

# ELEMENTARY PARENT STUDENT HANDBOOK 2010-2011

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## FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the International Community School of Addis Ababa Ethiopia.

At ICS we believe that learning is social and that students working together in cooperative groups can have powerful learning experiences. Each of our classrooms in grades Early Childhood through 5 is staffed with highly qualified teachers and at least one highly qualified teaching assistant. Our classrooms are arranged in ways that encourage and enhance cooperative learning and you will often find groups of students huddled around carpets, in reading nooks, or stretched out on the floor discussing their work.

Students who live and learn in an international setting bring many experiences with them that enhance their day to day learning in the classroom. We believe that these experiences are crucial to the development of the whole child, so we encourage the essential subjects of reading, writing, and math along with a variety of experiences in technology, physical education, and the arts. Our students read and write for a minimum of 90 minutes daily, do math for 60 -75 minutes, learn about science and/or social studies for 45 minutes, and have the opportunity to learn from up to six specialist teachers for at least 45 minutes twice a week. It is a core educational belief at ICS that success in life requires balance; if students have a strong foundation in reading, writing, and math, and they attend specials regularly it is likely that they will discover their interests in life and learn to be successful. Helping students to experience a holistic education is one of our goals at ICS!

This handbook is intended to inform you about the basic information you will need to know this school year. It is also intended to communicate our expectations for academic success and student behavior. Our handbook embodies the culture of ICS therefore it is important for you to review it with your child. This year I look forward to experiencing the wonders of learning with you and I encourage you to use this handbook as one way to learn about our school!

Sincerely,

Hubert Gordon  
Elementary School Principal

## WHO AND WHAT WE ARE AT ICS

### Mission Statement

The International Community School of Addis Ababa, accredited in the United States, develops the talents and intellects of a multicultural student body using learner-centered, holistic instructional methods, empowering each student to contribute in an evolving world.

### Philosophy Statement

We of the International Community School promote an interactive, holistic, learning environment which encourages freedom of inquiry, initiative, creativity and academic achievement. Emphasis is placed on providing students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to face the challenges of the future.

We teach respect for the richness and diversity of individuals, cultures and spiritual beliefs; build self-esteem and sustain self-discipline; and, above all, cultivate and celebrate a passion for learning. Within a dynamic, multi-cultural environment, we acknowledge our responsibility to and involvement with the global community.

### At ICS we believe that...

- Education should address the dynamic process of each child's unique development.
- Diversity in culture, beliefs, knowledge and opinions has positive value and is best facilitated in an environment of honest communication, inclusion, dignity, compassion and safety.
- Developing and evaluating moral and ethical values are a critical part of a person's education and growth.
- Education in all its forms is collaboration among parents, students, teachers and other community members.
- Education should help children identify, acquire and build upon the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to live fully in an evolving world.
- Education should nurture and preserve the love of learning.
- Formal education is only one component of life-long learning.

### ICS Strategic Plan

Beginning in 2005, several parents, teachers and students participated in evaluating the educational programs and operational procedures at ICS. In April 2007, a team of international educators visited ICS to review our findings. As a result of this process, ICS created a strategic plan. Four strategic objectives comprise this plan and action plans support its implementation.

Objective 1: Academic Success

Objective 2: Preparation & Participation in the International Baccalaureate program

Objective 3: Character and Leadership Development

Objective 4: Facilities Enhancement and long-term Financial Plan to support student learning

Please contact Hubert Gordon or Jim Laney to know more about the strategic plan and how you could help ICS meet its objectives.

## 40 Years of Education

ICS is celebrating over 40 years of offering high quality education in Ethiopia.

The International Community School of Addis Ababa (ICS) is an independent, co-educational school sponsored by the US Embassy in Ethiopia with an American-based curriculum. ICS offers an educational program for Early Childhood (ages 3–4) through grade 12 students of all nationalities. The school was founded in 1964, and in 1966 it moved to the current campus of 15 acres. ICS serves nearly 648 students representing more than 62 nationalities.

The school has been fully accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools in the United States and is recognized by the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is a member of the Council of International Schools (COIS), the Association of International Schools in Africa (AISA) and the College Board. The new strategic plan as well as a report from the Validation Team has been submitted to Middle States to support reaccreditation.

The teaching staff represents diverse cultures and nationalities with the majority of the teachers holding Masters Degrees in their fields.

## ADMISSIONS

ICS admits children into their age appropriate grade level. We use on or before August 31 as the cut-off date to determine which grade is age appropriate. We know that children develop at different rates, so we are willing to observe a child, to assess a child, and, if appropriate, to discuss an accelerated or delayed grade placement. Final grade placement decisions are made by the Principal.

Child's birth date is on or before September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Grade placement	Child's birth date is on or before September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Grade placement
2007	EC3	2003	2
2006	EC4	2002	3
2005	KG	2001	4
2004	1	2000	5

## ELEMENTARY FACULTY

### Administration

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Elementary School Principal	Hubert Gordon	<a href="mailto:hubert.gordon@icsaddis.edu.et">hubert.gordon@icsaddis.edu.et</a>
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### ICS Contact Information

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Fax: 251-11-371-0722	

**There are many assistants available to answer the phones at ICS. We also have voice mail. If you receive no response, the Ethiopian telephone service is not working properly. Please let us know when this happens.**

## ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

ICS has approximately 367 students in the elementary school. The students are divided according to chronological age from Early Childhood (3–4 year olds) to grade 5 (approximately 10-11 year olds). Each grade K - 5 class has fewer than 25 students with a teacher and a teaching assistant. The ICS curriculum is based upon standards from the United States and other international organizations.

ICS is committed to providing a learner-centered school environment using holistic instructional methods. By learning how to learn, problem-solve and think, students will be empowered to contribute to an evolving world.

### Early Childhood & Kindergarten

Students in Early Childhood and Kindergarten learn how to cooperate as a member of a group, investigating and discovering ideas, and developing important foundations for future scholarship. Teachers guide students in developing their literacy and numeracy skills as they pursue their interests and units of inquiry. Children are encouraged to make choices and plans, to explore and ask questions, and to solve problems. There are consistent routines so children can anticipate what will happen next.

### Grades 1-5

In grades 1 and 2 students build their academic skills and begin to develop and apply skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. In grades 3-5, students have acquired basic academic skills and begin to apply their skills more independently.

### Specials

In addition to the core curriculum, students receive instruction from specialists in the areas of Art, Computer, Library, Music and Physical Education. Students are required to put on sports wear for Physical Education. French is offered in grades 2-5. General Music is offered from Early Childhood through grade 5; Beginning Band supplements General Music in grade 5 as an after school extended day program. Students in grades 2-3 and in grades 4-5 also participate in Choir.

## Optimal Match Team

ICS subscribes to the Optimal Match philosophy; we assess a student's skills and adjust instruction for optimal learning to occur. Classroom teachers work with the Optimal Match Team, the support teachers and the elementary counselor, to help meet each child's needs.

Support is offered for students who have not yet learned the basic skills according to grade level standards. The Optimal Match Team works within classrooms, with small groups of students or with individuals on a specific skill or task. The Elementary Counselor works with whole classes and with individuals or small groups to develop and practice conflict resolution skills.

For students who are still learning English, English as Another Language (EAL) classes are also offered.

**If you wonder if your child could benefit from Optimal Match support, please talk with your child's teacher, with one of the Optimal Match Team, or with the Principal.**

Some students' skills are developed beyond grade level expectations. The classroom teacher and the Optimal Match support teachers work together with the Principal, Librarian and Computer teacher to provide appropriately challenging tasks to extend and broaden learning.

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At ICS we are committed to: *Knowing It, Living It, Modeling It*

*Revised October 2010*

## English as Another Language (EAL)

ICS offers English as Another Language (EAL) support to students whose first language is not English. We know that the best place for students to learn the language is within the mainstream classroom and interacting in English with their peers. We try to provide all students with many opportunities to develop their vocabulary, reading, and writing skills through our language arts program.

In Early Childhood, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade, all students are developing the basis of literacy in English. Consequently, children at these grade levels learn English with their peers as a part of the regular classroom. From 2nd grade through 5th grade some students need extra English lessons to compensate for the difference between their understanding of English and that of their peers. Intensive English lessons are offered to students during the time when their peers are studying English in the classroom. This allows those students who are just starting to learn English to learn at a level appropriate for their development. In addition to intensive lessons, these students study English as their foreign language instead of attending French classes. Students in EAL classes are regularly assessed in order to integrate them into their classroom as soon as they are able.

Parents can help ease the transition for their children into an English immersion environment by doing several things. Finding other families from your own culture and making friends will help "bridge the gap" between the home culture and the new environment. Frequent communication with your child's teacher and the EAL teacher, and getting acquainted with the families of other new students, will help your child to make some new friends. As your child is ready, joining at least one after school activity is a way to integrate them more fully into the life of the school. Maintain speaking and reading in the first language at home. Finally, making a good adjustment as a family, with parents maintaining a positive attitude about the new environment and new school, will help smooth any obstacles that arise as you settle into Addis Ababa.

## Elementary Library

ICS parents may also use the library facilities and check out books for their own use or for use with their child(ren). Books can be checked out for one week. Books may be returned or renewed during the scheduled elementary library period or during elementary library hours, which are from 7:30-4:30 each school day and on Saturday mornings from 9:30-12:00.

During the school day each class from Kindergarten through grade 5 has a weekly scheduled period when students are allowed to check out books. Early Childhood children have a regular scheduled time, but only their teacher or parents are able to check out books.

When books are overdue, students will receive written notices and will not be allowed to check out further items until they have cleared their record. We need you to assist us by being aware of your child's library day and helping him/her to return books on time. Sharing your child's books with him/her encourages reading and the love of literature. Learning to return books on time teaches your child responsibility.

Books are valuable resources. Lost and damaged books need to be replaced. Therefore it is necessary for the school to bill parents at replacement cost for lost or damaged school materials.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

At ICS we value working together with parents to help each child become successful. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved at ICS such as volunteering to help with classroom needs or special events, accompanying the class on a field experience, being a member of a school-wide committee, attending information evenings and parent conferences, joining the Booster Club or the Parent Teachers Association observing the Board meetings, and helping on ad hoc committees to organize special events.

At the beginning of the school year, each teacher contacts each parent to find out about each child and what we need to know to help him/her be successful at ICS.

Parent conferences are scheduled four times this year: October, December, February and April. The December and April conferences are student-led conference with the parent, child and teacher, while the October and February conferences are two-way conferences among parent and teachers.

**Other conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher on an as needed basis during the year.** You are your child's best advocate. We need you to stay in frequent communication with your child's teacher. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns. If your concern is broader than the classroom or you want more information, please contact the PK-8 Principal, Hubert Gordon (hubert.gordon@icsaddis.edu.et), 011-371-1544, or 0913 79 54 67/0913 027542

### Trimesters & Parent Conferences

The ICS Elementary School uses a trimester system while the Secondary School uses a quarterly system. We send home written report cards at a different time from the Secondary School because providing written report cards for elementary children three times a year fits better with their developmental pace.

**End of 1st Trimester:** November 19<sup>th</sup>

**Report Cards:** November 25<sup>th</sup>

**End of 2nd Trimester:** March 18<sup>th</sup>

**Report Cards:** March 25<sup>th</sup>

**End of 3rd Trimester:** June 10<sup>th</sup>

**Report Cards:** Last day of school — **June 16<sup>th</sup>**

## THE ICS WAY BECOMING AN IB LEARNER

For those of you who are returning, we hope you feel like 'old friends'. For those of you who are new, we are dedicated to helping you not feel new for very long.

The ICS Way is our code of behavior. Students are expected to demonstrate the principles of The ICS Way on the playground, in the cafeteria, and in the classroom - and, eventually, wherever they go.

*Taking care of myself* happens in many ways such as getting enough sleep and plenty of exercise, healthy eating habits, asking questions when one does not understand something or letting someone know if there is a problem.

*Taking care of others* includes community service, being sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and helping someone when they need encouragement or support.

*Taking care of this place* includes using trash bins and respecting school or personal property and taking care of this planet.

The ICS Way

I can make a difference by...

TAKING CARE OF MYSELF

TAKING CARE OF OTHERS

TAKING CARE OF THIS PLACE

As well as following the ICS Way, students will incorporate the IB Learner Profile traits into their lives. They will work to become more knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, reflective, inquirers, thinkers, communicators and risk-takers - all traits of the IB Learner Profile. These traits assist students with goals that they set throughout the academic year.

IB Profile Traits:

- |                 |                 |               |              |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| - Inquirers     | - Communicators | - Caring      | - Reflective |
| - Knowledgeable | - Principled    | - Risk-takers |              |
| - Thinkers      | - Open-minded   | - Balanced    |              |

### Help Us Help Your Child

Beginnings almost always present challenges. Children (and adults) manage change much better once they are familiar with the routines and expectations of the new situation.

Endings can also be difficult. In an international setting where families leave periodically, saying good-bye and having closure is especially important.

**Beginning and ending academic work with classmates is essential for your child's academic and personal development.**

We are committed to helping your child through academic and personal challenges. All of the ICS teachers have skills and strategies for helping your child adjust to challenges. They know how to support your child when friends leave, or when she/he has to leave. They know how to guide your child as he/she learns new skills.

<p><b>Fall Break</b> — October 17 - 24</p> <p><b>Mid-Year Break</b> — December 19- January 9</p> <p><b>Spring Break</b>—March 26 - April 3</p> <p><b>End of School</b>—June 16</p>
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Please help us help your child by planning your family trips around the ICS holidays. Please respect the ICS school calendar.

## Health

When your child is not feeling well - whether they are just recovering from an illness, or they are just beginning to show some symptoms of flu or a cold - please keep your child at home until she/he is fully recovered. One child's illness can spread and infect other students. Following The ICS Way means that we need to take care of others' health to the best of our ability.

## Food Allergies and Snacks

ICS has a peanut free kitchen because we frequently have students with peanut allergies. We also have students with severe food allergies to red dye and milk. To prevent someone from inadvertently causing another child to have a health concern, we ask all students not to share snacks or lunch. If the food has peanuts, milk, or red dye students should be particularly careful not to contaminate the cafeteria tables. Younger children with allergies will receive assistance in monitoring their food intake from teachers and teaching assistants. However, if your child has food allergies it is your responsibility to educate him/her about how to eat safely. Students requiring an EpiPen must notify the Nurse.

## No Hat, No Sun

Since Addis Ababa is at 2500 meters, we need to protect ourselves from the sun. Children must wear a hat with a brim (labeled with his/her name) if they are going to play outside during physical education classes and recess times. If they do not have a hat, they will only be allowed to play in the shady areas.

## Water

Everyone needs to drink a lot of water at this altitude to prevent headaches and dehydration. Each child needs to bring a water bottle (labeled with his/her name). ICS provides potable drinking water in large bottles around campus. Students fill their individual bottles from the large bottles and are encouraged to drink frequently.

## SCHOOL DAY - ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES

Respecting the rules and regulations of an organization contributes to a child learning responsibility and meeting his/her obligations. School begins at 8:00AM. Supervisors are on campus from 7:30AM. A bell rings at 7:55AM to inform students that they need to be in the classroom and ready for the day to begin. We need you to help us help your child learn responsibility by having him/her at school on time.

EC3 and EC4 programs are from 8:00-12:00 every day. Some parents of children in the EC4 program (for 4 year olds) elect to have their children stay for an extended day on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The EC4 extended day is from 12:00-3:20 and parents need to send lunch on those days.

All Elementary children need to leave campus by 3:30PM unless they are in a supervised after-school activity.

**NO ELEMENTARY CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED TO BE ON CAMPUS UNSUPERVISED.** Many elementary children are not yet able to make responsible decisions on their own. For their own safety we insist on elementary children being in a supervised activity and location when they are on campus. If elementary children have older siblings who are in after-school activities, parents need to make arrangements for the elementary child to leave campus at 3:30PM and then return for the older student. Elementary children can not 'wait' for the older sibling to be finished. If an elementary child is in an after school activity, they need to leave campus at 4:30PM. Please help us to teach your child responsible behavior and provide transportation according to these guidelines.

## Early Dismissal

On weekly basis teachers have professional development workshops on Wednesday afternoons from 2:00 - 4:30pm. Children leave campus at 2:00PM.

## MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

At ICS we believe that diversity in culture, beliefs, knowledge and opinions has positive value and is best facilitated in an environment of honest communication, inclusion, dignity, compassion and safety.

Children from over 62 nationalities attend ICS. Those children bring many different sets of values about religion, dress, food and behavior. While this diversity enriches, we must all be vigilant to ensure that unresolved conflicts do not damage the positive value that is inherent in these differences. In partnership with parents, we ask you to monitor comments and attitudes your child might bring home and to inform the child's teacher, the Elementary Counselor and/or the Principal if these attitudes are not consistent with the ICS Mission and Beliefs.

### At ICS we expect that each child will...

- Help children who are just learning English, just adjusting to living in Ethiopia, or recently entered ICS. Excluding a group or an individual is not acceptable and in conflict with ICS Mission and Beliefs.
- Use respectful language. Respectful language does not include swear words, racist comments, and words that are aimed at hurting someone else. Bullying (verbal or physical) is not tolerated.
- Honor different values about clothing. All children are expected to dress modestly — no short skirts or shorts, no bare midriffs, no spaghetti straps, and no underwear showing. If a teacher determines that a child's clothing is distracting him/her and/or other children or is inappropriate for the ICS environment, the child will be asked to come to the Principal's office to get a T-shirt to wear over the inappropriate clothing.

We understand that there are likely to be differing interpretations of what is acceptable. The Principal's judgment in this regard is considered definable.

## ATTENDANCE

Students begin to form bonds with their classmates and learn the teacher's rules and expectations for being successful during the first weeks of school. If they miss these early days, students often feel as though they are beginning 'from behind.' Please make every effort to be at ICS for the first day of school. Similarly, the last week of school is a time for closure for the students for a successful school year. In international schools where students regularly stay for only two or three years, students need

the last week to say good-bye to friends who are leaving. Please plan your holidays so as not to miss the beginning and ending of the school year, nor the days surrounding long breaks.

**AVOID BEING TARDY AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL DAY.** Being on time for school and coming regularly is very important. Students must attend twenty-five school days in a trimester to receive a report card. If your child is absent, a note signed by a parent or guardian to the teacher, or a phone call to the office, is appreciated. School begins at 8:00; try to ensure that your child is on campus between 7:30 and 7:50 so he/she can have a chance to socialize with friends, put away book bags, and be ready for the beginning of the school day. Frequently arriving late interferes with the learning process and does not help your child learn to respect others and the rules of the school, to be responsible, and to be a considerate member of a group.

ICS monitors absences and persistent late arrivals. You will be contacted if your child is frequently late arriving at school. You will also be contacted if your child is not able to leave campus at 3:30 each day or at 4:30 when he/she has after school activities.

### **Anticipated Absence**

Prolonged absence during the academic year is detrimental to your child's progress. If a prolonged absence is unavoidable, please let the classroom teacher know at least a week ahead of time. It is not always possible to provide work for the child to do while gone since much of the work involves class time and working with classmates. Often reading, keeping a journal of the family's activities and the child's experiences as well as keeping track of daily expenses is good application and practice during extended absences. Materials may be borrowed during the period the child is absent from school with the permission of the classroom teacher. Depending upon the age and development level of the child, providing for tutoring during the child's absence, or enrolling the child temporarily in another school, might be advisable.

**If parents are away from home for a period of time, the teacher and the principal need to have this information and the name of the responsible guardian.**

### **EARLY WITHDRAWAL**

If a child will be leaving the school permanently before the end of the school year, the parent needs to state this in writing by addressing the letter to the principal two weeks in advance of departure. A student checkout form must be signed by the teachers, principal and business manager. All financial matters must be settled, library and classroom books must be returned and any replacement charges for lost books must be paid **before transfer documents will be released.**

The School needs written notice at least two weeks in advance regarding any special requests for report cards, documents and any accompanying letters. Final reports will be given out the last day of school. Upon request transfer documents will be provided; however, these will be sealed for delivery to the next school or will be mailed to the forwarding school if a forwarding address is provided.

### **ASSESSMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Assessment results help teachers set instructional goals and inform children and parents about a child's progress. ICS is committed to monitoring individual students' growth and assessing their performance compared to grade level expectations and standards.

In addition to the individual teacher assessments, groups of teachers meet to analyze and evaluate student work, and all students complete internal assessments in reading, math and writing. Written work samples are sent to the United States for external validation and feedback. Grade level teachers design common assessments to evaluate the students' progress toward mastery of the standards.

To compare ICS students' performance and the ICS curriculum with students at other schools around the world, the International Schools Assessment is given to children in grades 3-7 and 10.

ICS uses a standards-based curriculum. Students are assessed and evaluated on their progress toward a standard. Throughout the year, the teachers provide guidance and instruction in the standard necessary for mastery of the standards. When students are just learning a skill, we do not expect them to show mastery level performance. Consequently we do not average grades in the elementary school. We do not want to imply that one is supposed to be good at something from the beginning.

When a student is working toward mastery of a standard or a skill, they receive a 2 on the report card. After they have demonstrated consistent, independent mastery of the skill, they are meeting and receive a 3 and when they are exceeding expectations they receive a 4.

Classroom teachers use a variety of assessments such as:

- Math, reading and writing journals
- Science notebooks
- Projects
- Observations
- Conferencing with child
- Portfolios
- Homework
- Reading logs
- Daily work
- Tests
- Common assessments

In the lower primary grades, expectations are set for each trimester since the children acquire skills at a rapid rate. In the upper elementary grades, the focus shifts to application and refinement of skills. Since this process takes longer, expectations are set for the end of the year. Many students may be moving toward the standard (2) at the first part of the school year. By the end of the school year, students should have met expectations (3). When there is an area of concern about the child's progress, he/she receives a 1.

We observe and collect a variety of assessment information to monitor and address individual progress toward the curricular goals. Each student's progress in reading and writing is indicated on a continuum for literacy skills and shared with parents.

Through parent conferences and report cards, as well as regular communication with the teacher and student, parents are informed of how their child is progressing toward grade level expectations and mastery of the curricular standards.

## Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester for students in grades K-5. EC4 students receive a written report of the child's progress at mid-year and at the end of the year. Report cards are written documentation of your child's development as observed and evaluated by the teacher and reflects progress to date. Please contact your child's teacher if you want more information or if you do not understand the report card. If there are outstanding financial obligations or overdue or lost books, a child's report card may be held at the end of the term until these obligations are cleared. End of the year reports will be given out the last day of school.

## REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Teachers send home regular newsletters, journals, or other forms of communication specific to your child or to his/her classroom. Younger students have a folder to help carry the information back and forth between home and school. Please check your child's book bag or folder to see if there is important information tucked inside.

ICS uses electronic communication as much as possible. Please be sure that the school's email address is in your contacts folder so you are able to receive the weekly newsletter, the *Yezare Samint*, and any other email communication that the school might send. Every Thursday (or the last day of the week) the school publishes the *Yezare Samint* which includes general information and a calendar for school-wide events. *Yezare Samint* will be sent to each family electronically. If you would like a paper copy of the *Yezare Samint*, please contact the Receptionist.

*Zena Admas*, a glossy magazine, is published periodically throughout the year. Both the *Yezare Samint* and *Zena Admas* are available on the school's website [[www.icsaddis.edu.et](http://www.icsaddis.edu.et)].

Director's Teas are held occasionally to gather feedback from parents and/or to share information with parents. In addition parent information evenings are held to explain the curriculum and how parents can best support their children.

Since students are working in journals for reading, writing and science, they will refer to previous work throughout the year. Upper elementary students will need to keep their work easily available for them to revise or as a reference. Teachers will plan regular times for children to share their journals with the parents and to discuss what has been happening in class. If you need more information about your child's progress, we need you to let the teacher know.

**Friday is an especially important day to check the book bag for communication from the school.**

## FIELD EXPERIENCES

Since ICS strives to build an appreciation of Ethiopia, to develop sensitivity toward the environment and toward other people, and to provide opportunities for students to think critically and apply skills, we arrange experiences that students can not have in the classroom. Some of the field experiences may occur on campus. Others require students leave campus. Many of these experiences in the field combine cultivating an understanding, appreciation and respect for our host country, Ethiopia, with another curricular focus.

Parents will be provided with a permission form explaining the field experience, date and time. The permission form must be signed before any child will be permitted to participate in a field experience off campus. Transportation is usually provided by the school transport vehicles equipped with seat belts. Occasionally the school may contract with commercial providers for transportation services. Seat belts may or may not be available on these "tourist busses." Supervision of all school sponsored experiences in the field will be organized by the teacher. Sometimes parents are asked to assist with supervision.

## SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Lunchtime intramural activities are scheduled for students in grades 3–5. Elementary Track and Play Days are organized annually in which all students from Kindergarten through grade 5 participate.

Elementary students may participate in a variety of after school activities which are held from 3:45-4:30. School-wide activities have been divided into three seasons. The Activities Coordinator, has more information about the specific activities offered. Parents are encouraged to sponsor an activity. You will receive information about the activities, any extra costs, and their scheduled meeting times before the season begins. Since some activities have a limited number of participants, please return the sheet with your choices as soon as possible

## Special Programs

Throughout the year there are special programs in which the elementary children perform or participate in some way. These events are advertised in the *Yezare Samint*, in the classroom newsletters, and in special bulletins that go home. We try to give parents enough notice so they are able to arrange their own obligations and are able to attend the school function. Students really appreciate having their parents see what they are doing at school. Some of the special programs include Meskal celebration, International Day, music concerts, drama productions, art exhibitions and special projects within the classroom. We hope you can manage to attend these events.

## Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are important times for children. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday in class, please arrange with the classroom teacher before sending in treats for the class. Some teachers have special days or ways they would like to celebrate birthdays.

Unfortunately some children have serious allergies to peanuts, dairy products, wheat or red food dye. **Check with your child's teacher if there are dietary restrictions in the class.** The classrooms do not have knives, paper plates, and napkins, so if the children need these, please include them with whatever you send. If everyone in the class is invited, teachers will be happy to distribute invitations for a child's party outside of school.

## LUNCH AND CAFETERIA PROCEDURES

ICS students have a choice of buying a hot lunch from the cafeteria or eating lunch from home. Cafeteria menus will be published monthly in the *Yezare Samint* and are posted by the cafeteria. You and your child can decide how many or which days he/she will buy lunch. Prices for lunch vary by grade and will be advertised on an annual basis.

If you or your children prefer, they can bring their lunch from home in the morning when they arrive at school, or someone can deliver it to them at lunch time. If a driver or another helper delivers the lunch, they will need to have a lunch pass to enter campus. The drivers or other helpers sit on the benches by the parking lot where the children come to collect their lunches when the teacher dismisses them. Sometimes it is more convenient to drop the lunch off at Reception, and someone will deliver it to the classroom.

### Elementary Lunch

KG - 5 - 11:10-12:10

## Sharing Food

Sharing food is a lovely social grace; however, in an elementary school setting it can present problems as well. Some children have allergies and could be affected by something in another child's lunch. Some children do not yet know how to regulate the size of the tastes they take from someone else's lunch. A child may want to offer a taste, but does not know what to do if the other child begins to eat most of the food. To prevent these problems, we encourage children to only eat from their own lunch.

Please explain to your child why we discourage children from sharing food. Discuss this idea with your child, and please let the teacher, teaching assistant or the Principal know if this causes any problems.

On the other hand, sharing food with someone who is still hungry and does not have enough to eat is an excellent example of compassion and service. This is an example of living The ICS Way: I can make a difference by taking care of others.

## Polite Manners at Lunch

Eating lunch together is an opportunity to practice polite table manners. All children are expected to stay seated for at least 15 minutes before going to play. This encourages them to eat and allows food to begin digesting before they start playing. In the cafeteria, we will use ceramic plates and stainless steel cutlery. Each class will help determine what polite table manners look like.

Please discuss some of the expectations below with your child:

- Show appreciation and thank the people who are serving in the cafeteria.
- Stay seated and request permission from the Teaching Assistant or other supervisor to be excused.
- Only ask for as much food as can be eaten. If the child asks for a second helping, he/she must plan to eat it.
- Clean up after finishing eating.
- Use quiet, inside voices when talking with friends at lunch.
- Chew and swallow food before talking.

## HOMEWORK

At ICS we encourage children to develop responsibility, independence, and organizational skills. This includes being responsible for their class work and homework assignments, making sure they bring all books and materials needed daily, are on time, and develop self-discipline. Every day your child should be reading — either aloud with you or in his/her own book.

Students in grades 3, 4 and 5 will begin maintaining a student agenda to record their homework, special events and other obligations. Please ask your child to see his/her agenda and encourage them to include family obligations and events as well. When the agenda includes all of the child's obligations, he/she is better equipped to learn how to manage his/her time effectively.

Suggested daily amount of reading time for each grade is as follows:

Grade 1 ----- 10 to 15 minutes  
 Grade 2 ----- 20-30 minutes  
 Grade 3 ----- 30-40 minutes  
 Grade 4 ----- 40-50 minutes  
 Grade 5 ----- 50-60 minutes

There will also be an additional amount of time (approximately 20-30 minutes for the upper grades) for math or other subject areas. These suggested periods of time will vary with each student due to his/her ability, study habits, organizational skills and independent skills. They may also vary when students have long-term or continuous work on projects.

We believe your encouragement and interest in your child's homework assignments are important and help promote a positive attitude in your child toward school and learning. When your child has homework, we encourage you to provide help and suggestions. However the homework should be a review and the child should be able to do the homework independently. If this is not possible, please let the teacher know.

Children study in a variety of ways so be aware of your child's method of studying. Some enjoy music, while others prefer extreme quiet while studying. Provide a study place with the minimum distractions for your child. Having a structured time, place and supervision on a daily basis is another way to develop scholarly behaviors.

Check your child's assignment notebook or agenda each day to help him/her establish routine study habits. Please let your child's teacher know if your child is consistently exceeding the suggested homework time guidelines.

If your child does not understand the homework, ask him/her to write a note explaining what he/she did understand and what stopped him/her from being able to finish the work. Refrain from doing the work for him/her—or from suffering intense frustration.

## THE NURSE

The School Nurse at ICS has four important jobs to do which include the following:

1. Taking care of daily bumps, scrapes and cuts as they occur.
2. Taking care of all medical emergencies and contacting the parents.
3. Maintaining updated immunization and treatment records for every student on campus.
4. Health screening yearly: height, weight, vision and/or hearing tests.

At the beginning of each school year, parents are asked to fill out or update a medical form which the School Nurse keeps on file in her office so that she will know what to do in case of illness or emergency.

**Please be sure to provide accurate updated information at the beginning of each school year. Teachers will be informed of students with particular allergies or other specific medical alerts.**

If a student is hurt on the playground, he/she will be accompanied to the Nurse's office. If your child needs to take any type of medicine during the school day, bring the medicine and a note to the Nurse's office.

The Nurse will contact parents if a child is ill or in any other emergency situation. The Nurse is in the Health Center. If the child will be collected to go home, the Nurse will notify the teacher, the main office, and fill out a gate pass to leave campus.

If your child is coughing and/or does not feel well, it is better for him/her and for the others if he/she stays home and rests.

Some illnesses are highly contagious and one sick child can infect a whole class.

## INTERNET USE AGREEMENT

Internet access is offered to students in Kindergarten through grade 5 for educational research and classroom activities. Since it is possible for students to access inappropriate material, several safeguards have been put in place. A website screening program has been installed that screens websites and blocks those it determines to be inappropriate.

Since no such program is entirely effective an Internet Use Agreement (IUA) is sent home with students in grades 2–5 during the first few days of school. By signing the agreement parents pledge not to seek out information that is libelous, obscene, profane, vulgar, offensive, abusive or threatening. Students will not be given Internet privileges until the student and parent have signed this agreement. Please discuss the IUA with your child and sign and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Beginning in Kindergarten, children begin to learn how to cite their sources of information. Academic honesty requires giving credit for information used in posters, publications and reports.

All elementary students will learn that plagiarism, copying someone else's work without giving proper credit, is unacceptable. Students will learn when it is acceptable to collaborate and share information and when one is expected to work independently and apply one's skills and understanding.

## ASSEMBLY AND CONCERT GUIDELINES

Assemblies and performances allow us to develop a sense of community, to teach appropriate behavior for plays, concerts and other performances, and to recognize students for various reasons. Regular elementary assemblies are held for students in grades 1-5 in the covered area between the First and Second Grade classrooms.

Music plays a large part in our assemblies as well as having students share accomplishments or projects so we can celebrate together. The songs or other activities contribute to building a sense of community. Teachers, teaching assistants (and any parents who want to attend) help by modeling correct audience behavior -- participating and/or showing appreciation and not having side conversations during the performances.

The following guidelines are provided to ensure a common understanding of the expectations and to ensure consistency among all those who are implementing the guidelines.

- Teachers and teaching assistants sit near or among their students to model appropriate behavior and to be able to intervene easily when necessary.
- Students enter the performance venue quietly and are seated in the appropriate area by their teachers and teaching assistants.
- Audience members sit still and keep their eyes on the performance. They do not have private conversations when someone else is speaking or asks for attention.
- Audience members remain seated during the entire performance. No one should leave his or her seat to use the restroom or get a drink. In addition, no one should enter or exit the performance area during a song, presentation, etc. (wait until between songs or transitions.)
- Hats are not worn during inside performances. Food and drink are also inappropriate.

- Audience members not visit or make negative comments about the presentation. Instead, individuals or group reflections facilitated by the teacher can be done in class following the performance.
- Backpacks, books, personal items, etc. are to be left in the classrooms or cubbies.
- Students remain seated following the performance and are dismissed by grade by either the assembly leader or the Principal.
- Students are expected to exhibit good character in accordance with The ICS Way (Take Care of Myself, Take Care of Others, Take Care of this Place) throughout the school day, including assemblies, concerts and other group gatherings. Students who do not behave appropriately are relocated to another spot, as discreetly as possible. Teachers notify parents of children with repeated inappropriate behavior during performances, assemblies or rehearsals and inform the PK-8 Principal who may need to follow up if there is no change in the child's behavior.

## **GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS**

### **Playground Rules**

Follow the directions of the playground supervisors in charge.

Use care and safety in all play.

Bringing toys and other personal items from home is discouraged.

### **Hot Weather**

Potable drinking water is available in various areas of the campus.

During the dry season, drink plenty of water.

We encourage each child to use his/her own thermos or cup and to drink water as much as possible. (Do not drink directly from the tap.)

All students must wear a hat to play in the sun.

### **Parking Lot Rules**

- All students are to wait in designated areas by the parking lot.
- All elementary students must check out with their designated teacher assistant before leaving the area.
- Pre-Kindergarten students will wait by their classroom to be collected.
- Kindergarten students will wait at the top of the ECE steps.
- Parents should be sure the teacher and teacher assistant have met the person who will be collecting the child.

### **After School Departure**

School finishes at 3:30. Students will be released only to those individuals/vehicles designated by the parent. Arrangements for students to go home with a friend or means other than with those designated (mamita, zabanya, driver) must be made between parents ahead of time and a note given to the teacher. Young children must be collected no later than 3:45 even if they have an older sibling who is in an after school activity. Younger children may not be left with an older sibling involved in an activity.

**Leaving Campus During the Day**

- Parents should notify the teacher regarding doctor or dental appointments ahead of time in order to receive the gate pass and any homework assignments.
- All students who need to leave the campus during the school day must check out at the office and get a gate pass from the office or the nurse.
- A parent or identified driver must collect the student from the office or the health clinic.

**Lost and Found**

- The lost and found box may be viewed by contacting the main office.
- Personal articles and clothing should be labeled with the student's name.
- Students should write their name on books and supplies.
- Items remaining in the lost and found box will be displayed regularly near the cafeteria. Those items not claimed will be donated to a charity organization on a regular basis.
- Students should not bring valuable personal items to school. The school assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged iPods, cell phones, cameras, and the like.

**Telephone Use**

- The office telephones are for business and emergency use. Teachers may request the receptionist to make calls for students when necessary and students may request the use of the phone for emergencies.
- Telephone use for making arrangements to go home with a friend at the end of the same day will be denied. (*This needs to be arranged with parents ahead of time.*)
- A pay phone located by the parking lot area is available for student use.

**Playground/Campus Use on Weekends**

- Use the ICS ID card to get into the school compound on the weekend.
- If students are in a supervised activity, such as soccer, they must stay in the designated area. The rest of the campus is off limits.
- If students are with a parent, the family may use the ECE playground area after signing in with Security. Security will unlock the gate.
- Parents are responsible for cleaning up the playground and treating the equipment responsibly.
- Students must be supervised by a parent or guardian when using the campus after school hours and on weekends.

**Discipline**

The ICS Way is the code of behavior regulating all behavior on campus.

**The ICS Way**

**I make a difference by...**

**TAKING CARE OF MYSELF**

**TAKING CARE OF OTHERS**

**TAKING CARE OF THIS PLACE**

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At ICS we are committed to: *Knowing It, Living It, Modeling It*

*Revised October 2010*

- Classroom management and playground discipline is maintained by the classroom teacher and teaching assistant.
- If students do not respond to the classroom teacher and/or the teaching assistant, they will be referred to the Principal. At that stage they may lose privileges, such as lunch recess or some other logical consequence.
- If the child's misbehavior persists, a parent conference will be called. The safety of others and protection of property are serious concerns. Misbehavior can lead to suspension and/or expulsion.

### **Suspension/Expulsion**

The Administration has the authority to suspend and/or expel students who disrupt learning opportunities or threaten the welfare of other students through disruptive acts or antisocial behavior. Prior to such action, the teacher, parents and Principal would meet to discuss the child's behavior. Suspension/expulsion are only for repeated disruptive behavior that has not changed and for serious offenses.

The following actions are grounds for suspension/expulsion:

Vandalism/stealing	Disrespect
Inappropriate language	Fighting
Lying (including forgery)	Use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs
Possession/use of weapons	Poor academic performance
Bullying (verbal, physical or social exclusion)	
Other improper behavior	

**Attendance at ICS is a privilege, not a right. Students have the responsibility to conduct themselves within the behavioral guidelines established by the school.**

**Those who are not able to abide by these guidelines may be asked to leave.**

**Responsibility for good behavior rests primarily with the student.**

**This handbook is prepared by the school administration to provide information and guidelines to assist children and parents at the International Community School of Addis Ababa.**

**When needed the Parent-Student Handbook will be revised or amended by the school administration to clarify school practice and expectations.**

**Comments and suggestions for improvement of this handbook are welcome and may be addressed to the Elementary School Principal.**