



**TISA**  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL OF AZERBAIJAN

**25/26**



# ELC Parent Handbook

More info - [www.tisa.az](http://www.tisa.az)

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# Early Learning Centre (ELC) Philosophy Statement



## Early Learning Centre Philosophy



### Image of the child:

At TISA we believe children are unique, capable and playful individuals. We trust in children's natural curiosity and their ability to take ownership of their own learning journey.

### Role of the teacher/educator:

As teachers we provide opportunities that guide students to be successful at their individual next step. We strive for a balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning engagements. We build a community where all students feel they belong. We focus on both academic development and social and emotional development. Our philosophy emphasizes the importance of all teachers working together to care for every student and support their overall growth.

### Role of the environment:

We create a stimulating environment that encourages children to think critically and engage actively. We provide children with a safe and secure environment that extends beyond the classroom to inspire and provoke natural curiosity. We encourage children to explore, learn and build independence through a wide variety of hands-on, authentic experiences.



### Role of the Curriculum:

*'Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning, but for children play is serious learning.'*  
-Fred Rogers

With this in mind, our play-based curriculum is centered around the development of social, emotional, self-management and communication skills. These are the building blocks for academic success. We support both developmental processes and each unique process of learning. Our curriculum ensures consistency and progression through a transdisciplinary approach. The curriculum supports diverse learning needs, fosters critical thinking, creativity and problem solving.

### Role of the parent:

Our community sees parents as each child's first teacher. Together we form a bridge between home and school, with a foundation built on trust and mutual respect. A strong partnership between home and school enhances children's experiences in our ELC. We work together towards the shared goals of independence, communication and social skills.



# Welcome

We **engage** as thoughtful, generous and resilient members of our local and global communities, taking action in Azerbaijan and beyond;

We **empower** one another to pursue personal and academic challenges with courage and a growth mindset;

We **inspire** life-long, authentic, and principled learning to create our best future together.

Welcome to the Early Learning Centre at The International School of Azerbaijan! We are delighted for you to join the unique ELC community in which your child will begin their educational journey through the International Baccalaureate Primary Years' Programme (IBPYP). The International Baccalaureate (IB) offers three programmes of international education:

**the Primary Years Programme (PYP) P1 to P8**

**the Middle Years Programme (MYP) M1 to M5**

**the Diploma Programme (DP) DP1 to DP2**

The three programmes have a common educational framework: a consistent philosophy about teaching and learning that focuses on the development of the whole child, and an overarching concept of the development of international-mindedness. Each programme promotes the education of the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth, involving the traditions of learning in languages, mathematics, sciences, humanities, the arts and personal, social and physical education.

The PYP aims to offer a balanced programme that focuses on acquiring significant knowledge, developing essential skills, understanding meaningful concepts, developing positive attitudes, leading to thoughtful action. Through the PYP we promote our belief that an inquiry-based teaching method with structured units of inquiry is an effective approach to teach the knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes that we value.

## The ELC at a Glance

Early childhood is a period of rapid development, growth and change and it goes by very fast! Our curriculum responds to the different learning and developmental needs of young children. Our ELC is designed to meet the needs of young learners who will discover the wonders of learning in our sensory rich, purpose-built facility.

Children will have the opportunity to explore and play independently, through guided inquiry and through self and teacher directed learning. Please see our ELC Curriculum Guide for more information about the learning that happens in the ELC.

Your child's education is a responsibility shared by you and us. We understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to education and believe in strong partnerships between the home and school. Together we can make school a place where your child will feel secure, enjoy success and lay important foundations for learning. Together we can begin to equip your child with important skills they need to learn: social, emotional, communication, self - management, research and thinking skills.

We request that you share this information with your child's other caregivers, especially about what your child does and does not bring to school, and about early morning drop-off and pickup procedures.

## Admission

If you wish for your child to join the ELC, please visit the school's website [www.tisa.az/admissions-procedures](http://www.tisa.az/admissions-procedures) and download the required forms to complete.

## Daily Schedules Examples

Nursery and P1 Daily Schedule	Nursery and P1 Afternoon Club
08.15 Arrival and Explore Classroom/ Shared Area	12.30 Quiet / Nap Time
09.00 Morning Meeting and Class Activities	13.00 Free exploration time Indoors
09.40 Snack	14.00 Snack
10.00 Outdoor Inquiry	14.30 Outdoor Learning
10.40 Classroom Activities	15.00 Story Time
11.40 Lunch	15.15 Dismissal
12.00 Community Circle	
12.30 Dismissal	
P2 and P3 Daily Schedule	
08.15 Arrival and Explore Classroom/ Shared Area	
08.35 Community Circle	
08.45 Morning Meeting	
09.00 Class Time	
10.00 Outdoor Inquiry	
10.40 Snack and Recess	
11.00 Specialist Lessons/ Class Time	

12.40 Outdoor Inquiry	
13.10 Lunch	
13.30 Specialist Lessons/Class Time	
15.15 Dismissal	

## Nursery Only

The Nursery Morning Session is open Monday to Friday from 8:25am to 12:30pm, TISA term-time only. We offer morning places with different attendance options, as follows:

- 5 mornings: Monday to Friday
- 3 mornings: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- 2 mornings: Tuesday, Thursday

## Practical Information

### **Bring to School**

A small backpack (this goes to and from school each day)

A named wide brimmed hat

Sun protection cream (named and in a zip lock bag)

2 spare changes of clothes in a named zip lock plastic bag (including two pairs of named underwear and socks), which will be kept at school

Rain pants / waterproof overalls (if needed)

Mosquito repellent if required will need to be applied before school, teachers will help your child reapply later in the day

Wellington Boots should be left at school

Nappies, wipes and cream, if needed, are to be provided by the parents.

**IMPORTANT:** Please make sure all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

The ELC does not allow toys or personal items to be brought from home, unless it is for a particular class learning engagement. Toys or other personal items can cause students to be distracted and create conflict between classmates. At times the personal items are misplaced, causing distress in the child. Please ask your child to leave personal items at home, or in their backyard in the ELC foyer. If a personal item is brought to school, it will be stored in the ELC office during school hours.

Examples of personal items: Jewellery, lip gloss, sweets or candy, slime, stuff animals, markers or crayons, figurines or dolls, cars, trains, etc.

## Clothing

Please ensure your child is wearing clothes and shoes that are practical and do not hinder their involvement in a wide range of activities including climbing, running, riding, painting, gardening etc.

Please provide shoes that support your child's journey towards independence in self-management. For instance, shoes with Velcro fasteners are more suitable for young children as they find laces challenging and Velcro promotes their self-reliance.

Children are recommended to provide boots for school if parents would rather they don't use their shoes for gardening and mud play. If no boots are sent to school we will assume that their shoes are okay to use. These boots will remain at school in your child's cubby in the ELC foyer. Boots are not provided by the ELC.

## Dismissal

ELC students must be picked up by a registered adult or a Secondary sibling. ELC students will not be released to Primary siblings. Please communicate with the homeroom teacher in advance if there are any changes to dismissal routine.

ELC children must go home straight away at 12:30 and/or 3:15 pm and cannot stay on campus unless they are supervised by an adult. An older sibling isn't sufficient to supervise an ELC student. Play must be limited to the ELC climbing area or the Primary Jungle Gym. Movable equipment is not available for afternoon play.

## **Lost and Found**

Located in the ELC Foyer a Lost & Found Box contains all clothing items abandoned during the school day. It is suggested that parents periodically check the box for missing items, as clothing is recycled or donated at midyear and at the end of the school year. Please name every item of clothing. When named items are found, they find their way to their owners quickly.

## **Snacks / Lunch / Water**

TISA has a NO NUTS food policy.

All children at the ELC will be given a mid-morning snack each day consisting of sliced fruits and vegetables, yoghurt, bread, cheese cubes and water. All ELC students are also provided with a hot lunch. To see the menu please visit our website and select the 'ELC Menu' button.

For Afternoon Club children, an afternoon snack will be served. If your child has any food allergies, please make sure you note them down on the health form provided upon enrolment of your child, and rest assured that we are diligent about such information.

Teachers supervise children during snack and lunch, but the teachers do not feed children.

Teachers do allow enough time for children to eat. There is 30 minutes for Nursery and P1 children and 25 minutes for P2 and P3 children.

It would help us if you encourage your child to eat independently at home and help them develop fine motor skills by allowing them to use cutlery and even tongs to serve themselves independently.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Parents are welcome to bring in a homemade cake or cupcakes (no nuts) to celebrate your child's birthday with his/her friends.

Kindly inform us at least a day in advance. We will sing our birthday song during circle time and the children will enjoy the birthday cake at lunch time.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Feeling Safe and Secure**

Your child's safety is our utmost concern. Our staff members are experienced child minders and regularly attend child-oriented first-aid training delivered by the SOS Clinic medical staff.

Health and Safety personnel also conduct regular visits to ensure that we consistently meet their health and safety standards. Furthermore, emergency protocols are regularly practiced (for example, evacuation and shelter-in-place drills). These procedures are supervised by and completed in consultation with TISA Security personnel.

### **Forms**

TISA has a specific security form that contains contact information for the children and parents. This form **MUST BE** filled out before you leave your child in the ELC on their very first day of school. We must have a Baku contact number for you in case of an emergency. This form will be sent to you by the ELC Secretary prior to your child's first day at TISA. If you change your contact details, please inform the ELC secretary immediately. We need this information in order to contact you in the event of an illness or accident.

Pick up details must be correct on this form. We will not release children to anyone who is not listed on the form. Please also note that we must receive written notification when pick-up arrangements change on any given day.

### **Toilet Training**

All ELC children in P1, P2 and P3 must be able to use the toilet independently as outlined in the admissions process. Diapers and pull-ups are not to be worn. If a child is still relying on these then they are deemed not independently toilet trained. Nursery students are an exception to this.

The ELC understands that accidents do happen and teachers will of course assist your child in changing into a fresh pair of clothes. A child who is fully trained should not have regular accidents. In addition, we would expect that the child is able to take care of clothing needs in the toilet and communicate when he/she has an accident and to ask for help. If accidents occur regularly during the week, the child is deemed not fully toilet-trained and may be asked to stay home until the child's toilet training is successful.

### **Nappy Changing Policy**

In line with the school's Child Protection Policy, The ELC has adopted the Nappy Changing Policy as set out below.

#### *Basic Principles*

The Nursery staff will bear in mind the following key principles when changing a child's nappy:

- Children have the right to feel safe and secure
- Children will be respected and valued as individuals
- Children have a right to privacy/dignity
- In order to promote and develop greater independence, children need to be supported in their understanding of toileting procedures: Nappies will be checked at regular intervals and promptly changed when required to ensure children are comfortable and happy.

### **Medical Support**

There is a trained medical practitioner onsite in a dedicated medical room in TISA 1. Staff in the ELC are trained in first aid every year.

Please do not send your child to the ELC if they are unwell and have any of the following ailments:

- Temperature exceeding 37.5 degrees C / 100 degrees F
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Bad cough
- Communicable disease (conjunctivitis or pink eye, chicken pox, etc)

If your child needs to take medication while in school, please take the medicine to the school clinic located in the Primary School building.

Please ensure that the medicine is clearly labelled with your child's name and the required dosage. The school doctor will administer the medicine to your child. Parents must notify the school of any on-going medical conditions.

In case of minor accidents or injuries, parents will be informed by the TISA doctor on duty or, by the ELC Coordinator or ELC Secretary

In the event of a medical emergency, our trained staff will administer the required first aid while parents are being contacted. In cases requiring treatment beyond the usual first aid measures, we will take children directly to SOS Clinic using an ambulance service if necessary.

A first aid trained staff member will stay with the child until a parent arrives.

## **Absences**

If your child will not be coming to the ELC, please let us know by calling the ELC office at (012) 497 72 83 or sending an email to [elcsecretary@tisa.az](mailto:elcsecretary@tisa.az). Please inform the homeroom teacher as well.

In cases where your child will not attend the ELC for a prolonged period, please also inform us and, where possible, let us know when you expect your child to return to school.

## **Afternoon Club Attendance Policy**

Afternoon Club begins on the 6th day of the school year. It is available to a newly admitted student on their 6th day of school, at the teachers' discretion and pending application to the ELC secretary. Children cannot start Afternoon Club on their first day of school.

### **Attending the Afternoon Club is dependent on:**

- A child's social-emotional wellbeing
- A child's readiness to stay at school for a full school day
- A child's capacity to follow directions and be gently redirected

If a child is showing signs of trouble adjusting to the Afternoon Club or struggling with the added school time, the teacher and family can put the child's attendance on pause.

## **Attendance**

Children are expected to arrive on time and to attend school each day for the full day. Arrival time is between 8:15-8:25 am (ELC doors open at 8:15 am and the children are encouraged to arrive at this time to settle in for the day). Continued late arrivals are difficult for the child as well as distracting for the teacher and other children who may be engaged in other activities.

Parents who intend to take their child for extended travels during the year or before or after a holiday are requested to contact either the Primary Principal or the Primary Assistant Principal with the dates and reasons for travel. Missing school directly impacts a child's social, emotional, and academic growth, and any absence should be avoided if possible.

If your child is well enough to attend school, this means they are well enough for full participation in the programme which includes indoor and outdoor learning all year around.

## Parental Involvement

The ELC welcomes parent involvement and encourages all parents to take an active role in their children's learning development.

In addition, we need 2 ELC Parent Representatives on the PTA, and a homeroom parent for each class. These parents play a vital role in liaising between the parents and the ELC staff, especially in organizing our ELC events. If you are interested in taking on any of the roles mentioned above, please contact the ELC Office for more information.

## Communication

We strongly believe in the importance of parents as partners in your child's journey of learning. Your child's classroom teacher is always the first point of contact. If they are unable to assist, they will always direct you to where you can find the correct information.

### ***For any queries or needs, contact:***

ELC Office telephone number: +994 12 404 12 01 ext: 124

ELC Secretary - [Farida Guliyeva](mailto:elcsecretary@tisa.az) - [elcsecretary@tisa.az](mailto:elcsecretary@tisa.az)

Early Learning Centre Coordinator Heather Rich - [hrich@tisa.az](mailto:hrich@tisa.az)