



The Primary Years Programme

at Al Mustafa Academy

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada



Al Mustafa Academy is a Candidate School* for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. These are schools that share a common philosophy—a commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that Al Mustafa Academy believes is important for our students.

The IB Primary Years Programme at AlMustafa Academy

Al Mustafa Academy offers a balanced and academically challenging education, which is designed to develop individuals who are both independent learners and international citizens.

What is an IB education?

The IB continuum of international education for 3-19 year olds is unique because of its academic and personal rigour. We challenge students to excel in their studies and in their personal growth. We aim to inspire a quest for learning throughout life that is marked by enthusiasm and empathy. The IB aspires to help schools develop well-rounded students with character: students who can respond to challenges with optimism and an open-mind; students confident in their own identities; students who make ethical decisions; students who join with others in celebrating our common humanity; students who are prepared to apply what they learn in real world, complex and unpredictable situations.

The IB offers high-quality programmes of international education that share a powerful vision. An IB education is informed by the values described in the learner profile and:

- centres on learners – the IB's student-centred programmes promote healthy relationships, ethical responsibility and personal challenge
- develops effective approaches to teaching and learning – IB programmes help students to develop the attitudes and skills they need for both academic and personal success
- works within global contexts – IB programmes increase understanding of languages and cultures, and explore globally significant ideas and issues
- explores significant content – IB programmes offer a curriculum that is broad and balanced, conceptual and connected.

IB learners strive to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. These attributes of internationally minded people represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond intellectual development and academic success.

Many of you may have seen the IB Primary Years Programme model before, but do you know what it means?

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

What is the Primary Years Programme?

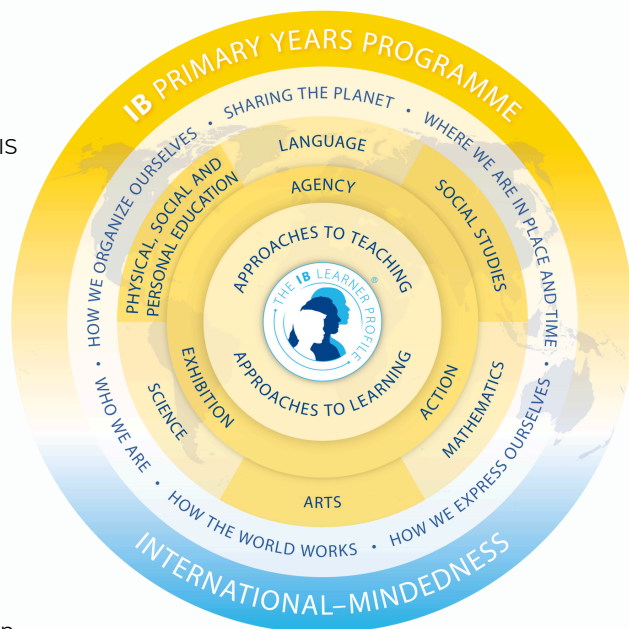
The PYP is an international framework which focuses on the development of the whole child addressing social, physical, emotional, cultural and academic needs for learners. IB offers the PYP for students aged 4 onwards. The International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed to build upon the natural curiosity of the child. Intended for children ages 3 to 12, the programme focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.

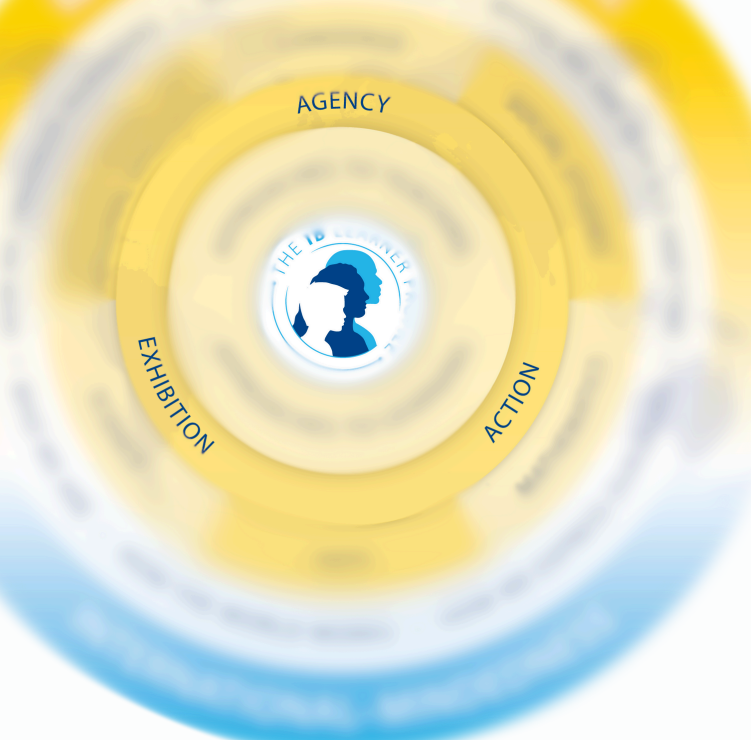
The PYP, like all IB Programmes, is transdisciplinary, meaning students learn across subject areas while investigating big ideas. As a transdisciplinary, inquiry-based and student-centred education with responsible action at its core, the PYP remains trusted, timeless and transformational. Through the PYP, students experience learning that is engaging, significant, challenging and relevant as it spans between, across and beyond traditional subject boundaries.

The enhanced PYP framework emphasizes the central principle of agency that is threaded throughout the new organizing structure of the programme:

the learner, learning and teaching and the learning community.

Augmenting the focus of the “written, taught, and assessed” curriculum with the human elements—the learner and the learning community—underlines that everyone connected to the school community has voice, choice and ownership to impact learning and teaching.





What is Agency?

Agency is the power to take meaningful and intentional action, and acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of the individual, supporting voice, choice and ownership for everyone in the learning community.

Agency is present when students partner with teachers and members of the learning community to take charge of what, where, why, with whom and when they learn. This provides opportunities to demonstrate and reflect on knowledge, approaches to learning and attributes of the learner profile.

Students with agency:

- have voice, choice and ownership; and a propensity to take action
- influence and direct learning
- contribute to and participate in the learning community

What about Action?

Student-initiated action is considered as a dynamic outcome of agency, and an integral part of the learning process that can arise at any time, within or outside the programme of inquiry.

Action might come in the form of: participation, advocacy, social justice, social entrepreneurship, and life choices.

... And Exhibition

As a powerful demonstration of agency, the exhibition has been repositioned to reflect students' capacity to take action on an issue they have chosen to explore, as well as acknowledging the community of learners that have nurtured them through their years in the PYP.

A more flexible approach to the exhibition will take students' experience at Al Mustafa Academy into account while emphasising that students have the capacity to independently initiate, design and lead the exhibition.

IB learner profile

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

As IB learners we strive to be:

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



I have heard the term UNIT OF INQUIRY What does it mean?

In the PYP, students learn about significant concepts through units of inquiry.

The six transdisciplinary themes that guide units of inquiry and compose a year of study are:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organise ourselves
- Sharing the planet

Units of inquiry interweave subject areas such as mathematics, language, arts, science and social studies. This approach encourages students to make their own connections between what they learn in core subject areas and how it relates to the world around them.

What do students in the PYP Learn?

Al Mustafa Academy outlines the specific knowledge content and academic curriculum guided by the following five essential elements:

- The knowledge content is organised under the transdisciplinary themes. The specific topics that students will cover can be found in our curriculum guides.
- The learning skills aim to help students become independent, well functioning, self-motivated learners.
- The learning attitudes aim to develop a lifelong love of learning and nurture a child's curiosity and confidence.
- The action component emphasizes the need to connect the student with his or her potential and responsibility for using what was learned.
- The rigorous guidelines for classroom practices to match the educational philosophy and values of the IB are communicated through professional development and a school's internal reflection process.

What do subjects are covered in the PYP ?

The six subject areas identified within the PYP are:

- language (LA)
- mathematics
- science
- social studies
- arts
- personal, social and physical education

At Al Mustafa Academy, students in the PYP are taught in English and study Arabic as their additional language.

The Arabic language programme offers support for students who are new to the language, and mother-tongue support for students whose native language it is.

The PYP acknowledges that development of mother-tongue language is crucial for both cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity.

What are Approaches to Learning?

In order to be prepared for lifelong learning and conduct purposeful inquiry, students need to master a whole range of skills which are relevant to all subject areas as well as life outside school.

- Social skills
- Research skills
- Thinking skills
- Communication skills
- Self-management skills

What do we want students to Understand?

In order to develop a holistic approach to learning the PYP identifies key concepts that have relevance within and across subjects. These concepts often form the basis of questions that are used to drive children's inquiry and lead to a deeper understanding of what is being learned. These concepts include:

Form: What is it like?

Observing, identifying, describing and categorizing.

Function: How does it work?

Analyse the function, role, behaviour and the ways in which things work.

Causation: Why is it like it is?

Prompting students to ask "Why?" and of helping them to recognize that actions and events have reasons and consequences.

Change: How is it changing?

Realization that we are growing up in a world in which the pace of change, both local and global, is accelerating.

Connection: How is it connected to other things?

helps focus on the relationships within and among systems are often complex, and that changes in one aspect of a system will have consequences, even though these may not be immediately apparent; that we must consider the impact of our actions on others, whether at the immediate, personal level or at the level of far-reaching decisions affecting environments and communities.

Perspective: What are the points of view?

Helping students reject simplistic, biased interpretations, towards seeking and considering the points of view of others, and towards developing defensible interpretations.

Responsibility: What is our responsibility?

This concept was selected because of the need to develop in students the disposition towards identifying and assuming responsibility, and towards taking socially responsible action. This concept is directly linked to the action component, one of the essential elements in the PYP curriculum.

What are Approaches to Teaching?

- Based on inquiry
- Focused on conceptual understanding
- Developed in local and global contexts
- Focused on effective teamwork and collaboration
- Differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- Informed by formative and summative assessment.

