

Welcome to



Vasa International School of Stockholm

ANNO 1998



Parent Handbook

Below you can find some useful information on our school, our routines and policies, as well as the Primary Years Programme. You can also visit our website:

<https://www.vasainternationalschoolofstockholm.com/en-GB>

Our mission statement

Vasa International School of Stockholm is a small, friendly, multicultural IB World school that strives to foster a challenging, internationally- minded and inclusive environment for its students.

Our vision is to acknowledge every student's potential and build upon their strengths and interests in learning. We aim to be caring and inspiring teachers, ambitious and principled students, and informed and engaged parents.

Our mission is to stimulate student voice, choice and curiosity through inquiry and encourage respectful relationships between all members of the school. As a community, we constantly seek to empower all students to express themselves individually and collaboratively, preparing them for the challenges of the future and encouraging them to become lifelong learners and active global citizens.

Our philosophy

As an IB World school, we are committed to the IB vision for the creation of a collaborative, diverse community united by a mission to make the world a better place through meaningful education.

At Vasa International School of Stockholm, we promote and develop the learning of different languages and the understanding of different cultures. Our students, their families and our staff are internationally minded and as a community we embrace and promote all of those different identities and cultures.

By aiming to instill the IB values into the hearts of all community members we encourage our students, teachers and parents to embrace the Learner Profile attributes and become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, courageous, balanced and reflective.

As a school, we promote collaboration, encourage learners to have an active role in their learning and we inspire each other to ask questions and learn through mindful inquiry.

We also value reflection as a means to deepen our understanding and to improve teaching and learning. As an IB school, we recognize the importance of taking action as a means of connecting our learning to real-life situations and as a means to improve ourselves and the world around us.

The IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable 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 programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

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

Welcome to Vasa International School of Stockholm!



We are truly happy that you have chosen to put your child's education in our hands. It is our goal as an IB school to present all students with significant, engaging, relevant and challenging learning experiences. We strive to ensure that all children feel safe and develop as much as possible. This handbook aims to give you a better idea of the school regarding routines, administration and the teaching and learning that takes place here.

Vasa International houses approximately 470 students and more than 60 staff members. We have 21 classes from preIB to MYP4 (Swedish grade 9). We are a certified **IB World School** that offers the PYP (Primary Years Programme). Our school also received authorization to run the MYP (Middle Years Programme) in October 2017.

Our school offers two streams;

- The **Bilingual Primary Year Programme**, which follows the IB PYP framework with the content of the Swedish curriculum LGR11. The language of instruction for these classes are both in Swedish and in English.
- The **International English Primary Year Programme**, which follows the IB PYP curriculum and the language of instruction is English.

The school was founded in 1998 by Mrs. Anette Parts and Mrs. Rita Ahonen, members of the school Board. The school does not have any particular political or religious affiliation, and is regulated by the Swedish National Agency for Education. The Principal of the school is Mrs. Anna-Karin Backman.



Contact information

School Leadership

Head of school / Principal: Anna-Karin Backman
annakarin.backman@vasaintschool.se



PYP Coordinator and PYP Vice-Principal: Maria Angelidou
maria.angelidou@vasaintschool.se



MYP Coordinator and MYP Vice-Principal: Katarina Dybeck
(Katarina will join our school October 15th, 2021)
annakarin.backman@vasaintschool.se



After School Care (Fritids) Coordinator: Melissa Brice
melissa.brice@vasaintschool.se



All other staff may be contacted via *first name.surname@vasaintschool.se*

PYP Class Mentors 2020/2021

PreIB: Malgorzata (Maggie) Awad and Kamil Szmerdt

PYP1a: Aimila Karmi

PYP2a: Johan Gimenez

PYP1b: Sonia Phal Dessai

PYP2b: Sara Hamwi (Ashley McQuoid on maternity leave)

PYP3a: Louise Rydén

PYP4a: Anders Karlström

PYP3b: Jason McDonald

PYP4b: Marc Nelissen (substituting for Natalie Tegidius)

PYP5a: Anna Kraus

PYP6a: Anna Lindell

PYP5b: Zoi Galanopoulou

PYP6b: Simeon Vasilev

Physical Education: Malwina Grudziecki

Swedish as an additional Language: Gia Falk Jensen

Music & Arts (PYP4-6): Ronnie Friend and Patrick McIlroy

Note: The class assistants will be announced at the beginning of the term.

Other staff connected to PYP:

School librarian: Robin Drozdowski

School nurse: Ulrika Frygnell

School counselor: Anna Sjöström

Special Education teacher: Bridget Doughty

Student support: Will Jewkes

Facilities



Aside from well equipped classrooms, the school facilities include a lunchroom, gym hall, science lab, music room, visual arts room and a library. Our gym facilities are at our sports hall on **Döbelnsgatan** and at **KFUM on Rosengatan 1**, where we offer a full range of gymnastics and performance arts activities to our pupils.

The '**Annex**' at **Upplandsgatan** is our two-storey venue that hosts the Music and Arts classes for Bilingual and International PYP 4. 5 and 6, as well as MYP .

The **Pre-IB** class with students of age 5 is also located at **Johannesplan**.



The school also owns a farm a bit outside Stockholm, at **Eknäs**, where the children get to do different outdoor activities which are grounded in the IB requirement of learning by experience. Here pupils have the opportunity to see and learn how a variety of fruit and vegetables grow and are able to plant themselves.

The site also features an assault course that tests students' dexterity, motor skills – and sense of fun.

A short walk from the main site, we also offer a variety of water-based activities such as kayaking and swimming.

A nature reserve is also giving our students the opportunity to experience outdoor life activities and learn about the Right of Public Access (Allemansrätten).

Library

Our librarian is on site to help students with research and finding books appropriate to their interests and reading levels. The books from the school library are for school use. Regular visits to the city library are also made during the term. We consider our library a 'hub of inquiry' where students can conduct research and collect information for their lessons and other projects.



General school guidelines

Opening hours

The building is open 7:45-17:30 daily. Due to safety reasons, children in the PYP must be accompanied by an adult or registered in the after school care program if they are on campus outside of school hours (school hours might vary, please check your child's schedule).

Valuables

It is strongly discouraged to bring valuable items to school. Bringing valuable items such as computers and phones to school are at the owner's own risk, and Vasa International takes no responsibility for lost or stolen property. Students are also not allowed to bring toys to school.

Lost and found

All property should be clearly marked with the student's first and last name. A telephone number is also quite helpful in locating the proper owner of objects that get left around the school.

A lost and found box is located close to the back yard entrance on the entry floor. All objects that are found outside of classrooms (not on the hooks) are brought to the lost and found basket,

unless there is a clear name on the article. All lost and found objects will be donated to a local charity if not reclaimed within one week of the end of each term.



Lunch

Students receive a free, healthy and well-rounded meal served each day in our lunchroom. The food comes from ISS World, a well known caterer that provides many schools in the Stockholm region with quality food. Our food is 30% organic.

If you, due to allergies or religious reasons, need to request a special diet, please fill in the form that is sent home at the beginning of each academic year. If you misplace or for any reason need this form, you will find it on SchoolSoft. *All allergies need to be confirmed with a doctor certificate.*

We would also like to let you know that *we are a nut-free school* and that no nuts are allowed in the school.

Snack

Please have your child bring a fruit/vegetable or sandwich every day. We kindly ask that you **do not send candy, juice boxes, crisps, cookies, buns or similar**. Occasionally, parents

will be asked to provide packed lunch during theme days or for outings at Eknäs (the same rules apply as for snacks). Please remember that **it is forbidden to bring any kind of nuts to school** due to serious allergy issues.

Student services

Special education needs

General guidelines

Vasa International's commitment to the SEN program aims to ensure that the development of all students is the shared responsibility of all staff. We strive towards practicing **inclusion** within our school network, which is about responding positively to each individual's unique needs. It also aims to minimize the marginalization of students due to their differences.

You can read *our Inclusion policy* on Schoolsoft under Files.

Pedagogical investigation – Action plan

To ensure that all students get the appropriate help they need, we follow guidelines from the National Board for Education regarding investigating all matters concerning a student's welfare. The class teacher, in collaboration with the student care team, will establish a pedagogical investigation to examine the needs in each specific case. If the conclusion is that the situation requires measures that go beyond the teacher's expertise, an action plan will be established which is decided by the school student care team and the principal. An action plan is always made in collaboration with the school health care team, student and legal guardian.

Compensatory aids and assistive technology

All students in need of compensatory aids will be given the opportunity to use them. Examples of aids could be: Stava rex, talsyntes or audio books.

School health service

General guidelines

The Student Care team is a multidisciplinary team that works collaboratively to support teachers, parents and students. The aim of the team is to promote the students' learning and well-being in the school environment and to help students overcome adversities and thrive.

Our student care team consists of the following members:

- School Principal: Anna-Kanin Backman
- PYP Coordinator / Vice-principal: Maria Angelidou
- MYP Coordinator / Vice-principal: Katarina Dybeck
- Special Education teacher: Bridget Doughty
- Student care: Will Jewkes
- School counselor: Anna Sjöström
- School nurse: Ulrika Frygnell

The team meets on a weekly basis and has an open-door policy for teachers and other staff who wish to bring forward issues and concerns. The school doctor and school psychologist are also available for consultation and support when needed. The team also cooperates with other agencies, where necessary.

The responsibilities and tasks of the student care team include:

- to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- to plan and carry out preventative work on student social and emotional development.
- to identify obstacles and barriers in student learning that are related to medical, psychological, social or special learning needs factors.
- to provide support, advice and solutions to issues that the teachers, students or their guardians are facing.

Health records

When a student is accepted to Vasa International, guardians will be asked to sign a health record requisition to approve that the school student care team may obtain the transfer of health records from BVC (Child welfare center), or the previous school.

Vaccination

The school health services offer all students vaccinations according to the national vaccination program, and the vaccinations started at BVC are monitored. Prior to vaccination, the students always bring information home and parental consent is needed before vaccinations are performed. If students have previously followed another vaccination program than the Swedish

one, and have received vaccinations outside the BVC and school, the legal guardian is asked to submit a copy of the given vaccinations to the school nurse.

Counselor

Meetings with the school counselor and psychologist are available upon request.

Educational counseling

For the MYP students, Career and Educational Counseling is available on campus to help students select an appropriate high school program; Swedish or International. During Career Week, all students get a chance to explore different professions and the MYP students visit the High School Expo in Älvjö.

Administration and routines

Home-school communication

➤ Email and telephone

Please contact the teacher via Email for general questions or to book an appointment. For urgent matters call the following numbers:

Admin: 0733136829

School nurse and counselor: 0733136824

ASC phone: 0762519590

➤ SchoolSoft

The main platform of communication with the school is SchoolSoft.

Access

SchoolSoft is the school's digital platform for administrative needs, such as attendance, schedules, test results and a lot more. You will be provided with the information regarding login once your child has begun school (or shortly prior to that). If you have not received the information by school start, please make sure you contact the school administration. If you would like help with the interface, you should contact the class teacher for further assistance.

When accessing SchoolSoft for the first time, make sure to fill in your contact details under "My Profile". As the legal guardian, you are responsible for keeping these details updated.

Attendance

All reporting of attendance is done in SchoolSoft. If the student is to be absent from school, it is very important that you register this in SchoolSoft **before 8:30** in the morning. All students need to be in class and ready to start the lesson **by 8.30 a.m at the latest**. Late arrivals affect the smooth operation of the lessons, so we urge you to be on time and to always inform the teachers if there is a special reason for arriving late.

Homework

Most teachers put homework in SchoolSoft or Google Classroom to create easy access for you at home. There you can see when the homework is due and what it involves. Results from assessments may also be found on SchoolSoft. You can read our *Home Assignments policy* on Schoolsoft under Files.

Weekly newsletter

Teachers post a letter to the parents every Friday with information on what the class worked on that week, important dates and other important information. Please make sure you read this newsletter every week.

Teacher planning

You will find the weekly lesson plans for each class on SchoolSoft.

Teacher comments and feedback

Teacher feedback and assessment results are shared with parents through SchoolSoft or Google classroom (for PYP 5-6). Students strengths and developments are recorded on Schoolsoft in the report cards and Individual Development plan for each student.

If a teacher needs to address something specific that has happened during class regarding individual students they reach out to the parents by email, phone or ask for a meeting.

Documents

Vasa International School of Stockholms policies and other important documents can be found on SchoolSoft under the heading **"Files and links"**.

➤ Class Dojo

Class Dojo is used as an interactive digital portfolio, but also as a blog where teachers post students work on a weekly basis. Please do not use Class Dojo as a means of direct communication with the teachers and other staff.

➤ Developmental talks and parent meetings

Developmental talks are held once a term and they are student-led. During the developmental talk, the teacher, student and legal guardian will go through the student's academic and social development so far, and talk about the student's interests and what the focus should be on, up until the next development talk. The developmental talk will be prepared in advance by the teacher and the student.

There is a parent meeting at the beginning of each Autumn term and a Unit share day called Celebration of Learning (Open Day for parents) in the Spring term. During the parent meeting, the teacher meets all parents simultaneously to give general information of what is happening in school. It is also a time to discuss and ask questions about the different aspects of the PYP program. It is a great opportunity to get to meet other parents and exchange thoughts and experiences.

➤ Report cards

Report cards are given out twice an academic year at the end of each term. They will contain a summary of the student's achievements in all subjects taught and in all IB elements. During the development talks in February, the student will participate in the creation of an Individual Development Plan (IUP), with specific goals on areas of improvement.

➤ School website (www.vasainternationalschoolofstockholm.com)

The school website is used as a first point of contact containing information for those who are interested in joining the school. There is a description of the school and the IB-programs offered, as well as the local curriculum. Interested families will also find application forms there.

General information and routines

Fragrance-free school policy

In order to create a safer learning environment for students, as well as a safer work environment for staff, Vasa International School of Stockholm requests that all students and staff refrain from wearing perfume, cologne and other fragrances, and use unscented personal care products in order to promote a fragrance-free environment. Read more in our Fragrance-free policy on SchoolSoft under Files.



Clothing

As the PYP classrooms are shoe-free zones, all PYP students need to bring indoor shoes. As the students will be outside every day, we strongly advise appropriate clothing based upon the current/predicted daily weather (keeping in mind that weather predictions are often wrong here in Stockholm...be prepared for the worst). We will go outside in rain, snow or hail. Make sure to mark student clothing clearly with name and preferably phone number, as this increases the chances of items being found and returned when lost.

During Physical Education, proper clothing for the activity at hand is required. Check SchoolSoft for further information from the PE teacher regarding what kind of clothing/gear that would be appropriate for each unit/lesson. If for some reason a student is not participating in an outside PE

activity, an extra set of warm clothes is advisable when observing and participating only in group discussions etc.

Classroom supplies

Classroom supplies/equipment for students are provided by the school. This includes, but is not limited to pencils, notebooks, colored paper, colored pencils, markers, etc. You are asked to provide one plastic pocket for home assignments and one binder that the student takes home at the end of the year with all the work done throughout the year.

Cell phones

We do not advise children to bring cell phones as the school cannot assume any responsibility for the loss or damage of them while at school. However, if they are brought to school, the teachers will collect all cell phones in the morning and return them at the end of the day. If a student needs to use the phone during school hours, parents will need to inform the class teacher ahead of time.



Absence from school

If a student is absent from school due to illness, it is important that parents register this in SchoolSoft before 8:30. If not registered accordingly, this will be reported as unexcused absence and the teacher must contact the guardians sometime during the school day.

If the child is sick with fever or a cold, they should be symptom-free and medicine-free to return back to school.

The teacher may give permission for up to five days leave each academic year. If you want to request vacation during school days, you need to fill in the appropriate form found on SchoolSoft and return it to the class teacher. The **maximum number of days** a student can take as extra vacation days is **ten days**. This needs to be approved by the school principal.

Please email the classroom teacher and principal if you would like to request for extra vacation days. Remember to register absent days on SchoolSoft.

Homework

At Vasa International, we have developed a home assignment policy based upon current research compiled in the document "Läxor i praktiken" from Skolverket. As an IB school, our home assignments must also continue the meaningful nature of the IB skills and values. Please read more about our Home Assignments policy on School Soft under Files.

Dropping-off your child at school

When dropping your child off at school, please note that the parking spaces outside the school are very limited. Your chances of finding a spot in the morning are very slim. We strongly suggest that you leave your car elsewhere and travel by public transport.

Guardians are currently not allowed into the school building due to Covid. You are welcome in the building if you have a booked appointment, in which case you are to wait for the staff member you are meeting by the entrance.

ASC – After School Care/Fritids

Vasa International recommends that children in PYP1-4 be a part of the After School Care program, as the ASC at our school is closely aligned with the IB curriculum, and one of its aims is to enhance and further develop the students' learning and understanding of the English language. Besides the social development in PYP classes, an emphasis is put upon Arts-, Music- and PE activities both within and beyond the school campus. The ASC is open between 7:45 and 17:30, as school doors close at 17:30. Each family can pick up their child at their discretion after regular lessons end. ASC staff will bring your child to the entrance to be picked up as soon as you notify them by sms in the ASC phone number. An afternoon snack is served each day during ASC.

The fee structure for enrollment in ASC/Fritids in the City of Stockholm is based on a percentage of the family income: 2% for the first child, 1% for the second and third, and 0% for the fourth. However, the fee shall not exceed 986 SEK/month for the first child and 493 SEK/month

for subsequent children. Slightly different rules apply for the international English classes, which you will be informed about at the beginning of the term.

ASC will be closed during holidays (red days), teacher study days and for the **month of July**.

Please contact the ASC manager in good time if you need alternative options for the time that ASC is closed.

Parent engagement

We would like you to be active in your child's school work, meaning that you discuss relevant assignments and chat with your child about the unit of inquiry at hand. You are of course welcome to come and visit us at school, however we would like you to communicate with relevant staff at least one day in advance to check that it is a suitable time.

We aim for an **active PTA** in our school and we would love to see more parents engaged, so please contact our school Principal if you would like to be involved.

As we are an IB-school, you will often be asked for your opinion regarding our procedures and policies connected to the IB. This could be via surveys, workshops, focus groups, etc. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Admissions at Vasa International

A child's grade level placement should allow for success academically and socially. Therefore grade placement of new students takes place based on their date of birth (January-December).

Moving to a another Municipality

When moving to another municipality, parents need to contact the school and the new municipality in advance. If this occurred too late in such a way that causes a financial loss to Vasa International School of Stockholm, parents can be liable.

Learning and teaching in PYP

The transdisciplinary elements of the PYP



Inquiry is the leading pedagogical approach of the PYP and is recognized as allowing students to be actively involved in their own learning and to take responsibility for that learning. Inquiry allows each student's understanding of the world to develop in a manner and at a rate that is unique to that learner. Inquiry, interpreted in the broadest sense, is the process initiated by the student or the teacher that moves the student from his or her current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding.

Concept-based inquiry is a powerful vehicle for learning that promotes meaning and understanding, and challenges students to engage with significant ideas. This is central to the Primary Years Programme (PYP) philosophy.

Students co-construct beliefs and mental models about how the world works based on their experiences and prior learning. They integrate new knowledge with their existing knowledge and apply these understandings in a variety of new contexts.

Students gradually work towards a deepening of their conceptual understandings as they approach those concepts from a range of perspectives.

Concept-based learning moves beyond facts and leads to breadth and depth of understanding.

Knowledge = FACTS = know

Concepts = BIG IDEAS = understand

Another main pillar of the Primary Years Programme is **transdisciplinary learning**. The PYP recognizes that educating students in a set of isolated subject areas, while necessary, is not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to students and transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects. Therefore, the PYP defines **six transdisciplinary themes** that identify areas of shared human experience and have meaning for individuals from different cultures and ethnicities. These themes are part of the common ground that unifies the learning in all IB World Schools offering the PYP. They provide the opportunity to incorporate both local and global issues in the **knowledge** component of the PYP written curriculum (see below under Essential Elements of the PYP).

Being an IB world school means that it is our aim to educate for life. Our ambition is to create **internationally minded** and knowledgeable citizens. We know that our students get a good start for higher education, whether it be a Swedish gymnasium, the IB Diploma program or a college/high school somewhere else in the world. Many come back to visit providing us with positive feedback regarding the success of our goals.

IB Learner Profile

At the core of the PYP is the Learner Profile. These characteristics were identified by the developers of all four International Baccalaureate programs and provide a common core to the IB continuum. Students and teachers often refer to these attributes and strive actively on a daily basis to be:



- ★ **Balanced:** We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
- ★ **Caring:** We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
- ★ **Communicators:** We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
- ★ **Inquirers:** We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life
- ★ **Knowledgeable:** We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
- ★ **Principled:** We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
- ★ **Reflective:** We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.
- ★ **Courageous/Risk-takers:** We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
- ★ **Thinkers:** We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
- ★ **Open-minded:** We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Essential elements of the PYP

The PYP has compiled the **five essential elements** which are used in the classroom to aim towards a balance in the program of study. Below you will find the four essential elements which are used throughout a PYP classroom:

1. Knowledge

2. Concepts

3. Approaches to Learning (Skills)

4. Action

Each essential element contributes to the social and cognitive development of a child. These essential elements create the foundation of the PYP.

1. Knowledge – What do we want the students to know?

As PYP is a transdisciplinary program most subjects are taught in our units of inquiry. We make sure that all students in the International Bilingual classes reach all demands regarding content and skills that come with the Swedish curriculum, Lgr 11, but we also follow the IB scope and sequence documents. In the International English classes we strictly follow the IB curriculum for all subjects.

A school year at Vasa International always consists of six units of inquiry. These units are based upon a central idea, which the teacher and the students explore for a number of weeks, usually 4-6. Both students and parents need to be actively working with the central idea during the current unit. Doing so helps the students deepen their understanding and inquire deeper into the unit at hand.

Sample Unit of Inquiry (UOI)

Transdisciplinary theme: How we express ourselves

Title of unit of inquiry: The impact of advertising

Central idea: Advertising influences how we think and the choices we make

Lines of inquiry:

- The purpose of advertising
- The types, styles and locations of advertisements
- The devices used to make advertising effective and to influence our choices

The central ideas are formulated to fit under the six different transdisciplinary themes that are chosen from the IB for their global significance and illustrating the commonalities of human existence. The transdisciplinary themes are considered essential in the context of a program of international education.

The PYP transdisciplinary themes:

- **Who we are**
- **Where we are in place and time**
- **How we express ourselves**
- **How we organize ourselves**
- **How the world works**
- **Sharing the planet**

All science and social studies education will be taught inside the framework of the units and often many other subjects will be part of them as well. If some of the subject specific goals and skills don't fit under the unit work, they will be taught as stand alone topics.

2. Concepts - What do we want the students to understand?

The teacher and students will look at the inquiry at hand through different conceptual lenses, to give the students chances to make connections over the subject boundaries. The teachers will choose two or three concepts for each unit that they think supports that unit, and they will make sure that all key concepts are used during the year.

The PYP Key concepts:

Form - What is it like?

Function - How does it work?

Responsibility - What are our obligations?

Causation - Why is it as it is?

Connection - How is it linked to other things?

Change - How is it changing?

Perspective - What are the different points of view?

The most common use of key concepts is through questioning. Below are some sample questions for a given theme.

Central idea	Key concept(s)	Question(s)
All living things go through a process of change	change, connection	How are the changes that two animals go through alike? (<i>connection</i>) How does an animal (e.g. butterfly) change during its lifetime? (<i>change</i>)
Through arts people use different forms of expression	function, perspective, reflection	What does expressing yourself through art look like ? (<i>form</i>) How can different people have different perspectives on a piece of artwork? (<i>perspective</i>)

All units within all grade levels form together the school's Programme of Inquiry (PoI). The PoI is reviewed every year to make sure that the horizontal and vertical development under each transdisciplinary theme is satisfactory. Our PoI is found on SchoolSoft, in every classroom, as well as in the above link with policies and other documents.

3. Approaches to Learning – What do we want the students to be able to do?

The five interrelated approaches to learning



The importance of developing subject specific skills as well as skills that transcend subject boundaries is identified both in the IB curriculum and Lgr 11. It is important for the student to not only learn certain skills, but also to understand them and to be able to connect skills in different subject areas to each other. When studying a certain unit of inquiry, the teacher identifies which skills will be necessary for the students to develop and understand. The students will also have time to reflect over the skills and to what extent they think the skills were applied in that certain unit of inquiry. Below you can find the specific skills the IB has determined essential for the development of the student.

<i>Thinking Skills</i>	<i>Social Skills</i>	<i>Communication Skills</i>	<i>Self-management Skills</i>	<i>Research Skills</i>
<i>Acquisition of knowledge</i>	<i>Accepting responsibility</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Gross motor skills</i>	<i>Formulating questions</i>
<i>Comprehension</i>	<i>Respecting others</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Fine motor skills</i>	<i>Observing</i>
<i>Application</i>	<i>Cooperating</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Planning</i>
<i>Analysis</i>	<i>Resolving conflict</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Time management</i>	<i>Collecting data</i>
<i>Synthesis</i>	<i>Group decision-making</i>	<i>Viewing</i>	<i>Safety</i>	<i>Recording data</i>
<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Adopting a variety of group roles</i>	<i>Presenting</i>	<i>Healthy lifestyle</i>	<i>Organizing data</i>
<i>Dialectical thinking</i>		<i>Non-verbal communication</i>	<i>Codes of behavior</i>	<i>Interpreting data</i>
<i>Metacognition</i>			<i>Informed choices</i>	<i>Presenting research findings</i>

4. Action – How do we want the students to act?

The PYP believes that successful inquiry will lead to responsible student action. As an IB school, it is Vasa International's obligation to make sure that there is opportunity for action within the unit of inquiry. The teacher will guide the students in choosing action, and acting and reflecting over their action in order to make a difference in the world. The form of action will of course look very different depending on the grade level. Action can and will take place both guided in the classroom and independently elsewhere. As parents, we would like you to report to the class teacher anything that the child has said or done as a reaction to something learned at school, especially if it shows that your child has developed a sense of sensitivity towards bigger issues in the society.

Action beyond the classroom –An example:

A parent reports to a teacher that her four-year-old child has taken action at home, after having been on a school excursion to a recycling station/sewage treatment plant/centre:

Parent: On your trip did the children learn about water conservation?

Teacher: It was one component of our investigations. Why do you ask?

Parent: Because during the weekend I was starting the shower for my son. He ran out of the room and came back with a bucket, and put it in the shower. When I asked him what he was doing, he replied: "I'm catching the water that is not hot enough yet for my shower, so I can save it and give the garden a drink after my shower."

Teacher: That's really interesting. He is taking action as a result of what he learned. Please let me know if this continues and if you notice anything else.

As stated above, action as a result of an inquiry can take place anywhere and anytime. Therefore, teachers would be very happy if you told them about action the students take at home or outside of school, as it is powerful evidence of one of the essential elements of the PYP.

Language

As an IB school we value multilingualism and are obliged to present the students with one language in addition to the language of instruction, so in our school all students are taught English from the age of five. As we believe that all staff are language teachers, more than half of the staff in the ASC are native English speakers. Music and Arts are taught in English by native English speakers. PE is also taught in English.

Vasa International's bilingual classes follow both the Swedish curriculum and the IB curriculum, meaning that from MYP 1, the students in the Bilingual classes will receive a Swedish report card. The International English classes will receive a report card based upon the IB curriculum.

A variety of **mother tongue lessons** are also offered after normal lesson time for our students. To find out more about which languages we offer and when please contact Rita Ahonen at rita.ahonen@europaskolan.nu. There might be different regulations for our Bilingual and International pupils attending mother tongue lessons.

You can read *our Language policy* on Schoolsoft under Files.

Assessment

Formative assessment

During the unit of inquiry or current subject area, the teacher will check the student's development so that it is moving in the right direction, that no misconceptions have arisen, that the student understands where to move next, and to develop as much as possible in regards to the goals of the area of work. Examples of how formative assessment can take place are:

- journal entry
- presentations
- quiz
- mini-conference/interview
- observations
- short response

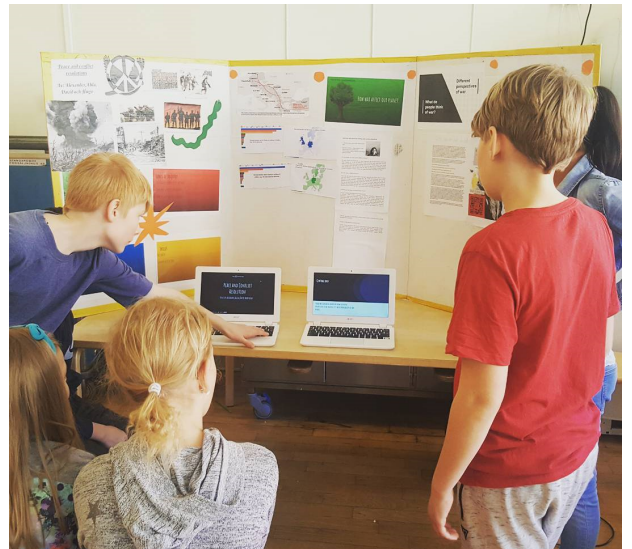
- checklist

Summative assessment

At the end of a unit of inquiry or a subject area, a summative assessment can be done to see to what extent the student understands the central idea or the goals set up for the area of work. The assessments are recorded and lay as a foundation for the Individual Development Plan (or IUP), where teacher, student and parents together look at the student's whole school development.

A part of the assessment plan is the **digital portfolio**. In the portfolio the student gathers evidence of development, understanding and work that the student is particularly happy with. The student gets to reflect over what and why a specific piece of work should be put inside the portfolio. The portfolio follows the student through the whole PYP so as to make the development in different subjects evident. At Vasa International, we use the online digital portfolio Class dojo. New students will be provided with a login code, as well as a school email address to be able to access the digital portfolios.

As a final assessment in the PYP and as a culmination of all the years of work in the Primary Years Programme, the students in PYP6 need to prepare the '**Exhibition**', which is a very important part of the PYP. In the final year of the programme, students undertake a collaborative, interdisciplinary inquiry process that requires them to identify, investigate and propose solutions to real-life issues or problems. They then present their findings to the community. The Exhibition offers students an exciting opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their own learning and it is also a way to celebrate their transition from the PYP to the MYP,



You can read *our Assessment policy* on Schoolsoft under Files.

We wish you a wonderful school year here at Vasa International School of Stockholm!