



Conniston Middle School Student/ Parent IB Handbook

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our number one priority is providing your children with a superior educational experience at Conniston Community Middle School. Dignity, respect, and personal responsibility are the touchstones of our expectations. You play a vital role as partners in our mission of maintaining high academic and behavioral standards for your children and we greatly appreciate your support.

Conniston Community Middle School is an authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP) World Schools. Our commitment to high quality, challenging, and international education make Conniston a perfect site for this well-renowned program. 100% of our teachers have attended training workshops through the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Please make sure to stay up to date about IB at <http://connistonibschool.wix.com/cmsib>

It is an honor and a privilege to work with you and your children.



What Makes IB Unique?

- IB programmes are recognized around the world and ensure an increased adaptability and mobility for IB students.
- The curriculum and pedagogy IB programmes focus on international perspectives of learning and teaching, while insisting that students fully explore their home culture and language.
- IB World Schools must undergo an exhaustive authorization process in order to offer one or more of the programmes, which includes a study of the school's resources and commitment to the IB mission and philosophy.
- IB teachers participate in a wide variety of professional development opportunities to constantly update their knowledge and share their expertise with colleagues around the world.
- Many students graduating from the Diploma Programme find that it enhances their opportunities at tertiary institutions. The IB works closely with universities around the world to gain recognition for IB programmes.
- The core components of IB programmes encourage students to participate in creative and service-oriented activities, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of reflection on a personal and academic level.



History of the IB

The International Baccalaureate was founded in Geneva, Switzerland in 1968 as a non-profit educational foundation.

A group of talented, forward thinking teachers at the International School of Geneva, with assistance from several other international schools, created the IB Diploma Programme. What started life as a single programme for internationally mobile students preparing for university, has today grown into three programmes for students aged 3-19.

The programme in the early days consisted of a common pre-university curriculum and a common set of external examinations for students in schools throughout the world, seeking to provide students with a truly international education. Although the first IB schools were predominantly private international schools, they included a very small number of private national institutions and schools belonging to state education departments. This has changed over the years and today over half of all IB World Schools (authorized to offer one or more of our programmes), are state schools.

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Carrying forward the ideals and dreams of the IB founders, the organization exists to provide high quality education for a better world, as expressed in their mission statement.

IB Programmes continue to encourage this international mindedness in students and educators through the IB Learner Profile; a set of values that represent their mission and principles.

Throughout the year, they also provide a full array of professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators that enable them to:

- Implement the most effective classroom practices from around the world.
- Develop students' capacity to think critically and act compassionately in a complex, ever-shrinking world.
- Satisfy the educational needs of culturally, linguistically and economically diverse student populations.
- Build students' confidence in their learning abilities.
- Provide teaching faculty with the opportunity to develop and expand their professional skills.
- Add international perspectives to their academic offerings.
- Measure teaching and learning against an international standard.

International Baccalaureate Organization's (IBO) Mission and Strategy

The International Baccalaureate® (IB) is more than its educational programmes and certificates. At our heart we are motivated by a mission to create a better world through education.

We value our hard earned reputation for quality, for high standards and for pedagogical leadership. We achieve our goals by working with partners and by actively involving our stakeholders, particularly teachers.

We promote intercultural understanding and respect, not as an alternative to a sense of cultural and national identity, but as an essential part of life in the 21st century.

All of this is captured in our 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 programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

What is the International Baccalaureate?

The IB is a non-profit international educational organization that was established in 1968. The IB offers to schools three program of international education that span elementary, middle and high school years. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed for students aged 3-12, the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students aged 11-16, and the Diploma Programme (DP) for students aged 16-18. While these programs form a continuous sequence, each may be offered independently. In all three programs, the IBO offers schools curriculum materials, assessment procedures, teacher training workshops, program evaluations, school authorization, and comprehensive support services in English, French and Spanish.

IB programs are offered by state schools, public schools, private schools and international schools.

What is the Middle Years Programme?

It is a program of international education designed to assist students in developing personally and intellectually, as well as, understanding, attitudes and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and interrelated world.

The IBMYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It is an educational framework that requires students to study in eight subjects;

- Language A (literature taught in the student's native language)
- Language B (Foreign Language: Spanish)
- Humanities (Social Studies)
- Science
- Math
- Arts
- Physical Education
- Technology



The model embodies three fundamental concepts: communication (valuing language acquisition in at least two languages), holistic learning (finding the connections across and within the subjects and grade levels), and internationalism (a growing understanding of a student's own culture coupled with an understanding and appreciation of other cultures). National, state, and district curriculum requirements are the basis of each subject's content.

IB MYP At Conniston Middle School

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IBMYP) is designed for students aged eleven to sixteen. This period, encompassing early puberty and mid-adolescence, is a particularly critical phase of personal and intellectual development and requires a programme that assists students to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. Learning how to learn and how to evaluate information critically is as important as learning facts

It is a programme of international education designed to help students develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world. The overall philosophy of the programme is expressed through holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication that support and strengthen all areas of the curriculum.

The IBMYP Program at Conniston Middle School has been developed to encourage advanced-level thinking strategies, independent study, and interdisciplinary learning. This rigorous curriculum is intended to provide enrichment through interdisciplinary study by using individual investigations of real-world problems and solutions, large and small group dynamics, “international mindedness”, and multicultural understanding.

Under the guidance of an extraordinarily strong faculty and staff, students achieve a remarkable balance between rigorous academics and rewarding community service activities. The program will showcase an educational environment that fosters each student’s maximum development of their abilities in order to realize their contributions to self, school, community, and the world.

Benefits and objectives of the IBMYP at Conniston Middle School

The IBMYP program will promote:

- growth of cognitive processes.
- higher-level thinking strategies, application of thinking strategies to content area and to hands-on projects.
- growth of affective/social processes.
- self-recognition through self-awareness, self-analysis, and self-evaluation; social recognition through social awareness, interaction, and responsibility; and inter and intra-personal skills.
- self-initiated action; accept responsibility for their choices; pursue independent learning; and engage in convergent thinking, divergent thinking, and problem solving.

The curriculum will include development of critical thinking skills (problem solving, decision making, inductive and deductive reasoning, logical predictions, inventive and creative thinking) using Bloom’s Taxonomy as a benchmark. It will also provide plenty of instruction in research skills to expand the students’ experience with data-gathering, use of school and community resources, and presentation skills. The IBMYP program will stimulate individual interests, strengthen individual abilities in academics, and develop life skills.

The program will showcase an educational environment that fosters each student’s maximum development of their abilities in order to realize their contribution to self, school, community, and the world.

IB Learner Profile: Explanations

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing our common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet help to create a better and more peaceful world.

Qualities:**IB Learners strive to be:**

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.
Thinkers	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

IB LEARNER PROFILE : CHARACTERISTICS

<u>Quality</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
<u>Inquirers</u>	Are Curious, Independent Learners; Love Learning
<u>Knowledgeable</u>	Explore Concepts and Ideas, Acquire In-Depth Knowledge, Develop Understanding
<u>Thinkers</u>	Think Critically and Creatively; Make Reasoned, Ethical Decisions
<u>Communicators</u>	Understand and Express Ideas Confidently and Creatively; Work Effectively and Willingly in Groups
<u>Principled</u>	Act with Integrity and Honesty; Take Responsibility for Actions
<u>Open-minded</u>	Understand and Appreciate One's Own and Others' Cultures, Traditions, Perspectives
<u>Caring</u>	Show Empathy, Compassion, Respect Toward Others; Commit to Service
<u>Risk-Takers</u>	Approach Unfamiliar Situations With Courage and Forethought; Bravely and Articulately Defend One's Beliefs
<u>Balanced</u>	Are Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally Balanced
<u>Reflective</u>	Assess and Understand Strengths and Limitations

Attitudes: What do we want the students to feel?

Appreciation	appreciating the wonder and beauty of the world and its people
Commitment	being committed to their learning, persevering and showing self-discipline and responsibility
Confidence	feeling confident in their ability as learners, having the courage to take risks, applying what they have learned and making appropriate decisions and choices
Cooperation	cooperating, collaborating and leading or following as the situation demands
Creativity	being creative and imaginative in their thinking and in their approach to problems and dilemmas
Curiosity	being curious about the nature of learning and of the world, its people and cultures
Empathy	imaginatively projecting themselves into another's situation, in order to understand his/her thoughts, reasoning and emotions
Enthusiasm	enjoy learning
Independence	thinking and acting independently, making their own judgments based on reasoned principles and being able to defend their judgments
Integrity	having integrity and a firm sense of fairness
Respect	respecting themselves, others and the world around them

Service and Action in IB

Conniston's IB MYP requires all students to complete community service. Community service is an essential part of the IB MYP. Your community service will emphasize your academic achievement with experiences that benefit others who need help. You will gain a greater understanding of social and moral issues. Furthermore, community service will foster a sense of responsibility, inspire awareness, concern, reflection, and encourage development of personal skills within our local, state, national, and/or global community. You are encouraged to ask yourself "How can I make a difference?"

Action (learning by doing and experiencing) is a key component in constructivist models of education, including the kind of teaching and learning common to all IB programs. Service, as a subset of action, 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. The MYP aims to help students develop their personal understanding, their emerging sense of self and their developmentally appropriate responsibility in their community. As students become more aware and acquire a better understanding of the context, and of their responsibilities, they become empowered to make choices about how to take thoughtful and positive action. This action will be different from student to student and from context to context.

The action may involve students in:

- feeling empathy towards others
- making small-scale changes to their behavior
- undertaking larger and more significant projects
- acting on their own
- acting collaboratively
- taking physical action
- suggesting modifications to an existing system to the benefit of all involved
- lobbying people in more influential positions to act.

Service requires that students are able to build authentic connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they encounter in the community.

At Conniston each IB student is required to participate in an act of service.

In 6th grade students are required to complete 20 hours, 7th grade 25 hours and in 8th grade 30 hours. As a result IB students should, through their engagement with service and action, be able to identify their learning outcomes and develop a written self-reflection on the service they participated in.

How Do We Teach Service Learning?

Service + Learning = Service Learning

Service: means contributing or helping to benefit others and the common good.

Learning: means gaining understanding of a subject or skill through study, instruction or experience.

Service learning: **Investigation, preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration** are five stages of service learning. By understanding how each stage works, you can be more effective in making plans to help in your community.

Stage 1: Investigation: What will the student be investigating? They will need to investigate the resources that their group brings to the process of service learning. By investigating the needs of their own community and related to the specific topic being discussed.

Stage 2: Preparation: They have investigated the problem and have decided to find ways to take action. What will the student do next to prepare? Have them come up with ways that they will prepare to tackle the topic at hand.

Stage 3: Action: Once they have investigated their own skills and community needs and are prepared with background knowledge they will need to create and carry out action plan. Most often they will take action in one of these four ways: **Direct Service, Indirect Service, Advocacy and Research.**

Stage 4: Reflection: Looking back at their experience have them determine what they have learned so far and how it has impacted them and the community. Reflection takes place along the way: as they investigate and prepare, as they do the service and as they demonstrate what they have learned and accomplished.

Stage 5: Demonstration: With demonstration the student can again draw upon their abilities to showcase their service learning project. In this final stage they can review what they have learned, how they planned, what they did, and how they reflected along the way. Then they tell others about it. They can make a mural, design a comic strip, create a website, write an article for the newsletter, put together a PSA, create a brochure and so much more.

Types of Certificates and Requirements for Conniston IB Students

The following shows the two levels of certificates students can receive at the end of MYP Year 3 (8th Grade). It is important that all hours are completed each year in order to ensure all requirements have been met for the IB MYP program at Conniston.

	Honorary Certificate requirements	Exemplary Certificate requirements
Grade Point Average	For students who have a minimum 2.75 GPA in 8th grade. This certificate also requires a minimum of 30 hours completed in 8th grade. There is no high school credit requirement for this certificate.	For students who have a minimum of a 3.5 GPA in 8 th grade and who have earned at least two high school credits. This certificate also requires a minimum of 30 hours in 8 th grade as well as all hours from 6 th and 7 th grade completed.
Conduct	All 3's and 4's in conduct.	All 3's and 4's in conduct.
Community Service	Minimum 20 hrs in yr 1 Minimum 25 hrs in yr 2 Minimum 30 hrs in yr 3	Minimum 20 hrs in yr 1 Minimum 25 hrs in yr 2 Minimum 30 hrs in yr 3