



مدرسة الشارقة الأمريكية الدولية  
Sharjah American International School



# Kindergarten Parent – Student Handbook 2019-2020



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# Welcome to the Kindergarten Wing at Sharjah American International School-Dubai Campus!

As KG Team members, we are looking forward to an enriching and rewarding school year. Our objective is to create an environment in which your child can develop and flourish emotionally, socially, and academically. This will be accomplished through providing developmentally appropriate hands on learning experience that can meet your child's individual needs and will inspire him/ her to be a lifelong learner.

The early years are one of the most important developmental times in your child's life, as this is when lifelong healthy habits and practices are created. In the KG department, our priority is to support your child to be independent through predictable routines, policies that foster healthy habits, and positive guidance. Another key component in enabling your child to become an independent learner requires us (parent and KG team) to work together. To ensure that our best practices are followed and impact on students is effective, you are kindly requested to read through our handbook as a family.

If this is your second year or your first year joining our KG Family we know that through the strength of the parent-teacher partnership your child will have a successful year in our Kindergarten program.

I thank you in advance for reading through our handbook and supporting our set policies by role modeling them for your child.

Warmest Regards,

Ms. Nicole Cavanaugh and the Kindergarten Team

## **SAIS-D Mission Statement**

To provide an internationally recognized American curriculum based on Common Core State Standards/CCSS, New Generation Science Standards/NGSS, and the California State Education Framework. SAIS-D strives for excellence and innovation in education and is committed to preparing students, both academically and socially, to be creative problem solvers and career and college ready. SAIS-D appreciates the cultural diversity of its multilingual community and instills a culture of mutual understanding and international mindedness that empowers students to be passionate, innovative, and productive citizens in an ever-changing global society while embracing the cultural values, beliefs and aspirations of the UAE.

## **SAIS-D Vision**

**Vision:** As a member of the SAIS Group of schools, our Vision is to be well recognized internationally and fully trusted locally.

### ***We will be well recognized internationally for:***

Delivering measurable and benchmarked outcomes

1. Maintaining active status of affiliations and accreditation with American and internationally recognized school accreditation associations
2. Striving to be effective members of the Global Community
3. Preparing students to be creative innovators and responsible entrepreneurs
4. Respecting the diversity of the school community

### ***We will be fully trusted locally for:***

1. Complying with all legislations and operational requirements set for licensed private international schools in Dubai
2. Being a valued member of the local community
3. Building constructive and effective partnerships with all stakeholders
4. Delivering holistic education services to all students
5. Preparing students for prestigious higher education opportunities and securing admissions to colleges and universities worldwide
6. Supporting our teachers and staff members with adequate professional development opportunities
7. Preserving the UAE local identity and culture throughout all school practices and policies
8. Considering the multilingual nature of the school community at most where almost all students are English Language Learners

## **Kindergarten Community Policies**

### **Attendance and Punctuality Policies:**

**Punctuality:** To ensure the academic needs of your student are met, it is imperative that your child is present by school at 7:40am. Drop off is between 7:25-7:40am. In case a student is **late (comes after 7:45)**, the teacher **will not** allow him/her into the class unless you have checked in with the KG supervisor and will be recorded as late in our school system. Students that are repeatedly late will be reported to the Director of Early Years. The Director of Early Years will then contact the family and request that the family come to the school to meet and explore ways on how the family can ensure that their child will be on time to school every day.

Students that arrive before 7:15 must be supervised by a family member, students that arrive after 7:15 maybe dropped off in designated early room with a KG teacher/assistant. Students are NEVER to be left alone in a classroom. We appreciate you adhering to this very important safety matter.

Our school day ends at 1:00 Sunday to Thursday. Sunday-Thursday late fees will apply at 1:30. Chronic lateness will require a meeting with the Director of Early Years.

**Early Dismissal:** The KG Supervisor and Director of Early will be notified if a parent is asking for their child to leave school before the set end of day time. They have the right to review each case and approve/ not approve early leave based on information provided by the family. It is preferred that families discuss early dismissal before the day of request.

**Attendance:** If your child becomes ill and will be absent please inform the school. When the child returns to school please provide a medical report so we can ensure that your child is ready to be back in school. All other absences, those that do not relate to your child being ill, must be approved by the Director of Early Years. Those unapproved will be recorded in our system as unexcused absences.

Please note: After students exceed 20 days of school absence, the Vice Principal will recommend to the Principal that this student's placement not be continued for the upcoming year. The school will provide a final "excessive absence letter" to be signed in the office of the Vice Principal.

## **Afterschool Room Policy**

From 1:30 to 2:30 the KG department provides a late room for families that have students in the upper grades or parents that wish for the additional hours, Sundays through Thursdays. Please note, fees do apply and must be paid to the registration, before your student will be accepted into the Afterschool room.

## **Bus Policy**

For our families that use our school transport service it is important that families communicate with the KG teacher if their child is using the bus and what bus number, at the beginning of enrollment. If at any time changes occur, the family is required to communicate the change to the KG supervisor. As a department we are not responsible for changes that are made and not communicated to the KG supervisor.

## **Designated Pick-Up Person Policy**

To ensure the safety of your child please introduce to the teacher the person who will be picking up your child everyday: (father, mother, driver, nanny or any other family member). We will not release your child to anybody

that you have not already cleared with the teacher. If your pick up plan changes please **inform the teacher and the KG supervisor as we can't release the child to an unknown person. Pick parent/ guardian needs to have the parent's school ID card at all times.**

## **Class Assignment**

It is the academic goal of the KG department to create a diversified learning environment for all our learners. This goal takes priority when creating our class lists. Parents are welcome to request for teachers they may be interested in, however our above stated goal will be the priority. As a department we do not guarantee the request of the parents. As the year progresses if the KG leadership team recognize that a student's academic needs are not being met within 3 weeks of enrollment, we will meet with the families and our Student Support Services department to decide the best course of action for the child.

## **Birthday Policy**

We recognize the importance of celebrating your child's birthday; however we also want to ensure that birthday celebrations do not take time away from our academic goals. Therefore when a child has his/ her very special day, families are invited into the classroom at the end of the day to sing Happy Birthday and if the family chooses to share a gift with child's classmates, we require non-food items. Example: fun pencils, stickers, balloons, hats, etc. **All food or Birthday food items will not be allowed in the KG wing.** We thank you in advance for adhering and understanding the importance of our Birthday Policy.

In addition, please note that no member of the KG team will be responsible for handing out Birthday invitations to the students.

We thank you in advance for adhering and understanding the importance of our Birthday Policy.

## **Uniform Policy**

- All students are expected to wear their school uniform everyday with black shoes and white socks.
- Girls can wear only white polo under their school uniform with white leggings or short white pants.
- Please provide extra clothes for your child in case of accidents, spills, etc..... Don't forget: write his/her name on them please.
- Sports shoes are to be worn on the PE day only.

**Please label all your child's clothes, bag, water bottle and lunch box.**

## **Healthy Eating Policy**

- Meal times are a social learning time where students sit down with their friends quietly and enjoy their food.
- Good examples of table manners are given by the supervising staff member sitting with the students.
- Please send with your child enough food and snacks for two meals. We ask that when packing your child's lunch you only **provide healthy options** to promote healthy habits as well as encourage good dental hygiene.

- The following list: *Chocolate, sweets, candies, lollipops, chips, and soda* are not allowed. Please avoid packing fried foods and chocolate sandwiches.
- We will encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day
- We will have a water dispenser available positioned within the school for any refillable bottles to be topped up, as required.
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimize the risk of choking

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

SAIS-Dubai along with the KG Department has a commitment to maintaining an educational environment where racism and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender identity, disability, marital or civic union status, homelessness or age, are not tolerated.

SAIS-Dubai prohibits discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation, of/against any of its students, as such conduct is contrary to the mission of the school and its commitment to equal opportunity in education.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. It is prohibited by SAIS-Dubai and violates the law of the UAE. For purposes of this policy, “school” includes school – sponsored events, trips, sports events, and similar events connected with school. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about discrimination or harassment, or any retaliation against any individual who has cooperated with an investigation of a discrimination, harassment or retaliation complaint, is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

SAIS-Dubai takes allegations of discrimination, including all forms of harassment and hate crimes, as well as retaliation seriously and will respond promptly to complaints. Where it is determined that harassing conduct which violates the law and this policy, has occurred, SAIS-Dubai will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and will impose corrective action as necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate, which may include school-related discipline (refer to code of conduct).

SAIS-Dubai also prohibits bullying, as set forth in the Bullying Policy section in the school’s code of conduct.

### **Definitions:**

“**Discrimination**” is defined as treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study in the school because of an individual’s actual or perceived race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students, because of his/her membership in a protected class.

“**Harassment**” is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, age. Discrimination and or harassment include, but are not limited to:

Display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group based upon the criteria listed above.

Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above because of one of the criteria listed above.

Any action or speech that contributes to, promotes or results in a hostile or discriminatory environment for an individual or group described above.

Any action or speech that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that either (i) interferes with or limits the ability of an individual or group (as described above) to participate in or benefit from a school program or activity at SAIS-Dubai; or (ii) creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment.

Harassment can be communicated in any form, including verbally, in writing, or electronically via the Internet, cell phones, and text messaging, social media or in any other way that shows disrespect to others based on race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age.

What constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristics on which the harassment is based.

“**Hate Crime**” is defined as a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, homelessness, gender identity, disability, or age. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another’s property.

“**Retaliation**” is defined as any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under this policy or the \*UAE law\*, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

The definitions of discrimination and harassment are broad. In addition to the above examples, other unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, that has the effect of creating a school environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to either male or female students may constitute discrimination and/or harassment

### **Reporting Complaints of Discrimination, Harassment, Hate Crimes and Retaliation**

If any student believes, in good faith, that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination described above, the individual has a right to file a complaint with the Supervisor, Head of School, Director of Early Years, Vice Principal, or the Principal. This may be done orally or in writing. Teachers or other staff members who observe incidents of harassment involving students, or are in receipt of a complaint from a student, shall report such incidents immediately to the Supervisor, Head of School, Director of Early Years, Vice Principal, or the Principal.

Please note that while these procedures relate to the Schools’ policy of promoting an educational setting free from discrimination and harassment, as detailed further in this policy, these procedures are not designed nor intended

to limit the Schools' authority to discipline or take remedial action for conduct which the School deems unacceptable.

The School Management will work with the individual who files a complaint of discrimination or harassment; including conducting an investigation and holding conferences, in order to fairly and expeditiously resolve the complaint. Whenever possible, a conference should be scheduled during a time that does not conflict with regularly scheduled work and/or school programs.

For more detail information we kindly ask that you refer to the SAIS-D student handbook that covers all the schools at SAIS-D. In the KG Wing all cases will be handled in an age-appropriate matter and will fit within our positive discipline policy.

## **Behavior Guidance Policies**

### **Positive Discipline Policy**

The KG team consistently emphasizes basic respect for the individual student. Our students are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. Students learn by exploring, experimenting, and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, and appropriate assertiveness. Students learn self-control and how the world works in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the student's struggle toward independence. Students are accepted as they are — development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, its own challenges and needs. Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behavior and modeling, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways.

#### **In our approach:**

- Expectations are limited to what is realistic for the developmental level of the student, and they are clarified for students so they understand what is expected of them.
- A “yes” environment is created, which enhances and encourages student's positive behavior.
- Teachers model appropriate behavior.
- Teachers encourage student's efforts to build feelings of self-worth.
- Students are given alternatives, which enable them to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower students to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving are encouraged.

#### **The following methods of discipline are prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or physically indicating disapproval.

- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a student is a “bad” girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Retaliating or doing to the student what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

## Anti-Bullying

### Introduction

Bullying is unwanted **negative behavior** by a student or group of students, with the intention of causing harm, involving an observed or perceived power imbalance. These behaviors occur between peers and are **repeated**. **Bullying can be done one-to-one or by a group**. Bullying is often considered part of growing up, but bullying can be damaging and result in a life-long diminish in a person’s quality of life as bullying may lead to very serious outcomes including death. The bullied child may isolate himself/herself, lose confidence, disassociate with friends, and lose interest in school. It is important to eliminate bullying in schools.

A bullying incident, including cyber bullying, will be treated as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

There may be occasions when a student’s behavior warrants a response under the school’s child protection procedures rather than the school’s disciplinary procedures.

When incidents of bullying are made aware of, the school will internally investigate the situation.

SAIS-Dubai promotes a safe environment with zero tolerance for acts of bullying. The \*Designated Safeguarding Committee (DSC) provides educational initiatives promoting positive behaviors and interactions. When instances of bullying occur, the DSC will utilize appropriate interventions with the possibility of developing behavior plans for students involved. In some cases, students will receive counseling and parents will be notified. Such intervention will involve continued monitoring to eliminate reoccurrence.

### Types of Bullying

**Verbal Bullying:** threatening to cause harm, name calling, Teasing, harsh criticism, spreading rumours, taunting.

**Social Bullying:** refusing social interaction, rude hand gestures, social isolation, leaving someone out.

**Physical Bullying:** hitting, tripping/pushing, throwing or taking someone’s belongings.

**Cyber bullying:** Using digital devices and online tools such as social media to insult or threaten, blackmail, damage the reputation of someone.

### Players

### Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders

**Bullying involves multiple players. Bullies, victims, and bystanders all play important roles in contributing to bullying—and each can help make bullying stop. Since bullying is primarily learned, it can also be “unlearned”—or conditions can be changed so that it is not learned in the first place.**

**Bullies . . . select and systematically train their victims to comply with their demands.** They seek active encouragement, passive acceptance, or silence from bystanders. **But**, bullies can be stopped when victims and bystanders learn and apply new ways to stand up against bullying. Bullies can also learn how to make friends and get what they want by helping, rather than hurting, others.

**Victims . . . reward the bully by yielding control and showing signs of intimidation.** They often fail to gain support from bystanders and avoid reporting the bullying. **But**, victims can learn to defeat the bully by responding assertively, rallying support from bystanders, or reporting the bullying to adults.

**Bystanders . . . play an important and pivotal role in promoting or preventing bullying.** Often without realizing it, they may exacerbate a situation by providing an audience, maintaining silence, actively encouraging, or joining in. **But**, bystanders can neutralize or stop the bullying by aiding the victim, drawing support from other bystanders, or obtaining help from adults.

#### **School Support - How does SAIS-Dubai Support Students?**

Effective bullying prevention starts with changing the beliefs and behaviors of individuals, and learning effective bullying prevention strategies. But lasting change requires the creation of an environment where *everyone* understands that bullying is unacceptable, harmful, and preventable—and where everyone takes responsibility for stopping it.

**Strategies** present a stepwise approach to engaging staff and children in bullying prevention, ensuring consistency of messages, and creating an environment where all children feel safe.

**Messages** provide a set of statements to use as a starting point for talking with children about bullying prevention.

SAIS-Dubai Administration recognizes the importance of supporting students, academically, emotionally, and spiritually. The Administration supports the implementation of effective child protection practices and creates a child-safe organization.

**Prevention** offers concrete suggestions for helping children differentiate between acceptable and harmful behaviors and builds the skills necessary for effective bullying prevention.

**Intervention** offers strategies for responding effectively when an incident occurs—things to do and say to stop the incident and ensure that the children involved are safe.

**Follow-up** offers guidance on what to do after the incident. It includes separate guidance for addressing the needs of the bully, victim, and bystander.

**Talking with children** offers specific language you can use when talking about bullying.

SAIS's Student Support Services (SSS) also consists of Counsellors / Social Workers who assist with the care and protection of students.

- **Provide advice on the Child Protection Policy as it applies to individual cases**
- **Provide advice on mandatory reporting of child abuse**
- **Provide Child Protection Training Sessions for all Staff**
- **Provide intervention plans to students**
- **Empower Students and Parents through awareness** it is the duty and responsibility of all SAIS staff to be role models and exemplify appropriate behaviors and interactions. SAIS empowers students by utilizing an integrated dual curriculum which enables students to build emotional character traits including confidence and independence. Daily focus is placed on student personal development. Through education, students become empowered to make better choices, understand their rights, and become productive members of a global society.

SAIS-Dubai will provide **parental awareness** on various topics throughout the year.

### **\*The Designated Safeguarding Committee (DSC)**

#### **Members**

The DSC will consist of students and staff members (Homeroom Teacher, Hallway Supervisor, Counselor, Head of School and the Vice Principal).

The student members need to show responsibility, integrity and maturity. They have to set an example to other students on how to act, therefore they must be aware of their own words and actions as they are representing the school at all times.

#### **Policies and Responsibilities**

The DSC will be known throughout the school and have a designated area where they can gather and do work which will also act as a safe environment for other students to go to in case they need the assistance of one of the members.

They will be given training by the Counselors / Social Workers on how to respond to reports of bullying, how to act if they witness any bullying and when to ask for intervention on a certain case.

#### **Hero Points**

When KG students succeed in showing that they can demonstrate positive behavior and community guidelines, they will receive a HERO point from a staff member. Points are given on a small ticket that indicates the school value the student has displayed. (Respect, Independent Learner, Responsible and Safe, Active Member in the Community)

Teachers will help the students keep track of their HERO points so they can be redeemed for Awarding Certificates or prizes at our Hero Point Store!

#### **Redeeming the Points**

Students can redeem points at any time during the school year; points cannot be transferred to another academic year. Points are redeemed at the bookstore weekly or monthly if applicable with the teacher or teacher assistant.

## Parent Complaints Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set clear guidelines and flowchart to ensure that parent' concerns and complaints are dealt with in a professional and systematic approach that reflects an effective distributed leadership structure.

Students and/or their guardians are expected to follow the steps below in case of raising any concerns or complaints

1) Students and/or their guardians can communicate with the hallway supervisor in case of any concern that involves academic, pastoral care, health and safety, or support.

Hallway supervisor will document the reported complaints/concerns; start an investigation process, contact with concerned staff member(s) and reply to students/guardians within two working days. Should the concern not be resolved; students/guardians can take their concerns to the line manager (step 2).

2) Students and/or their guardians can communicate with the Director of Early Years, in case of any unresolved concerns or complaints which have already been discussed with the hallway supervisor and the feedback was found to be unacceptable by parents/guardians, the Director of Early Years will follow up and address the concerns/complaints, communicate with concerned staff members and respond back to the parents/guardians within two working days. Should the step (2) process not provide practical resolution(s), parents/guardians can go to step (3).

3) +Students and/or their guardians can communicate to the Vice Principal in case there is any concern that involves pastoral care, health and safety, or Student Support.

If the problem is not resolved, students and/or their guardians can go to step (4).

4) Students and/or their guardians can communicate to the Principal if their complaint is not addressed.

**Parents are NOT allowed to directly communicate/ contact teachers without arranging a meeting in the presence of the hallway Supervisor, the Director of Early Years or any Senior Leader.**

