
Middle Years Programme: Handbook of Studies

This booklet provides an outline and explanation of the SSIS Middle Years Programme. It also provides specific information about the courses we offer, how grades are calculated as well as a guide to the final MYP personal project. Programs in Grades 6 to 10 are offered with our mission, vision and promise as a guide to providing an excellent education and experience for our students.

MISSION

To provide an excellent international education to the children of expatriate families.

VISION

Encourage and enable students to be self-motivated, lifelong learners, who value other cultures and are responsible, meaningful participants in the international community.

PROMISE

To create students who thrive with high expectations for continual growth, the capacity to excel in a 21st Century global community, accepting themselves, showing compassion for others and welcoming all of the opportunities presented by a diverse world.

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programme of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning is sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2007

Introduction to The Middle Years Programme (MYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB)

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB) is a course of study for students aged between 11 and 16 years; Grades 6–10 at SSIS.

The Middle Years Programme is designed to prepare young people for the changing demands of life in the twenty-first century. MYP students are at an age when they are making the transition from early puberty to mid-adolescence: this is a crucial period of personal, social, physical and intellectual development, of uncertainty and of questioning. The MYP aims to help students to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. This means teaching them to become independent learners who can recognize relationships between school subjects and the world outside, and learn to combine relevant knowledge, experience and critical thinking to solve authentic problems.

The eight subject groups provide a broad, traditional foundation of knowledge, while the teaching activities and strategies used aim to increase the students' awareness of the relationships between the subjects. Students are encouraged to question and evaluate information critically, to seek out and explore the links between subjects, and to develop an awareness of their own place in the world.

The eight subject groups in the MYP are linked through Global Contexts. These Global Contexts provide a framework for making connections within the subjects and between the subjects and the world outside the classroom. The Global Contexts are:

- Identities and Relationships
- Orientation in Space and Time
- Globalization and Sustainability
- Personal and Cultural Expression
- Scientific and Technical Innovation
- Fairness and Development



Overview of MYP Subjects

Subject Groups	Periods per Week per Grade		Subjects	Notes
	6, 7 & 8	9 & 10		
English	4		English (all levels) *Chinese (all levels)	<i>English and Chinese will continue to be offered at multiple levels tailored to students needs for grades 6-10</i>
World Languages	4		German (native) Japanese (native) Korean (native) *French (beginners)	
Humanities	4		Humanities	
Sciences	4		Science	
Mathematics	4		Mathematics	
Physical and Health Education	2		Physical and Health Education	
Arts / Performing, Visual	2 2	4	Drama Music Visual Arts	<i>Grades 6 to 8: the arts are offered on a rotation each year.</i> <i>Grades 9 & 10: students choose one art from Drama, Music and Visual Arts.</i>
Design / 3rd Language	2		Design	<i>Grade 9 & 10: students can choose from Food-, Digital- and Material Design.</i>
Guided Learning	2			
Total	30			

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) in Grades 6 to 10

Sample Timetable for grades 6-8

Grades 6-8

Time		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20 – 8:30		HR	HR	HR	HR	HR
8:30 – 9:25	1 st Period	PowerSchool per. 1	PowerSchool per. 13	PowerSchool per. 12	PowerSchool per. 7	PowerSchool per. 6
	Grade/Class Room	English	Visual Arts	Maths	Design	Individuals and Soc.
9:25 – 10:20	2 nd Period	PowerSchool per. 3	PowerSchool per. 2	PowerSchool per. 14	PowerSchool per. 9	PowerSchool per. 8
	Grade/Class Room	Chinese	English	Music/ Drama	Science	PHE
10:20 – 10:45	Break #1					
10:45 – 11:40	3 rd Period	PowerSchool per. 5	PowerSchool per. 4	PowerSchool per. 15	PowerSchool per. 11	PowerSchool per. 16
	Grade/Class Room	Individuals and Soc.	Chinese	Homeroom	Maths	Homeroom
11:40 – 12:40	4 th Period	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:40 – 13:40	5 th Period	PowerSchool per. 7	PowerSchool per. 6	PowerSchool per. 1	PowerSchool per. 13	PowerSchool per. 10
	Grade/Class Room	Design	Individuals and Soc.	English	Visual Arts	Science
13:40 – 14:35	6 th Period	PowerSchool per. 9	PowerSchool per. 8	PowerSchool per. 3	PowerSchool per. 2	PowerSchool per. 12
	Grade/Class Room	Science	PHE	Chinese	English	Maths
14:35 – 15:30	7 th Period	PowerSchool per. 11	PowerSchool per. 10	PowerSchool per. 5	PowerSchool per. 4	PowerSchool per. 14
	Grade/Class Room	Maths	Science	Individuals and Soc.	Chinese	Music/ Drama

Sample Timetable for Grades 9 and 10

Grades 9-10

Time		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20 – 8:30		HR	HR	HR	HR	HR
8:30 – 9:25	1 st Period	PowerSchool per. 1	PowerSchool per. 13	PowerSchool per. 12	PowerSchool per. 7	PowerSchool per. 6
	Grade/Class Room	English	Visual Arts	Maths	Design	Individuals and Soc.
9:25 – 10:20	2 nd Period	PowerSchool per. 3	PowerSchool per. 2	PowerSchool per. 14	PowerSchool per. 9	PowerSchool per. 8
	Grade/Class Room	Chinese	English	Music/ Drama	Science	PHE
10:20 – 10:45	Break #1					
10:45 – 11:40	3 rd Period	PowerSchool per. 5	PowerSchool per. 4	PowerSchool per. 15	PowerSchool per. 11	PowerSchool per. 16
	Grade/Class Room	Individuals and Soc.	Chinese	Homeroom	Maths	Homeroom
11:40 – 12:40	4 th Period	PowerSchool per. 7	PowerSchool per. 6	PowerSchool per. 1	PowerSchool per. 13	PowerSchool per. 10
	Grade/Class Room	Design	Individuals and Soc.	English	Visual Arts	Science
12:40 – 13:40	5 th Period	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13:40 – 14:35	6 th Period	PowerSchool per. 9	PowerSchool per. 8	PowerSchool per. 3	PowerSchool per. 2	PowerSchool per. 12
	Grade/Class Room	Science	PHE	Chinese	English	Maths
14:35 – 15:30	7 th Period	PowerSchool per. 11	PowerSchool per. 10	PowerSchool per. 5	PowerSchool per. 4	PowerSchool per. 14
	Grade/Class Room	Maths	Science	Individuals and Soc.	Chinese	Music/ Drama

Teaching in the Middle Years Programme

Inquiry-based - provoking curiosity in order to structure and sustain exploration

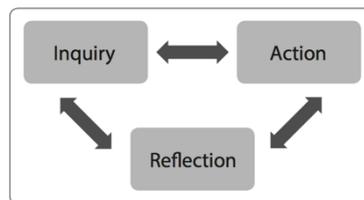
Concept-driven - planning and teaching through concepts that are transferable to new contexts

Collaborative - promoting effective teamwork and purposeful/productive collaboration

Differentiated - providing access to learning for a diversity of learners

Inquiry is a central idea in IB approaches to teaching. Inquiry, interpreted in the broadest sense, is the process initiated by students or the teacher that moves students from their current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding. (From Principles into Practice, 2014)

This statement conceals, perhaps, the most significant way in which teaching and learning in MYP differs from the educational experience of parents and teachers. IB programmes recognize and value students' efforts to make meaning when exploring the world around them. To support this, the MYP requires teachers to provide learning experiences that draw on students' prior knowledge and provide the time and opportunity for reflection.



This is supported in the MYP by the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills and attitudes in context. We believe this is the way in which students learn best; they should be invited to investigate personally and globally significant issues by:

- Formulating their own questions
- Designing their own inquiries
- Assessing the various methods available to support their inquiries
- Proceeding with research, experimentation, observation and analysis that will help them find their own responses to the issues.

The goal is making sense of the world by building connections between understanding students already have and new information and experience, taken from the inquiry into new content. But not all approaches to teaching in the MYP will take place in an inquiry setting. The MYP promotes balance and a meaningful choice in teaching strategies that can include lectures, demonstrations, memorization and individual practice.

However, in all IB programmes, the inquiry cycle is used in a number of ways. Teaching and learning through inquiry helps students to grow in their capacity to:

- Make connections between previous learning and current learning
- Make predictions and take action to see what happens
- Experiment and play with various possibilities
- Make and test theories
- Collect data and report findings

- Clarify existing ideas and reappraise perceptions of events
- Deepen their understanding through the application of a concept
- Research and seek information
- Take and defend a position
- Solve problems in a variety of ways

Approaches to Learning (ATL)

The focus of ATL in the MYP is on helping students to develop the self-knowledge and skills they need to enjoy a lifetime of learning. ATL skills empower students to succeed in meeting the challenging objectives of MYP subject groups and prepare them for further success. (From Principles into Practice, 2014)

Considered in total and at the highest level, ATL skills are the skills of the self-regulated, intrinsically motivated learner. ATL skills are informed by, and support the development of, the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. Over time, students should develop understandings of how they learn best and how they can evaluate the effectiveness of their learning.

This kind of self-regulated learning helps students:

- Reflect purposefully on their learning
- Understand the diversity of human learning needs
- Evaluate and provide evidence of their learning
- Share responsibility for creating productive, cooperative and safe learning environments
- Develop the confidence to try new strategies and explore new concepts
- Prepare for further study and responsible participation in local and global communities

ATL Skill Categories	MYP ATL Skill Clusters
Communication	Communication
Social	Collaboration
Self-Management	Organization Affective Reflection
Research	Information literacy Media literacy
Thinking	Critical thinking Creative thinking Transfer

Understanding the MYP Assessment

The MYP offers a criterion-related model of assessment. This very simple statement conceals, perhaps, the most significant way in which the MYP differs from the educational experience of parents and teachers. For the vast majority of adults, our qualifications were gained after studying courses for two or more years and then completing the relevant examinations in a few tough weeks; after which we were rewarded with a percentage score, an A to E grade or something similar. Because we are familiar with this test and grade system we are inclined to feel comfortable with it and often prefer to see our children's grades presented in this way. Quite simply, we understand it. It is, most likely, what was done to us.

But think again! How would you feel about driving in a country where there was only a written exam required to drive a car? In many countries, there are practical and written tests. In the practical test, you are required to safely demonstrate a range of skills, e.g. left turn, right turn, reversing, parking etc. For each of these skills there is a sequence of actions that you have to perform to a given standard that are recorded on the examiners checklist. This checklist is the assessment criterion for that particular skill. As a further illustration, what factors do you consider when choosing one of the thousands of restaurants to eat at in Suzhou? Standards of hygiene, quality of food, efficiency of service, cost and atmosphere may be amongst your considerations. These factors amount to a criterion-referenced model for selecting a restaurant. The important point is that final written exams are not the only way to assess achievement or mastery of a skill; in practice, exams are often not the best method.

Some of the key features of MYP assessment are listed below:

1. Each of the eight MYP subject areas has different assessment criteria. These criteria have been designed to assess the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes required for success in each subject area.
2. Teachers organise continuous assessment over the duration of the programme. This provides students with ongoing feedback about progress and highlights how performance can be improved.
3. The MYP criteria require teachers to develop a range of different assessment methods. We know that students learn in different ways and this gives students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate different strengths. For example, some students have excellent verbal presentation skills but find it more difficult to express themselves in writing.
4. Each criterion is assessed more than once, giving students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. This gives a better overall indication of performance and balances an occasional poor result or off-day.
5. Examinations and end of unit tests are regularly used but are afforded the same status as other methods of assessment.

In each academic year, we report on all students' achievements through parent-teacher meetings and at the end of each semester by issuing a detailed report that will give a grade for criteria in each subject. These grades are collected by the process of continuous assessment, although, there are formal end of year examinations in appropriate subjects near the end of semester 2.

If you would like more information about the MYP, you might like to look at the IB official web site at the following address: www.ibo.org.

MYP Effort Grade Descriptors

Students' effort grades are reported on a 1 to 7 scale for every report.

Grade	Descriptor
1 Very Poor	The student had minimal achievement in terms of the objectives.
2 Poor	The student rarely completed homework on time, and paid little attention to set requirements. The student rarely asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities even when requested by the teacher . The student rarely came to class with all necessary items.
3 Mediocre	The student sometimes completed homework on time, and paid some attention to set requirements. The student occasionally asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities when requested by the teacher . The student sometimes came to class with all necessary items.
4 Satisfactory	The student usually completed homework on time, and with attention to set requirements. The student sometimes asked appropriate questions or contributed to class activities of their own initiative . The student usually came to class with all necessary items.
5 Good	The student almost always completed homework on time, and with good attention to set requirements. The student regularly asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities of their own initiative . The student almost always came to class with all necessary items.
6 Very Good	The student sometimes did work in addition to class requirements, and engaged in extra activities to further their understanding of the subject. The student always completed homework on time, and with full attention to set requirements. The student frequently asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities of their own initiative . The student always came to class with all necessary items.
7 Excellent	The student regularly did work in addition to class requirements, and engaged in extra activities to further their understanding of the subject. The student always completed homework on time, and with full attention to set requirements. The student frequently asked appropriate questions and contributed to class activities of their own initiative . The student always came to class with all necessary items.

IB MYP General Grade Descriptors and Attainment Grades

Students' grades are reported on a 1 to 7 scale. The general MYP grade descriptors indicate the achievement required for the award of each subject grade.

Grade	Boundary	Descriptor
Grade 1	1 - 5	<p>Produces work of very limited quality.</p> <p>Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts.</p> <p>Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking.</p> <p>Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.</p>
Grade 2	6 - 9	<p>Produces work of limited quality.</p> <p>Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts.</p> <p>Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking.</p> <p>Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.</p>
Grade 3	10 - 14	<p>Produces work of an acceptable quality.</p> <p>Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps.</p> <p>Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking.</p> <p>Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.</p>
Grade 4	15 - 18	<p>Produces good-quality work.</p> <p>Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps.</p> <p>Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking.</p> <p>Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.</p>
Grade 5	19 - 23	<p>Produces generally high-quality work.</p> <p>Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts.</p> <p>Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication.</p> <p>Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.</p>
Grade 6	24 - 27	<p>Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work.</p> <p>Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts.</p> <p>Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication.</p> <p>Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.</p>
Grade 7	28 - 32	<p>Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work.</p> <p>Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts.</p> <p>Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking.</p> <p>Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.</p>

Example of MYP Criterion-related Assessment

Students are graded using four criteria for each subject. Each criterion is weighted equally and indicates a level of achievement from 0 to 8.

Here is criterion A for Humanities in Grade 6:

Criterion A: Knowing and Understanding	
0	Student does not achieve a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognizes some vocabulary ● demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through limited descriptions and/or examples.
3 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses some vocabulary ● demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through simple descriptions, explanations and/or examples.
5 - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uses considerable relevant vocabulary, often accurately ● demonstrates substantial knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through descriptions, explanations and examples.
7 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● consistently uses relevant vocabulary accurately ● demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through detailed descriptions, explanations and examples.

In addition to this, all subjects will be assessed with a further three criteria (B, C, D). These are specific to each individual subject and focus on skills rather than content. The requirements to achieve each level increases throughout grades 6-10.

These criteria are shared with all students whenever an assessment is assigned, and teachers explicitly teach what is required from the students. Teachers may provide additional information about what is needed through task-specific criteria. This indicates specifically what the students are required to do for that specific task.

Example of Teacher Gradebook

Students are graded for four criteria for each subject. Here is an example of how a teacher grade book might look at the end of the school year:

PowerTeacher Pro Assignments

Due Date	Category	Assignment	Flags	Score
02/09/2018	Test	U3: Algebra Test	⬅	6/8
12/11/2017	Test	U2: Fractions Decimals and Percentages Test (A)	⬅	5/8
11/20/2017	Project	U2: Fractions Pattern Activity (B)	⬅	8/8
09/25/2017	Test	U1: Statistics Test	⬅	4/8
09/11/2017	Project	U1: Data Analysis Activity C	⬅	4/8
09/11/2017	Investigation	U1: Data Analysis Activity D	⬅	4/8

Grades last updated on: 3/8/2018

The example above shows some of the MYP assessment principles:

- An assessment task may cover 1 or more criteria
- Teachers will use a variation of assessment types
- Teachers will decide the overall level of achievement of a criterion based on assessment tasks
- Teachers do not determine grades by averaging scores, nor do they use fractions
- The attainment grade is determined using the boundary table
- The Semester 1 grade is the interim level of achievement of a student at that moment in time, whereas the end of Semester 2 grade is the final level for the whole year.

Understanding Academic Honesty

At an IB school, Academic Honesty is an important part of being a principled learner. Misconduct may have serious consequences. Misconduct includes:

- **Plagiarism** - the representation, intentionally or unwittingly, of the ideas, words or work of another person without proper, clear and explicit acknowledgment
- **Collusion** - supporting academic misconduct by another student, as in allowing one's work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another
- **Duplication of work** - the presentation of the same work for different assessment components
- Any other behavior that gives an **unfair advantage** to a student or that affects the results of another student (falsifying data, misconduct during an examination, creating spurious reflections).

Interdisciplinary Learning

Introduction

In each year of the programme, students engage in at least one interdisciplinary learning opportunity. This is a chance for students to integrate the global contexts to explore the key concepts from the perspective of two different disciplines. This kind of learning encourages broader perspectives on complex issues, and encourages deeper levels of analysis and synthesis.

Aims

The aims of the teaching and study of MYP interdisciplinary units are to encourage students to:

- develop a deeper understanding of learning skills and apply them in meaningful contexts
- integrate conceptual learning, ways of knowing, and methods of inquiring from multiple disciplines
- inquire into compelling issues, ideas and challenges by creating products or explaining phenomena
- reflect on and communicate understanding of the interdisciplinary learning process
- experience the excitement of intellectual discovery—including insights into how disciplines
- complement and challenge one another.

Assessment Criteria. Interdisciplinary Units are assessed following **three** criteria.

A: Evaluating

In order to address real-world and contextual issues and ideas, students will be able to:

- analyze disciplinary knowledge
- evaluate interdisciplinary perspectives.

B: Synthesizing

In order to address real-world and contextual issues and ideas, students will be able to:

- create a product that communicates a purposeful interdisciplinary understanding
- justify how their product communicates interdisciplinary understanding.

C: Reflecting

In order to address real-world and contextual issues and ideas, students will be able to:

- discuss the development of their own interdisciplinary learning
- discuss how new interdisciplinary understanding enables action.

Actions for Service Projects

Introduction

Students will meet Action for Service in every subject they study, as well as outside the classroom in the projects and after-school activities they will participate in each year. Through these activities students will identify what communities they belong to and how they can make a positive contribution. They will also be encouraged to consider how other communities live, and think about how we can all live together. It is hoped that increased awareness of community needs will lead to responsible social involvement. The key question that all students need to address is: "How can I make a difference in the communities in which I live?"

Extracurricular and Classroom Activities

To successfully complete each year in the MYP students at SSIS are required to take part in service activities individually and in groups. There are many ways this can be done, both inside and outside the classroom. The emphasis in all grades will be on encouraging students' participation in quality service projects.

Action for service projects must involve these essential elements:

1. Investigation
2. Preparation and Planning
3. Action
4. Reflection
5. Demonstration and/or Celebration

Service requires that students are able to build connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in the community. When connected to classroom learning, the experience of service offers opportunities to apply concepts, both skills and knowledge, as students explore the community in its complexity, gain personal insight, develop existing and new skills, and grow in confidence and responsibility as they become "actors" in the "real world" beyond school.

MYP Learning Outcomes for Service

Fulfillment of the school's expectations for participation in Action for Service is a requirement of every year in the MYP and of the IB MYP Certificate. With appropriate guidance and support, MYP students should, through their engagement with service as action:

- **Become** more aware of their own strengths and areas for growth
- **Undertake** challenges that develop new skills
- **Discuss**, evaluate and plan student-initiated activities
- **Persevere** in action
- **Work** collaboratively with others
- **Consider** the ethical implications of their actions.
- **Develop** international-mindedness through global engagement, multilingualism and intercultural understanding.

Understanding the Personal Project

Introduction

The Middle Years Programme is designed to prepare young people for the changing demands of life in the twenty-first century. The MYP aims to help students to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. This means teaching them to become independent learners who can recognize relationships between school subjects and the world outside, and learn to combine relevant knowledge, experience and critical thinking to solve authentic problems.

In the context of the MYP aims, the personal project holds a very important place. It is a significant piece of work produced during the final year, which provides an excellent opportunity for students to demonstrate their personal interests, and the independent learning skills they have developed. The student needs to choose carefully the type and goal of their project in terms of the skills and techniques that are required to complete it successfully.

Approaches to Learning

The personal project is a chance to do what the student wants to do. It is a product of their own initiative and should reflect their experience of the MYP. It provides an excellent opportunity to produce a truly creative piece of work of individual choice, to demonstrate the skills they have developed in Approaches to Learning and to show an understanding of disciplinary understanding.

Aims

The aims of the personal project are to allow you to:

- Participate in a sustained, self-directed inquiry within a global context
- Generate creative new insights and develop deeper understandings through in-depth investigation
- Demonstrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge required to complete a project over an extended period of time
- Communicate effectively in a variety of situations
- Demonstrate responsible action through, or as a result of, learning
- Appreciate the process of learning and take pride in your accomplishments.

Personal Project - Assessment

The Personal Project is assessed using three criteria. It is important to recognize that the quality of the final product is considered less important than the skills and processes of planning, research, application, analysis, organization and engagement. This is consistent with the MYP aim of giving students appropriate opportunities to learn to combine relevant knowledge, experience and critical thinking to solve authentic problems.

The assessment criteria are listed below in table 1. You will notice that there is not a criterion that focuses only on the quality of the product. More detailed information about the criteria and their application is available in the student guide.

Criteria		
A	Planning	0 - 8
B	Applying Skills	0 - 8
C	Reflecting	0 - 8

Table 1: Personal Project criteria

Personal Project

As shown in the table above, each project is awarded a level on a 0 to 8 scale for each criterion.

SSIS MYP Certificate

After successful completion of the MYP and Personal Project, students are awarded an SSIS MYP Certificate.

The Award of the High School Diploma

Students must achieve a minimum of 24 credits from subject courses undertaken in Grades 9 to 12.

Credit is awarded to a subject achieving a subject score of 3 or above (out of 7) for 2 semesters of a subject in a given year e.g. a student achieving a score of 4 in English for Semester 1 and Semester 2 for Grade 10 English will achieve a credit. Alternatively, credit may be given if a student achieves a score of 3 or above for any two semesters of a particular subject course e.g. a student who achieved a score of 2 in Grade 11, Semester 1 for Mathematics but subsequently achieves a score of 3 for Grade 11, Semester 2 and a score of 5 for Grade 12, Semester 1, will be awarded credit.

Students must have a minimum of 80% attendance in order to receive an SSIS High School Diploma, unless a special circumstance prevent this from being achieved, under which the student would then apply for special consideration e.g. for documented medical cases.

There are three distinct pathways to earning the HSD diploma. The first pathway is for students attending SSIS in Grades 9-12, the second for students entering SSIS in Grade 10 or 11 and the third for students with documented Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Students Attending SSIS in Grades 9 to 12

Students attending SSIS in Grades 9 to 12 must meet the course requirements outlined below to earn a HSD Diploma.

- First language 4 credits
- Second language 3 credits
- Humanities 3 credits
- Science 3 credits
- Math 3 credits
- Research Project 1 credit
- Electives 7 credits

*Electives include Art, Design, 3rd Language, a second subject from Experimental Sciences or Individuals and Societies

Note: Students at SSIS may achieve more than the minimum 24 credits needed for the Diploma and study in Grades 9 to 12 allows for 26 credits to be available to students, which they are encouraged to achieve for a stronger transcript.

Students Entering SSIS in Grade 10 or 11

The second pathway is intended for students entering SSIS in Grade 10 or 11. Students are required to complete a minimum of 24 credits, which includes credits students bring with them from their previous school(s). The main difference concerns the second language requirement. Students entering SSIS in Grade 10 or 11 are required to complete one language credit, which can be earned at either SSIS or a previous school.

-
- First language 4 credits
 - Second language 1 credit required (2 encouraged for college/university)
 - Humanities 3 credits
 - Science 3 credits
 - Math 3 credits
 - Research Project 1 credit
 - Electives 9 credits

*Electives include Art, Design, 3rd Language, a second subject from Experimental Sciences or Individuals and Societies

Note: Students SSIS may achieve more than the minimum 24 credits needed for the Diploma study, which is dependent of what a student may have studied previously.

Students with Identified and Documented Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Students with identified and documented learning or social disadvantages need to attain 22 credits from G9 – G12 to earn the High School Diploma, but have greater flexibility in earning their credits. Students with an identified SEN are not required to fulfil the Second Language credit, although they are encouraged to consider studying a second language. In lieu of the second language requirement students may receive additional support in achieving their High School Diploma.

- First Language 4 credits
- Second Language Encouraged but not required
- Research Project 1 credit
- Humanities 3 credits
- Science 3 credits
- Math 3 credits
- Electives 8 credits

*Electives include Art, Design, 3rd Language, a second subject from Experimental Sciences or Individuals and Societies

Guided Learning Programme

Throughout the MYP, student agency and well-being is a top priority. As such, there is a comprehensive program that is guided by our Wellbeing Mission Statement: ***"We aim to develop self-aware, healthy and resilient students who actively strive to create a better world through intercultural understanding, respect and compassion."***

The Secondary Assistant Principal (Pastoral) works with the Heads of Grade, homeroom teachers and social emotional counsellors to ensure a safe, but challenging, learning environment where the Head of Grade and Homeroom teachers advise, guide and encourage the students in their care.

The pastoral programme consists of a 10-minute Homeroom period at the beginning of the day and 2 1-hour periods of Well-Being Programming and Guided Studies time. Students are guided through a series of lessons that challenge them to develop their own wellbeing and that of others, as well as examine and improve on their own learning and study skills. Some of the topics covered include:

- **Growth Mindset** – an area of positive psychology developed by Prof. Carol Dweck that encourages students to change the way they think about challenges in their lives
- **Healthy Relationships** – Using the research-informed *3Rs (Rights, Respect and Responsibility)* program from *Advocates for Youth* to help students make healthy, informed choices about romantic relationships.
- **Study Skills** – developing techniques that improve the quality and efficiency of learning. We believe good study skills can reduce stress.
- **Mindfulness** – A form of meditation that has been found to reduce stress, increase happiness and improve concentration. We use the *Smiling Minds* program because it has age-specific guidance that's relevant to students.
- **Digital Citizenship** – We adapt resources from the excellent *Common-Sense Media* to ensure that students learn how to be a healthy participant in online communities.

If you would like further information about MYP, please contact the MYP Coordinator.
This document is also available in Chinese and Korean. Please email the Admissions Office at admissions@mail.ssis-suzhou.net for a copy.