



## PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

### Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Education at The ISF Pre-School is based on the belief that effective learning takes place in a supportive, nurturing environment founded on mutual trust and respect. The ISF Pre-School aims to provide children and their families with a learning environment where they feel a sense of belonging, where they feel comfortable and familiar with the routines, customs, and regular events, and where they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behavior.

The ISF Pre-School adopts a holistic view of child development where the child is seen as a whole person with a desire to learn and to be active in the learning process. The focus is on the individual child as a learner and the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that the child brings to his/her experiences.

### Introduction to the Curriculum

The curriculum and supplementary programs implemented at Pre-School have been selected and developed to take into account contemporary research based understandings of how children learn, and the optimum conditions for learning to take place.

The underlying values of the Pre-School curriculum are based on the ISF's *Eight Virtues + One*, adapted for young children. Drawing on the essence of Chinese and Western thinking, these values are incorporated into the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC). At Pre-School, the curriculum is delivered through two principal languages of instruction: Putonghua (70%) and English (30%). This medium of instruction articulates into the Foundation Year bilingual immersion program at The ISF Academy.



## The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC)

The International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) forms the basis of the Pre-School curriculum. It supports key areas of learning through holistic enquiry and play-based approaches encompassing all curriculum areas. Developed by an international team of curriculum experts, the IEYC provides support for teachers so that three main aims can be achieved. They are:

- To help children learn the subject knowledge, skills and understandings they need to become aware of the world around them.
- To help children develop personal qualities they need to take an active part in the world throughout their lives.
- To help children develop an international mindset alongside an awareness of their own nationality.

The IEYC is an integrated, thematic approach to teaching and learning that capitalizes on young children's interests and their desire to explore, ask questions, and find the answers. The IEYC Process of Learning captures children's natural curiosity as a starting point and, within an enabling environment, balances child-initiated and teacher-scaffolded learning.

### The IEYC Process of Learning





Learning happens through thematic units which are designed to last for several weeks to allow more in-depth inquiry. Built into each unit of work are the IEYC Personal Goals, which are personal qualities and learning dispositions we believe are essential to enable children to be at ease with the continually changing context of their lives. The IEYC Personal Goals include enquiry, resilience, morality, communication, thoughtfulness, cooperation, respect and adaptability.

### Six Key Learning Areas

Developed in accordance with the recommendations set out by the Curriculum Development Council and recommended for use in pre-primary institutions by The Education Bureau HKSAR in 2017, the Pre-School curriculum covers the following six key learning areas:

1. Language
2. Early Childhood Mathematics
3. Nature and Living
4. Arts and Creativity
5. Physical Fitness and Health
6. Self and Society

### Language

The following principles guide the theory and practice of Language Learning in the ISF Pre-School:

- The languages of instruction at the Pre-School are Putonghua and English.
- In view of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the Pre-School community, students are educated and encouraged to be inclusive and communicate in languages that are understood by all members of the Pre-School community.
- Students learn to read and write Chinese using traditional characters.
- Cantonese is a language of wider communication in Hong Kong. The Pre-School is committed to celebrating the Cantonese language and culture.



### Early Childhood Mathematics

Using a variety of strategies, Pre-School teachers help students develop mathematical concepts by building on young children's everyday activities, incorporating their cultural backgrounds, languages, mathematical ideas, and strategies. The learning environment is planned so that it is conducive to mathematical explorations with the inclusion of a range of specific mathematical activities and designated areas in the classroom containing manipulative materials and blocks for construction, math games and puzzles, or a shopping area.

### Nature and Living

Nature and Living is the study of the world and how it works. Children are natural scientists and from a young age may already demonstrate a number of basic attitudes, learning dispositions, and an open-minded approach to their learning. These attitudes are capitalized on in the Pre-School curriculum.

At Pre-School the children's interest in science and technology is stimulated through designated science areas, such as classroom centers or the Makerspace equipped with a variety of resources, displays, science-related investigative tools and materials. The emphasis is on a fully integrated curriculum that enables the children to develop scientific knowledge and understanding at each year level.

### Arts and Creativity

Participation in an Arts program that encompasses dance, drama, music, and visual arts helps young children acquire a range of creative and artistic talents and skills and develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of their cultural heritage and that of other cultures. The goal of the Pre-School Arts Curriculum is to help young children develop practical knowledge, understanding and ideas in the four main disciplines of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, and to be able to communicate their knowledge and ideas in each of the disciplines.



### Physical Fitness and Health

At Pre-School, a premium is placed on the physical fitness, health, and safety of children at all times. A holistic approach to the development of young children requires balanced social skills, health, and physical education programs delivered in an environment where the children's social skills development and their physical and emotional health are promoted.

### Self and Society

At Pre-School, the *Eight Virtues + One* provide the foundation for the child's self-image and the enhancement of their interpersonal and communication skills. Through participation in positive learning experiences in a supportive environment where they are treated with respect by positive adult role models, children learn about their own value and understand the feelings and needs of their peers.

### Extended Program Curriculum (Year Two Only)

The Extended Program is offered only to selected Year Two students. Students who are enrolled in the Extended Program attend both the morning and afternoon sessions during the school day, where lunch will be supervised at school. Extended Program classes have a different schedule from the Half Day Program.

With extended contact time with the homeroom teachers, the Extended Program offers daily literacy and mathematics standalone lessons in addition to small group inquiry time. Furthermore, the following standalone lessons led by homeroom teachers are scheduled weekly:



- Wushu
- Language Arts
- Drama
- Chinese Ink Painting and Acrylic Painting
- Gardening
- Additional Music Lessons

Through the various additional standalone lessons and the extended contact time with homeroom teachers, the Extended Program promotes a more in-depth concept-based inquiry and open-mindedness towards different cultures. The routines set out in the Extended Program are designed for students to have opportunities to enhance social skills and independence, which support smoother transition into full day primary school programs.

### Assessment and Reporting Processes

Effective assessment procedures are critical to effective teaching and learning. Teachers can best meet the needs of individual learners when they are able to establish, through a range of diagnostic and formative assessment procedures, the next step required to be taken in the teaching process. Teachers at the Pre-School use a range of informal observation and assessment strategies to systematically monitor and record the children's progress towards meeting selected learning outcomes in all areas of development. Individual student portfolios are used at the Pre-School and are regarded with pride by students and their parents as tangible proof of their progress. The appropriate placement of new students is ensured through a range of assessment and interview procedures. Children's progress and achievement is reported to parents in the following ways:

- Portfolios
- Reports
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Student Exhibition
- Parent-Child Homework



## Parental Involvement

There are many ways that parents can be involved in their child's learning – both at home and at school. Pre-School encourages parental involvement through sharing relevant expertise and ideas. At Pre-School, parents are strongly encouraged to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. In particular, we would like parents to:

- Reinforce the *Eight Virtues + One* in daily life;
- Ensure that your child has the best attendance record possible;
- Ensure that your child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and resources;
- Ensure your child is healthy and fit to attend school;
- Inform the school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect your child's performance or behavior at school;
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general; and
- Participate in and support school events and class activities.