



O CASTRO
INTERNATIONAL
BRITISH SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

2015-2016 Parent Handbook



CONTENTS

1. Welcome
2. Introduction
3. Curriculum
 - 3.1 Aims and Objectives
 - 3.2 School Structure
 - 3.3 Early Years Framework
 - 3.4 Assessment for Learning (AFL)
 - 3.5 Learning Journeys (*Reports*)
 - 3.6 Homework
 - 3.7 Reading
 - 3.8 Language Acquisition
 - 3.9 Guidance Department
 - 3.10 Special Educational Needs
 - 3.11 Positive Reinforcement
4. School Organisation
 - 4.1 Child Entry
 - 4.2 Breakfast Club
 - 4.3 Dismissal
 - 4.4 Early Dismissal
 - 4.5 Aftercare
 - 4.6 Bus Services
 - 4.7 Punctuality
 - 4.8 Attendance
 - 4.9 Illnesses
 - 4.10 Medicines
 - 4.11 Allergies
 - 4.12 First Aid
 - 4.13 Head Lice
5. Our School Day
 - 5.1 Academic Calendar
 - 5.2 Early Years Timetable
 - 5.3 Weekly Sessions
 - 5.4 Lunch
 - 5.5 Snack
 - 5.6 Playground
 - 5.7 Wet Play
 - 5.8 Nap Time
 - 5.9 Tooth brushing

- 5.10 Extracurricular Activities
- 5.11 Events
- 5.12 Birthdays
- 5.13 School Trips
- 5.14 Money Collections
- 5.15 Uniform
- 5.16 Spare Clothing
- 5.17 Toys
- 6. Communication
 - 6.1 School Diary
 - 6.2 Nursery Welcome
 - 6.3 New Pupil Welcome
 - 6.4 Meet the Teacher
 - 6.5 Parent-Teacher Meetings
 - 6.6 Classroom Visits
 - 6.7 Parent Partnership
 - 6.8 Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
 - 6.9 School Website
 - 6.10 School Email

Welcome

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Early Years Team, I wish to extend to you and your child a very warm welcome to a wonderful year ahead at O Castro International British School.

Over the past couple of years, I have been working under the direct supervision and guidance of Mari Carmen Vazquez, the school owner, in developing the Early Years Programme at our school. We are very proud of the successes of our programme, the excellent relationships we have with the families and of the staff who work hard to making our school a happy place where children can learn and play in harmony. We hope that the partnership we build between school and home will enhance and support your child's learning and development throughout the first years of school.

The Early Years handbook is intended as a reference guide throughout the school year. We hope that it will answer most of the questions you might have throughout the year and if any of the details change we will do our best to keep you informed. If you have any questions or concerns after you have read the Early Years Handbook, please feel free to contact me for more information.

We look forward to working with you and your family in making this a memorable year at O Castro International British School.

My Kindest Regards,

Ms. Monica Fontan
Early Years Coordinator



Introduction

This handbook contains general information for parents and has been developed to provide families with specific information about our Infant Department (Early Years Foundation Stage) and the programme we offer. It includes clear guidelines regarding our curriculum, as well as policies, procedures and parent expectations.

O Castro International School provides a wonderful place for children to grow and develop in a culturally diverse and nurturing environment. We believe that our children need to feel secure and important at all times! We build on a strong foundation by providing learning, adventure, and guidance. Children will grow in an environment that invites and encourages their curiosity and questions as well as provides outlets for them to express themselves and their personal experiences. We encourage thoughtful and respectful interaction between all people involved with our school community making children feel comfortable to open up and take life in!

Our Early Years Department is staffed with a dedicated, hard-working and professional body of teachers who work alongside our families in order to provide an environment that facilitates the growth of children into well-adjusted individuals with positive self-images. Families are actively involved in the school and are a part of the learning process.

Curriculum

Aims and Objectives

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at O Castro International School offers planned activities and experiences that help children make progress in their development and learning. We aim to provide a well-planned and resourced curriculum to take each child's learning forward and to provide opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and respect. Children are monitored throughout Early Years to ensure that they are making progress. We endeavour to identify and address particular difficulties in any of the areas of learning and development, so that achievements can be celebrated. Partnership with parents is seen as key to children's learning and development.

Our curriculum aims to support, foster, promote and develop children's:

- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning: in particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners;
- social skills: in particular by providing opportunities that enable them to learn how to cooperate and work harmoniously with each other and to listen to each other;
- attention skills and persistence: in particular the capacity to concentrate on their own activity or on group tasks;

School Structure

O Castro International School is divided into 'key stages' as organised in the English National Curriculum.

***Early Years Foundation Stage** refers to the framework for children up to the age of five. We follow a play-based curriculum which involves a balance between 'child-initiated' and 'adult-initiated' activities.

At the age of 5, children enter Primary and will be in Key Stage 1. Key Stage 1 is made up of 2 grade levels; Year 1 and Year 2. **See Appendix A**

All Nursery and Reception classes consist of a qualified native Teacher and a bilingual Teaching Assistant.

Your child's teacher is your main point of contact at school. He/She

- Helps your child to become settled, happy and safe
- Is responsible for your child's care, development and learning
- Takes a careful note of your child's progress, sharing this with you and giving ideas as to how to help your child at home

Early Years Framework

The curriculum for Early Years is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework document published in the United Kingdom. The framework consists of:

- The **7 areas of learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge
- Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the Reception year; these expectations are called the **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)** **See Appendix B**
- Assessments that will tell you about **your child's progress** through the EYFS

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first. These are:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and

interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

These prime areas are those most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outdoors.

Activities are planned through a series of themes and topics that are changed every few weeks and offer experiences in all 7 areas of learning and development. The Early Years teaching staff will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. All experiences and activities are planned and monitored by the Early Years staff.

Assessment

Assessment for Learning (AfL) means using evidence and feedback to identify where children are in their learning, what they need to do next and how best to achieve this. Through on-going assessment we hope to build a complete picture of a child's development, not only intellectually, but emotionally, socially and physically.

Through informal observations, children in the Early Years are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. These goals are the expected levels that your child should reach by age 5. [See Appendix B](#)

At the end of the EYFS teachers complete an assessment which is known as the EYFS Profile. This assessment is carried out by the Reception teacher and is based on what they, and other Early Years staff caring for your child, have observed over a period of time.

Another important part of the EYFS Profile is your knowledge about your child's learning and development, so do let your child's class teacher know about what your child does with you: such as how confident your child is in writing their name, reading and talking about a favourite book, speaking to people your child is not so familiar with or their understanding of numbers.

All of the information collected is used to judge how your child is doing in the 7 areas of learning and development. Finding out at this stage how your child is doing will mean that the teacher your child has in their next school year – Year 1 – will know what your child really enjoys doing and does well, as well as helping them decide if your child needs a bit of extra support, what that support should be and if they are already getting it.

Learning Journeys Reports

Learning Journeys in Early Years are *reports* written twice a year and give an update on progress. The Learning Journey is intended to recognise that in the Early Years children learn at different speeds dependent on their age, experience, environment and individual level of development. Children also progress at varying rates in different areas of learning and development and with different skill sets.

The intention of a Learning Journey is not to make a judgment, but to recognise a child's achievements and where developments are required across all 7 areas of learning and development. Learning is collaboration between school and home and the aim of the report card is to guide parents in the activities and educational experiences they provide for their children outside of the school day.

Children will receive 2 Learning Journeys during the school year:

- Mid-year Learning Journey (December)
- End of Year Learning Journey (June)

Homework

Homework is occasionally assigned but is not mandatory.

The aim of homework in Early Years is to:

- Develop healthy study habits
- Apply and revisit concepts studied in class

- Stimulate pupil interest
- Provide parents with the opportunity to collaborate in the learning process

Reading

Throughout the school year, children will receive a **Reader** to read at home. The kinds of Readers we send home in Early Years contain simple words, simple sentences and some Readers do not include any words at all. Readers are intended to improve Reading, Speaking and Listening Comprehension Skills as well as reinforce the Phonics Skills being worked on at school.

As parents, you are your child's most influential teacher. We have provided some suggestions on how you can help to make Reading a positive experience at home. If neither parent speaks in English, don't worry. These tips are useful in any language. **See Appendix C**

Along with the Reader, teachers also suggest engaging in storytelling with an adult in the child's mother-tongue or language spoken at home to help build their vocabulary.

Language Acquisition

Children in Early Years learn language through play and planned group activities in a natural way. At OCIS we recognise, celebrate and promote children's home language and mother tongue. Parents are encouraged to continue to promote and use their home language with their children and reinforce vocabulary and concepts acquired at school through their mother tongue.

Children who enter the school with English as an additional language are immersed in an English-speaking environment and their language develops through modeling and everyday language opportunities, particularly through play. Specific teaching of key vocabulary and modeling of good language is taught as appropriate within the context of other learning.

Spanish class is introduced in Reception with six 50 minute periods a week. The specialist teacher uses the Early Years themes and topics as a basis for teaching as well as through an age appropriate Spanish Reading and Writing scheme of work. The activities are play-based and encourage a natural acquisition of language.

Guidance Department

The guidance department is an integrated service within the organisation of the school. The primary role of the Guidance Department in Early Years is to provide support services and technical advice to teachers and families.

The Guidance Counselor collaborates with the overall Early Years community in the prevention and detection of specific learning needs. This is carried out through informal observations, teacher and parent feedback, and a series of assessments where needed. The assessment results are shared with the Early Years teachers and a plan is put into place to target specific

areas. If a concern shall arise, parents are contacted and a meeting is scheduled with the Guidance Counselor.

For those parents interested in learning how to become more involved in their child's social, emotional, and academic success, the Guidance Counselor offers parents effective parenting skills, information concerning academic planning and/or referral sources as requested. If parents have any doubts or concerns regarding their child's development, they may make an appointment to see the Guidance Counselor via the School Diary.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

O Castro International School follows a Special Educational Needs Policy which promotes learning and inclusion for all. Teachers plan to meet the needs of each individual child to bring about continuous progress and achievement in the context of inclusion.

Some children may experience an additional need in their learning process during their time in school. If concerns arise, these are shared with parents. Differentiated work is planned and the child's progress will be closely monitored.

A child whom we feel may benefit from additional support over a given period of time will be given an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a teaching and learning plan that sets out specific targets and actions for a child with a specific learning or behavioural need. It allows to plan for progression, monitor the provision for additional support needed outside the school, collaborate with parents and other members of staff, and to help the child become more involved in their own learning. IEP's are reviewed regularly with the child and parents.

Positive Reinforcement

In Early Years we celebrate positive and commendable behaviour rather than negative behaviour. We use the method called Positive Reinforcement which uses a reward-based system to promote good behaviour in the classroom. When children are praised for their good actions we are promoting children to repeat wanted behaviour, thus children build a positive self-image of one self.

Early Years teachers use reward systems such as Happy Face, Reward Charts, Daily Star, Teacher's Helper, Rainbow, etc. to celebrate good behaviour as well as academic progress and personal achievements. The reward systems put into place by the Early Years Team are all related to specific individualised targets. Thus, we ask parents to collaborate in praising personal goals by maintaining a flow of communication with their child's teacher concerning specific goals achieved at home, such as toilet training or eating habits. This will help promote the concept that with hard work and effort anything can be achieved.

School Organisation

Children Entry

School begins promptly at **9:15** and ends at **17:00**.

All children are expected to arrive at school between 9.05 and 9.15 to ensure the start of the day begins in an orderly fashion and free of interruptions.

Children arriving between 8.30 and 9.15 should be dropped off at the Main Infant Entrance (just left of the Main Entrance) where they are welcomed at the door by a teacher on duty. Parents are not allowed to enter the building for security purposes.

Children arriving after 9.15 are considered late and must report to the School Office through the Main Entrance. They will be escorted to class by a Teaching Assistant.

Breakfast Club

The school offers a Breakfast Club service for those families who need their child supervised prior to the school opening time. This service is available from 7.30 to 8.30 at an additional cost.

Dismissal

At the end of the day (17.00), parents are asked to pick their children up at the Infant Entrance where they will be dismissed by their teacher. Parents should wait away from the exit area, to ensure a safe and secure dismissal takes place for all children. This will make it easier for your children and their teacher to see you.

All Infant classes are dismissed in an orderly fashion by class, starting with our Nursery classes first and working our way up to Year 1. Upon arrival, if your child's class has already been dismissed, please wait patiently for the remainder of the classes to be dismissed before approaching your child's teacher for permission to collect your son/daughter.

Any changes concerning the person or parties involved in picking up your child must be communicated to the teacher via the School Diary and/or by phoning the School Office.

Early Dismissal

If a child must leave during the school day their teacher must be informed via the School Diary. When picking up your child, parents must enter the Main Entrance and wait in the Main Office. Parents are not allowed to access the classroom to pick up their child.

Class time will not be interrupted, therefore children will not be sent to the Main Office until the end of the lesson.

Aftercare

For those parents running late, their child will be supervised by an adult until 17.30 free of charge.

The school offers an **Afterschool Club** for all children after 17.00 for up to 2 hours at an additional cost.

Bus Service

Children travelling to and from school by bus are supervised by a Bus Monitor.

Parents wishing to communicate any issues related to the bus service must do so by contacting the School Office.

Messages for your child's teacher must be written in the School Diary and not via the Bus Monitor. Bus Monitors do not have access to the classrooms to speak with your child's teacher.

If parents choose to pick up their child instead of using the bus service, the change must be noted in the child's School Diary. Unexpected bus service changes must be communicated to the School Office before **14:30**.

If there are any changes regarding the person or parties involved in picking up of your child at the bus stop, a parent authorisation must be handed to the Bus Monitor as well as communicating the change to the School Office.

Punctuality

Our Early Years Teachers insist on punctuality and regularity of attendance for all our children. Children enjoy their morning routines and like to initiate the morning playtime activities with their peers. Taking part in the Morning Routine gives them a sense of responsibility and helps to develop autonomous learning.

Parents are responsible for their child's tardiness. Please respect the other children in the class and ensure your child arrives to school on time. Interruptions cause children to get distracted and lose focus on the learning taking place.

Attendance

Excused absences include an illness, doctor's appointment, a medical emergency, a religious holiday celebration and/or grief.

Unexcused absences include family holiday during school terms and/or taking days off for leisure activities.

Illnesses

Children should not be sent to school if he/she is ill prior to departure from home or if they are not fully recovered from an illness. Children are not fully receptive to learning when they are ill and could infect others.

When a child is off sick from school or attending a medical appointment, the School Office must be contacted and informed of the child's condition and medical absence. The School Secretary will notify your child's teacher of his/her absence.

When a child at school shows clear signs of illness, the school will contact the family to pick up their son or daughter.

Allergies

If a child has any kind of allergy, especially food or medicine, parents must ensure the school receives a copy of the child's medical report to keep on file. A copy can be handed in at the Main Office or to your son/daughter's teacher.

Parents of children with a food allergy are recommended to send the teacher a list of foods the child is able to eat to keep on file. This will be very helpful during special celebrations, events or activities that might involve food.

Medicines

If a child is on medication, the School Secretary should receive a prescribed medical notice. It is essential that medicines are clearly labeled with your child's name and must indicate the time and amount of dosage as prescribed by the doctor.

Teachers should be aware of any children in their class who may require medical treatment whilst at school. Please inform your child's teacher, via the School Diary, of any medicine he/she is prescribed to take during school hours.

Medicines must be dropped off in the Main Office and not placed in your child's school bag. If your child travels by bus, medicines must be given to the Bus Monitor. The School Office will ensure medicines are properly administered.

At the end of the school day, medicines will not be placed in children's school bags. Parents are responsible for picking up medicine in the Main Office. If your child travels by bus, the Bus Monitor will ensure any medicine is handed to the adult at the bus stop.

First Aid

Simple first aid is given at school when necessary. If a child is hurt during the school day, parents are notified via the School Diary or contacted via telephone. If an accident needs hospital attention the school will contact the parents.

Please ensure that your child's school record, including emergency contact information, medical history and any other relevant information is up to date.

Head Lice

Head Lice cases can be common among young school children. Any case of head lice should be immediately reported to the School Office. Advice on treatment is available from the school.

Please note that the School is not responsible for treatment and parents should take the necessary measures to avoid infestation.

Our School Day

Academic Calendar

The school follows the official Xunta de Galicia Department of Education school calendar. Parents are sent the new school calendar officially before the start of the new school year. The calendar will also be available on the school webpage.

Early Years Timetable

Our Early Years Programme consists of a full timetable. Children begin school at 9.15 under the direct supervision and care of their Teacher and a Teaching Assistant and ends at 17.00. Sessions take place in the classrooms and resource areas around our school.

The **Nursery Timetable** consists of three 50 minute morning sessions, and three 45 minute afternoon sessions. Lunch takes place from 12.15 to 13.00 and afterwards children have time to nap and rest. [See Appendix D](#)

The **Reception Timetable** consists of four 50 minute sessions and three 45 minute afternoon sessions. Lunch takes place from 13.00 to 13.45 and afterwards children have up to 45 minutes of playtime or extracurricular activity. [See Appendix D](#)

Children play outside for 20 minutes in the morning (Morning Break) and 15 minutes in the afternoon (Afternoon Break).

Early Years afternoon sessions begin at 14.30 and end at 17.00.

Weekly Sessions

Area of Learning	Nursery	Reception
CL Communication and Language	5	5
PD Physical Development	4	3
PSED Personal, Social and Emotional Development	5	5
PHONICS Literacy (Reading and Writing)	5	5
MATHS Mathematics	5	5
UW Understanding the World	3	3
EAD Expressive Arts and Design (Art and Music)	3	3
SPANISH Spanish	0	6

Lunch

Lunch takes place in the school's Dining Hall and is supervised by the child's Teacher, Teaching Assistant and/or Lunch Aide.

The aim of our Dining Room services is to:

- Encourage good table manners
- Promote respect towards fellow peers, teachers and lunch aides
- Improve eating habits
- Establish excellent hygiene habits

Children are expected to eat at least one and a half courses. Children who experience difficulties acquiring a taste for new foods will be encouraged to try them gradually until they become responsible for their own eating habits. Exceptions are made for those who struggle to adapt to new foods. Thus, replacements are made until the child becomes accustomed to the new foods being served at school.

All menu items are freshly prepared in the School Kitchen. Please notify the School Office or your child's teacher via the School Diary of any changes in your child's diet, especially diets prescribed by a doctor.

Any changes in your son/daughter's diet should be communicated via the School Diary. Children with a special diet or allergy are closely monitored by a Lunch Aide who serves and monitors their food intake. Specific nutritional needs should always be communicated and discussed with your child's teacher.

The School Menu is sent home every month. If you have any questions or doubts concerning your child's lunch, please contact your child's teacher.

Those families, who decide not to use our Dining Hall services, are expected to pick up their child after 12.15 if they are in Nursery or after 13.00 if they are in Reception and dropped off by 14.30.

Snack

All Early Years children are allowed to bring in a small sized healthy snack to have before their morning playtime. The Early Years Team encourages children to bring in healthy snacks such as peeled fruit, a handful of raw veggies, whole wheat biscuits or yogurt. Families are expected to follow our Early Years Healthy Snack Menu. [See Appendix E](#)

If your child experiences difficulties eating, we recommend he/she not bring a snack to school. Instead, your child's teacher will offer him/her a biscuit or cookie to hold off until lunch time.

The school provides children with a healthy snack during the afternoon break.

Playground

The playground area in Early Years is a safely enclosed and supervised area used during breaks, playtime, curricular activities and special school events. It is intended for children to play how they choose.

The playground is the main area for social interaction amongst children. It is a social space in which children interact with others and make new relationships. Children converse to a greater extent with other children and learn to negotiate their relationships as well as solve their own problems. They learn how to use school equipment properly as well as how to take care and respect the school grounds.

Children are supervised at all times when using the playground area by their teachers and/or other members of the Early Years Team.

Wet Play

On rainy days, Early Years teachers organise playtime indoors either in the classroom, Lower Hall or downstairs covered playground area.

Playtime takes place in the classroom where children enjoy a quiet film and/or have access to wet play games and resources. Wet Play games and resources differ from the material used in class on a daily basis.

Please avoid bringing wellies or umbrellas to school. Umbrellas are not allowed inside the school building and any child wearing wellies will have to bring an extra change of shoes.

Nursery Nap

Naptime takes place after Nursery lunch. Children have over an hour to sleep and rest before their afternoon sessions. Although not all children may sleep, all children are required to rest.

The dormitory is prepared and supervised by the Nurery Team. If you have any doubts or questions concerning naptime, please contact your child's teacher.

Specific sleeping and/or resting needs should be communicated and discussed with your child's teacher.

Reception Tooth brushing

In an effort to promote a healthy lifestyle and good hygiene habits, *Reception* children are encouraged to bring to school a toiletry bag with a toothbrush, toothpaste and small cup to practice proper tooth brushing after their lunch meal. All items, including the bag, must be properly labeled with the child's name.

Extracurricular activities

The school offers children a variety of extracurricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. The activities available for Early Years children are intended to extend a child's curiosity in the areas of art, dance, music and/or sports.

Lunchtime activities are only offered to those children in Reception.

All extracurricular activities begin the first day of school. Parents will be formally notified via newsletter of the activities currently being offered as well as enrollment procedures.

If you have any doubts concerning Extracurricular Activities, you may contact the Extracurricular Activities Coordinator.

Early Years Events

Assemblies are intended to gather the Early Years Community and share their learning experiences. Assemblies are held during school hours and Primary pupils and their teachers are often invited to watch. Children usually sing songs or recite poems related to the topic work being studied in class.

Early Years children celebrate different types of festivities intended to integrate the topics and themes discussed in class as well as involve the School Wide Community.

Some of our Assemblies and festivities include:

- *Family Day
- Halloween
- Multicultural Week
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas
- Peace Day
- Valentine's Day
- Carnival
- St. Patrick's Day
- Book Week
- Spring
- Sports Day
- Teddy Bears Picnic
- End of Year Festival

*Our Early Years pupils engage in a Family Day Celebration out of respect for those children who may not have a mother or father; Mother's Day or Father's Day is not included in our Early Years Curriculum.

Although parents may not be present during all of our festivities, they are always invited to participate and collaborate in other ways.

Birthdays

A birthday celebration at school is always fun and children enjoy sharing their special day with their friends and teachers.

Early Years children celebrate their birthdays on **Fridays**. Children are more than welcome to bring in a special treat for their classmates. Treats must be sent to school in individual packed bags. Treats are handed out by the birthday boy or girl and sent home at the end of the day. Parents should keep in mind that some children may have a food allergy and it is always best to check with the teacher before sending anything in to school. Piñatas, cakes or loose sweets are

not permitted.

Birthday Invitations are distributed at school only when there are enough for the entire class. A list of children's names in your child's class can be provided to you upon request.

School Trips

Early Years trips are planned to enhance children's learning. The trips organised complement the curriculum and are linked to the topics and themes being discussed in school.

Children will not be allowed on a trip without parental consent.

All trips are supervised and chaperoned by members of the Early Years Team.

Money

Payments for trips, photographs, or other school fees will be charged directly to your account.

Please refrain from sending money collections that are not related to school events. Money collections for non-school purposes are not permitted.

Uniform

The Early Years uniform is a tracksuit and all Nursery and Reception children must come to school wearing the School Tracksuit.

Early Years Uniform
School Tracksuit
White t-shirt with school logo
White socks
White trainers
Navy parka or coat

Along with the indicated items above, children are required to wear their school button down apron. The apron is brought to school every Monday and taken home to wash on Fridays.

All uniform items as well as coats must be labeled with the child's name to avoid loss. This will help to identify misplaced items.

The School Uniform can be purchased on site at the Shop (Long Bao) or at El Corte Inglés in Vigo. It is not mandatory to purchase the school's parka or coat but families purchasing other models must ensure they are navy.

Children are discouraged from wearing jewelry to school. The school is not responsible for loss or damage of jewelry.

Spare Clothing

Early Years children are required to bring to school an extra set of clothes, properly labeled, in case of a bathroom accident, messy spill or wet and muddy playgrounds. These clothes will stay at school (Nursery) or in the child's schoolbag (Reception).

In the event of a mishap, your child's soiled or wet clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home in his/her school bag.

We encourage children to bring in a cap, properly labeled with their name, to be used during outdoor activities.

Toys

We ask parents to refrain from allowing children to bring toys or other personal belongings to school as this just causes unnecessary problems.

Parents will be formally notified when children are allowed to bring toys or other personal belongings to school, always related to the topic/theme being studied in class.

Communication

School Diary

Contact with parents is maintained through the School Diary. Parents should ensure that the diary is checked every day. Very important information is sent home frequently.

Teachers will use the School Diary to:

- Send homework and/or other activities to be completed at home
- Communicate accomplishments and progress being achieved
- Give feedback concerning working, eating and or sleeping habits as well as behaviour when relevant or necessary
- Write about incidents that may occur throughout the school day
- Request a parent meeting

Teachers will use emails to:

- Notify parents of upcoming events taking place at school
- Inform parents of topic work being studied in class
- Ask parents to collaborate in home or school projects

Parents should use the diary to address the teacher with any doubts or questions they may have regarding the learning and development of their child. Teachers will get back to parents the same day they receive a written note.

Parents must notify the teacher of any changes made in regards to:

- bus services

- diet
- absence and tardiness
- illness
- medicines
- medical conditions
- child pick up

It is important for teachers to receive as much feedback from parents as possible. Be sure to keep your child's teacher up to date with feedback concerning your child's personal accomplishments and progress at home. We will do the same via our **Rainbow System**. On a weekly basis, your child will receive a Rainbow in his/her diary with a comment related to an Area of Learning. These Rainbows help teachers maintain communication with parents regarding their child's personal achievements at school.

Do not be alarmed if the teacher does not write a comment in your son/daughter's diary every day. Just remember "No news is good news".

Nursery Welcome

All *Nursery* parents will have the opportunity to meet their son/daughter's teacher prior to the start of the school year. The Nursery Welcome Meeting is held the first week of September at the school. Parents will receive a newsletter via email with the exact date and time of the meeting.

The Nursery Welcome Meeting is intended for parents to familiarise themselves with the teacher as well as resolve any doubts or questions regarding their child's first days school.

New Pupil Welcome

During the first week of September, all new *Reception* parents are welcomed to meet with the Early Years Coordinator. A date and time is established for new parents to come into school and discuss any last minute questions or doubts they may be having regarding the first few days of school. Parents will receive a newsletter via email with the exact date and time of the meeting.

Meet the Teacher

Meet the Teacher Night is usually scheduled within a month of the first day of school. It is intended for all parents to meet their child's teachers as well as other fellow parents. This event gives parents a glimpse of your child's daily life at school and an opportunity to learn about the curriculum.

Teachers will give parents an overview of children's daily routines, timetables and activities. Policies and procedures are briefly discussed along with overall expectations for the year ahead.

At the end of the night, teachers will take any questions parents may have about the classroom. It is the perfect opportunity to ask general questions and clarify any doubts. However, this is not

a time to discuss your child's individual needs or progress – save that for Parent\Teacher Meetings when the teacher knows your child better and can give you their undivided attention.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Parent-Teacher Meetings are organised to discuss a child's individual progress at school. Teachers and parents share feedback on how the child is making progress in all 7 areas of learning and development.

Parents or Classroom Form Tutors may request a meeting at any time during the school year. We recommend two per year (one halfway through the year and another towards the end of the year). The meetings must be requested and confirmed through the school diary.

Parents will receive a formal letter indicating the days and times their son/daughter's teacher is available to meet.

Classroom Visits

During the Spring term, parents are invited to visit their child's classroom. The purpose of the Classroom Visit is to give parents the opportunity to get a general feel of the classroom, observe the way their child interacts with their teacher and peers, and to participate in daily classroom activities.

Parents will be formally notified of the event via newsletter.

Parent Partnership

Early Years parents play a very important role in their child's learning process. Parents are often asked to participate and take part in special events concerning topic work being discussed in school. They are always invited to join us during Early Years events which take place throughout the year.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Parents are also encouraged to participate in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Class representatives act as a link between staff, class parents and the other members of the PTA committee. All parents are automatically members of the PTA and are eligible for election to the committee. Even if you feel unable to serve on the committee, your help at one or two events during the year would be much appreciated.

School Website

The School Website is available for parents to access general school information. A parent link is provided for each family to access information regarding their child's academic school year. Parents can access the page at www.oastrointernationalschools.es

School Email

Parents will receive weekly emails regarding themes or topics being studied in class and/or news about special events or activities from their child's teacher or Key Stage Coordinator.

Please ensure that the School Office has an email address on file.

Parents can also contact the School Office via email to make any inquiries regarding the Early Years or to request any other relevant information concerning your child's learning and development. Parents can email the school at info@ocastrointernationalschool.es

Appendix A School Structure and Equivalent Years of Study Table

O Castro International British School		England	USA	Spain	Age
*Early Years Foundation Stage	Nursery	Nursery	Pre K 3	Infantil 3	3
	Reception	Reception	Pre K 4	Infantil 4	4
Key Stage 1	Year 1	Year 1	Kindergarten	Infantil 5	5
Key Stage 2	Year 2	Year 2	Grade 1	1º Primaria	6
	Year 3	Year 3	Grade 2	2º Primaria	7
	Year 4	Year 4	Grade 3	3º Primaria	8
	Year 5	Year 5	Grade 4	4º Primaria	9
	Year 6	Year 6	Grade 5	5º Primaria	10
Key Stage 3	Year 7	Year 7	Grade 6	6º Primaria	11
	Year 8	Year 8	Grade 7	1º ESO	12
	Year 9	Year 9	Grade 8	2º ESO	13
Key Stage 4	Year 10	Year 10	Grade 9	3º ESO	14
	Year 11	Year 11	Grade 10	4º ESO	15
Key Stage 5	Year 12	Year 12	Grade 11	1º BACH	16
	Year 13	Year 13	Grade 12	2º BACH	17

Appendix B: Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

Prime Areas of Learning	
ELG's for Communication and Language	
01	Listening and attention: Children listen to instructions and follow them accurately, asking for clarification if necessary. They listen attentively with sustained concentration to follow a story without pictures or props and can listen in a larger group, for example, at assembly.
02	Understanding: After listening to stories children can express views about events or characters in the story and answer questions about why things happened. They can carry out instructions which contain several parts in a sequence.
03	Speaking: Children show some awareness of the listener by making changes to language and non-verbal features. They recount experiences and imagine possibilities, often connecting ideas. They use a range of vocabulary in imaginative ways to add information, express ideas or to explain or justify actions or events.
ELG's for Physical Development	
04	Moving and handling: Children can hop confidently and skip in time to music. They hold paper in position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip. They are beginning to be able to write on lines and control letter size.
05	Health and self-care: Children know about and can make healthy choices in relation to healthy eating and exercise. They can dress and undress independently, successfully managing fastening buttons or laces.
ELG's for Personal, Social and Emotional Development	
06	Self-confidence and self-awareness: Children are confident to speak to a class group. They can talk about the things they enjoy, and are good at, and about the things they don't find easy. They are resourceful in finding support when they need help or information. They can talk about the plans they have made to carry out activities and what they might change if they were to repeat them.
07	Managing feelings and behaviour: Children know some ways to manage their feelings and are beginning to use these to maintain control. They can listen to each other's suggestions and plan how to achieve an outcome without adult help. They know when and how to stand up for themselves appropriately. They can stop and think before acting and they can wait for things they want.
08	Making relationships: Children play group games with rules. They understand someone else's point of view can be different from theirs. They resolve minor disagreements through listening to each other to come up with a fair solution. They understand what bullying is and that this is unacceptable behaviour.

Appendix B (continued)

Specific Areas of Learning	
ELG's for Literacy	
09	Reading: Children can read phonically regular words of more than one syllable as well as many irregular but high frequency words. They use phonic, semantic and syntactic knowledge to understand unfamiliar vocabulary. They can describe the main events in the simple stories they have read.
10	Writing: Children can spell phonically regular words of more than one syllable as well as many irregular but high frequency words. They use key features of narrative in their own writing.
ELG's for Mathematics	
11	Numbers: Children estimate a number of objects and check quantities by counting up to 20. They solve practical problems that involve combining groups of 2, 5 or 10, or sharing into equal groups.
12	Shape, space and measures: Children estimate, measure, weigh and compare and order objects and talk about properties, position and time.
ELG's for Understanding the World	
13	People and Communities: Children know the difference between past and present events in their own lives and some reasons why people's lives were different in the past. They know that other children have different likes and dislikes and that they may be good at different things. They understand that different people have different beliefs, attitudes, customs and traditions and why it is important to treat them with respect.
14	The World: Children know that the environment and living things are influenced by human activity. They can describe some actions which people in their own community do that help to maintain the area they live in. They know the properties of some materials and can suggest some of the purposes they are used for. They are familiar with basic scientific concepts such as floating, sinking, experimentation.
15	Technology: Children find out about and use a range of everyday technology. They select appropriate applications that support an identified need – for example in deciding how best to make a record of a special event in their lives, such as a journey on a steam train.
ELG's for Expressive Arts and Design	
16	Exploring and using media and materials: Children develop their own ideas through selecting and using materials and working on processes that interest them. Through their explorations they find out and make decisions about how media and materials can be combined and changed.
17	Being imaginative: Children talk about the ideas and processes which have led them to make music, designs, images or products. They can talk about features of their own and others work, recognising the differences between them and the strengths of others.

Appendix C How to engage children in Reading

Tips on Hearing Your Child Read	
1	Choose a quiet time Set aside a quiet time with no distractions. Ten to fifteen minutes is usually long enough.
2	Make reading enjoyable Make reading an enjoyable experience. Sit with your child. Try not to pressurise if he or she is reluctant. If your child loses interest then do something else.
3	Maintain the flow If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction. It is better to tell a child some unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to build them all up from the sounds of the letters. If your child does try to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'.
4	Be positive If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Don't say 'No. That's wrong,' but 'Let's read it together' and point to the words as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.
5	Success is the key Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. This can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Remember 'Nothing succeeds like success'. Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to easier books. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers.
6	Visit the Library Encourage your child to use the public library regularly.
7	Regular practice Try to read with your child on most school days. 'Little and often' is best. Teachers have limited time to help your child with reading.

Tips on Hearing Your Child Read (continued)	
8	<p>Communicate</p> <p>Your child will most likely have a reading card from school. Try to communicate regularly with positive comments and any concerns. Your child will then know that you are interested in their progress and that you value reading.</p>
9	<p>Talk about the books</p> <p>There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. Just as important is being able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book; about the pictures, the characters, how they think the story will end, their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and you will help them to develop good comprehension skills.</p>
10	<p>Variety is important</p> <p>Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books.</p>

Source: <http://www.topmarks.co.uk/parents/ten-tips-on-hearing-your-child-read>

Appendix D Early Years Timetables

Nursery Timetable

9:15	Morning Registration
9:20	Lesson 1
10:10	Morning Break
10:30	Lesson 2
11:20	Lesson 3
12:15	Lunch
13:00	Naptime / Rest
14:30	Lesson 4
15:15	Afternoon Break
15:30	Lesson 5
16:15	Lesson 6

Reception Timetable

9:15	Morning Registration
9:20	Lesson 1
10:10	Lesson 2
11:00	Morning Break
11:20	Lesson 3
12:10	Lesson 4
13:00	Lunch
13:45	Playtime / Extracurricular Activities
14:30	Lesson 5
15:15	Lesson 6
16:00	Afternoon Break
16:15	Lesson 7

Appendix E Early Years Snack Menu

Children are expected to bring in the following snack to school on the corresponding days:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Fruit	Sandwich	Fruit	Drinkable Yogurt	Biscuits