



Qatar-Finland International School Parent Handbook 2018-2019





Dear Families,

Welcome to the Q.F.I. School community. Our school wants to share the learning journey together with your family as your child's education is extremely important. We hope that this handbook will help you organise your daily lives and find common understanding in educating your children.

In this handbook, there are some practices and procedures we have in our school. However, the most important thing is that your children feel you are interested in their education and share the joy of learning.

Wishing a good academic year 2018- 2019.

Sincerely,

Mr. Juha Repo
Principal



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Vision..... | 4 |
| Mission..... | 5 |
| Values..... | 5 |
| • Respect..... | 5 |
| • Communication..... | 5 |
| • Professionalism..... | 5 |
| • Co-operation..... | 5 |
| • Equality..... | 5 |
| Our Way of Teaching..... | 6 |
| Responsibility and Support..... | 7 |
| Curriculum..... | 8 |
| Admissions and School Fees..... | 10 |
| Student Assessment..... | 10 |
| Daily Working Hours and Structure..... | 12 |
| Extra Curricular Activities (ECA)..... | 13 |
| Student Support..... | 14 |
| School Policies (e.g. Fee Policy, Uniform Policy, Behavior Policy, Device Policy, Student Attendance)..... | 14 |
| Health and Safety..... | 14 |
| Lunch..... | 15 |
| Transportation..... | 15 |
| Drop-off and Pick-up..... | 15 |
| Money..... | 16 |
| Library..... | 17 |
| Home-School Cooperation..... | 17 |



Contact information

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Vice Principal G0-2: | Ms. Hanne Patomäki – 3345 4875 |
| Vice Principal G3-5: | Mr. Jerker Polso – 5069 3343 |
| Vice Principal G6-9: | Ms. Tarja Männikkö – 3372 8539 |
| Head of Admissions: | 5032 2893 |
| Head of HR: | Ms. Amira Taawash – 4012 7895 |
| Front desk: | Ms. Marwa Mahmoud – 4012 7890 |
| CFEE, Lead Expert: | Ms. Minna Repo – 5501 2649 |
| Executive Coordinator | Ms. Hanaa Konbaz |

Teachers can be reached through email firstname.lastname@qfiscchool.com or via Parent Portal in Digital Campus.

The teaching staff and parents will collaboratively define other communication channels if needed. The school will not give out the personal contact information of the teaching staff.

In all student-related matters, the first point of contact is always your child's class teacher/homeroom teacher.

Vision

We are a learning community dedicated to inspiring success and nurturing well-being. Finnish education excellence is at the heart of all we do, because we believe that everybody deserves the best possible future.

Mission



Respect for diversity

We are different yet we are the same. Let's embrace this.



Responsibility for learning

We are all learners for life. We trust the professionalism of our teachers, and we trust our students to be proactive learners.



Courage to be creative

To be a pioneer is to take educated risks. To be an innovator is to use your imagination.



Collaboration for shared SUCCESS

Working together works.



Global citizenship

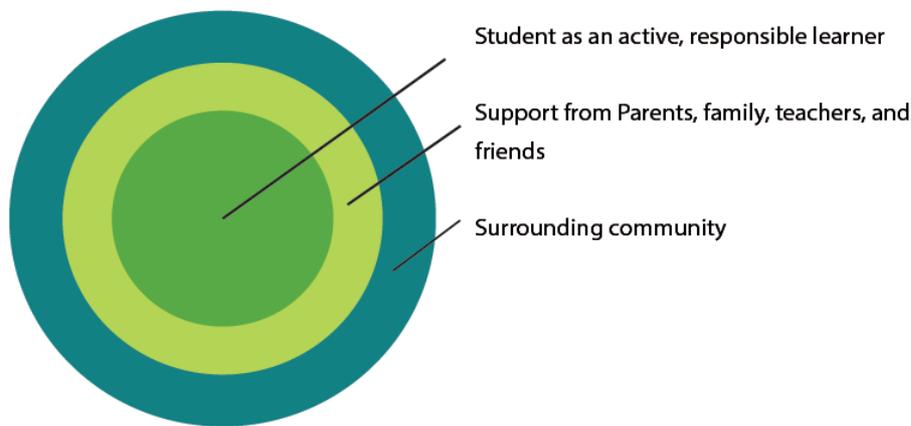
We are citizens of the world, confidently navigating our own path to reshape the future.

Values



Concept of learning

The philosophy and theoretical basis of the Q.F.I. School lies in socio-constructivism and socio-cultural approach and it introduces the idea of meaningful learning – purposeful studying – reflective teaching process as a foundation of pedagogy in a networked society. The school recognizes an individual learner and diversity of learners and supports the learning process of each student. Modern and versatile learning environment enables student to acquire, use and produce knowledge, and enhances participation and collaborative



Our Way of Teaching

Most of the content topics are designed to form larger, holistic entireties where several subjects are combined in the most feasible way. Teacher collaboration plays an important role in this approach. The teachers of the same grade level mix the groups and utilize their strengths for the best possible outcomes. The teachers need to plan the activities together!

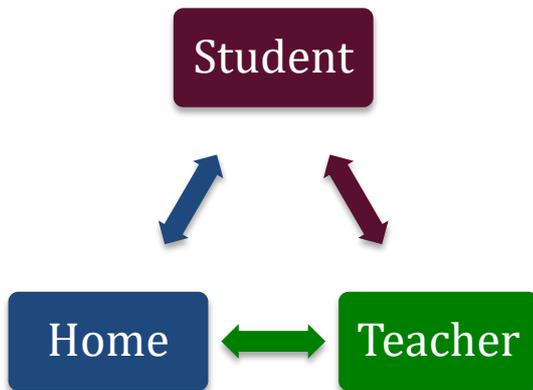
In the early years, learning is organized through practicing skills together with heavily integrated themes rising from the curriculum topics and the children's interests. At this level, making a clear distinction whether children are studying e.g. Math or Arts is not relevant, but rather the relevance raises from the integrated content of the learning activities and their connection to the children's lives. Early learning takes place through play and children's active participation in collaborative knowledge construction.

The older the students, the stronger are the roles of individual subjects in their curriculum. At this point the school also introduces the subject teacher system. However, learning should still

be organized around integrated themes. These themes and integrated activities are planned collaboratively so that the division of responsibilities in implementation is utilizing the strengths of each staff member.

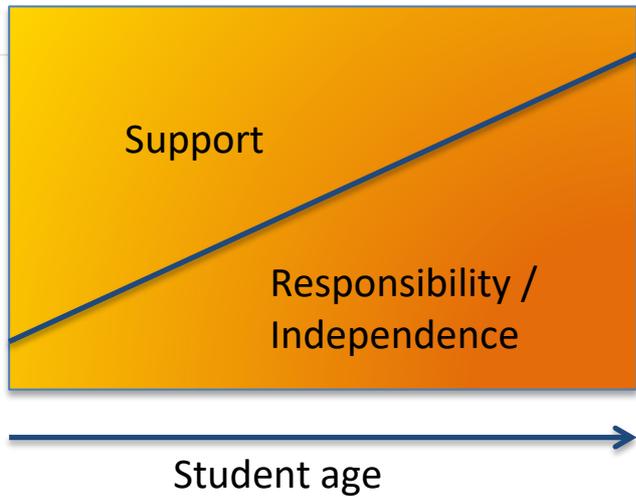
Another emphasis is put on making sure our students get enough physical exercise during a school day. Therefore, in the classrooms our students may use balance boards whenever standing and gymnastic balls when sitting to do pencil work. Staff together with older students organize optional activities for the longer breaks and we encourage all students to participate. The breaks are planned to be part of holistic learning.

Responsibility and Support



The Finnish system strongly believes in collaboration of the stakeholders mentioned in the picture. There are several studies showing that the students coming from homes that work together with the school and show interest for education, perform socially and academically much better than their peers without this support.

At the same time, the Finnish Education System wants to emphasize the fundamental responsibility for learning, which is always on the student. When bringing up independent learners this responsibility must be taken seriously and nurtured from an early age. Students at all ages can decide if they listen to teacher's instructions. This is an age- appropriate sign of responsibility and it is needed for learning and higher thinking skills.



Our school believes in gradual release of support. The child is never left alone. The nature of support varies. The younger the child, the more support is available. However, we always keep in mind that a young child as well as a mature adult has both the ability to take responsibility and the need for support.

Curriculum

The Q.F.I. School curriculum provides a well-balanced system incorporating highly academic skills and strong self-expression and creative skills. The curriculum combines the Finnish National Core Curriculum with the Qatari curriculum standards.

Our teaching approach is thematic, integrated and child-centered. The instruction provides opportunity for successful academic achievement alongside nurturing your child as a whole person. Our teachers have high level content knowledge combined with strong pedagogical skills, a variety of methodological tools and approaches to serve the individual needs of your child.

Apart from enhancing academic achievement, we work to support the development of the following cross-cutting skills:

- Higher level cognitive skills, learning to learn
- Cultural competences, interaction and self-expression
- Looking after oneself, managing daily activities, and safety
- Multi-literacy
- ICT competence
- Working life skills and entrepreneurship
- Participation, empowerment and responsibility



More content related information can be found on school website (www.qfiscchool.com).





Admissions and School Fees

Please, refer to the Admissions Policy and School Fee Structure on the school website (www.qfiskool.com). According to Ministry guidance, signing the school policies is required for securing a place in the Q.F.I. School.

Student Assessment

Every child that applies to our school goes through the admissions assessment. We assess the students in order to place them in the most appropriate grade level based on their skills. After the initial assessment, the admissions team holds the right to place the student at the appropriate grade level.

Assessment is based on holistic evaluation of the child's learning and his/her performance during the test. The school looks into academic, social, emotional and motoric skills as well as behavior and attitude since they all are equally valuable in child's holistic development. Low performance in any of these areas might be a reason for a refusal of an applicant.

At the beginning of the school year the school pedagogical staff prepares a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for each student. The mentioned aims come from the school curriculum. The PLP gives a holistic overview of child's strengths and weaknesses and sets some objectives for and tools for the ongoing term. The PLP is reviewed for every term.

The most important data for student assessment comes through continuous teacher observations and continuous formative assessment. In these processes the teacher is able to collect information about student progress through versatile sources. Observing student's daily work and using continuous formative assessment on daily bases gives the teacher realistic and up-to-date information about student's academic level, working skills and behavior. For example, the following documentation is used:

- teacher's notes, photos, videos
- student test results
- student portfolios
- student self-evaluation documents
- group self-evaluation documents

The school year is divided into three terms. Students receive a report card at the end of each term. Prior to this the parents have a possibility to meet teachers in a Parent-Teacher Conference or Student-Led Conference.

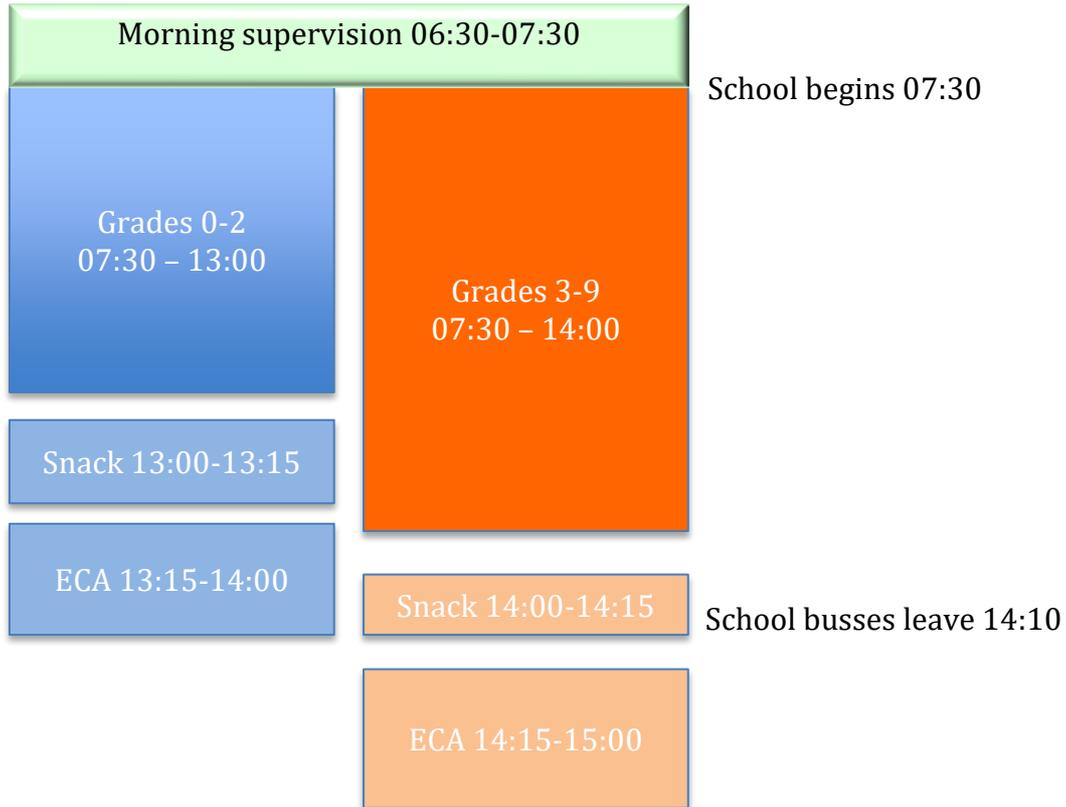
In the early education (Grades 0-2) the evaluation is written and descriptive. Starting from grade 3 student assessment follows numeric scale from 4-10 (4 being failed and 10 being outstanding) with a descriptive text.

The children are taught to use peer- and self-evaluation as a natural part of daily routines and group activities. The use of these methods enhances the understanding between learning and assessment and promotes the construction of stronger and more realistic self-image.



Daily Working Hours and Structure

School gates open 06:30
School begins 07:30



All students have also longer breaks during the school day. School day structure can be changed according to the outside weather conditions. During the winter months, it is important that parents see to their children's warm clothing because cold weather does not prevent the children from going outside to play. If your child has a medical reason for not being able to go outside, please contact the class teacher / homeroom teacher / school nurse.

Extra Curricular Activities (ECA)

Grades 0-2:

- Snack 13:00-13:15 (in School Canteen)
- ECA starts 13:15 – end times vary according to the activity

Grades 3-9:

- Snack 14:00-14:15 (in School Canteen)
- ECA starts 14:15 – end times vary according to the activity

The objectives of extra-curricular activities are:

- to support the educational work of the home and school
- to increase involvement on the part of children and young people
- to provide an opportunity for developing social skills and nurturing a sense of community
- to provide an opportunity to feel one is capable and successful
- to develop creative activity and thinking
- to encourage children and young people to produce their own culture
- to provide an opportunity to become more familiar with the student
- to support the pursuit of interests and promote constructive pastimes

The school offers a wide variety of Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) mainly organized by outsourced companies. Students staying after school for ECA have a 15 min supervised snack break. The representative of ECA provider picks up the students from the school canteen. The companies are also responsible for supervising the students after activities until they are picked up.

More information about ECAs including contact information can be found on the school website.

NOTE: All inquiries about outsourced activities must be addressed directly to the provider.



Student Support

Our focus is on early intervention in a flexible manner with solid co-operation between the different stakeholders. In order to prevent the emergence and growth of problems we offer support in three categories: general, intensified and special support.

Everyone is entitled to general support. It is a natural part of everyday teaching and learning process. Intensified and special support categories are based on careful assessment and long-span planning. If general support is not enough, further care is planned by multi-professional Student Welfare Team. The team consists of Vice Principal, School Counselor, Special Needs Teachers and School Nurse.

School nurse is available in the school every school day for emergencies and other health matters. Please contact the nurse for appointment or enquiries (4012 7896). Please, do not bring your child to school if he/she is ill.

School Policies (e.g. Fee Policy, Uniform Policy, Behavior Policy, Device Policy, Student Attendance)

Please refer to the school policy document at <https://qatarfinlandschool.com/schoollife/>

Health and Safety

The school has a Health & Safety & Environment Team whose responsibility is to coordinate safety related topics inside the school and in relation with relevant stakeholders. The staff has been trained for first aid and fire safety.

The school has a full-time nurse. School nurse is available in the school every school day for emergencies and other health matters. We ask you to inform the nurse about your child's potential medication or other health related issues. You can contact the nurse for appointment or enquiries (tel. 4012 7896 or email [firstname.lastname\(a\)qfischool.com](mailto:firstname.lastname(a)qfischool.com)).



The school organises evacuation drills each term. The school has a Health and Safety Plan. We kindly ask you to exercise extreme caution while driving in our drop-off / pick-up areas. The pedestrian crossings (zebra crossing) are no parking zones. Please, educate your children to use these marked crossings.

Lunch

The school has a Canteen. The provider is operating a **non-cash system** based on bracelet (students) or canteen ID card (parents). If you want to use the canteen services, please come and see the school finance office.

More detailed information will be given by the Canteen provider (Jazz Café) as soon as possible.

There is always a possibility to have a packed lunch brought from home. The students are expected to have healthy, nutritious packed lunches with them. Soft drinks, chips/crisps, nuts, chocolate or other sweets are not allowed.

Transportation

The school cooperates with Safari Transport. Transportation Office is located at the bus gate. All inquiries concerning school transportation should be addressed directly to Safari Transport
tel. 5007 9317
email: registration@safaritransport.com

Drop-off and Pick-up

The school gates open 06:30 in the morning. From 6.30 to 7.00 the children are in the Assembly Hall or the Gym. After 7.00 children go outside weather permitting. There are two official drop-off / pick-up areas both with entrance and exit gates. The school busses are using the side entry and exits. Please, note that both parking areas are one-way drive areas. Use consideration and caution when parking your car so that it doesn't obstruct the traffic and cause dangerous situation. All cars must exercise reverse parking. The pedestrian crossings (zebra crossing) are not parking zones. Please, educate your children to use these marked crossings.



In case the child is picked up earlier than usual, the person picking up must fill in a form (Student Early Pick up Form). This can be acquired from the school reception. It must be signed by the teacher. No student is allowed to leave without the signed form.

Grade 0-6 students must be escorted out from the school premises by an adult. Only secondary (grades 7-9) students are allowed to exit the premises independently.

Q.F.I. School takes their responsibility on students' health and safety very seriously. We think that it is important that the students get enough free time and rest. Also, according to our policies, the students need to be supervised at all times to ensure their safety. Instead of monitoring the late pick-up, the school staff is occupied with numerous other duties after the teaching hours. **The school is not liable for the safety of the children after the end of the last lesson.**

For these reasons, the students should be picked up promptly after their school day is over.

- 1.If there is a frequent pattern of student being picked up late (10 times), the **Class / Homeroom Teacher** will contact the **family and the Student Welfare Team**.
- 2.If this policy is continuously violated (10 additional times), the parents will be asked to meet with the **Counselor** and Class/Homeroom Teacher. An **Action Plan** is made for further procedures.
- 3.Further violations of this policy (10 additional times), the parents will be asked to meet with the **Vice Principal**, Counselor and Class/Homeroom Teacher. The student and the parents sign a **Conditional Agreement**, in which the school expectations are reinforced.
- 4.For further cases of tardiness (10 additional times), the student will **not be offered a place** at the school for the next academic year.

Money

We urge you not to have the students bring money to school. The responsibility for any money that students might possess lies on the family.



Library

Library is a versatile learning environment, where our students can read, study, research and do projects alone and in groups utilizing the modern technology. Students may borrow books for a specified time using their student ID cards. In case there is any damage or loss of the library materials, the parents are liable for covering the costs before the student is able to borrow more materials. Unpaid library fees can cause for student not to get his/her report card at the end of the term.

Home-School Cooperation

The school strongly believes that bringing up children is a collaborative task, which requires shared values and understanding between homes and the school. Q.F.I. School provides the parents with a handbook, which includes all school policies and procedures. This will help them organize their daily lives and find common understanding with the school in educating their children.

In the Q.F.I. School, we believe that the responsibility of learning is shared between students, teachers and homes. Whilst the parents are primarily responsible for the upbringing of their child, we support them by taking responsibility for the child's education at school.

Parents are welcome to our school to join classes, to talk to staff and to contribute to our community building after negotiating this with the school administration. We hope that parents will be active partners in supporting all aspects of their children's learning, in and outside of school. **The first point of contact for the parents is always the Class/Homeroom teacher who will in turn contact other professionals when needed.** Possible further actions will be decided in collaboration with parents.

All our teachers are willing and happy to talk with the parents about their children's learning or any school matter that they might have in mind. However, this is not done during the lessons or other duties.

Home-school collaboration is enabled through following structures:

- Parents receive **feedback** about their child's behavior and academic performance in school **on a daily basis** through various means of communication (e.g., phone calls, e-mails, scheduled meetings, student management system, etc.).
- Parents receive a **weekly letter** from teachers with general information of the class (special events, tests, things to remember), topics that are being taught during the week and some pedagogical guidance on how to support the child at home.



- The school year is divided into three terms. Students receive a report card at the end of each term. Prior to this the parents have a possibility to meet teachers in a **Parent-Teacher Conference or a Student-Led Conference**.
**The first and second term report cards include the respective term evaluation. The last report card covers the student's progress over the whole academic year.*
- There is **Principal's Morning coffee** every first Thursday of the month at 7:30 am in the Canteen.
- The school has a **Parent Association (PA)**. PA is a parent-led group that supports the school in its primary task according to the school values. Teachers collect contact information of the parents who are interested in acting as Class Representatives. The school point of contact is the Lead Expert, Ms. Minna Repo.

The aims of PA are:

- To enrich the children's education by promoting parental involvement in supporting school policies and programs in a constructive way
- To maintain and foster a constructive partnership between staff and parents in the interests of the school and children
- To act as a vehicle for discussion, learning and positive action
- To enhance programs offered by Q.F.I. School
- To work toward achieving these aims through fundraising and other activities