

The Falcon School



International Baccalaureate
Middle Years Programme

Parents' Handbook

Contents

	Page
The IB Learner Profile	1
What is the MYP?	4
What and how will my child learn?	5
Benefits of the MYP	7
Does the MYP prepare my child for further studies?	9
When and how does the MYP conclude?	10
What is the Personal Project?	11
Assessment in the MYP	12
Approaches to Learning (ATL)	17
Interdisciplinary learning in the MYP	18
Service as Action in the MYP	20

THE IB LEARNER PROFILE

The International Baccalaureate programme aims 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.



I explore ideas and issues that are locally and globally important, to get in-depth knowledge and develop my understanding in many areas.

I develop my natural curiosity and learn the skills I need to inquire. I enjoy learning and love to learn new things.



I think carefully and show initiative. I make good decisions and I'm a problem solver.

I confidently and creatively share my ideas with others in many ways, in more than one language. I listen to and work well with others.



I tell the truth and I'm fair. I respect others, and take responsibility for my actions and their consequences.

I appreciate my own culture and personal history, but I listen to and respect the ideas and thoughts of others. I try to look at things in more than one way.



I show that I care about the needs and feelings of others. I help others and I look after the environment.

I have confidence to be in new situations and try new roles, ideas, and strategies. I stand up for and explain the things I believe in.



I look after my mind and body. I do my best to stay healthy.

I think about my own learning. I know when I've done well, and when I could improve.



THE IB MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP)

What is the MYP?

The Falcon School is a Candidate School* for the Middle Years Programme of the IB. We are pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that we believe is important for our students.

*Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its four academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme, or the Career-related Programme (CP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted. For further information about the IB and its programmes, visit www.ibo.org

The Middle Years Programme is a challenging and exciting educational framework developed by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (the IBO), which is designed to be student-centred while allowing students to develop valuable skills and understandings of big ideas as well as concepts specific to individual academic subjects. Over 1500 schools around the world currently offer the Middle Years Programme, which develops international mindedness and powerful Learner Profile attributes through a varied academic programme and meaningful learning experiences where students are encouraged to become independent lifelong learners with a passion for making the world a better place.

The Middle Years Programme is in alignment with the values of the Falcon School, where we nurture the talents of each individual student, while encouraging them to strive for academic excellence through inquiry and exploration in an inclusive teaching and learning community.

What and how will my child learn?

In the IB Middle Years Programme, students study subjects from 8 key areas:

- Language and Literature
- Language Acquisition
- Individuals and Societies
- Sciences
- Mathematics
- Physical and Health Education
- Design
- Arts

Each of the areas has its own learning objectives for the students in each grade to meet throughout the programme. These objectives are coupled with conceptual and inquiry-based study of a wide range of topics that concern both global matters as well as the students' own personal experiences. Each unit of inquiry is built around key themes and concepts, which the students explore on their own terms while building a solid foundation of factual and procedural knowledge which they will then use to communicate their understanding.

For instance, in the subject Individuals and Societies, which incorporates History and Geography, a teaching unit might look at *Historical Evidence*. One of the *Key Concepts* in Individuals and Societies is *Change*, and two *Related Concepts* for the subject are *Innovation* and *Interpretation*. The MYP teacher creates a *Statement of Inquiry* for the students to explore, which must take into account a *Global Context*, such as *Fairness and Development*. For the unit on *Historical Evidence*, the teacher could decide on the following *Statement of Inquiry*:

Innovative actions often impact human societies and can lead to lasting changes.

The students would then explore, among other topics, “People who changed society” and could individually produce an extended piece of writing in the form of a biographical sketch. This kind of assessment task enables students to identify and analyse a historical accomplishment of a person, by researching information from a range of sources.

A second task for this unit could be producing a presentation on “Inventions—Then and now”. Such an assessment task enables students to communicate and organize key information in the form of an oral presentation with an accompanying PowerPoint.

All subjects in the MYP are organised around units like the above. Teachers plan thoroughly what and how students will learn, and provide opportunities for exploration of a broad range of ideas and topics.

Benefits of the MYP

The MYP, as an enriching and transformational educational experience, offers a number of benefits for a student's overall development and readiness for future challenges.

Holistic Education

- The MYP emphasizes the development of the whole child, focusing not only on academic knowledge but also on social, emotional, and physical well-being. This holistic approach ensures that students grow into well-rounded individuals.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

- Students are encouraged to think critically and independently. They learn how to analyse information, make informed decisions, and approach problems creatively, skills that are essential in the modern world.

Global Awareness

- Through its focus on global contexts and intercultural understanding, the MYP develops a global perspective. As responsible global citizens, students become aware of cultural diversity and global issues.

Interdisciplinary Learning

- The MYP promotes interdisciplinary learning, allowing students to make connections across subjects. This approach enhances their understanding of complex concepts and fosters a more integrated view of knowledge.

Development of Communication Skills

- Students in the MYP are encouraged to express their ideas clearly and confidently in a variety of formats and contexts. This focus on communication skills prepares them for future academic and professional success.

Focus on Lifelong Learning

- The MYP nurtures a love of learning by encouraging curiosity and inquiry. Students are taught to be reflective, setting the foundation for lifelong learning and adaptability in a rapidly changing world.

Service Learning and Social Responsibility

- The MYP integrates Service as Action, encouraging students to engage in Service as Action and social responsibility. This helps them develop empathy, a sense of community, and the desire to make a positive impact on the world.

Preparation for Further Education

- The MYP provides a strong foundation for the Diploma Programme (DP) or other advanced educational paths. Students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to succeed in more challenging academic environments.

Personalized Learning

- The MYP encourages students to explore their personal interests through the Personal Project. They pursue their passions, take ownership of their learning, and develop self-management skills.

Emphasis on Ethical and Moral Development

- The MYP instills a strong sense of ethics and values, helping students to develop integrity, fairness, and respect for others. This ethical grounding is crucial for making responsible decisions in their personal and professional lives.

Does the MYP prepare my child for further studies?

The Middle Years Programme prepares students for the rigours of the IB Diploma Programme. Not only are students equipped with the academic and procedural knowledge necessary to succeed, but they will also develop valuable interdisciplinary skills and understandings which will serve them well in all areas of the Diploma Programme as well as in their future studies beyond their secondary education. University Admissions Tutors speak highly of the desirability of students who have completed an IB education. The research and thinking skills they develop during the programme are an excellent preparation for the kind of academic work undertaken at University level.

In addition, projects such as Service as Action and the Personal Project help to prepare students for the core of the Diploma Programme, as well as equip students with transferable skills that they will be able to use for both work and study when they leave school.

When and how does the Middle Years Programme conclude?

The Middle Years Programme runs from S1 to S5 at the Falcon School. At the end of S5, students sit online eAssessments for subjects such as English, Language Acquisition (Modern Foreign Languages), Sciences, and Mathematics. There are also virtual ePortfolios for subjects such as Arts and Design, which are assessed. All these assessments act as validations of the achievement and progress of the students throughout the MYP. Additionally, in order to complete the programme and receive the final MYP certificate, students complete the compulsory **Personal Project** in the last year of their middle years studies (S5).

What is the Personal Project?

The **Personal Project** is, as indicated by the name, a project that students complete over a period of time, structured around a topic that is of personal interest to them. Over the course of the development of the project, students practise transferable skills and consolidate their learning across different subjects while exploring ideas that matter to them personally.

The outcome of the **Personal Project** should be a tangible product or demonstrate intangible results, and be accompanied by a report that details the outcome of the project and its impact. It must also be accompanied by a complete set of references and evidence of the project's progress.

Students work on this project over the course of their S5 year, starting at the end of S4 with a submission date towards the end of S5. Each student works closely with a supervising teacher over the course of the entire project, while the **Personal Project** coordinator ensures overall quality of the student's work. The final product is evaluated internally by the supervisor, and then submitted to the International Baccalaureate for external moderation. This is the final step towards confirming the student's completion of the project.

The Personal Project is mandatory for all students and a condition for graduation from the Middle Years Programme.

See also the Personal Project Handbook

Assessment in the MYP

The Falcon School views assessment as an ongoing process of gathering, analysing, reflecting and acting on evidence of student learning to inform teaching. We see assessment as how we comprehend what students know, understand, can do, and feel. Assessment is used as a tool to collect, interpret and analyse information about achievements and performance to improve teaching and enhance learning. It is an integral part of teaching and learning; it recognizes achievement and effort, shows progression, and provides sufficient evidence that can be monitored.

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups are summarized in the table below:

	A	B	C	D
Language and Literature	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language Acquisition	Listening (Comprehending spoken and visual text)	Reading (Comprehending written and visual text)	Speaking (Communicating verbally)	Writing (Communicating using written language)
Individuals and Societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
Arts	Knowing and	Developing	Thinking	Responding

	understanding	skills	creatively	
Physical and health education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating

A variety of assessment strategies may be used by teachers to develop suitable and appropriate performances of understanding. Tasks, targeting MYP objectives, are broadly represented by the following list:

- Compositions—musical, physical, artistic
- Creation of solutions or products in response to problems
- Essays
- Examinations
- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Research
- Performances
- Presentations—verbal (oral or written), graphic (through various media)

Each unit of each subject includes **formative** and **summative** assessments that are planned at the beginning of the unit. All essential elements are assessed in the course of a year: knowledge, concepts, skills, service and action.

Formative Assessment

Through effective formative assessment, teachers gather, analyse, interpret and use a variety of evidence to improve student learning and to help students to achieve their potential. Student peer and self-assessment can be important elements of formative assessment plans.

Tools and Strategies for Formative Assessment include: Rubrics, Checklists, Exemplars; Anecdotal Observations, Performance, Process-focused assessment, Selected response (quizzes & tests), Open-ended tasks

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments generally occur at the end of the teaching and learning process. Summative assessment allows students to demonstrate their understandings in actions and demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills. It also allows them to base their learning on real life experiences that can lead to further inquiries. It provides information for parents and teachers on the progress of the student and what has been learned. Internal (school-based) summative assessment is part of every MYP unit. Summative assessments are designed to provide evidence for evaluating student achievement.

MYP Levels of Achievement

The Overall Level of Achievement (OLA) is the end of the year grade out of 7 based on overall performance across all the assessment criteria for a subject. Each criterion is given a mark out of 8. When a teacher has given a mark for each criterion, a student has a mark out of 32 which is then mapped against grade boundaries published by the IB (*See the Falcon School Assessment Policy for a detailed explanation of this process*). Throughout the year, teachers will collect evidence of student achievement from many different types of assessment including formative and summative assessments.

The following table describes what is meant by each of the seven OLA grades:

OLA	MYP General Grade Descriptors
7	Produces high quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
6	Produces high quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts.

	Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
5	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real world situation.
4	Produces generally good quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contest with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
3	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstanding or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
2	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applies knowledge and skills.
1	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

Grade (OLA)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boundaries	1-5	6-9	10-14	15-18	19-23	24-27	28-32

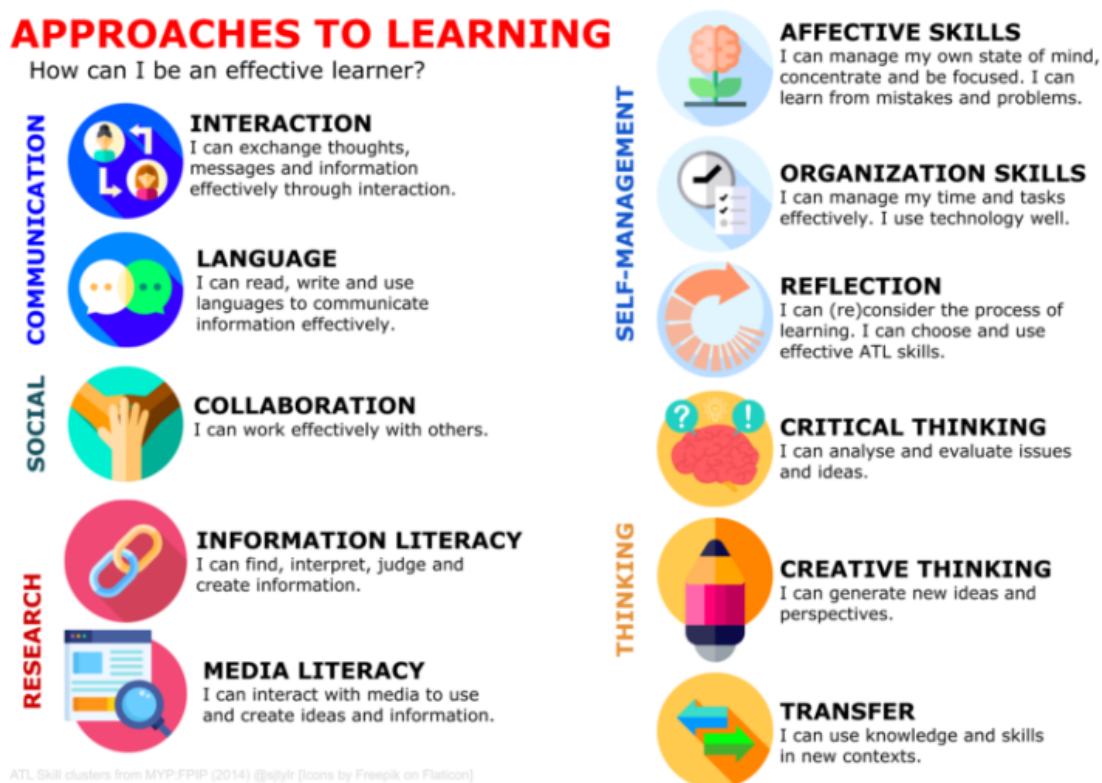
Formal reporting on students' achievement and progress occurs at three points in the school year, in November, February, and June.

See also the Falcon School IB Assessment Policy

Approaches to Learning (ATL)

ATL is the umbrella term used for a range of skills which students develop over the course of the Middle Years Programme. Approaches to learning are specific skills taught explicitly to students as part of each unit in each subject. They are aimed at helping students “**learn how to learn**”, and nurture personal and academic skills which can be used later in life. Students develop these skills through learning experiences in the classroom, and apply them in their work, which allows them and their teachers to evaluate their progress. These skills lie at the heart of the Middle Years programme, and they are taught and developed throughout every subject and activity in the school.

The graphic below lays out the main skills clusters and categories, developed in the Middle Years Programme.



MYP skills clusters and categories

Interdisciplinary learning in the MYP

Interdisciplinary learning is a key component of the MYP, designed to help students make connections across different subject areas and apply their learning to real-world situations. The integration of knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines fosters a deeper understanding of complex concepts and issues. Students begin to think beyond the boundaries of individual subjects and to approach problems and ideas in a more holistic and integrated way. This approach not only enriches their academic experience but also equips them with essential skills for future education and life.

Understanding Interdisciplinary Learning

- **Integration of Subjects:** Interdisciplinary learning involves combining knowledge, skills, and methodologies from two or more subject areas to explore a central theme or solve a complex problem. For example, a project might integrate science and geography to study climate change.
- **Holistic Perspective:** This approach encourages students to view issues from multiple perspectives, understanding how different disciplines interact and contribute to a broader understanding of the world.

Benefits of Interdisciplinary Learning

- **Deeper Understanding:** By connecting different areas of knowledge, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topics they study. They see how concepts in one subject relate to and influence others.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Interdisciplinary learning challenges students to think critically and creatively. They learn to analyse problems from various angles, consider different solutions, and synthesize information across disciplines.
- **Real-World Application:** This approach mirrors the complexity of real-world issues, where problems are rarely confined to a single discipline. Students learn to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways, preparing them for the interconnected challenges of the future.

- **Engagement and Motivation:** Interdisciplinary projects often involve topics that are relevant and interesting to students, increasing their engagement and motivation. When students see the relevance of what they are learning, they are more likely to be invested in their studies.

How teachers organise Interdisciplinary Learning

- **Collaboration:** Teachers from different disciplines work together to design and implement interdisciplinary units, ensuring that the connections between subjects are meaningful and relevant.
- **Facilitation:** Teachers guide students in making connections across disciplines, helping them to see the relevance and applicability of their learning in broader contexts.
- **Support:** Teachers provide the necessary support for students to navigate the challenges of interdisciplinary learning, such as managing multiple perspectives and integrating diverse types of knowledge.
- **Timing:** Every student in the MYP at the Falcon School takes at least one Interdisciplinary Unit each year. Often, there are more opportunities for this approach to learning.

Service as Action in the MYP

Service as Action is a core component of the MYP, emphasizing the importance of community service in the development of students as caring, responsible, and active members of society. It encourages students to take action in response to the needs of their communities, building a sense of social responsibility and empathy.

Importance of Service as Action in the MYP

- **Personal Growth and Development:** Engaging in service to the community helps students develop a wide range of personal and interpersonal skills, including empathy, leadership, and collaboration. It also encourages them to reflect on their values and the impact of their actions.
- **Global Citizenship:** Through service to the community, which starts in School and extends outwards into local, national and international initiatives, students gain a greater awareness of important global issues. They learn to see themselves as part of a larger community and recognize their potential to contribute positively to society.
- **Ethical and Moral Development:** Service activities encourage students to think critically about ethical issues and the consequences of their actions. They learn to make decisions that reflect integrity and fairness, fostering moral and ethical development.
- **Active Engagement:** The MYP aims to cultivate active learners who take initiative in their learning and their communities. Service as Action encourages students to move beyond awareness to meaningful action, promoting active engagement with social and environmental issues.

Examples of Service Activities

Service activities in the MYP can take many forms, ranging from small-scale individual projects to larger, collaborative initiatives.

Environmental Projects

- **Examples:** Organizing community clean-ups, planting trees, creating recycling programs at school, or raising awareness about environmental conservation.
- **Learning Connection:** These activities often link to science, geography, and global contexts like "Globalization and Sustainability."

Social Justice Initiatives

- **Examples:** Volunteering at local shelters, organizing clothing or food drives, creating campaigns for human rights, or advocating for marginalized communities.
- **Learning Connection:** These activities connect to individuals and societies, language and literature, and global contexts like "Fairness and Development."

Health and Wellness Projects

- **Examples:** Running workshops on healthy living, organizing sports events to promote physical activity, or creating mental health awareness programs.
- **Learning Connection:** These activities can tie into physical and health education, science, and global contexts like "Identities and Relationships."

Cultural and Educational Outreach

- **Examples:** Teaching younger students, tutoring peers, organizing cultural exchange programs, or creating educational materials for underserved communities.
- **Learning Connection:** These activities connect to language acquisition, arts, and global contexts like "Personal and Cultural Expression."

Technology and Innovation

- **Examples:** Developing apps or websites to address community needs, teaching digital literacy skills, or creating technological solutions for local problems.

- **Learning Connection:** These activities often link to design, mathematics, and global contexts like "Scientific and Technical Innovation."

Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

- **Examples:** Leading campaigns on issues like bullying, climate change, or animal rights; creating social media content to raise awareness about important issues.
- **Learning Connection:** These activities can connect to various subjects depending on the focus of the campaign, such as language and literature, individuals and societies, or science.

How Parents Can Support Service Learning

Parents and family can play an important role in supporting a student's engagement with service as action. They can help by:

Encouraging Participation

- **Support Your Child's Interests:** Encourage your child to pursue service activities that align with their passions and interests. Help them identify causes they care about and explore how they can contribute.
- **Promote a Positive Attitude:** Talk to your child about the value of service to the community and the importance of giving back. Reinforce the idea that even small actions can make a significant impact.

Providing Resources and Opportunities

- **Identify Opportunities:** Help your child find service opportunities in your community, such as local volunteer organizations, community events, or online platforms that connect volunteers with causes.
- **Offer Practical Support:** Provide transportation, materials, or other resources your child might need to participate in service activities. If possible, participate in service activities together as a family.

Engaging in Reflection

- **Discuss Experiences:** After your child participates in a service activity, engage them in a conversation about their experience. Ask what they learned, how they felt, and how they think they made a difference.
- **Encourage Reflection:** Help your child reflect on how their service activities connect to their academic learning and personal growth. Encourage them to think about what they might do differently in the future.

See also the Service as Action Handbook