

Middle Years Programme Parents' Handbook



Vasa International
School of Stockholm

ANNO 1998

Below you can find some useful information on our school, our routines, policies, and the Middle 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 60 staff members. We have 21 classes from preIB (5-year olds) to MYP4 (Swedish grade 9). We are a certified IB *World School* that offers the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP).

Our school offers two streams of the Primary and Middle Years Programme;

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

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



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 at **KFUM on Rosengatan 1**, where we offer a full range of gymnastics and performance arts activities to our pupils.

At our site on **Renstiernas Gatan**, our bilingual PYP 5 and 6, and MYP students, have access to the school's design studios that offer a full range of woodwork and textile courses. 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 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 fruits and vegetables grow and are able to plant some themselves.

The site also features an obstacle 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).

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.dybeck@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

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).

MYP students are asked to leave the building after their final lesson of the day. If an MYP student has the need to stay in the school building after their final lesson they have to report their presence to *Jozita Atte*. This is due to safety regulations.

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, damaged, or stolen property.

MYP students are assigned a locker where they can lock their books and jackets. Valuables are stored in the lockers at the owner's own risk. If something of value is stolen or lost from a student locker it should be reported to the families home insurance. *Please see the contract and computer document regarding student computers.*

If large items must be brought to school, please make arrangements with a staff member to store these items safely.

Cell phones

Cell phones should be silenced and out of sight at all times during the school day. Cell phones are not to be used during the school day, other than for emergency purposes. Students caught using phones on the school grounds will be asked to leave their mobiles with management, and pick them up at the end of the school day.

- Social media is prohibited to use during school hours due to safety reasons.
- Teachers may ask students to use their cell phones for pedagogical purposes.

Code of conduct

MYP students are to abide by a code of conduct. These guidelines outline essential rules and agreements for students to follow during their time at school. A physical copy of the code of conduct is handed out by the mentor at the beginning of the school term and must be signed by both the student and guardian and returned. A digital copy of the code of conduct can be viewed on schoolsoft.

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

Lunch



Students receive healthy and well-rounded meals, 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 good food.

Special meals are available upon request. If you, for health 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. You will find this form on SchoolSoft.



Student service

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 practice **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 – Accommodation 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 accommodation 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 Älvsjö.

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.



Administration and routines

SchoolSoft and Google Classroom

SchoolSoft is the school's digital platform for administrative needs, such as attendance, schedules, test results and more. You will be provided with the information regarding login once your child has begun school (or shortly prior to). 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 legal guardian, you are responsible for keeping these details updated.

Attendance

All reporting of attendance is done in SchoolSoft. If the student is staying home 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**. MYP students should be present for the beginning of their first lesson.

Documents

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

Google Classroom is a web service developed by Google for schools that aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments. Students have access to a virtual classroom for every subject. Google Classroom is a platform where students can turn in their work and receive feedback from teachers. Parents/guardians will also receive an invitation to join Google classroom.

Assessments and Homework

Teachers put results on SchoolSoft to create easy access for you at home. Teachers use Google Classroom to post material, assignments, essays, presentations, and homework. There you can see when the assessments and homework are due and what they involve.

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 here.

Developmental talks and parent meetings

Developmental talks and parent meetings are held once a term. 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 student. Both student and legal guardians are expected to attend.

Parent meetings are where 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 MYP program. It is a great opportunity to get to meet other parents to exchange thoughts and experiences.

Grades & Report cards

Grades/Report Cards are given out twice in an academic year, at the end of each term. They will contain a summative assessment of the student's achievements in all subjects taught. Bilingual students will receive a link to their school report on SchoolSoft. International students will receive a report card from their mentors by email.

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.

Classroom supplies

Classroom supplies/equipment for students are provided by the school. This includes, but is not limited to pencils, notebooks, student calendar, colored paper, portfolio binder, colored pencils, markers, etc. Students are expected to respect the materials and supplies provided for them. This also applies to general property belonging to the school

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 an unexcused absence, and the teacher will send an email home. Parents are expected to stay informed and up-to-date on their child's attendance.

The teacher may give permission for up to five days leave each academic year. Any leave request for more than five days will have to be approved by the Principal. If you want to request vacation during school days, you need to fill in the appropriate form found on SchoolSoft and turn it into the management. Remember to always register absent days on SchoolSoft.

The school will not permit leave of absence during National Tests.

Parent engagement

We would like you to be active in your child's school work, meaning that you discuss relevant assignments and speak with your child about the unit of inquiry at hand. You are welcome to 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.

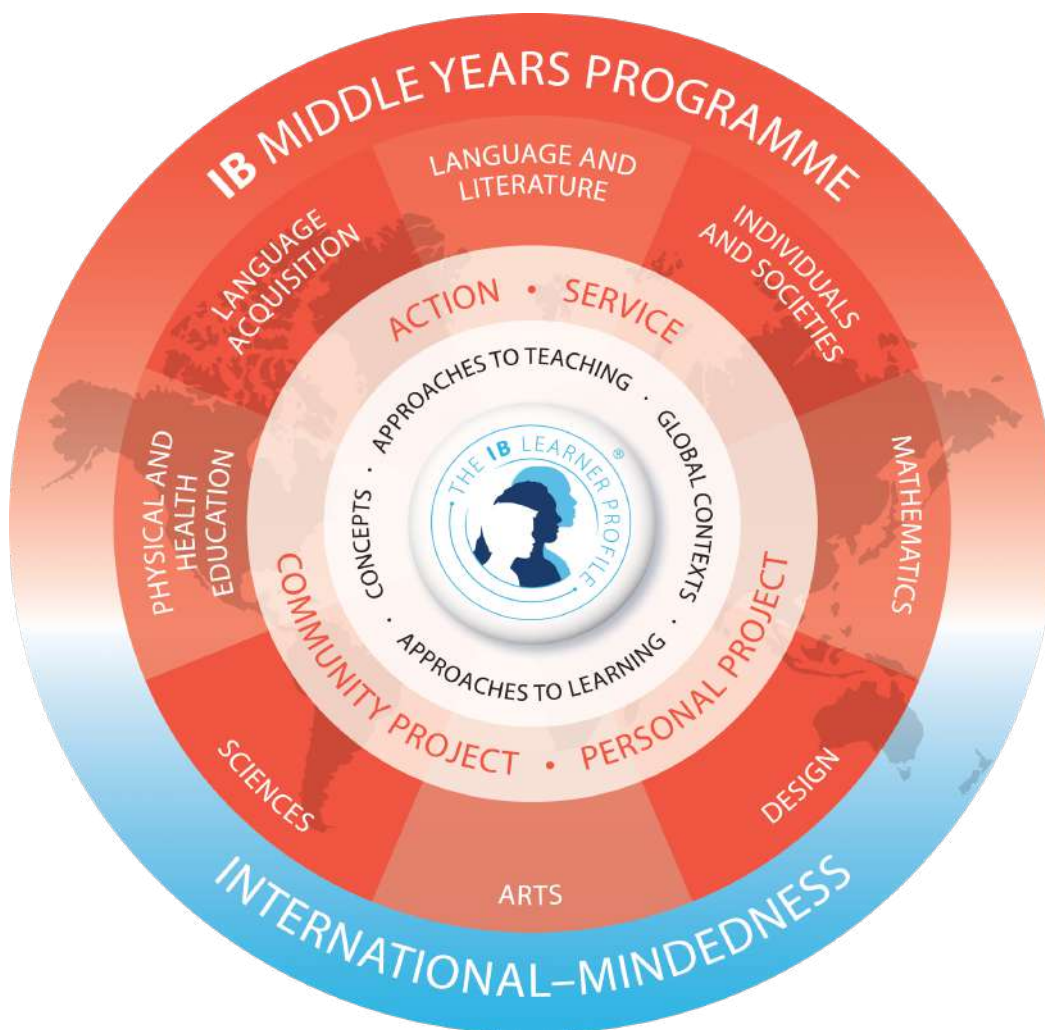
We have an active PTA that holds meetings every term where the Principal is present. The meetings are open and the PTA would love to see more parents engaged.

In an IB-school you will be asked for your opinion regarding the IB. This could be via surveys, workshops, etc. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Moving to a another Municipality

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

Teaching and learning in the MYP



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 MYP 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.

Language

As an IB school we are committed to present the students with one language in addition to the language of instruction, so in our school students are offered the choice of Spanish or French. Vasa International's bilingual classes follow both the Swedish curriculum and the IB curriculum; this means that foundation subjects (Math, Science, SO and Swedish) are taught in Swedish, while all other subjects are taught in English. Music, Art, PE (Idrott och hälsa), and Design are taught in English.

A variety of mother-tongue lessons are also offered after normal lesson time for all our students.

Knowledge - What do we want the students to know?

We study all subjects covered in the Swedish curriculum (Lgr 11). As an IB school, these subjects will be taught in our units of inquiry. We will make sure that all students reach all demands regarding content and skills that come with Lgr 11, but we will also follow the IB program of inquiry. The bilingual class report cards will reflect the student's development in comparison to the goals in Lgr 11.

Each subject at Vasa International is taught through units of inquiry. These units are based upon a central idea using a statement of inquiry that the teacher and the students explore for a number of weeks, usually 4-6. Students need to be actively working with the statement of inquiry during the current unit. Doing so helps the students deepen their understanding and inquire deeper into the unit at hand.

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

The MYP global contexts:

- **Identities and Relationships**
- **Personal and cultural expression**
- **Orientation in space and time**
- **Scientific and technical innovation**
- **Globalisation and sustainability**
- **Fairness and development**

Conceptual learning - What do we want the students to understand?

A concept is a big idea. Concepts represent the vehicle for students' inquiry into issues and ideas of personal, local and global significance, providing the means by which the essence of a subject can be explored.

The MYP identifies 16 key concepts to be explored across the curriculum. These **key concepts**, shown in the table below, represent understandings that reach beyond the eight MYP subject groups from which they are drawn.

Communities Communities are groups that exist in proximity defined by space, time or relationship. Communities include, for example, groups of people sharing particular characteristics, beliefs or values as well as groups of interdependent organisms living together in a specific habitat.	Time, space and place The intrinsically linked concept of time, space and place refers to the absolute or relative position of people, objects and ideas. Time, place and space focuses on how we construct and use our understanding of location ("where" and "when").	Identity Identity is the state or fact of being the same. It refers to the particular features that define individuals, groups, things, eras, places, symbols and styles. Identity can be observed, or it can be constructed, asserted and shaped by external and internal influences.	Creativity Creativity is the process of generating novel ideas and considering existing ideas from new perspectives. Creativity includes the ability to recognize the value of ideas when developing innovative responses to problems; it may be evident in process as well as outcomes, products or solutions.
Aesthetics Aesthetics deals with the characteristics, creation, meaning and perception of beauty and taste. The study of aesthetics develops skills for the critical appreciation and analysis of art, culture and nature.	Systems Systems are sets of interacting or interdependent components. Systems provide structure and order in human, natural and built environments. Systems can be static or dynamic, simple or complex.	Culture Culture encompasses a range of learned and shared beliefs, values, interests, attitudes, products, ways of knowing and patterns of behaviour created by human communities. The concept of culture is dynamic and organic.	Change Change is a conversion, transformation or movement from one form, state or value to another. Inquiry into the concept of change involves understanding and evaluating causes, processes and consequences.
Relationships Relationships are the connections and associations between properties, objects, people and ideas—including the human community's connections with the world in which we live.	Global interactions Global interactions, as a concept, focuses on the connections among individuals and communities, as well as their relationships with built and natural environments, from the perspective of the world as a whole.	Communication Communication is the exchange or transfer of signals, facts, ideas and symbols. It requires a sender, a message and an intended receiver. Communication involves the activity of conveying information or meaning. Effective communication requires a common "language" (which may be written, spoken or non-verbal).	Perspective Perspective is the position from which we observe situations, objects, facts, ideas and opinions. Perspective may be associated with individuals, groups, cultures or disciplines. Different perspectives often lead to multiple representations and interpretations.
Connections Connections are links, bonds and relationships among people, objects, organisms or ideas.	Logic Logic is a method of reasoning and a system of principles used to build arguments and reach conclusions.	Development Development is the act or process of growth, progress or evolution, sometimes through iterative improvements.	Form Form is the shape and underlying structure of an entity or piece of work, including its organization, essential nature and external appearance.

As well as these 16 key concepts, subject specific **related concepts** are also used to develop MYP units. Teachers can develop additional related concepts to meet the needs of students and local or national curriculum requirements. For each unit, teachers identify one or more related concepts that extends learning, leads to deeper understanding, or offers another perspective from which to understand the identified key concepts.

Skills - What do we want the students to be able to do?

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 students 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 Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills will be necessary for the students to develop and understand. The students will also have time to reflect over the ATL skills and to what extent they think the skills were applied in that certain unit of inquiry. Lgr 11 has chosen a number of skills that are desirable that the student develops for each subject. Below you can find the specific ATL skills the IB has determined essential for the development of the student.

ATL skill categories	MYP ATL skill clusters
Communication	I. Communication
Social	II. Collaboration
Self-management	III. Organization
	IV. Affective
	V. Reflection
Research	VI. Information literacy
	VII. Media literacy
Thinking	VIII. Critical thinking
	IX. Creative thinking
	X. Transfer

The focus of ATL in the MYP is on helping students to develop the self-knowledge and skills they need to enjoy a lifetime of learning. ATL skills empower students to succeed in meeting the challenging objectives of MYP subject groups and prepare them for further success in rigorous academic programmes.

Service and Action - How do we want the students to act?

Action (learning by doing and experiencing) is a key component of all IB programmes and service has always been a shared value of the IB community. IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. Service requires that students are able to build authentic connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in the community. When connected to classroom learning, the experience of service offers opportunities to apply concepts, both skills and knowledge, as students explore the community in its complexity, gain personal insight, develop existing and new skills, and grow in confidence and responsibility as they become “actors” in the “real world” beyond school.

Community Project

The community project is a compulsory part of the MYP and helps students to develop the attributes of the IB learner profile; it provides students with an essential opportunity to demonstrate ATL skills developed through the MYP and fosters the development of independent, lifelong learners. The community project also focuses on community and service, encouraging students to explore their rights and responsibilities to implement service as action in the community. As a consolidation of learning, the community project engages students in a sustained, in-depth inquiry leading to service as action in the community. The community project is usually undertaken in MYP4.

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
- quiz
- mini-conference
- observation
- short response
- project

Summative assessment

At the end of a unit of inquiry or a subject area, a summative assessment is done to see to what extent the student understands the central idea or the goals set up for the area of work.

To find our complete assessment policy and other relevant documents please visit:

https://padlet.com/vasa_international/4zxrzxo85yec

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