow from our school library. You can access our Library catalogue at **<https://iics.follettdestiny.com>** by selecting the campus your child is attending.
- If there are special celebrations native to your culture or country that you would like to share with the class, please do get in touch and let us know so that we can schedule a time for you to come in.





ILLNESS

In the interest of a healthy learning environment, please keep sick children at home, even if they want to come. It is better for them and only fair to the rest of the children at school. Also, if they are well enough to come to school, they are considered well enough to take part in all activities including outdoor play.

The school should be advised of an infectious disease by telephone. In the case of such an infection, a message may be sent home informing other parents of possible symptoms.

If a child becomes ill at school, she/he will be taken to the school Nurse and the parents will be notified and asked to collect their child. Please be sure that the school has a number where you can be reached in case of emergency.

Please note that no medication can be administered by class teachers. Written consent from the parent is required for the School Nurse, First Aid Assistant, the Principal, or the Vice Principal to dispense medicine.

Should a child have an accident at school, the school nurse or teachers will administer first aid. If the staff member in charge believes the child should be seen by a doctor, the school ambulance service will be called.



PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We are always interested in having parents volunteer at school. We are also interested in hearing of any talents parents may have to offer. Please contact your child's teacher to let us know.

ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Room Parents fulfill an important role in helping the teacher work together with class parents over the year. Room Parents assist the teacher and the PTA with communication and the building of a strong community. Room Parents are volunteers at the beginning of the school year.

Each class in both Primary sections will have at least one Room Parent.

Room Parents may be asked to assist in:

- Welcoming new parents
- Helping with class trips
- Assisting the PTA with Funky Friday Treats and Teacher Treat Days
- Communicating between PTA and parents



PLAY DATES

Notifying The Teacher/s

We encourage students to continue building relationships outside of school. It is essential that classroom teachers are informed of intended play dates and any changes to pick-up procedures.

Please note that because of space issues, it is often not possible to accommodate play date friends on the school bus and any such request must sent to the school office the day before.

QUIET TIME

After lunchtime play, the Early Years 3 & 4 classes have a quiet time. This varies depending on the time of the year, the age of the children, and their individual needs. Children will either need to rest, sleep, or participate in a quiet activity.

TOILETING

It is a requirement that all Early Years students are toilet trained before they come to school. Children are reminded at regular intervals to visit the toilet. Understanding that occasional 'accidents' may happen, we ask that all children have a spare set of clothing including underwear and socks at school.

Toilet doors are kept open during garden times and heating is provided during the colder months.

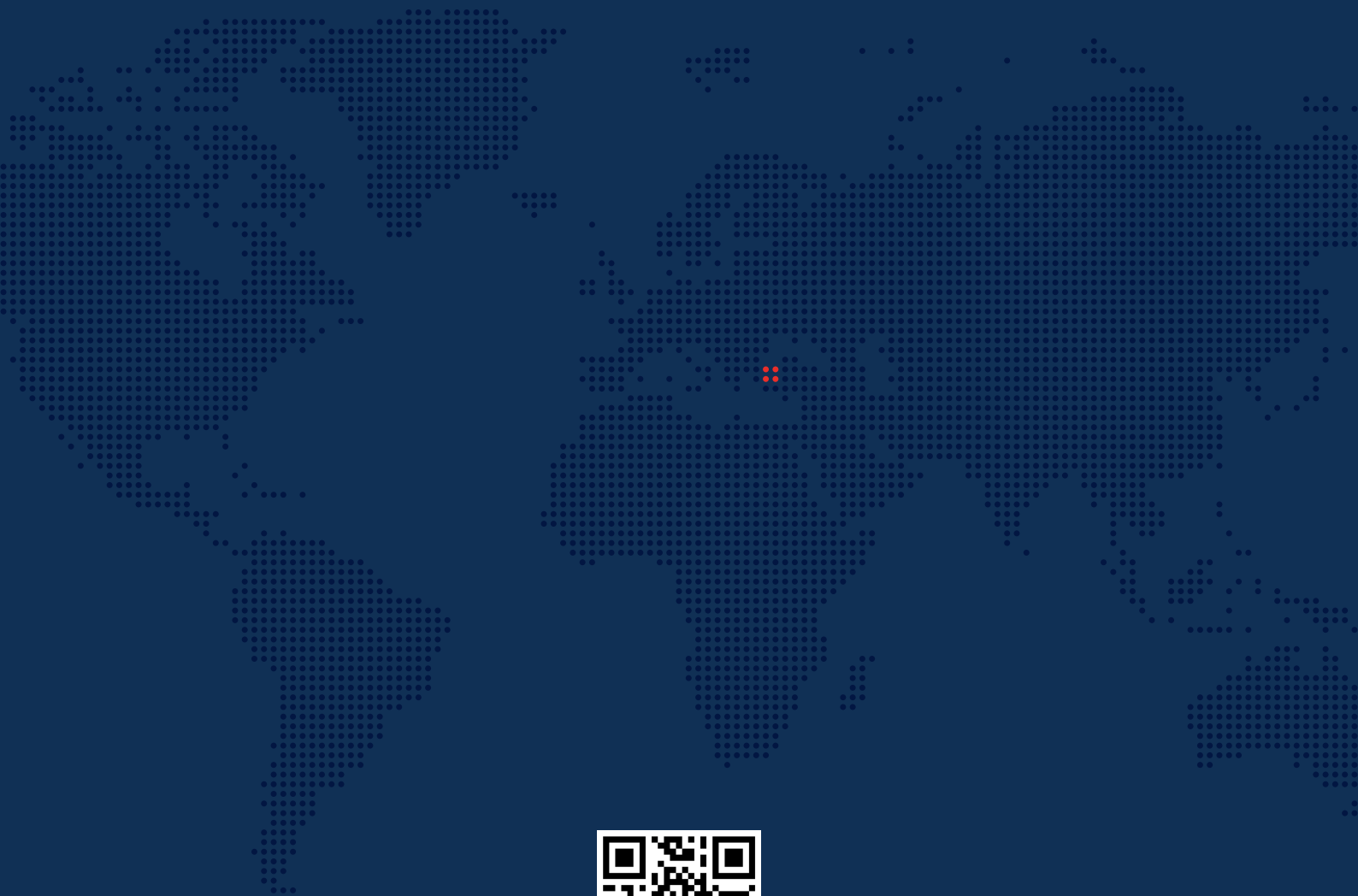
TOYS

Parents are requested to make sure that children do not bring toys to school for the following reasons:

- Toys could get lost or damaged;
- All children at school should have equal opportunities to play with whatever is available (by sharing they learn valuable social skills); and
- Students should be using the equipment and materials that have been carefully chosen at school.

Children may use listening equipment and computer games on the school buses but may not use them during school hours. Children are responsible for storing these items and taking responsibility for loss or damage to these items.

Your class teacher will provide you with more information regarding our morning meetings should 'sharing' be part of these meetings, you will be provided with more information during our 'Back to School' parent information sessions.



CONTACT US

ISTANBUL INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL