



# **The International School of Ahafo**

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

**August 2018**



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## 1. Welcome

The International School of Ahafo (ISA) is a co-educational, not-for-profit and Reception to Year 9 day school which caters for children from age 4 to 14 years. It does not currently offer an education beyond Year 9 due to the small size of the school and the cost effectiveness of employing specialist subject teachers for Year 10/11.

The school is overseen by a Board, most of whom are employees at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, and some of whom are parents of children at the school. ISA is approved by the Ghana Education Service, is a member of the Association of International Schools in Africa and is also a Cambridge approved school, which allows the school to administer the Cambridge Checkpoint external exams for Year 6 and Year 9 students.

It is our aim to provide the best possible education based on the Cambridge Primary and Cambridge Secondary 1 curricula, and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), all of which have been developed to suit the needs of culturally diverse and internationally mobile students. We strive to ensure that all our students enjoy their learning experiences at school and that they will be enthusiastic and actively engaged both intellectually and socially. The school is staffed by committed, highly qualified and internationally experienced teachers who currently come from the UK, South Africa and Ghana.

We regard ISA as a strong community where all members look after each other and respect each other's backgrounds, beliefs, views and abilities. Small class sizes mean each child is seen as an individual and has the potential to develop his or her skills and talents, not only academically, but also in a range of community, sporting and creative activities.

## 2. Staff Contact Details

Reception and Year 1	- Sankofa Class
Year 2, Year 3 & Year 4	- Nkyinkyim Class
Year 5 & Year 6	- Gye Nyame Class
Year 7, 8 & 9	- Nyansapo Class

Name	Position	Email
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Tersia Ruth Assumption	Nkyinkyim Teacher	<a href="mailto:Tersia.assumption@isa.edu.gh">Tersia.assumption@isa.edu.gh</a>
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Rita Dzide-Tei	Business/Communications Manager	rita.dzide-tei@isa.edu.gh

### 3. Vision and Mission

#### Vision

We will prepare our students to be compassionate, resilient, versatile and equipped to face the opportunities of the future.

#### Mission

We offer an international education to the diverse children in the Newmont Ahafo community by promoting a broad curriculum that shapes our students to be competent, well-rounded young people.

#### Core Values

- **We embrace diversity**

Children, staff and community members at MKV come together from all over the world and all are treated with equal respect.

- **We use team-work in an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality**

We recognize that we can only be a strong community if we work together for the benefit of all.

- **We are courageous**

We are not afraid to take risks in our efforts to learn and grow in skills, knowledge and understanding.

- **We demonstrate scholarship**

We always do our best to work hard and celebrate our success.

- **We are caring**

We care for each other and our community and show compassion for the less privileged.

- **We demonstrate responsibility**

We are responsible for the choices we make in all aspects of our lives.

- **We have integrity**

We strive to be honest and maintain strong moral principles.

## 4. Our School Logo



Kente cloth, which is depicted on our school logo, is an icon of African cultural heritage around the world. It has its origin in the Ashanti Kingdom where it was an Akan sacred cloth made of silk and cotton, and worn in times of extreme importance. It was once the cloth of kings but, over time, the use of kente became more widespread. However, its importance has remained and it is held in high esteem among the Akans, an ethnic group of Southern Ghana. The school has adopted the kente cloth design as a reflection of our location in Ghana and to demonstrate our respect for local traditional culture.

## 5. The Primary School Curriculum

### Reception

The youngest children in the Reception class (age 4–5 years) follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) programme from the UK. This is a particularly important year for our students as it is during these early stages that they develop essential skills in reading, writing and number.

The Foundation Stage covers seven areas of learning and development, which are all interconnected:

- Communication and language development
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy development
- Mathematics development
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

**From Year 1 (age 5-6) to Year 6 (age 10-11)** our students follow the Cambridge Primary Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). The Cambridge curriculum focuses on the three core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. There is a clear framework for each subject in which teachers have the flexibility to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of their students. Progress is measured by use of the Cambridge Progression Tests from the end of Year 3, and also the externally marked Cambridge Checkpoint assessments at the end of Year 6 and Year 9, which compares our children's performance to other children around the world. In this way, we know that ISA academic standards compare appropriately with other international schools. The costs of the Cambridge Checkpoint assessments are currently borne by the school.

All other areas of the curriculum are taught through the IPC which fosters enquiry-based learning through its internationally focused units and via a cross-curricular approach. In addition, the IPC promotes the development of international-mindedness and the following personal learning goals:

- Respect
- Resilience
- Thoughtfulness
- Communication
- Morality
- Adaptability
- Co-operation
- Enquiry

Ghanaian Culture, Music, ICT, French and PE are taught as discrete subjects unless they fit comfortably within the IPC Unit which is being taught. For further information on the Cambridge Primary Curriculum please go to: <http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/>

For further information on the International Primary Curriculum please go to: <http://www.greatlearning.com/ipc>

### Primary School Subjects

(Years 1-6: Age 5-11)	
<b>English</b>	<i>Cambridge Primary Curriculum core subjects</i>
<b>Mathematics</b>	
<b>Science</b>	
Geography	<i>IPC (which may include Science where the Unit covers the Cambridge learning goals)</i>
History	
Art/Design Technology	
ICT (Information & communication technology)	<i>Taught as discrete subjects, although can be incorporated into the IPC where appropriate</i>
PSHE (Personal, Social & Health Education)	
French	
PE (Physical Education)	
Music	
Ghanaian Culture	

## 6. The Primary School

Children join ISA in the Reception class and **must be four (4) years old by 31<sup>st</sup> August** in the year they join. Please note that this entry age is non-negotiable and is strictly enforced, as it is based on the developmental, social and academic needs of the child. The school would ask that parents respect this view.

Thereafter, each class will move up to the next Year Group at the beginning of each academic year (August/September). Children are placed with other children of the same age, although at the

moment the school has small numbers and so runs vertical classes. However, when numbers increase, the school will fall into line with typical northern hemisphere international schools as follows:

	<b>Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>					
<b>Year</b>	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<b>Age</b>	4 – 5	5 - 6	6 - 7	7 - 8	8 - 9	9 - 10	10 - 11

All classes in the school are mixed-ability and work is differentiated to address individual needs. Therefore, in line with all other British-styled international schools, it is not ISA policy to hold children back, since it is regarded as a non-evidence based practice that may harm children more than helping them.

Seven nationalities are currently represented in the Primary school where our students are children of Newmont employees or children of teachers working full-time in the school. ISA understands that international families are highly mobile so children are able to enter Primary classes at any time throughout the academic year, once all formalities are completed.

## 7. The Secondary School

### Year 7 to Year 9

Students move to the Secondary stage of their education as they enter Year 7, when the Cambridge Secondary 1 curriculum is used. Like the Cambridge Primary Curriculum, the Secondary 1 curriculum maintains a strong focus on the three core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science, and provides a clear teaching structure for teachers to follow.

The curriculum is presented in five content areas or ‘strands.’ These are further divided into ‘sub-strands.’ The five strands and sub-strands of English are:

- Spelling and vocabulary
- Grammar and punctuation
  - *Reading*
  - *Writing*
- Reading
  - *Fiction and poetry*
  - *Non-fiction*
- Writing
  - *Fiction and poetry*
  - *Non-fiction*
- Speaking and listening

The Mathematics programme covers the six areas of:

- Number
- Algebra
- Geometry
- Measure
- Handling data

- Problem solving

The Science programme covers four content areas (which are shared with the IPC):

- Scientific enquiry
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics

In all core subjects, progress is measured through the Cambridge Progression Tests at the end of each year and Cambridge Checkpoint Assessment at the end of Year 9.

All other curriculum subjects are covered by the IPC which, although incorporating ‘Primary’ in its name, can be used effectively in Year 7 and Year 8. Ghanaian Language and Culture, French, Music, ICT and PE are offered as discrete subjects (unless they can be incorporated into IPC Units) and are continually developed and reviewed by ISA’s staff to ensure that the curriculum stays broad and rigorous. For further information on the Cambridge Secondary 1 Curriculum please go to: <http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/>

### Secondary School Subjects

(Years 7 - 9: Age 11-14)	
<b>English</b>	<i>Cambridge Secondary 1 Curriculum core subjects and assessed through Cambridge Progression tests and Cambridge Checkpoint</i>
<b>Mathematics</b>	
<b>Science</b>	
Geography	<i>Taught through the IPC (which may include Science depending on the Unit being covered) and regularly assessed against teacher rubrics</i>
History	
Art/Design Technology	
ICT (Information & communication technology)	
PSHE (Personal, Social & Health Education)	<i>Taught as discrete subjects but not formally examined</i>
PE (Physical Education)	
French	
Music	
Ghanaian Culture	

## 8. The Secondary School Students

Children automatically transfer to the Secondary programme on completing the Primary programme at the end of Year 6. While class sizes are small, children may be taught in vertical classes but, once numbers increase, classes will fall into line with other northern hemisphere international schools around the world:

SECONDARY SCHOOL							
	Cambridge Secondary 1 (Years covered at ISA)			IGCSE Years		Sixth Form A level years	
Year	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
Age	11 - 12	12 - 13	13-14	14 - 15	15 - 16	16 - 17	17 - 18

Classes in the Secondary school are mixed-ability and work is differentiated to address individual needs. As international families are highly mobile, children are able to enter Secondary classes at any time throughout the academic year.

## 9. Curriculum Information for Parents

During the first weeks of each new academic year, the school holds a ‘Meet the Teachers/Curriculum Information Evening’ during which new teachers are introduced to the community. At this time, parents are also invited into the classrooms to discuss expectations and any curriculum issues with the class teachers. This offers all parents the opportunity to ask any questions, or discuss any concerns, that they may have regarding their children’s learning.

In addition, at the beginning of each half term, information is sent home to all parents regarding which areas of learning are being covered in the curriculum. This school/home communication not only informs parents about what children are learning at school over the next few weeks, but also allows them to share in that learning.

## 10. English as an Additional Language (EAL) Provision

International schools are used to dealing with new students who arrive unable to communicate confidently in English. Where this happens at ISA, children will be assessed and monitored carefully after arrival. Little intervention will take place while the child settles into his/her new environment and picks up ‘playground’ English, which usually happens over a few weeks. Monitoring will then continue to ensure that the child is making steady progress in academic language acquisition. Where children fail to make sufficient progress, EAL interventions may be made. Parents will be kept informed at all times.

## 11. Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Gifted/Talented Students

ISA welcomes all children who are able to access its curriculum and whose needs can be met with the resources available. Students with Special Educational Needs are catered for, in the first instance, by a differentiated curriculum. They may also receive support within class or be withdrawn from lessons for specialist help. These actions will follow a period of evaluation leading to an Individual Education Plan. Parents will always be consulted and advised of progress.

Where children are found to be particularly able in their academic studies, they are catered for, in the first instance, by a differentiated curriculum. If this does not meet the child’s needs, then an Individual Education Plan will be prepared and implemented. As stated above, parents will always be consulted and advised of progress.

## 12. Extra-Curricular Activities

All students from Year 2 can choose to take part in the extra-curricular activity programme, which runs on four days each week after school. Typical activities include: football, yoga, taekwondo, craft, knitting, drama, craft club and dance. All teachers offer one after-school activity each week. Parents who are interested in offering an extra-curricular activity are very welcome to contact the school to arrange dates and times, and to inform us regarding what facilities are required.

## 13. The School Day

Students are expected to be in school by 7.45am so they can line up promptly when the drum is sounded at 8.00am. Children who arrive late disrupt lessons which are already under way and may miss out on important learning. If children are late on more than two occasions, parents will be contacted to find out why. Children should not be sent to school earlier than 7.45am as there are no teachers on duty before school starts.

Children have a snack at 10.00am and then go out for a break. In order to support effective learning throughout the day and to promote a well-balanced lifestyle, we ask you to pack a healthy snack for your child. You are also encouraged to provide a refillable water bottle to be used at the filtered water fountains. Children are not allowed to chew gum (chewing/bubble gum is forbidden on school premises) or consume chocolate, sweets and fizzy drinks in school. Occasionally a class party will be held to celebrate an event and we acknowledge that, at that time of sharing, some exceptions may be made. However, we encourage healthy snack choices.

We provide transportation for children who go home for lunch and live at the further reaches of the compound. All children need to be back at school before the drum goes at 1.00pm sharp. Parents are required to ensure that there is always an adult at home during this period. A teacher will be on duty at school from 12.45 – 1.00 pm

### School Day Timings

8.00	<i>Registration - morning lessons start</i>
8.05 – 9.00	Lesson 1
9.00 – 10.00	Lesson 2
10.00 – 10.30	<i>Snack/Break time</i>
10.30 – 11.15	Lesson 3
11.15 – 12.00	Lesson 4
12.00 – 1.00	<i>Lunch</i>
1.00 – 2.00	Lesson 5
2.00 – 3.00	Lesson 6
3.15 – 4.00	After-school activities (Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Formal lessons end at 3.00pm but children attending the extra-curricular activity programme stay until 4.00pm. Due to the age of our youngest students, and the demands placed upon them through our learning programme, **Reception children will finish school at 12.00 midday** and not return for the afternoon session during Terms 1 and 2. The school day will be extended for Reception children, where appropriate, in Term 3 to prepare them for the full school day in Year 1.

Parents or aunties waiting to collect children may wait at the forecourt. Parents should notify their child's teacher if another adult is picking up their child. Students in Sankofa will only be released to parents, caregivers or to an older sibling (unless permission is given in writing for an alternative e.g. leave by themselves). If children are not collected after 15 minutes they will be kept in the office and the Business Manager will call parents immediately. It is important that young children are collected on time as late collection can cause children anxiety. If a child is consistently left for late collection, a parent conference will be called with the Principal.

In the event of a family emergency or change of plan, please try to contact the School Office as soon as possible so that your child and the teacher can be informed of your new arrangements.

## 14. School Holidays

The teaching year at ISA operates over three terms in line with most northern hemisphere international schools.

- Term 1 is from late August until Christmas, with a half-term break
- Term 2 is from January until Easter, with a half-term break
- Term 3 is from the week after Easter until the end of June, with a half-term break

The school closes for all Ghanaian public holidays.

## 15. Emergency Measures

Fire and emergency evacuation drills are held at school each term. Students will be asked to go to a designated area, led by their classroom/subject teacher. Every drill is treated as a genuine emergency and is acted on accordingly with urgency. The emergency response is evaluated each time a drill is carried out and feedback is shared by staff.

## 16. Illness/Accident

To reduce the chances of making other children (or teachers) ill, please do not send or bring your child to school if s/he has any of the following:

- Fever
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Contagious disease
- Head lice

A child with a contagious disease (which can easily be passed on to other people) will be sent home. S/he may come back to school when the risk of infecting other children has passed. Please call the

school to let us know if your child becomes ill with a contagious disease so we can then watch out for similar symptoms in other children.

***Children should not be sent to school when they are not well enough to learn.***

Minor accidents are dealt with by our First Aid-trained teachers. If your child is taken ill during the school day, we will telephone you to ask you to come and collect him/her. If your child requires professional medical attention due to an accident, you will be called to come to school, or to attend hospital if necessary. We will always notify you if your child suffers any kind of head injury while at school in case of delayed concussion.

## **17. Allergies and Medical Conditions**

It is extremely important that parents inform the school of any life-threatening allergies their child may have so school staff can be informed of any student who requires life-saving medication (e.g. EpiPen) for allergic reactions.

If your child has a medical condition of any type, e.g. allergies, asthma, epilepsy, ADHD, autistic spectrum disorders or diabetes, please ensure this is indicated on the medical form. The school will share this information on a 'need-to-know' basis with relevant staff.

For safety reasons, no prescription drug will be given to students on the school premises unless specifically instructed by the physician or with the consent of parents. If a child is on regular medication, the school requires clear written instructions about the way the medication has to be administered. If your child is on regular medication, even if it is not administered at school, then the school must be informed.

## **18. Immunizations**

In the interest of safety for all children, immunizations are to be conducted by the student's general practitioner or pediatrician and recorded on the medical examination form. Please keep your child's immunization record on our file up to date.

## **19. Bike Safety**

If your child rides a bike to school, they must wear an appropriately fitted helmet and parents must explain clearly to their children the Newmont safety rules regarding road use.

## **20. Attendance/Absence**

If your child has a planned absence from school, you should notify the teacher, or the office, in advance. The simplest way is through the homework diary, or by phone or email.

We ask parents to ensure that absences are kept to a minimum and family trips do not conflict with school days. The school year includes generous vacation time and therefore an extension of this time is not encouraged. Parents are requested to schedule dental, optician and other routine appointments during school holidays in order not to disrupt learning.

Should a child become ill overnight, parents should call the School Office before 8:30am or send a note explaining the reason for the absence. The Business Manager will call parents to find out the reason for any absence of which the school has not been notified.

If your child is recovering from an illness and is unable to participate in physical education or swimming activities, the child’s physician should issue a medical certificate indicating the period of time that the child must be excluded from these activities. If your child needs to be excused from these lessons for any other reason, a signed note must be sent with your child, or you should phone or email the office. Please do not tell your child to tell the teacher – the message **must** come from the parent.

## 21. School Uniform and Dress Code

At ISA, we have a strict dress code, which puts the focus on academics, not fashion. A school uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of our school and sets an appropriate tone and appearance. We want the wearing of our school uniform to instill a sense of pride, support positive behaviour and discipline and encourage a sense of identity and belonging. Furthermore, the wearing of the ISA uniform ensures equality for students of all races and backgrounds. Hence, students’ personal appearance should therefore reflect respect for themselves, their school and the community.

Our school uniform policy, rules and expectations have been designed to be simple, fair and reasonable to parents and care givers, students and staff alike. Our school uniform supports effective teaching and learning. It is practical, smart and has been designed with value for money and health and safety in mind. All students are required to wear the necessary school uniform when attending school, representing the school, or when participating in a school-organised event outside normal school hours, unless special permission is granted. School uniforms are available for purchase from the School Office and the prescribed dress code for each age group is in the table below.

Age Group	Uniform
Reception, Y1, Y2	Short sleeved-shirt (in light blue) with the school’s logo on the pocket + shorts in navy blue with side pockets and belt loops. Uniforms at this stage of the school are unisex for the ease of play and sitting on the carpet.
Year 3 – 9 Boys	Short sleeved-shirt (in light blue) with the school’s logo on the pocket + shorts in navy blue with side pockets and belt loops
Year 3 – 9 Girls	Short sleeved-shirt (in light blue) with the school’s logo on the pocket + skirt in navy blue
PE – All	Royal blue school polo shirts sold at the School Office, preferably with black shorts, appropriate footwear and a sun hat
Friday Wear – All	African Print dress for girls and shirt for boys – to be worn with school uniform shorts.

In line with the school’s respect for local traditions, children wear African prints on Fridays. The fabric is available for sale from the School Office and can be sewn into school-appropriate styles. Please note that except for Fridays and PE/Swimming designated periods, full school uniforms **must** be worn at all times during the school day, including breaks and lunchtimes.

Uniform shirts must be tucked into shorts and secured with a belt. Girls' skirts should be knee-length; jewellery should be kept to a minimum and nail polish should not be worn.

Shoes must be plain black, close-toed and with no heel. They must be practical, completely attached to the feet with a sturdy sole for health and safety reasons and be worn with a pair of white ankle-length socks. Shoe laces must be fastened at all times. Slippers, flip flops or Crocs are not allowed (unless for wearing with swimming clothes.)

Good grooming of hair, skin and finger nails is expected at all times. Hair should be neat and tidy and of a natural colour. Extreme styles and colours are not acceptable. Long hair must be tied back if requested by a teacher.

No writing on school uniform or school-approved apparel will be permitted except embroidery or iron-on labels of children's name for ease of identification.

Appropriate swim wear, along with a towel, goggles and a swimming cap for girls with long hair, is required for swimming lessons.

Students are encouraged to wear hats and caps while participating in activities outdoors due to health concerns of prolonged or excessive exposure to direct ultraviolet radiation of sunlight. Nevertheless, slogans, images and designs must be discreet. Hats are not permitted indoors at any time.

## **22. Meeting the Dress Code – The Role of Parents**

We ask all parents and care givers who send their children to our school for their support of the school uniform/ dress code policy. We believe that parents have a duty to send their children to school correctly dressed and ready for their daily schoolwork. We look for and welcome full parental support in this regard and request that all items of school uniform are clean, presentable and in good state of repair for the start of the school day. Parents should ensure that their child's name is written on all items of clothing as children can become upset as a result of lost clothing.

In the unlikely event that a parent has difficulties fulfilling this request, they are asked to speak confidentially to the Principal to discuss the matter. Any student with medical reasons wishing to wear clothing/ footwear other than that described above **must** provide a medical professional's letter explaining the reason why and for how long the requested clothing or footwear change will apply. We regret that a letter from parents and caregivers is not acceptable under any circumstances.

## **23. Meeting the Dress Code – The Role of Staff**

All staff are expected to and have been instructed to enforce, reinforce the school uniform policy and ensure compliance at all times during the school day whilst students are on school grounds or premises. They are also able to help with finding spare uniform for children who need to borrow items and helping parents locate lost and named items, where possible.

## **24. Lost Property**

Lost Property is currently collected in the School Office, from where students can collect any items they have mislaid. We strongly suggest that all items of clothing are marked with the student's name so they can be returned in the event of loss.

## **25. Student Behaviour**

ISA has very high expectations for student behaviour and requires students to be respectful at all times; these expectations are written in the ISA Student Code of Conduct. Where behaviour falls below our expectations, sanctions will be applied. Misbehaviour which represents breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will be dealt with promptly and reflect appropriately the seriousness of the misbehaviour. Repeated poor behaviour will result in parents being invited to school to discuss their child's attitude with the class teacher or Principal. Instances of dangerous or violent behaviour will result in a suspension or permanent exclusion from the school.

It is an expectation that students will behave appropriately when travelling to and from school as well as during school trips, and at all times while wearing the ISA school uniform.

## **26. School Reports**

Children in both the Primary and Secondary schools will receive a detailed academic report twice a year: at the end of Term 1 (December) and at the end of Term 3 (June). These reports are substantial documents which the parents are invited to discuss with the teachers during a parent/teacher/student consultation evening, which follows shortly after the distribution of the reports.

## **27. Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences**

There are a number of opportunities through the year for parents to meet with teachers formally. At the beginning of each academic year, the school hosts a 'Meet the Teachers' evening when new teachers are introduced to the parent community and parents can identify their child's new teachers. This event also offers parents the opportunity to discuss curriculum and general school issues with their child's teacher. Later on in Term 1, there will be individual meetings between teachers and parents to discuss their child's progress. Further meetings will take place in Term 2 and Term 3. Parents are actively encouraged to allow their children to accompany them to these meetings so that they can be a part of the discussion.

## **28. Formal External Assessment**

In the Primary school, children are formally assessed through external tests at the end of Year 6 when they take the Cambridge Checkpoint assessment. In the Secondary school, the Cambridge Checkpoint assessment takes place at the end of Year 9. The following is a quote regarding the Checkpoint Assessment taken from the Cambridge website:

*'Cambridge Primary Checkpoint tests have been designed to assess learners at the end of Cambridge Primary. They are available in English, English as a second language, mathematics and science, and give valuable feedback on learners' strengths and weaknesses before they progress to the next stage of education.'*

*The tests are marked in Cambridge and provide schools with an external international benchmark for learner performance. Each learner receives a statement of achievement and a diagnostic feedback report, giving schools detailed information and parents extra trust in the feedback they receive.'*

## 29. Homework

Homework assignments are an important reinforcement of the learning of new concepts and skills, and help to build desirable work, study and research habits. Homework seeks to:

- provide students with the opportunities both to prepare for and to further develop work done in class;
- consolidate and extend children's learning;
- contribute to the assessment of student learning;
- contribute to the evaluation of teaching;
- promote independent study and research skills;
- exploit learning opportunities less readily available in the classroom and
- develop home-school partnerships.

Time spent on homework varies according to the nature of the homework, the ability of the student and their diligence and motivation. Homework is sent home by all teachers for all classes on a daily basis throughout the school. Parents are requested to ensure homework is completed by children in the afternoon/evening and is not done in the early morning before school.

### Primary School

Homework will involve reading, comprehension, learning spellings and tables, will be a worksheet based on the work done in class that day, or will be internet research on a topic being studied in class. No child should be spending much more than one hour per evening doing homework.

A school reading scheme is in place for all those children who are learning to read and, if they are on the scheme, all children should be taking home a reading book at least two/three times per week. Parents are expected to listen to their children read on a daily basis and make a comment in the Reading Record which is sent home with the reading book.

### Secondary School

Secondary students will have homework based on their subject lessons or will have research to undertake on the internet. Teachers will ensure that homework is given in a balanced way so children do not have several different subject assignments at the same time. While reading is not compulsory at this level, it is highly recommend in order to support vocabulary development, improve general knowledge and to encourage a love of reading.

All students are issued with homework diaries, which are regarded as an integral part of the cooperation and communication between home and school. Teachers will check diary entries daily and will expect parents to have signed these diaries to confirm that homework has been completed satisfactorily. Please use the diary to write any important messages regarding, for example, any difficulties the child has had in coping with and completing their homework tasks.

Homework guidelines are as follows:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>HOMEWORK</b>		<b>READING</b>
Reception	-	-	Shared reading + spellings
Year 1-2	25 - 30 mins	4 times a week	10 - 15 mins
Year 3-4	30 - 40 mins	5 times a week	15 - 20 mins
Year 5-6	40 - 60 mins	5 times a week	20 – 25 mins
Year 7	60 + mins	5 times a week	30 mins – recommended
Year 8	60 + mins	5 times a week	30 mins
Year 9	70 + mins	5 times a week	30 mins

### **30. Mobile Phones**

As all students live on MKV, there is no reason for them to carry mobile phones with them during the school day. However, if it is ever necessary for a child to bring a mobile phone to school, the following rules apply:

- The phone must be switched off at all times except when contacting parents
- Students must ask permission to use their phone in order to contact parents
- The phone should be inexpensive as the school cannot take responsibility for the loss or damage of expensive electronic items
- The phone should be marked or named to enable the child to identify it

### **31. Assemblies**

The whole school comes together each Friday morning to celebrate the week. Children’s good behaviour/work/effort is celebrated as ‘Star of the Week’ and certificates are awarded. Teachers take it in turns to lead the assembly and once a year individual Primary classes prepare an assembly to which their parents are invited. Please note that, as ISA is an international school, assemblies do not have a religious focus.

### **32. Duties**

Teachers are on duty during break times and the end of lunch times when children come back to school. A duty rota is drawn up at the beginning of each academic year. There is no supervision before/after school hours. We understand that accidents cannot always be prevented but, by having teachers on duty, we can deal with accidents and injuries as soon as they happen.

### **33. Bullying**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with

promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

### **34. Events**

A number of events are planned throughout the year: Book Week, International Week, Christmas Concert, Science Week, Red Nose Day, etc. Letters/emails regarding these events will be sent to parents in good time informing them of details, requirements and any costs involved. The events calendar is published and sent to all parents at the beginning of each school year. Event dates are also on the school's website.

### **35. School Calendar**

The academic calendar is posted on the school website and will be emailed to parents at the beginning of each academic year. If parents need to know specific holiday dates before the start of the academic year in order to plan for holidays, they can speak to the Business Manager or Principal to access the draft academic calendar.

### **36. Field Trips**

On occasions, ISA students will be taken on field trips away from the school to enhance their learning. It is the expectation of the school that all students will join these trips as they are part of the formal school curriculum. Parents are expected to pay any expenses related to these trips.

All teachers taking their classes off campus must undertake a pre-visit to their planned visit location and, in addition, must complete a detailed risk-assessment before permission is granted for the trip. Parents are often invited to join the field trips so that there are more adults available for supervision. Class teachers will send emails to parents before these trips giving information and requesting help, if needed.

For field trips in the local vicinity, the school bus will be used and driven by the school driver (who is Newmont trained). For trips to Kumasi or outside the local catchment area, the school bus may be used (depending on student numbers) and a Newmont designated driver will be booked.

### **37. Security**

All visitors to the school must first report to the office. Parents are not permitted to enter school and go straight to their child's class without first informing the office. This includes specialist lessons such as swimming and PE.

Students are not permitted to bring unnecessary valuables, such as toys and electronic entertainment items to school. In the event of valuables being brought to school for learning experiences, parents are encouraged to coordinate with the class teacher. We discourage students from bringing large amounts of cash to school. Any deposits for payment should be paid directly to the School Office by parents.

### **38. Birthdays**

Some parents of our students like to celebrate their child's birthday by bringing a cake or small treats to the classroom. This is acceptable, but parents cannot ask teachers to hold a party for their child in school hours and in the classroom. Parents are asked to discuss an appropriate time for bringing in the cake/treats which is appropriate e.g. just before break-time or at the end of the day.

### **39. Concerns/Complaints**

Parents who are concerned about any matter, however small, regarding their child's education are very welcome to come to school and discuss the issue with the class/subject teacher, or with the Principal. ISA values its relationship with all parents and takes all parental concerns seriously.

### **40. Parent/Teacher/Friends Association (PTFA)**

The school supports an informal PTFA group. The main aim of this group is to promote and enhance the well-being of ISA students, developing relationships between parents and teaching staff in order to build a strong and united school community. Please see the Appendix which offers guidelines regarding how parents or friends of the school can support the school.

Members of the PTFA are often involved in helping staff prepare for events such as the Christmas Concert. Members are reminded that ISA is an International School and therefore does not promote any single religious celebration. While we are happy to conduct a celebratory event at Christmas time for the MKV community, the children do not sing religious songs at this time, focus on the nativity, or display religious artefacts. We ask all community members to respect this.

### **41. Smoking**

ISA operates a strict no-smoking policy on campus at all times and in all areas.

### **42. Textbooks and Equipment**

All textbooks are provided by the school. Most of the books are purchased from the United Kingdom and are linked to our Programmes of Study. Students are permitted to take textbooks home to complete homework tasks and for their on-going study, and are required to keep books in good condition. Parents are asked to ensure that school text books are not used where there is food and drink, and are not placed in school bags with leaky water bottles. In the event of a student losing a book, or significantly staining it, a charge for replacement of the book will be made. When students leave the school, all text books must be returned.

### **43. Child Protection Policy**

ISA has a Child Protection Policy which supports Article 3.1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child which states,

*'in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. We are committed to prevent child abuse and protect children within our community.'*

Our policy outlines the actions that will be taken to ensure that all students are protected from all forms of abuse.

We believe that all children have the right to:

- a) Grow up in a safe secure and caring environment
- b) Be protected from harm – including neglect, abuse and exploitation
- c) Be listened to, and heard
- d) Be valued in terms of their language, culture, religion, gender and race
- e) Be treated as an individual

#### **44. Use of ICT and the Internet at School**

Computers enhance the teaching and learning environment for both teachers and students, but are sophisticated and powerful tools, and internet use in particular raises a range of legal, ethical, technical, and management issues. ISA therefore has an ICT Policy which both staff and students are expected to observe. Violations of the ICT & Internet Policy will result in a temporary or permanent ban on a student's use of the school network or of the internet. Additional disciplinary action may be added in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour. When applicable, and where the serious abuse of the school's ICT system or internet has occurred, ISA may be under an obligation to involve outside authorities.

#### **45. Information from School**

Please keep an eye on your child's school-bag and your emails as it may contain notes and important information for parents. This is especially important if your child is in Sankofa class. Every Friday, the school sends an email of all upcoming events for the following week, please make time to read this. In the unlikely event that you do not receive these emails, do contact the school promptly.

#### **46. Getting in Touch with the School**

Please ring the School Office (Newmont Ext 53002) or drop in a note if:

- ✓ Your child is going to be late
- ✓ Your child is ill
- ✓ Your child is away from school for any reason
- ✓ Your child is going on holiday during term time
- ✓ You are going to be late picking up your child
- ✓ Your home or family circumstances change

## 47. School Policy Documents

Please familiarize yourself with the Parent Hand Book (this document) as this is very important to the day-to-day running of the school. Parents are asked to support and follow the guidelines laid down in this document.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR EARLY YEARS/ RECEPTION PARENTS**

### 48. Starting School

Welcome to a new and exciting stage in your child's life. During this year, your child will make new friends, enjoy new experiences and learn new skills. We, you and the school, have the chance to work as partners to ensure that your child will have a positive attitude towards education based on social and academic confidence.

### 49. A Word about "Yes" and "No"

Please let "Yes" be "Yes" and "No" be "No". Just that. It should be simple, but if not, how does it impact on social life?

#### **The Sculptors**

*I dreamt I stood in a studio*

*And watched two sculptors there*

*The clay they used was a young child's mind*

*And they fashioned it with care*

*One was a teacher, the tools he used*

*Were books and music and Art*

*One was a parent with a guiding hand*

*And a gentle loving heart .....*

*And each agreed they would have failed if they had worked alone,*

*For behind the parents stood the school*

*And behind the teacher, the home*

Anonymous

### 50. Is my little one ready for school?

When starting big school, children need to be able to:

- ✓ Express their needs appropriately
- ✓ Use the toilet independently

- ✓ Wash and dry their hands
- ✓ Blow their noses
- ✓ Sit up a table
- ✓ Eat their packed snack properly
- ✓ Dress and undress themselves
- ✓ Sit quietly to listen to a story or a piece of music
- ✓ Wait patiently for their turn
- ✓ Know when to say “please” and “thank you”
- ✓ Share and take turns
- ✓ Tidy up things they have used
- ✓ Use a normal voice – not a baby voice
- ✓ Say goodbye with a smile!

### **First Day – A Happy One!**

- ✓ Please be positive with your child in preparing him/her for school and explain to him/her what will happen – talk about the teachers, other children, breaks, sitting down, tidy-up time and “end of day.”
- ✓ On arrival, it is very helpful if you can show your child where to put his/her bag – the cubby holes will be labelled.
- ✓ After greeting the teacher and some other children and finding a place to sit on a bench, please leave promptly because your child will pick up any anxiety you may have.
- ✓ Most children, even if initially upset, soon become distracted by their surroundings and settle down.

### **51. Getting Ready for School**

At home, you could practice these activities to improve your child’s co-ordination:

- ✓ Holding a pencil correctly
- ✓ Colouring in accurately
- ✓ Using scissors
- ✓ Using glue and paint carefully
- ✓ Hopping and skipping
- ✓ Balancing, running and jumping
- ✓ Kicking, throwing and catching a ball
- ✓ Tying shoe laces
- ✓ Peeling fruit
- ✓ Drawing straight and curvy lines
- ✓ Playing board and matching games
- ✓ Completing jigsaws
- ✓ Playing “I Spy”
- ✓ Playing “spot the difference”, snap and dot to dot games

## **52. Preparing for more Formal learning**

- ✓ Children need to be able to speak clearly and listen carefully
- ✓ Encourage your child to complete sentences, avoiding baby talk
- ✓ Encourage your child to listen and respond to simple instructions
- ✓ Foster a love of books, take time to enjoy stories together

## **53. Reading**

- ✓ We use a combination of two approaches, look –and –say and phonetic
- ✓ Children learn to read from a print-rich environment
- ✓ Encourage them to look at books, road-signs, shop signs, letters etc. as it is a very useful first step to reading

## **54. Writing**

- ✓ Your child will be learning to write his/ her name in lower case letters initially so it would be helpful if you could stick up your child's written names, perhaps on a bedroom door so that they can be familiar with its appearance
- ✓ Allow your child to colour! They need to get used to control of writing tools

*To be reviewed September 2019*