



Middle School Handbook 2011 - 2012

Dear Parents & Students,

Welcome to the Middle School at the International School of Port of Spain. We provide a learning community specially designed to meet the needs of young adolescents in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The middle school years are a transition time, a time between childhood and young adulthood. We strive to provide a supportive climate while giving students opportunities for choice and decision making. Our programs are diverse in nature, and structured to be challenging, while giving each student opportunities to succeed. The Middle School offers integrated programs through which teachers bring curricula together teaching concepts, skills and content around a specific theme. An integrated curriculum is a way for students to make connections to the real world beyond a subject area focus. These connections are made stronger through our outdoor education and community service projects.

The Middle School recognizes that the most important factor contributing to a student's long-term success is a positive attitude toward learning. At the end of every quarter, we recognize students who have shown outstanding academic responsibility/effort with their induction into the Gold, Silver and Bronze Clubs. Although the Middle School at ISPS is small, the programme offers a wide range of opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to make the best use of all of the resources available at the school.

A partnership between the home and school is also vital for a student's success. It is important for families to know what goes on at ISPS. We encourage communication between school and home. Ensure that you are on our Middle School e-mail list and that you read the school's weekly newsletter. Our handbook is designed to serve as a guideline for questions that may arise throughout the year.

Please contact me at asolozano@isps.edu.tt if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Alicia Solozano
Middle School Principal

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STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Middle School learner is respectful and seeks to uphold the goals of the International School of Port-of-Spain.

As an ISPS Middle School student you have the right to:

- A safe, clean and orderly environment.
- Respect as an individual.
- Caring and qualified teachers.
- Be a participant in making decisions that affect you.
- Be trusted.
- Know what is expected of you as a student.

With freedom comes responsibility! Along with rights come responsibilities. As an ISPS Middle School student, you are expected to accept certain responsibilities. If all students act responsibly, all of us can enjoy an atmosphere of trust and freedom.

SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

ISPS believes that in order to deliver a premier programme students, staff and parents should be held accountable to the highest levels of conduct.

Therefore, at ISPS, we expect that all students will:

- Uphold the fundamental rights of all ISPS community members by treating others and their property with respect and dignity.
- Practice tolerance and respect diversity.
- Behave in such a way that brings honour upon ISPS' name.
- Be responsible for your own conduct both in and out of school and understand that improper conduct has consequences.
- Resolve conflicts in a peaceful, rational manner.
- Be honest, always tells the truth and don't take what does not belong to you.
- Care for other physically, psychologically, and emotionally.
- Give of yourself to your community.
- Do your best every day; strive for excellence in everything you do.
- When you see others violating this Code of Conduct, speak out.

BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS
(Respect for self, others and school)

Our behaviour expectations for students in the Middle School at ISPS are based on respect for self, others and school/classroom rules.

Showing Self-Respect includes but is not limited to:

- Displaying the highest levels of conduct described in the ISPS Code of Conduct.
- Upholding the ideals of academic excellence by attempting to do your best.
- Dressing in a neat and appropriate manner (See Uniform Guidelines).
- Behaving in relationships in a manner that does not cause embarrassment to others or reflect unfavorably upon the school. This includes not engaging in public displays of affection.
- Keeping your school environment clean and free of litter.

Showing Respect for Others includes but is not limited to:

- Using appropriate language and not use hurtful words that might offend others.
- Refraining from pushing, shoving or rough-housing.
- Respecting the property of others, including another person's locker.
- Refraining from making racial or sexual insults, either verbal or written.
- Encouraging respect for the culture and people of our host country.

Showing Respect for School and Classroom Rules and Procedures includes but is not limited to:

- Possession and/or use of tobacco in any form, alcohol, or illegal drugs.
- Possession and/or use of weapons of any description including knives or toys that simulate real objects.
- Possession and/or use of aerosol sprays of any kind (including deodorant, hairspray, air freshener).
- Possession and/or use of laser pointers, matches and lighters.
- Stealing, regardless of how small it may seem.
- Using I-pods, MP-3 players, game boys and cell-phones during school hours. They must be turned off and out of sight
- Vandalism and tampering with emergency equipment.
- Chewing gum.
- Cheating and plagiarism (See Note)

NOTE: Acts of academic dishonesty are infrequent at ISPS. However, when plagiarism (which is taking and using as one's own the thoughts and/or writing of another), stealing tests, copying themes or tests from others or using unauthorized examination aids occurs, definite consequences will result. The first act of academic dishonesty will usually result in a zero on the test, paper, or project, and a phone call to parents. A second incident could result in an "F" mark for that quarter, suspension and school probation. As with other serious behavior problems, the ultimate consequence could be expulsion from our school.

If you disagree with or are confused about any of these expectations listed, please:

- Discuss your area of disagreement with your Homeroom Teacher.
- Discuss with your Student Council Homeroom Representative the possibility of bringing the issue before the entire Middle School Student Council.
- Arrange to discuss your concerns with the Principal. Come prepared with logical reasons and information to support your argument.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

We believe that Middle School is a time of experimentation, tremendous peer pressure, and seeking greater independence. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents work cooperatively to ensure that the student gains the most from a mistake.

- We believe that students learn best in an atmosphere in which appropriate behavior is expected of everyone and is based upon mutual respect and trust.
- We believe that all students have the potential for behaving positively, that they choose and are responsible for their behaviors, and that students can be guided and taught to make appropriate choices.
- We believe that an environment in which appropriate behavior is consistently expected and recognized creates a sense of security for each student that increases their attention to learning and to self-responsibility.
- We believe that discipline procedures should be based upon what is ultimately best for the student directly involved as well as the most positive impact upon others. Therefore, discipline procedures devised should reflect options that permit a range of consequences.
- We believe students benefit directly from the education process best when parents support and reinforce school regulations by demonstrating follow-up with students at home when misbehavior occurs at school.
- We believe in rewarding appropriate behavior. Appropriate behavior will be awarded in various ways.
For example: 1. Positive Recognition certificates
2. Gold Club/Silver/Bronze Club membership
3. Recognition assemblies

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Should a student choose to violate any of the behaviour expectations during school, while involved in a school-related activity, or coming to and from school, the inappropriate behavior is to be documented. After the documentation of misbehavior, the following procedure is initiated:

1. CONFERENCE

The Subject Teacher, Counselor, Homeroom Teacher, or Principal will confer with the student. The parents may be conferred with in person or by phone. A meeting may include other appropriate personnel. Several conferences may be required before further action is taken. As a result of the conferencing process, one or more of the following consequences may occur as a result of a student's inappropriate behavior:

2. DETENTION

Students may be required to serve one or more lunch time detention periods. Students must report to the detention room by 11:35am. An after-school detention may also be assigned. Parents will receive prior written notification so that transportation arrangements can be made. Depending on the nature of the offence, the student may be required to perform some service to the school community during the detention. Parents must sign and return the detention notice to the school.

3. NON-PARTICIPATION LIST

Students placed on the Non-Participation List may not participate in extracurricular student activities. This includes, but is not limited to, after school sports & activities, and social events.

4. CONTRACT

A formal written contract between the school, parents, and student may be required which specifies expectations and consequences of behavior.

5. COUNSELING REFERRAL

The school may require professional counseling or diagnostic evaluation as a requirement for continued enrollment. The results of any testing and/or professional recommendations for school action would also be required.

6. GRADE LOSS

A student who chooses to cheat or plagiarize material may receive reduction or loss of grade for that assignment. An unexcused absence from class will also result in a reduction of an academic mark.

7. FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT

A student and his/her parents may be required to reimburse individuals or ISPS for damage or destruction of property.

8. SUSPENSION

Suspension is the removal of a student from classes and activities for a short time. There are two types of suspension utilized depending on the nature of the misbehavior as well as the student's behavior history.

(a) In-school suspension:

Students may receive one to two days of in-school suspension, which means they are isolated in a supervised area of the Middle School. A student is expected to work on schoolwork during this time. Lunch and breaks are monitored.

(b) Out-of-school suspension:

In serious situations when it is felt best to remove a student from school to emphasize the seriousness of the behavior, a suspension to be served upon the supervision of the parents is given for a period of time to be determined by the Principal and/or Director. In this situation, it is the responsibility of the student and/or parents to obtain the academic work missed during the student's absence.

9. DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

An administrator may require that the student's continued enrollment or re-enrollment be contingent upon meeting behavior expectations.

10. EXPULSION

In extreme cases of misbehavior or as a result of recurring behavior problems, a student may be immediately dismissed from attendance at ISPS. Decisions made concerning the expulsion of a student will be made in consultation with the School Director and the Board of Directors.

COMMUNICATION
(E-News/Newsletter)

Regular updates with specific information on the Middle School are provided through the Middle School E-News. This is sent to the parent via e-mail. If you are not already on the mailing list, please contact the Principal at asolozano@isps.edu.tt with your e-mail address. The e-mail does not replace the weekly school newsletter. The newsletter is sent to all families electronically on Fridays. Hard copies are available upon request (though we encourage you to help us go green). The newsletter can also be accessed on the school's website.

LOCKERS

The Middle School provides each student with a locker. Students should use their own combination lock. For your own protection, do not give your combination to anyone. Students should use their lockers daily to insure the safety of their property. ISPS is not liable for lost or stolen property that is not properly secured. Lockers are the property of ISPS and therefore, are subject to inspection and search at any time for any reason. It is the student's obligation to keep them neat and orderly at all times. No locker is to be altered in any manner. No stickers, posters, or ornaments of any type may be placed on any locker. Students will be responsible and charged for any damage to their assigned locker.

BREAK AND LUNCH TIME PROCEDURES

Students may not leave campus for lunch unless a parent/guardian or a teacher/administrator accompanies them. Students are not allowed to order food to be delivered to the school. All students must go to the cafeteria at break and lunch. In order to control litter, food may only be eaten in the cafeteria. During lunch, students must stay in the cafeteria for the first 20 minutes. Students may then go the following places, where there will be a Middle School teacher on duty: the library, the south basketball court or south field. If it is raining, students are to stay in the cafeteria.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The ISPS Middle School is a learning community designed for students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. We recognize the intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and physical development needs of young adolescents, and strive to provide a supportive climate which will enhance students' self-esteem and personal development.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Middle School programs are diverse in nature, and structured to be challenging, while giving each student opportunities to succeed. Choice and decision-making encourage ownership of knowledge and behavior.

The Middle School offers integrated programs through which teachers bring curricula together teaching concepts, skills and content around a specific theme. An integrated curriculum is a way for students to connect beyond subject area focus. An integrated curriculum is a teaching method that combines disciplines, focuses on topics of natural interest to adolescents, and addresses the different learning styles of students. The use of computers and technology is not taught as a separate subject but is integrated throughout the program.

CORE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

- Grade 6

Problem Solving is the theme of the grade 6 academic year.

Students explore questions such as:

- How do I solve problems in my daily life?
- Is there a solution to every problem?

Language Arts/Social Studies

The course is integrated to include reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the context of social studies. The curriculum is literature based, using works dealing with various aspects of the problem solving theme. Interdisciplinary connections are made throughout the year with mathematics/science. Students gain practice in different types of writing, including creative and technical writing. Throughout this course, students review and learn to apply various grammatical concepts.

This course explores some of the ways that the problem solving process is used in real life contexts:

- Explore what it means to be a responsible citizenship in the school, local and global community.
- Using the Five Themes of Geography as a framework, examine the ways that humans have adapted to and manage their environment
- Investigate the nature of human conflict and means of resolving conflict.

Science

This course covers units in the Nature of Science, Biodiversity, Matter and Molecules and Forces & Motion. Connections are made with the other disciplines. Students relate problem solving in science to how problems are solved in society/Math concepts are regularly imbedded in the study of science concepts, such as calculating tectonic plate movement or analyzing the correlation between wheel circumference and distance traveled. This helps students understand mathematics in terms of concrete applications. Students also learn basic laboratory

procedures and safety. Critical thinking skills are emphasized throughout the course. Sources range from multiple text-based materials to current online resources, in order to keep the content updated and accurate.

Mathematics

The ISPS mathematics curriculum provides a process through which students investigate and acquire skills and an appreciation of the broad strands of mathematics, while developing critical thinking and problem solving strategies. In grade 6 emphasis is placed on consolidating basic skills and concepts learned in elementary school and beginning to apply these to more abstract concepts like algebra. The McDougal Littell Mathematics series is used for grade 6 math courses.

- Grade 7

The grade 7 academic year explores the theme of systems. It is based on the internationally recognized Watershed program developed at Radnor Middle School. The year is divided into three major units: Sense of Place, Sense of Time and Sense of Quality. Students explore questions such as:

- What makes a watershed a system?
- How are man and nature connected in a watershed?
- How do events in the past influence the present day?
- What factors influence the development of a sense of place?
- What is a quality system? How do we sustain quality?

Language Arts/Social Studies

In this integrated course, students explore the theme of systems through literature and different types of writing. In the Sense of Place unit students explore how man develops a connection to a place. They themselves build a 'Sense of Place' by interacting with the local watersheds. In a Sense of Time the history of the people in the local watersheds is used as a case study to examine the development of culture of a place. In looking at the people who settled in Trinidad, they also learn about the push and pull forces of migration. In a Sense of Quality the students study various systems which affect the quality of our lives and the importance of sustaining quality.

Science

Overall the students work within the Scientific Process, doing experiments throughout the year which complement the in-class and field work. In the Sense of Place unit students focus on the physical and chemical aspects of the watershed, including the various cycles that affect it: water, carbon, nitrogen, etc. . This includes the study of plants and benthic macro-invertebrates. They analyze stream water samples for a variety of ecological parameters and, in so doing, begin to recognize the interconnectedness of factors that influence the quality of our streams. The Sense of Time unit looks at the history of our watersheds from a geologic perspective as well as climatic factors. Our studies include rocks, minerals and soil and the time needed for each of these to form, as well as the effects of both chemical and physical forces on rocks to learn about this weathering and erosion processes. The Sense of Quality focuses on the characteristics and the maintenance of quality systems in the environment and an in-depth look at one system centered around the leatherback turtle. The program focuses on frequent field trips into the various watersheds we study, taking water samples and looking at the quantitative and qualitative parameters of a watershed.

Mathematics

The ISPS mathematics curriculum provides a process through which students investigate and acquire skills and an appreciation of the broad strands of mathematics, while developing critical thinking and problem solving strategies. Emphasis is placed on developing students' understanding and application of concepts through meaningful and relevant activities.

Grade 7 students are placed in Mathematics 7 or Pre-Algebra after an assessment period at the beginning of the school year. Assessment data used includes performance in previous grades, standardized test scores and teacher observations during the assessment period. Grade 7 students enrolled in the Pre-Algebra course are expected to maintain a B average. Both courses include units on Number Theory, Algebra, Geometry and Data and Statistics. The McDougal Littell Mathematics series is used for grade 7 math courses.

- Grade 8

Changes, Challenges and Choices is the theme of the grade 8 academic year.

Students explore questions such as:

- Does change always have to be accompanied by challenge?
- What precipitates change?
- How do your challenges relate to those faced throughout history?
- How do you deal with challenges?
- How do the choices we make facilitate change?

Language Arts/Social Studies

This course integrates both Social Studies and English in an overall theme of Changes, Challenges and Choices. Issues discussed deal with events that have changed and challenged the world in recent history and in present day. Topics include social injustices (children's rights, racism, death penalty), environmental issues (global warming, destruction of coral reefs), and the issue of population growth and how it relates to and affects world hunger, economics, and science and technology. Students also explore novels related to the topics being studied, where they will learn to identify and discuss key literary elements. They will also gain practice in different types of writing.

Mathematics

Grade 8 students are placed in Pre-Algebra or Algebra I after a thorough assessment of understanding of concepts and skills. Concepts and skills are taught sequentially to ensure that students are prepared for further study in mathematics. Emphasis is placed on developing students' understanding through meaningful and relevant activities.

The Pre-Algebra course includes units on Number Theory, Algebra, Geometry and Data and Statistics, with a special emphasis on applying algebra concepts to other areas of Mathematics. McDougal Littell PreAlgebra is the text used for Pre-Algebra.

The Algebra 1 course is the typical course covered in the first year of high school. Grade 8 students enrolled in the Algebra 1 course are expected to maintain a B average. Upon successful completion of Algebra 1, grade 8 students may receive one high school math credit. This will be recorded on the student's transcript but will not count towards the ISPS graduation requirement. Algebra I uses the McDougal Littell Algebra 1

Science

The Grade 8 science program is designed to give students the opportunity to develop both the skills and content knowledge necessary to be scientifically literate members of the community. Students use scientific processes: questioning, planning and conducting investigations, using appropriate tools and techniques to gather data, thinking critically and logically about relationships between evidence and explanations, and communicating results. Students use these skills to complement the content of Life Science, Physical Science and Earth and Space Science.

Life Science expands students' biological understanding of life by focusing on the characteristics of living things, the diversity of life, and how organisms and populations change over time in terms of biological adaptation and genetics. This understanding includes studying the Human Body, looking at the relationship of structures to their functions, interrelationships of matter and energy in living organisms, and the interactions of living organisms with their environment (Coral Reef Ecology).

Physical Science affords students the opportunity to increase their understanding of the characteristics of objects and materials they encounter daily. Students gain an understanding of the nature of matter and energy, including their forms, the changes they undergo, and their interactions, looking in particular at Electricity and Magnetism.

Earth and Space Science provides the foundation for students to develop an understanding of the Earth, its history, composition, and formative processes, and an understanding of the solar system and the universe.

This course is supported by several unit modules from the Prentice Hall Science Series.

ADDITIONAL COURSES

Spanish

The goal of Spanish as a foreign language is to help students develop a functional use of the language and to enable them to communicate and interact in Spanish at various levels of proficiency, as determined by the length of time and achievement in the program. All Spanish classes are designed to build competence in each of the four language skills: listening, speaking reading and writing.

Spanish in the Middle School is aimed at all students who may or may not have had prior exposure to the Spanish language. We attempt to accommodate the different levels of language proficiency attained by students through flexible grouping.

The approach is communicative and thematic. Some of the themes to be covered are as follows: greetings and introductions, the family, the home, everyday life, the community, leisure time, outings, the weather. The objectives are as follows: verbal communication in typical life situation, comprehension of written and listening material covering simple real life scenario, an ability to write short paragraphs on everyday topics and an awareness of Hispanic culture. The En Espanol series is used in grades 7 and 8.

Physical Education

Physical Education classes are required for all students at the ISPS in Middle School. This course is designed to provide a base for the history, background and safety of each sport or activity presented, to refine motor skills and to learn strategy and team play, starting with sports-specific beginning skills. Sports and activities include but are not limited to fitness and conditioning, football/soccer, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, kickball, flag football, softball, cricket and games.

Physical Education Dress Code

All students must change into the ISPS physical education uniform, ISPS blue shorts and T-shirt for class. After class students must use the showers and change back into their school uniforms.

Health

The purpose of the health program is to educate students about their physical, social and emotional health. The program helps students to gain a better understanding of the changes that take place during adolescence, aids in

the development of their social and communication skills, and encourages them to develop a sense of responsibility.

Creative Arts

The philosophy of arts education is to enrich the lives of human beings socially, aesthetically, emotionally, and intellectually. Students have the opportunity to express themselves creatively and to develop an appreciation for the arts. Each middle school student takes courses in visual art, music, drama and dance.

Exploratories

Exploratory programs capitalize on the innate curiosity of young adolescents, exposing them to a range of academic, vocational, and recreational subjects for career options. Exploratories are 9-week courses which are open to students in grades 6 to 8. Students choose their exploratory classes at the beginning of each quarter. Each quarter preference will be given to a certain group to ensure fairness in the selection process:

- Q1 – Gold Club/Silver Club members, Gr. 8, Gr. 7, Gr. 6
- Q2 – Gold Club/Silver Club members, Gr. 7, Gr. 6, Gr. 8
- Q3 - Gold Club/Silver Club members, Gr. 6, Gr. 8, Gr. 7
- Q4 - Gold Club/Silver Club members, random selection

Exploratory courses may include:

- Community Service Project
- Journalism
- Public Speaking
- Cooking
- Choir
- Crafts
- Steel Orchestra
- Stitch in Time (Sewing)
- Web Page Design

Note: Students who lack basic skills in core subject areas may be required to complete remedial courses during the exploratory period.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor Education is a program specifically designed for Middle School students. The emphasis is on full interdisciplinary learning in the unique countrywide classroom of Trinidad and Tobago. In an effort to learn more about our host country, each year, Middle School students and teachers will leave ISPS and spend three to four days together in the great outdoors. This learning experience, which encompasses cultural, environmental and outdoor education aspects of Trinidad and Tobago, provides students with an experiential learning opportunity that for many is the highlight of their middle school years.

Grade 6 students journey to Nariva to study the wetlands. Grade 7 students explore the watershed at Grande Riviere and view the nesting of the leatherback turtle. Grade 8 students travel to Tobago to examine the impact of tourism on the coral reefs.

HOMEROOM PROGRAM

While every student will have an academic relationship with their subject teacher, Homeroom is designed to establish a meaningful relationship with an adult staff member in a non-academic environment. Homeroom is a

regularly scheduled meeting in which teachers lead discussions with small groups of students on topics such as developing self, getting along with others, and character traits.

The Homeroom teacher monitors the academic performance of each student. Homeroom teachers can assist in developing skills, such as study and test taking, as the need arises. Homeroom also provides students with awareness of social issues that will assist them in personal development; issues such as tolerance, perseverance, respect, and manners are discussed. Additionally, the Homeroom teacher will act as a liaison between parents, students and teachers.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All Middle School students must participate in service projects to help give them the sense that their actions do count. Each Middle School student must complete a minimum 12 hours of volunteer service for the academic year. This may be done during the exploratory period or after school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips play an important part in a student's education and will be included in the curriculum when appropriate. Parents will be notified in advance and must give written permission before their children can participate. Parents may be asked to help transport the children. Every precaution is taken to safeguard the children on these trips, but neither the school nor the parents furnishing the car for the trips can assume complete responsibility for participating students. We require that each field trip driver be certain that his or her car is in excellent driving condition, that he/she has proper insurance coverage, and that each child wears a seat belt.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are loaned to students for use during the school year. Students are responsible for each text on loan and must pay for damaged or lost books. Lost and damaged books must be paid for at the actual replacement cost plus shipping & handling fees. Report cards and transcripts will not be released if money is owed for a book.

Textbooks may be borrowed from the school during the summer. This must be arranged through the principal of the appropriate school.

HOMEWORK

At the beginning of the school year, each teacher will provide a written outline that includes specific guidelines for homework assignments. The following information provides a general philosophy and procedures regarding homework assignments from MS teachers.

The nature of assignments given may include:

- Review of class notes
- Reinforcement of skills and concepts introduced in class
- Research activities
- Reports or long-term projects
- Independent reading
- Journal writing

Homework assignments are the student's responsibility. Assignments should be designed for the student to complete independently with little or no adult assistance. It is expected that students needing additional help or explanation will seek out the teacher. Students should record their assignments in the school issued homework diary. Parents should provide consistency in when and where schoolwork is to be done at home.

Time Limits

It is not feasible to establish rigid time limits for homework assignments, as too many variables exist. For example, students vary in their study habits, time usage, ability, time schedules, etc.

However, surveys over the years reveal the following averages of homework are typical:

- Grade 6: 60 minutes per night
- Grade 7& 8 60 – 90 minutes per night

Students or parents who feel that the homework amount is too much or too little should speak directly with the teacher or teachers involved.

Late Assignments

See “Late Assignment Policy.”

Quality Work

Students are expected to produce quality work at all times. Students will be required to stay in during lunch or after school to redo work of a poor quality, regardless of extracurricular participation.

Homework Support

Students with questions about assignments should approach the teacher to set up a convenient meeting time during a break or after lunch. The Middle School offers homework support. Each grade level will announce the schedule of homework support to students.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Multiple measures are used to assess students’ progress towards meeting academic standards and benchmarks and in acquiring habits that promote academic success. As a result, we also use a variety of methods to report on student performance. Quarterly report cards, progress reports, Grade Quick, and parent-teacher conferences are all forms of communicating with you.

- Assessment

The Middle School continues to make the transition towards a standards-based assessment system. What students should know and be able to do in each subject area at each grade level is defined by standards and benchmarks. Assessment tools are designed to evaluate the level of students’ understanding of concepts and mastery of skills described in the standards and benchmarks. In many classes, teachers will share a detailed description of the quality of work expected for demonstration of mastery in the form of a rubric. Students can use the rubric to evaluate and revise their own work before handing it in.

Teachers use a combination of formative and summative assessment.

- **Formative Assessment** is the ongoing assessment of how children are learning, undertaken by the teacher and the student during the course of the learning process. It provides feedback on students’ understanding and application of knowledge, concepts and skills *during the learning process and allows adjustments to be made in teaching and student practice to better assure students achieve targeted learning outcomes within a set time frame.*

This assessment is interwoven into the daily learning which:

- Provides feedback and shares learning goals with students
- Encourages students to reflect on performance and set goals for learning
- Guides teacher planning and instruction to meet student learning needs.

Classroom and homework assignments given as formative assessment give students the opportunity to practice skills and are, therefore, not weighted as heavily or not counted as part of the academic grade. Formative assessment will account for no more than 30% of the grade for a course.

- **Summative Assessment** is the assessment of learning that takes place at the end of a unit or course of study in order to measure how students have met curriculum standards. This assessment allows students to synthesize, apply, and present information in a variety of forms.

The assessment:

- Compares the student's learning with the benchmarks for a grade level
- Informs students, parents and others of progress
- Measures students' understanding of the central idea of the unit

The student's performance on summative assessment forms the major part of a student's Academic Performance grade.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE GRADES

The following grading standards are normally utilized by the teacher and are reflected on the quarterly reports.

Grade Standard	Grade Standard
A 100 – 95	C 76 – 74
A- 94 – 90	C- 73 – 70
B+ 89 – 87	D+ 69 – 67
B 86 – 84	D 66 – 64
B- 83 – 80	D- 63 – 60
C+ 79 – 77	F Below 60%

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY GRADES

Work habits influence academic success. We believe that students should be evaluated and given feedback on these habits separately from their academic progress and performance. Four Academic Responsibility grades will be given for each subject on the end of quarter reports in the following areas:

- Completes assignments on time with quality
- Meets basic class expectations
- Displays appropriate classroom conduct
- Makes a positive contribution to the classroom environment

The following evaluation scale is used for each of the areas.

- 1: Rarely meets expectations.
- 2: Beginning to, and occasionally does, meet expectations.
- 3: Usually meets expectations
- 4: Consistently meets and at times exceeds expectations.

To encourage students to develop these habits, we reward students with "club membership." Club membership is determined at the end of each quarter using the quarterly grade reports. Students in the three clubs gain certain privileges (e.g. preferred Exploratory choice, purchasing ice-cream at lunch) for one academic quarter.

- Gold Club:

Students may gain membership into the Gold Club by obtaining the highest rating (4) for 90% of the total Academic Responsibility grades assigned. A student receiving any unsatisfactory Academic Responsibility grades (1 or 2) is not eligible.

- Silver Club:

Students may gain membership into the Silver Club by obtaining the highest rating (4) for 80% of the total Academic Responsibility grades assigned. A student receiving any unsatisfactory Academic Responsibility grades (1 or 2) is not eligible.

- Bronze Club:

Students may gain membership into the Bronze Club by obtaining the highest rating (4) for 70% of the total Academic Responsibility grades assigned. A student receiving any unsatisfactory Academic Responsibility grades (1 or 2) is not eligible.

When calculating the percentage of the Academic Responsibility grades, integrated subjects carry a higher weighting. For example, Language Arts/Social Studies has a double weight.

Late Work

Students need to complete at least 85% of coursework to receive a grade for a course. It is important for students to hand in work on time to ensure adequate class participation and preparedness. Work handed in after the deadline will result in a reduction of the Academic Responsibility grade.

1st late assignment - Parent informed.

2nd late assignment – Parent informed. Student will be assigned to lunch detention, exploratory study period or after school sessions to complete assignment.

3rd late assignment – Parent informed. Student placed on Academic Probation status with loss of privileges, including participation in after school sports & activities, and social events. Academic Probation status will be reviewed at the end of the reporting period.

Late assignments must be submitted within 5 days for credit.

For information on work missed due to absence see Make-Up/Missed Work on page G2.

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments must be directly related to the academic standards and MAY be offered in some courses. Students must have completed all regular assignments before taking on extra credit assignments. Extra credit may account for a maximum of 5% of the grade.

Report Cards

Academic Performance and Academic Responsibility grades are reported regularly throughout the year. Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Progress reports are issued in the middle of each quarter. Parents may keep their copy of the report but must sign the report envelope and return it to school to indicate receipt of the report. Notification of when reports will be issued will be published in the weekly Newsletter and MS E-NEWS.

Parents can access Grade Quick progress reports on Edline. The subject teacher will communicate how often these reports will be updated in the course outline shared at the beginning of the year.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Students take the Measures of Academic Progress, a standardized, group-administered assessment of reading, mathematics and language skills. The MAP assessment is based on the internationally endorsed reading and mathematical literacy frameworks. As the assessment is completed electronically, results are available soon after completion of the assessment and are used to monitor individual student growth, as well as compare student progress with that of students from throughout the world.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM

If students experience academic difficulty, they may need the help of support services to improve and/or to increase their motivation for successful academic performance.

Support services may include:

- Individual and small group instruction during or after school.
- Individual student-teacher conferences.
- Daily progress report/checklist
- Placement in an Academic Support class.
- Parent conferences at school and via phone.
- Private tutors at parents' expense or via peer tutors.
- Special short-term modifications in curriculum and scheduling requirements.

Teachers, parents and/or students may request support services through your child's Homeroom teacher or Counselor.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on Academic Probation, with loss of privileges, upon the recommendation of the grade level team if a student consistently experiences serious academic difficulties coupled with motivation problems. This means that:

1. The student has a grade below a C- in two or more subjects.
2. The student has unsatisfactory academic responsibility/effort grades in two or more subjects.
3. The student has failed to turn in 3 or more assignments on time.

Probation will minimally last until the end of the reporting period or until all deficient grades have been raised. If grades have not improved, probation will continue. Privileges that may be withdrawn until grades improve include:

- Holding a Student Council office
- School dances, or Fun Nights
- After-school sports
- School activity days
- Other activities as determined by the school

When a student is placed on probation, the school will work with the parents and student to develop a probationary contract outlining the expectations during the period of probation. This plan may include components of the support system listed above. At the conclusion of each quarter, the student, parents, teachers, counselor and principal will review the probation plan. A decision based on what is best for the student will be made for the following quarter.

If the student has been on academic probation for three quarters and there is no improvement in academic performance and motivation, the school will assist parents to find more appropriate educational services at another institution. This action is taken only when existing resources have been exhausted and the student's needs demand another school situation.

RETENTION

In extreme circumstances, a student may not demonstrate sufficient progress throughout a school year, despite satisfactory effort by the student and with academic support from the school. This may be due to a number of factors including limited English language proficiency, cognitive or social/emotional immaturity or an extended absence. In these cases the school may require that a student repeat a grade. A decision regarding retention will be communicated to parents by the end of May.

AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS AND ACTIVITY PROGRAMS (ASAP)

This is a broad-based activity program that strives to provide a wide variety of enjoyable, valuable learning experiences that cater for the physical, intellectual, and social needs of the students of ISPS. Currently we offer twenty-four activities by instructors and coaches who are all specialists in their areas. The students are charged a minimal fee to offset the cost incurred in running the program.

The ASAP is organized into three sessions:

- September to December (ten weeks);
- January to March (nine weeks);
- April to June (nine weeks).

Some of the activities offered:

Chess, Community Service Club, Drama, Soccer, Gymnastics, Karate, Modern Dance, Steel Pan, Science Club, Spanish Club, Strings (Violin, Viola, Cello), Environmental Club, Yearbook Production, Tap Dance, Dance Group, Elementary Basketball, Archery, Track and Field, Table Tennis, Badminton, Elementary Volleyball, Drawing and Craft and Computer club.

The Athletic Director coordinates a schedule of sports and activities over the academic year based upon student interest.

Student Government

The Middle School Student Council (MSSC) is comprised of Middle School students elected by their peers. The primary responsibility of the Student Council is to plan activities for the Middle School throughout the school year. These activities could include dances, theme days, movie nights, intramural events, etc. Members of the Student Council meet twice a week during the lunch break.

The following officers are nominated and elected by Middle School students:

- President (Only grade 8 students eligible to run for this position)
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

In addition to these positions, a Homeroom Representative is elected within each of the Homerooms. Campaigns and elections take place during the first month of school. Meetings take place during the lunch period.

Students on the MSSC must remain in good academic and behavior standing. Students in poor standing or who are not following through on their responsibilities can be dismissed from Student Council by the teacher advisor(s) to the MSSC.

Town Meetings

Town meetings provide students in the Middle School an opportunity to come together to share information, discuss issues and celebrate achievements. Town meetings are scheduled as needed.

International Week

Every year we celebrate the diversity at ISPS with a week of events, which usually coincides with United Nations Day in October. Our entire community is involved in activities that culminate with an international fair of food, music, cultural regalia and games from different countries.

Sports Day

Sports Day gives students a chance to compete in athletic events with participation in fun races. Students compete within their houses. Sports Day is usually held in the second semester.

Walk-A-Thon

In February or March each year a walk-A-thon around the Queen's Park Savannah is held to raise funds for charitable institutions that support children in need. Students and parents are encouraged to support this event.

EVENING SOCIAL EVENT PROCEDURES

Only eligible students and those at school the day of the event may attend. Students must arrive within 30 minutes of the start of the event. Once a student comes on school grounds for a social event, all school rules apply. Students will only be allowed to leave the campus with an adult. Only students with a walking pass may walk home at the end of the event. Lastly, all students are to leave the school grounds within fifteen minutes after the event is over. Students who fail to make arrangements to have someone pick them up within fifteen minutes after the conclusion of an event will not be allowed to attend the next event.