PaRK IS Policies

TEACHING, LEARNING & CURRICULUM

PaRK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

PaRK IS | Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum

1. **Our Vision and Mission**

At PaRK International School (PaRK IS) we teach children the skills and give them the tools to become bilingual, curious, autonomous and agile learners while achieving their personal best in a fast moving World.

The mission of PaRK IS is to educate and inspire students and provide them the skills to be happy and succeed in their individual chosen path.

We work to:

- Educate our children in an international environment, achieving fluency in reading, writing, comprehension and speaking in both Portuguese and English
- Cultivate an environment in which children/students are happy and acquire a passion for learning; where each student is monitored individually and has the opportunity to create his/her own educational path
- Facilitate a high quality programme appropriate to the age and developmental stage of each child, offering a rigorous but dynamic teaching approach
- Implement innovative and up-to-date academic, artistic, sports and technology programmes
- Safely utilise the latest technology in order to encourage its integration as an educational tool
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving;
- Adapt to a changing world to prepare students to confront challenges and seize opportunities
- Promote "learning to learn" and the art of thinking needed for continuous learning throughout life
- Promote excellence and the capacity of each student to give their best
- Teach students to learn how to properly communicate in various ways
- Build a safe and welcoming environment for students and families
- Cultivate pride in the collective experience of the PaRK IS community
- Promote a good sporting attitude, knowing how to win and lose with dignity and respect while also taken care of health.
- Create persons of integrity, who respect the diversity of others while also having an active role in society
- Encourage autonomy and responsibility in all aspects of the student's life
- Promote collaboration and interactivity between families, peers and between the educational community
- Promote fellowship programmes to involve children in worldwide social problems and have an active role in trying to make ours a better world
- Have partner companies that best serve today's youth

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

This policy establishes what quality teaching and learning look like at PaRK International School. It aims to enable and empower our staff to "teach like pros", putting learning at the centre of everything we do. It treats teaching as a technically challenging profession that can be mastered through continuous improvement and collaboration with colleagues. It also aims to establish an overview of our curriculum philosophy and the place of the PaRK Learner Profile in both the curriculum and the classroom itself.

We define *Teaching* as the range of strategies teachers use to impart knowledge, understanding, skills, and behaviours in our students. We define *Learning* as the proactive construction of this knowledge, understanding, skills, and behaviours from our students.

We further define *Curriculum* as the expressed reality of these knowledge, understanding, skills, and behaviours. The taught curriculum is the collection of learning activities, assessment and feedback opportunities, and resources we use to deliver the key learning outcomes of a subject. This is mapped in the written curriculum through our Unit Plans and Year Overviews. We share our curriculum with students and parents through Curriculum Guides and Knowledge Organisers.

3. PaRK IS TEACHING AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

To enable our teachers to be the best they can be, PaRK has created a Teaching & Learning Framework. This framework aims to:

- Inspire teachers to want to continuously improve
- Outline in a clear and transparent way what great practice looks like
- Help guide lesson observations and learning walks
- To build capacity amongst both individual teachers and the collective teaching body

The T&L Framework is developed and maintained by the PaRK Teaching & Learning Working Group (chaired by the Deputy Head - Academic). The framework uses a wide evidence-based approach in its construction. Predominantly we use the work of the Education Endowment Foundation (2021), Hattie (2021), and Rosenshine (2012) in our framework, but a full review of recognised frameworks has been made by the school here. It also incorporates the *Inspired* Teaching Standards found here.

The PaRK Teaching & Learning Framework is used to guide all formal and informal lesson observations, and is placed at the heart of our pedagogical discussion and collaboration. The design of the framework is based around the idea that certain key classroom domains can be mastered through continuous reflection and practice. These domains currently are:

- **Planning** great lessons that utilise high levels of subject knowledge and well-designed learning outcomes
- The creation of a positive **learning environment** through high expectations and challenge
- Responsive **teaching** that is evidenced through classroom management and good student progress
- Quality **learning** that is evidenced through the activation of student thinking
- Quality **assessment** that checks for learning and impacts the lesson

4. ENSURING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Section Level:

At the centre of our policy to improve teaching and learning is collaboration (Fullan, 2013). Every week we have one hour where staff come together to work on an aspect of pedagogy. These Staff Hour sessions are coordinated by SLT and are linked to the School Development Plan.

Beyond this, PaRK runs a Google Classroom for teachers (the [PaRK Virtual Learning System](#)). Here we share articles, host forums, and store a video bank of lessons and resources.

Department Level:

Further to this, all departments are given one hour a week to meet and work on department pedagogy and administration. All HODs at PaRK create a Department Development Plan at the beginning of the year which is shared and reviewed with staff throughout the year. These too are linked to the School Development Plan.

Individual Level:

There is a formal structure of Performance Development within the school. Within this system all staff meet with their line manager three times over the year to create and reflect on professional targets. Furthermore there are two full lesson observations and feedback sessions, giving teachers an opportunity to work on their pedagogical target(s).

PaRK understands that the best schools use observation as a formative tool to build pedagogical capacity amongst therein (Hattie, 2021). Therefore, there are numerous opportunities to take part in informal structures of observations across the year. HODs perform learning walks once a half term and we run a peer observation system every term to ensure all teachers are able to see other practitioners.

5. CURRICULUM

PaRK acknowledges that the best curriculums around the globe are rich in knowledge and understanding (Hirsch, 2016), but also focus on building subject-specific skills (Christodoulou, 2017). We run the IGCSE exams in Grade 9 and 10, and the IB Diploma Programme at Grade 11 and 12, as both programmes offer a good internal subject depth alongside a good breadth of subject choice. In Grade 7 and 8 we use a combination of the Cambridge curriculum standards and backward design to ensure our students gain the knowledge and develop the skills necessary for success at IGCSE, IB, and beyond.

The academic curriculum is structured in a way to ensure a good balance of core subjects and electives. The outline of subjects is:

- **Grade 7 Core:** English, Maths, Portuguese, Science, Geography, History, ICT, PE, Art, DT, Drama, Music
- **Grade 7 Elective**: Additional Language
- **Grade 8 Core**: English, Maths, Portuguese, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, ICT, PE
- **Grade 8 Electives**: Additional Language, two Art choices (Art, DT, Music, Drama)
- **IGCSE Core**: English Language, English Literature, Maths, Double or Triple Science, Portuguese First or Second/CAPLE
- **IGCSE Elective**s: Languages, Arts, Applied Sciences, Humanities

The pastoral curriculum allows for a balanced diet of Social Skills and Pastoral time. Students meet with their tutors for 10 minutes every morning. There is also 60 minutes of Year Group Time every week. The schedule for YGT is as below:

- Week 1: **Social Skills** - 60mins (led by the Well-Being Dept)
- Week 2: **Tutor Time** - 30 mins (led by tutor/HOY) and **Assembly** - 30 mins (led by HOY)

To map our curriculum, PaRK uses both long and medium term curriculum plans. We do not expect individual lesson plans to be complete unless for formal lesson observations (twice a year). Every grade in every subject is expected to have:

- A yearly curriculum plan that gives a general overview of where the units come in the year
- A yearly assessment plan that identifies the summative assessments and where they come in the year
- A series of unit plans that outline the learning outcomes, learning activities, and resources in each unit

6. PaRK IS LEARNER PROFILE

We also believe that academic rigour must be supported through a focus on the building of specific learning habits and aptitudes (Claxton, 2018). At PaRK we use 12 distinct learner attributes in our Learner Profile. These incorporate some characteristics from the IB Learner Profile, as well as from the PaRK IS vision and mission.

We aim to ensure the Learner Profile attributes are actively taught in classrooms by having a section in our unit plans dedicated to them. We also have a part of our reporting system in which teachers evaluate the amalgamation of certain attributes as our Approaches to Learning (AtL). There are five categories of AtLs according to the learner profile: **Autonomy and Resilience**; **Communication and Curiosity; Reflection and Thinking; Collaboration, Respect and Empathy**; **Confident, Courageous, Driven.**

Below is the AtL rubric we use in our report system and the division of the Learner Profile into the five AtLs.

Student Profile	Excelling	Practising	Emerging	Concerning
Autonomy and Resilience [Being prepared for learning, and dealing with setbacks]	Always prepared for class with required materials. Always submits tasks on time and to a high standard. Remains focussed and determined even when dealing with negative external pressures and setbacks	Usually prepared for class with required materials. Usually submits tasks on time and to a high standard. Generally remains focussed and determined even when dealing with negative external pressures and setbacks	Sometimes prepared for class with required materials. Sometimes submits tasks on time and to a high standard. At times, remains focussed and determined even when dealing with negative external pressures and setbacks	Almost always unprepared for class with required materials. Rarely or never submits tasks on time and to a high standard. Loses focus easily when faced with negative external pressures and setbacks
Communication and Curiosity [Communication skills and engagement in learning]	Writes, speaks and uses digital communication tools very effectively. Stays fully engaged, actively listening and willing to respond to, and ask, questions	Usually writes, speaks and uses digital communication tools effectively. Is generally engaged in lessons, actively listening and willing to respond to, and ask, questions	Sometimes has difficulty in expressing themselves effectively on paper, when speaking or when using digital communication tools. Sometimes engaged and willing to ask or answer questions.	Ability to communicate on paper, verbally or using digital tools is limited. Rarely engaged or attempts to answer questions

![PaRK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL logo]

Reflection and Thinking [Putting thought into new ideas and reflecting on progress towards goals]	Always takes time to think carefully about each new fact or concept. Constantly reflects on the progress being made towards academic and personal goals and makes changes as required.	Generally takes time to think carefully about each new fact or concept. Usually reflects on the progress being made towards academic and personal goals and makes changes as required.	Sometimes thinks carefully about the subject matter. At times, reflects on the progress being made towards academic and personal goals and considers changes.	Rarely thinks carefully about the subject matter. Does not usually reflect on the progress being made towards academic and personal goals nor makes changes when required.
Collaborative, respectful and empathic (teamwork and respect and empathy towards others)	A highly effective and supportive team member, Always works well with others and offers encouragement. Always well-mannered, consistently follows all class rules and demonstrates respect for fellow students and staff members, including those from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.	An effective and helpful team member, Generally works well with others and offers encouragement. Usually well-mannered, generally follows all class rules and demonstrates respect for fellow students and staff members, including those from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.	Sometimes effective as a team member. Can work well with others and offer encouragement. Sometimes well-mannered and follows class rules. Can demonstrate respect for fellow students and staff members, including those from different backgrounds and with different perspectives.	Rarely works well with others or offers encouragement. Consistently breaks class rules and behaviour requires regular correction. Can show poor manners, and find it hard to empathise with individuals from different backgrounds or with different perspectives.
Confident, Courageous Driven (Ambitious individuals who take calculated risks)	Always demonstrates a positive attitude and a will to excel. Willing to try new things and take risks in pursuit of ambitious personal goals.	Usually demonstrates a positive attitude and a strong will to succeed. Generally willing to try new things and take risks in pursuit of personal goals.	Sometimes demonstrates a positive attitude and a will to succeed. Occasionally willing to try new things and take risks related to personal goals.	Becomes easily demotivated when facing challenges and rarely shows the will to move forward. Reluctant to try new things and take risks

7. HOME LEARNING

Home learning at PaRK might be set by teachers for a variety of reasons:

- **Extended Practice tasks** are set to reinforce learning by asking students to retrieve key knowledge and understanding or practice the skills developed in class. The aim here is to deepen/obtain fluency.
- **Independent Learning tasks** require students to produce a product such as an essay, composition, project, etc. Students explore a subject in a self-directed (often creative) way.
- **Preparation tasks** are assigned to introduce students to material the teacher will present in the future - it is a form of pre-teaching. This might involve **Flipped Learning** techniques.

The vast majority of Home Learning should be of the first type of task, with most subjects having a small number of Independent Learning tasks spread over the year (Sherrington, 2019).

Home learning is set to fulfil the challenging and rigorous curriculum aims we have here at PaRK, but equally we recognise that our students have other commitments in the evenings and at weekends. Therefore:

- We aim to ensure that the total amount of home learning per student does not exceed 60 mins per evening
- Students are not expected to complete tasks at the weekend

- Students are given the freedom and responsibility to manage their homework timetable; they will be able to do this as teachers will not expect tasks to be completed by the next day

At PaRK Senior we do not believe in a set Home Learning timetable, but that students should manage their own workload. Below is the guideline we ask teachers to stick to when setting home learning tasks - the times in the table are considered a maximum amount of home learning to be set by subject.

Gr.	Eng	Port	Mat.	Hist	Geo	Lan.	ICT	Arts	Phy	Che	Bio	Opt.	PE	Tot.	Ave.
7	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	0		20			-	220	44
8	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	30	15	15	15		-	275	55
9	40	40	40						30	30	30	90	-	300	60
10	40	40	40						30	30	30	90	-	300	60

At IB level, we move away from a situation of Home Learning, to one of Independent Learning. Students are set Independent Learning tasks by teachers, and are expected to organise their own time (both at home and in free periods during the school day) to complete these.

For all Higher Level subjects, students may be asked to complete up to 90 minutes of Independent Learning time per subject per week. For all Standard Level subjects, they will probably have around 60 minutes worth of Independent Learning per subject. TOK and Extended Essay will also require Independent Learning, but this will vary greatly over both Grade 11 and 12 depending on key assignment deadlines.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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