



I M S

ORIENTATION BOOKLET

CASA DEI BAMBINI PROGRAMME
(Kindergarten / Reception)
2022 – 2023

WELCOME TO IMS' CASA DEI BAMBINI PROGRAMME!

We are looking forward to getting to know you. The early years of a child's education are an important and exciting time, and we are eager to become a significant part of your child's early development.

What follows are a few tips to help you start the school year. A complete set of information can be found in the Parent Handbook, which will be available to you on our Engage Parent Portal. Please read these two documents carefully to help you and your child settle in! Please also familiarize yourself with our website, www.ims.edu.hk, where we update upcoming and past events, and summarize school activities each month.

Parent Orientation and Practical Life Montessori Seminar: An orientation for parents only is held at school for the parents of all new children, including those entering from the Foundation groups. Orientation will be given by your child's classroom teachers. They will review the classroom layout, some Montessori philosophy, and discuss how to support your child's learning at home. We will also review IMS logistics, talk about our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and overall, provide you with an opportunity for you to get to know your child's classroom teachers better.

As part of orientation, we ask that you begin reminding your child that school starts soon. You may want to show your child a calendar, and count down the days. This supports their learning process, and adds to the anticipation of beginning school as an exciting event to look forward to. We recommend that you begin having your child wake up at the appropriate time for school and have a good breakfast the week before school starts so that you can establish a routine. Speak with your child about school and all of the fun that the children will be having together when school starts!

Supporting Separation: If this is your child's first school experience, they may experience some trepidation. Different children will react in different ways, and feelings of anxiety are normal and natural. Within the first few weeks of school, these feelings should lessen, and your child should adjust to the Montessori environment, and to school. You can help in the process of settling by expressing confidence and excitement about your child entering school – this may be a difficult transition for you too! Be sure to talk to your child about school in a positive manner. If you are worried, your child will pick up on your anxiety. If you are at ease, your child will likely be so too. Let your child know that the teachers and school staff will take good care of him/her during the school day. If separation issues do arise, be sure to contact your child's teacher for support.

It is our goal to establish a warm, loving and supportive school community. Our teachers and staff will work with you and your child to make the transition process as smooth as possible.

In the first week, 3 year old children come for a shorter time to give them time to settle in gently. Most of our new 3 year olds have experience in our Foundation Programme, and we find that many of these children settle more easily than children completely new to IMS. However, do not be surprised if your new or returning 3 year old cries. Separation anxiety is normal. We ask that parents bring their children to school and leave as quickly as possible to reduce any separation anxiety, but to be available at short notice if your child is not settling.

In the second week, all 3 year old children should be able to be in the full morning session with minimal difficulty. Please continue to bring your child to school (or put them on the normal scheduled bus) and leave immediately to reduce any separation anxiety, but continue to be available at short notice if your child is not settling. Your child's class teacher will talk to you about how they are settling in and will let you know what their starting schedule will be; this can vary for each child in this initial period, based on their individual needs.

NOTES FOR STARTING SCHOOL

Snack: Healthy snacks are provided at school. We are trying to promote healthy eating and dental care in the school. If your child has specific allergies, parents may provide a special snack for the child. Please note that **IMS is a nut-free school**, and we follow a strict no-nut policy for all food items on the school premises.

Throughout the school year, children in the class are asked to act as the host for the classroom and to bring in a special snack from home. Please prepare an appropriate snack for 25 children as indicated on the calendar or communicated to you by the classroom teachers.

All arrangements above are subject to the development of the COVID19 virus, and all the relevant government legislation and regulations.

Lunch: For those children staying for the afternoon, please prepare a healthy lunch for your child to bring to school. You can encourage your child to participate in this activity by helping them prepare their own lunch. If your child requires a hot lunch, please place it in a thermos flask. Reheating facilities are not available at school, and lunches cannot be brought into school during school hours. Please refer to the School Parent Handbook for recommended foods.

Pick-up and Drop-off: **Your child may not be left unattended in the school before or after school hours.** Please refer to the attached Campus Specific Logistics for details.

Opening Time: The school building is open 15 minutes before the official start of class. Primary children may play in the outdoor play areas under the supervision of IMS staff. Prior to this time, children must be under the direct supervision of parents until the child is dropped off at the school gate or front door and received by an IMS staff member.

Student Drop-Off: Please note the Campus Specific Logistics for this drop-off. **Cars must NOT be parked/waiting outside the school. Parents using the services of a driver are asked to review these drop-off rules carefully with your driver. In the event of non-compliance by a driver, the School reserves the right to require the child to take the school bus.**

Children should be brought to school at least five minutes before the official class start time to ensure that they have sufficient time to independently go to their classroom, and prepare themselves to start the day. **It is important that the arrival time is carefully observed.** Late arrivals can be disruptive and potentially embarrassing to the child, and diminish important social rituals of greetings of teachers and friends.

Teachers are preparing classrooms in the morning, supervising students, and welcoming students into the classroom. Teachers are **not** available to speak with parents at this time. You may arrange to speak with your class teachers after school or via phone or email.

Late arrivals: The child must go to G/F Reception or Lobby/Entrance area to have his/her temperature taken, and a member of staff will take the child to class.

COMMUNICATION

If you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do contact your child's teacher directly, who will be able to advise you. We will work with you to resolve any situation in a supportive manner. Communication is critical to your child's development, and your child's teachers need to have your support and understanding to best help your child, and vice versa. Please let us know how we can help you understand the purpose of the activities in which your child is participating. The Montessori Curriculum often has an indirect benefit that is not necessarily intuitively obvious to a parent. Our

ultimate goal is to help your child “do it by myself” and to be a confident and happy participant in a world he / she is beginning to understand better each day and to grow into a person who makes a difference in his/her small community in preparation for the future.

Engage Parent Portal: In a subsequent email, you will receive an invitation to our Engage Parent Portal. Please follow the directions in this email and complete your portal registration as soon as possible so that you do not miss any important information. Most of the school’s communication comes through this portal. This is also where you will be able to view and update your contact information and view your child’s personal and medical details. The portal contains the Parent Handbook and all pertinent policies, procedures, forms and documents. The Parent Portal also hosts a calendar with school, campus, and class events.

Teacher’s email addresses: During orientation, your child’s teachers will provide you with their email addresses, so that you may be in routine contact as needed. Your classroom teachers will periodically send out classroom information by email regarding upcoming events or class information.

Campus administration and Curriculum Leaders are also easily reached by email. You can call our front desk administrative staff or email them with any questions or urgent issues. Please copy your teachers on any emails you send to the front desk to ensure we are all in the loop with any communication.

Each class also has Class Parents who can help with non-academic questions. Parents who are interested in taking on this role can speak to their class teachers for further details.

Communication Folder: Each child has a plastic folder in which all hard-copy communications and finished work will be placed. **Please check this folder each day** for notes from your teacher or the school. Please put any communication items for your child’s teacher or the school in this plastic folder, and ask your child to be sure to give it to the teacher.

IMS News: The IMS Blog will be published approximately every 2 weeks on our website, www.ims.edu.hk. You will receive a notification through the Engage Parent Portal every time we have a new entry. A monthly calendar for your child’s class, which lists upcoming events and activities, will also be visible on the Engage Parent Portal. Please keep your email and contact information up to date through the Parent Portal, and **Please check our website, your email, and the Engage Parent Portal regularly.**

Parent Conferences: Each year we hold formal Parent-Teacher Conferences (PTC) in November and March in order to give you the opportunity to discuss your child’s Term Report and progress with the Class Teachers. **Please note the dates on the School Calendar, so that you can be sure to attend these important meetings!** In addition to the PTCs, parents and teachers may schedule meetings at other times during the year, should this be required.

Progress Reports: Each term, parents receive a “Term Progress Report” which shows how your child is learning and developing through the Montessori Curriculum. This report is uploaded to the Engage Parent Portal at the end of each term on the Monday prior to the end of term holiday. For the third term, a Year-End Report with teacher comments is posted to the Engage Parent Portal on the Monday prior to the last day of the school year.

Montessori Curriculum Evenings: Teachers help you learn more about the Montessori Method and other topics of interest to families as per the school calendar. These events are an important opportunity to learn more about the way your child is learning in the classroom, and how you can support your child’s development at home. Parents are encouraged to attend every Montessori Curriculum Evening, as noted in the Calendar.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Medical alerts: We have asked you to let us know of any medical alerts. Please let us know of any further medical information which may be important in the care of your child.

Snacks and Food Preparation: IMS provides snacks (simple biscuits and fruit) and water for the children every day, and much of the practical life exercises include food preparation exercises which the children like to eat as part of their snack, including hard-boiled eggs. We have asked you to let us know of any allergies in the application form. Please let us know of any further allergy information which may be important in the care of your child. *All arrangements above are subject to the development of the COVID19 virus, and all the relevant government legislation and regulations.*

Illness: If your child is ill, please do not have them attend school. If a child has a fever (above 99.5°F/37.5°C), is vomiting or has diarrhoea, has a contagious rash, other infection, or symptoms related to COVID-19 or other communicable diseases, the parent will be called to collect the child from school. Children should not return to school until at least 24 hours after the symptoms have passed and with a doctor's note of health for symptoms related to COVID-19 (See the Parent Handbook for more details). If necessary, we will bring your child to the nearest hospital, while attempting to contact the parents / guardian. Parents are required to inform the school with details of any illness or symptoms that your child is experiencing.

Please Note: We will adhere to specific protocols and inform parents as necessary to respond to COVID-19 or any prevalent communicable disease with the guidance of the Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Education Bureau (EDB). We will inform you should such protocols be required at the start of the new school year or when the government puts requirements in place.

PARKING

Parking is not available on Campus. Public parking is available nearby as described in the attached Campus Specific Logistics information. Parents using the services of a driver are asked to review these parking rules carefully with your driver.

BUSSING

Castle Brothers is an independent company that provides bussing services for the students of the school. If you plan to have your child ride the bus, please be certain that Castle Brothers has your form. The bus form is attached with this Orientation Booklet and this must be submitted by the date as stated in the form in order for the bus company to confirm your route, send you the exact pick-up time, and the bus photo ID that must be worn for the first two weeks of bussing. You may contact Castle Brothers directly at 2555-2088.

Pick up and drop off location and time information will be sent to you by Castle Brothers.

NOTE: As schedules are changing over the first two weeks of any term as new children are added to the bus routes, timings of busses will change, and the routine will be uncertain for the first two weeks.

NOTE: If you plan to bring your child to school or pick him/her up on any day, you should notify Castle Brothers AND the school at least 24 hours before the end of your child's day to ensure the bus does not wait for your child or that IMS does not put your child on the bus that day.

UNIFORMS

Please ensure that your child has the full uniform including backpack and hat. When children are outdoors they must be wearing a hat during school hours.

On P.E. days, the children wear their sports uniforms to and from school. Each class has a different P.E. day schedule, as noted on the class calendar, which will be handed out at Orientation.

Uniforms can be purchased:

New Uniforms are purchased from Aston Wilson online (payment by credit card) at <https://shop.ims.edu.hk>. Orders are filled by Aston Wilson, which is an independent company that manufactures uniforms.

Please note that there is a small adjustment in uniform prices from 1 July. The Summer Uniform is worn from August to November and March to June, while the Winter Uniform is worn from December to March, or as is appropriate for the weather. Accordingly, Summer uniforms are best purchased from March to September. Winter uniforms are best purchased from October to February.

Used uniforms (in excellent condition) can be purchased through the PTA. Please contact the PTA at pta@ims.edu.hk to set up a time to try on and purchase uniforms.

SECURITY

During school hours, your child will be cared for by IMS staff. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with us.

Off-Campus Security: When going outside of school premises, we require a ratio of no less than one adult to four children (1:4) for the Casa dei Bambini classes and no less than one adult to six children (1:6) for the afternoon outings taken by Full Day students. We will need parents / helpers to volunteer to accompany us on outings from time to time. For first-year Casa children (age 3), we require one caregiver per child for outings.

On-Campus Security: All visitors must register when they enter an IMS Campus. Parents and Caregivers are welcome on campus, after signing in as a Parent Volunteer or showing the child's security card for drop-off or collection at the Pick-up Time. If your child is staying for after-school programmes, you may collect your child after the scheduled programme finish time.

Every student has been issued a **Security Card**, which must be shown for each child when leaving School. If you wish to have a non-parent collect your child, please call the school and provide the person's full name, and ask that person to bring a photo ID to show the school, or if this is a regular collector (helper/caregiver), please give the Security Card to that person. If the person collecting your child is not recognized by IMS staff, we will call the emergency number which you have provided to verify the identity of the person attempting to collect your child.

Any alternative pick-up arrangements must be confirmed by the child's parent with the front office at least one hour prior to the normal end of school for your child.

More details regarding the campus' security procedures are included in the attached Campus Logistics Section.

Parent Travel: If you plan to travel outside of Hong Kong when your child remains at school, please notify the school by filling in the Parent Travel Form providing the contact details of an appropriate guardian, and the duration of your trip. The guardian cannot be the family's helper or nanny, and IMS must have your confirmation by signature that, in the case of an emergency, the guardian has the right to make decisions regarding your child.

Fire Drills: Fire drills are held regularly in order to familiarise the children and staff with the exit routes, and to ensure maximum safety in the event of an emergency.

Parents should familiarise themselves with the appropriate exit routes in order to be able to help. Parents who are in the school when the fire alarm sounds must participate in the evacuation of the building according to the fire drill procedure.

PARENT – TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Parents play an important role in supporting IMS and its mission of providing an authentic, dual-language Montessori education. The IMS Parent-Teacher Association was established at IMS' inception to support IMS' special community of teachers, students, and families. The vibrancy and warmth of our parent community are a testament to, and an essential aspect of, the nurturing, child-centred environment that IMS provides for every student.

PTA Mission

The PTA collaborates closely with parents, teachers and the school management to:

- Provide a forum for parents and teachers to exchange views for the overall benefit of students at IMS.
- Promote a sense of community among the teachers, parents, and students.
- Enhance the educational environment at IMS.
- Encourage parents to actively participate in IMS programmes and activities.

Getting Involved

We encourage parents to get involved in making IMS a wonderful environment for your child. There are a myriad of opportunities for parents to contribute! We have Class Parents for each Casa class, and they may be asking for your help as needed. Each year we are seeking parents of a new Casa child to join the team in helping support the teachers and building the community. **Please let us know if you would like to volunteer to be a new Class Parent.**

You could also join one of the many subcommittees led by the PTA. You could assist students in the school Library, work on the Memory Book, or help organise annual fundraising events such as the School Picnic, Gala Dinner, or International Fair. Ideas for making more of IMS for your child are welcome. Please go to the PTA website <https://www.ims.edu.hk/our-ims-pta/> to learn more and sign up. You are most welcome to put in as much, or as little, time as you have available, whether it is a few hours a year or a few hours a month. Thank you in advance for your support!

The Parent-Teacher Association fee you are billed at the beginning of the year helps fund various projects sponsored by the PTA during the year as well as parent education sessions. All PTA funds are controlled independently by the IMS PTA.

The PTA hosts three evening PTA meetings during the course of the school year, and all parents are welcome to join. These are listed on the School Calendar. After the PTA meetings, teachers are scheduled to help you learn more about the Montessori Method and other topics of interest to families as per the school calendar. This is a great place to meet other families, support the teachers & staff, and learn what you can do to make this an ever-greater community.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up through our website <https://www.ims.edu.hk/our-ims-pta/> or contact the PTA directly – pta@ims.edu.hk.

SUPPORTING MONTESSORI AT HOME

Since you are your child's first and most important teacher, you might be wondering about the kinds of activities you could be doing at home to help your child get off to a great start in the Montessori Casa dei Bambini program. This information has been prepared as a source of suggestions and ideas, which we will be working on at school as well. Make your time exploring these activities fun and engaging. Happy learning!

SOCIAL SKILLS

1. Practice turn-taking while playing games.
2. Help your child learn to initiate a conversation. Example: May I play with you? Can we share the blocks? Would you like a turn?
3. Role-play peaceful solutions to conflicts that could arise. Examples: talking it over, sharing, taking turns.
4. Make sure your child has contact with other children his/her age.
5. Encourage and practice cleaning up after play.

INDEPENDENCE

1. Be sure your child has had time away from you.
2. Help your child learn to dress him/herself:
 - putting on sweaters and jackets
 - fastening or tying boots
 - changing from boots to sneakers and back
 - zipping jackets
 - independent toileting
 - zipping and unzipping a backpack

ATTENDING SKILLS, LISTENING SKILLS AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

1. Read to your child each day.
2. Listen to tapes and CD's of children's music, and sing along.
3. Help your child follow simple two-step directions. Example: Go to your room and get your pyjamas.
4. Limit Tablet, SmartPhone, TV and computer time.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. Encourage your child to ask questions.
2. Talk about everyday experiences.
3. Use describing words. Example: This pear is juicy. Find your purple shirt with the white stripes.
4. Help your child classify objects into categories. Example: a doll or train set is a toy, a giraffe and an elephant is an animal, etc.
5. Help your child learn his/her full name, address, and telephone number.

MOTOR SKILLS: FINE AND GROSS

Fine Motor:

1. Use a variety of art materials. Example: crayons, scissors, play dough, paints, etc.
2. Do puzzles.
3. String beads on laces.
4. Practice using a glue stick.

Gross Motor:

1. Practice going up and down a slide safely.
2. Teach your child to pump his/her legs while swinging.
3. Practice throwing, catching, and kicking a ball.
4. Jump rope to jump rope rhymes.

READING AND WRITING READINESS

1. Read, read, read in your native language! Enjoy a reading ritual with your child from birth. Children at this stage of development are learning about the world as it is. And so, books with photographs, realistic illustrations and stories based on real-life activities are best. Books with elements of fantasy and anthropomorphisation are best left to children of 6 years of age and older.
2. Read to your child each day. Encourage your child to participate. Ask questions such as, "What do you think will happen next?" and "Why do you think he did that?". For older children, discuss the themes in the book, the characters and ask them to tell about the story in their own words.
3. Recite nursery rhymes and sing rhyming songs.
4. Enrich your child's vocabulary by naming objects with their proper names.
5. Use complete sentences, offering a robust and varied vocabulary, when communicating with your child.
6. At an age-appropriate time, as recommended by your child's teacher, practice sound games to help children distinguish and recognize the sounds in words.
7. When recommended by your child's teacher, provide a chalkboard for your child to practice their writing skills. Older children may be encouraged to write notes to family members and compose stories of family activities or trips.

MATH READINESS

1. Whenever you use math, talk about it. Example: I am cutting the apple in half. We need to buy six oranges – can you help me count them? I see three horses.
2. Read nursery rhymes and storybooks that incorporate numbers.
3. Count whenever you can, anything you can!
4. Practice one-to-one correspondence by letting your child set the table or hand out snacks.
5. For older children, play games that incorporate math such as "Chutes and Ladders" and other board games. Playing cards are also great for matching games and for ordering numbers.
6. Set the timer for an activity to give your child a sense of how long it lasts.
7. Give your child a snack that's easy to count. Have him/her count the pieces and subtract them as they are eaten.

8. Whenever you check your child's height to see how much he/she has grown, talk about measurement.
9. Start a dollar jar. Use this for counting and estimating. Example: We have 10 dollars in the jar-- is that enough to buy a piece of candy that costs five dollars?
10. Have your child sort toys by size, colour and/or shape.
11. Point out shapes around the house and when doing errands.
12. Let your child help with measuring when cooking or baking.
13. Put a large wipe-off calendar on the refrigerator and markdown special events. Count down the days to each of these occasions. Recite the days of the week, and stop when you get to the day you are on.
14. Begin a countdown to the first day of the Montessori Casa dei Bambini programme.

We hope this information is helpful. Again, welcome to the IMS Montessori Casa dei Bambini Programme – we are going to have a wonderful year!

Your Montessori Casa dei Bambini Faculty Team

FORMS AND DOCUMENTS TO BE RETURNED TO IMS

Please ensure that the following documents and forms are completed and returned to IMS either via online form or in hard copy. Please complete and send the forms before **Friday 10 June 2022**.

- IMS Parental Authorisation Form:** Please complete this [online form](#) as a consent for your child to participate in school activities and on various privacy aspects, including sharing of your child's pictures/videos in internal communication or external media, and releasing parents' contacts to the PTA and other members of your class, etc.
- IMS Student Medical & Dietary Restriction Form:** Please complete this [online form](#) and upload a copy of your child's Vaccination Records. Please also upload a photo of your child, with a minimum of 300 dpi in full color on a white background. Please include your child's name in the file name of the photo.

Other Forms to be filled in / actions to be taken:

1. **Bus Registration Form** – Please return the form with the payment directly to Castle Brothers. Please note that bus forms received less than 30 days prior to the start of service usage may take additional time to arrange bussing. Parents are advised to contact the bus company as soon as possible to arrange service.
2. **School Uniform** – (please order on website <https://shop.ims.edu.hk>), or contact the PTA for used uniforms at pta@ims.edu.hk).

Please Note: The Hong Kong Government requires all students attending schools in Hong Kong to hold a valid proof or dependent visa for their stay in Hong Kong. Parents are required to provide the school with an updated copy of their child's dependent visa or any valid proof of the child's legal stay in Hong Kong as part of the enrollment process.