



PRIMARY (KS1 and KS2) PARENTS' HANDBOOK 2015 - 2016



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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 edition of the O Castro International British School Handbook for parents. We hope that it will answer most of the questions you might have while your child is at school. Please keep it handy for reference.

If your child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 3 you should also read their Parent Handbook which includes key information relevant for children in that stage of the school.

We look forward to an exciting year working with you and your children to provide the best possible start to their education this academic year of 2015-2016.

Nathan Parry
Head-teacher

Leigh Tullier
KS2 Coordinator

Keith Bailey
KS1 Coordinator

2. THE ENGLISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM

At O Castro International British School we follow the International Cambridge Primary Curriculum alongside the New English National Curriculum. The Cambridge Curriculum allows us to measure our progress and attainment against other international schools who follow the Cambridge Curriculum. It also provides clear, purposeful and relevant learning objectives around which exciting lessons can be planned. Being a Cambridge school means that our staff have access to banks of resources and regular training opportunities. The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.

The curriculum is just one element in the education of every child; it provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school academic, social and emotional learning journey.

3. SCHOOL ORGANISATION

There are three 'key stages' in the Primary School:

Foundation Stage

This is the name for the Nursery and Reception classes. They follow a curriculum called Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which is play-based and involves a balance between 'child-initiated' (chosen by the child) and 'adult-initiated' (led by an adult) activities. Most lessons have one Learning Support Assistant as well as their class teacher.

Key Stage 1

This includes Years 1 and 2, which are the first classes to follow the English National Curriculum. Most lessons, especially in Y1, have one Learning Support Assistant as well as their class teacher. In Y2 support is usually available for the core subjects.

Key Stage 2

This is Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 who continue to follow the English National Curriculum alongside integrating the Cambridge Curriculum. Support is allocated in terms of priority by the senior leadership and guidance teams, in consultation with the class teachers.

4. WEEKLY SUBJECT CLASSES

Subjects taught in English	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
LITERACY	10	7.5	7.5	7.5	6.5	5.5
MATHEMATICS	6	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
SCIENCE	3	2	2	2	2	2
TOPIC	2	2	2	2	2	2
PSHE	1	1	1	1	1	1

ICT	2	2	2	2	2	2
ART (fortnightly)	2	1	1	1	1	1
PE	2	2	2	2	2	2

MUSIC	1	1	1	1	1	1
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ASSEMBLY	1	1	1	1	1	1
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Subjects taught in Spanish						
LENGUA CASTELLANA	6	5	5	5	5	5
CONOCIMIENTO DEL MEDIO	0	2	2	2	2	2

Subjects taught in Galician						
LINGUA GALEGA	0	3	3	3	3	3

Fourth Language FRANÇAIS	0	0	0	0	1	2
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5. EQUIVALENT YEARS OF STUDY

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

6. GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

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

The Guidance Counsellor collaborates with the overall school 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 conducted throughout the school year which measure children's general intelligence, verbal intelligence and nonverbal intelligence. The assessment results are shared with the teachers and a plan is put into place to target those weakest areas. If a concern should arise, parents are contacted and a meeting is scheduled with the Guidance Counsellor.

7. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The school follows a special educational needs policy which promotes learning and inclusion for all. Staff plans to meet the needs of each individual child to bring about continuous progress and achievement in the context of inclusion.

Some children may experience specific difficulty in their learning during their time in school. If concerns arise, these are shared with parents. Differentiated work is planned and the child's progress monitored.

A child whom we feel may benefit from additional help for a time or longer term will be given an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is devised by the class teacher and monitored by the Special Needs Co-ordinator. This sets out targets which are particular to the child. IEPs are reviewed regularly with the child, class teacher and parents.

8. GIFTED, TALENTED AND ABLE CHILDREN

The school identifies children who are particularly able or who consistently show exceptional potential. Differentiated work is planned and the child's progress monitored. We believe these children must be challenged and this may involve, but not be limited to, specific extension work / homework and higher level exams. The progress of these children will be monitored by the assessment coordinator.

In pursuing excellence and equity in the education of able and talented pupils, the school seeks:

- To support teachers in recognising the wide range of pupils' talents and abilities.
- To encourage and support the development of alternative approaches to teaching and learning that engage, extend and challenge able and talented pupils at levels appropriate to their ability.
- To encourage a dialogue between parents, staff and pupils in respect of pupils' special talents, abilities and developmental needs.
- To provide a supportive social, emotional, pastoral and educational environment, including the provision of opportunities for contact with similarly able or talented peers within school and the wider community.

9. HOMEWORK

We consider homework an important part of education. Homework offers pupils the opportunity to consolidate or extend learning and develop independent study skills. It can also be the basis of dialogue at home about what was learned in school and parents can help their daughter/son, organise and manage their time responsibly.

Parents are informed of the school's expectations towards homework and schedule at the beginning of September in the 'Meet the teachers' Parent Consultation meeting when school starts.

We do ask you to support your children in this important aspect of learning. It is important that all children complete homework. If there is a genuine reason why homework has not been completed, please explain in the home school diary. If homework is not completed on a regular basis, then the school will contact the parents.

10. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

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

When do we assess?

Continuously – dependant on the task and shared learning objective, including observation of personal and social skills.

At the beginning and end of the academic year reading and spelling are assessed in Years 1 – 6.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

All children in Years 3-6 will complete baseline Cambridge exams at the beginning (October) and progress checks at the end (May) of the academic year. The October exam results will be for staff use only and these will enable the teacher and senior leadership team to baseline the children and identify priority areas. Parents will be notified about the assessment week in May and children will be aware of when their exams are. These are marked internally.

11. WRITTEN REPORTS

Pupils receive 3 reports during the school year:

- First Term Report in December
- Second Term Report in March/April
- Third Term Report in June

12. CONTACT WITH PARENTS

Daily and fluid contact between School and Home is maintained through the School Diary.

Parents should check the diary on a daily basis. The School encourages parents to inform the School of any problem or difficulty which may affect the child's schooling.

MEET THE TEACHERS

In September parents have the opportunity to meet their child's teacher together with other parents and discuss the year ahead.

PARENTS' EVENINGS

Class Teachers are available to meet parents during the two Parents' Evenings organised in November and April. Parents are asked to sign up for a convenient appointment. We offer 10 minute slots initially so that all parents can be seen.

Parents may also ask for an appointment throughout the year with any teacher, at a mutually convenient time, by sending a note in the School Diary or via the School Secretary. The teacher will confirm the meeting via the School Diary.

13. PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

We have an active Parent Teacher Association. OCIS PTA has its own area in our website. Please consult it for more detailed information.

14. COMPLAINTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS

If you require clarification on any issue, or if you have a particular concern, please contact the school office. Usually you will wish to see the class teacher, but you may wish to see the Key Stage Coordinator or Head teacher (Key Stage Coordinator in the first instance). In any event you should contact the School Secretary in the first instance and the necessary arrangements can then be made. We know that despite our best intentions and hard work from time to time things can go wrong and very often a simple explanation can unravel the most difficult issues.

We welcome your comments on how we can improve our school and your compliments let us know when we are getting things right. It's good to be able to tell staff that they are doing well and for them to know that their hard work is appreciated!!

15. BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

We aim to create a welcoming, caring environment where relationships are based on respect and to develop a positive self-esteem in each child. The staff at O Castro International British School is committed to maintaining high expectations of good behaviour as an essential contribution to the educational experience of the children and to their happiness and well being while in school.

We hope that you will support our approach to behaviour which, we feel, will be of benefit to all.

The Discipline Policy is based on a system of rewards and sanctions. Positive behaviour in the classroom and other areas within the school is rewarded so that students and pupils work towards the recognition of their achievements.

Please consult the school web page for the full policy.

16. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is the persistent desire to hurt others and can be verbal, mental or physical; **it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at O Castro International British School.** We work hard to create the right conditions to eradicate bullying and quickly identify early signs of bullying. Children are always encouraged to tell a teacher, parent or friend.

All incidents are treated seriously and the appropriate action taken to deal with the bully and help the victim. The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

The school believes that only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at school. For example, the school runs a Buddy system. Children in Years 5 and 6 apply and are interviewed for the role. These children support and play with younger pupils in the playground. We record information on those children who play alone and seek to integrate them into groups as effectively as possible. Further details are available in our anti-bullying policy. Please consult the school web page for the full policy.

Staff are also encouraged to reward good behaviour with house points. More information about the reward and sanctions will be outlined during the 'Meet the Teacher' sessions at the end of September.

17. PEER TUTOR PROGRAMME

O Castro International British School is one of the pioneer schools in Spain in Peer tutoring. Peer tutoring is an educational approach that joins younger students who assume the role of tutee with older students who assume the role of tutor to work together in problem solving, social skills acquisition as well as emotional intelligence development.

The benefits of peer tutoring are:

- development of social behaviours, interpersonal and communication skills
- improvement in attendance
- improvements in self-esteem
- opportunities for leadership and social responsibility
- sensitivity to younger student's needs and concerns
- children's understanding of fairness
- proclivity toward sharing and kindness
- acquisition of role-taking
- development of creative and critical thinking
- development of empathy

18. ADMISSION OF NEW STUDENTS

Any student seeking a school place in Primary, except the Nursery and Reception, must submit the academic reports of their previous school and will be interviewed by the Head teacher.

The student will also be given an entry test in English, Mathematics, Spanish and a general intellectual ability test. If the new student does not have an adequate level of English or Spanish there is a linguistic immersion programme available to rapidly improve the student's level up to that of the class.

19. ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Please consult the school website or ask the school secretary for an up-to-date copy of the School Academic Calendar.

20. SCHOOL TIMETABLE

- The school day **starts** at **9.15** and **finishes** at **17.00** h.
- There is a break in the morning of 20 minutes and a further 15 minute break in the afternoon. Lunch time is from 13:00 - 14:30.

21. ARRIVAL AND ENTRY OF PUPILS

We expect children to arrive punctually for school so that the day can begin in an orderly way with no interruptions for latecomers. All parents have signed our home/school agreement that agrees to ensure children are in school on time.

Students should arrive between 8:50 and 9.05 where they will be taken to their class or looked after by a teacher on duty at the main student entrances.

For those parents who need to leave their children before school opening time, a special Breakfast Club service is available, from 7.30 am at an additional cost.

If a pupil arrives (after 9.15) he/she must go to the School Secretary's Office and they will be escorted to their class. Parents are not allowed to take their children to the classroom.

Reception, Nursery children and those in Year 1 have their own entrance, straight in to their classrooms which is accessed via the left-hand entrance where a teacher will take them into class to meet their teacher.

Children in Years 2,3,4,5, and 6 enter school via the ramp leading to the first floor entrance where they wait, attended by a supervisor, for their teacher to collect and take them to their class.

We ask that children go into class unaccompanied by parents; this helps to ensure a prompt start to the day and with younger children helps them to settle more quickly.

Persistent lateness is dealt with by the Head teacher.

22. COLLECTING PUPILS

At the end of the day (17:00), we ask parents to wait away from the entrance and exit area for their children to be dismissed. This makes it easier for the children (and teachers) to see you.

Leaving School: if a pupil must leave School before 17:00 the Form teacher must be informed via the School Diary or parents must duly inform the School Secretary. The pupil will be picked up by his/her Parents at the School Office. Parents must not access the classrooms to pick their children up.

If there is a change with the person who normally collects the child, parents should inform the school Secretary or inform the Form teacher through the School Diary.

23. ATTENDANCE

We insist on regularity and punctuality of attendance of all our Primary students and remind parents of their responsibility and obligation. Students must attend school every day.

Excused absences:

- Illness.
- Doctor's appointment that cannot be scheduled at another time.
- Medical emergency.
- Celebration of a religious holiday.
- Grief

Unexcused absences:

- Holidays during school terms.
- Days off for leisure activities.

The Head teacher will request a meeting with parents to resolve attendance issues.

24. ILLNESSES / ACCIDENTS

- Parents should call the school when their child is sick and inform the school of their condition and absence. When a student returns to school after an absence, parents must write a note in the School Diary explaining the reason to the Form teacher
- When a child shows clear signs of illness, the school will contact the family to collect their child.

The school Secretary will only administer medicines if there is a written authorization duly signed by the family and if all the information needed is available: name of pupil on the package, their class year, and dosage and administration time. Without this information medicines will not be given.

Parents should inform the School Office of any appointments that involve a student missing some or all of the school day.

25. RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

Children returning to school after illness should clearly be fit to do so and free from infection. Please err on the side of caution when making a decision about your child returning to school. Children should be fit to participate in all school activities including outdoor games and play-time. Injury, asthma, respiratory complaints or circulation difficulties are of course exceptions. If in doubt please see the school office.

26. UNIFORM

- Students must attend school in full school uniform every day unless they have been informed in advance in writing. The School can call home to request that parents bring the student's complete uniform.
- Please note that PE kit should only be worn on days when the child participates in PE class or has an extracurricular activity which requires this. On these days the child should come to school in this specific uniform.
- Lost items of clothing can often be found at the 'lost and found' point which is located near the EYFS entrance.
- For all students, all items of clothing should be named.

UNIFORM:

	BOYS	GIRLS
WINTER	Grey trousers White shirt Burgundy jersey Burgundy socks Black or blue shoes Navy parka/coat*	Tartan skirt White shirt/blouse Burgundy cardigan Burgundy socks/tights Black or blue shoes Navy parka/coat*
SUMMER	Grey trousers White shirt/polo shirt	Tartan skirt White shirt/blouse/polo shirt
PHYSICAL EDUCATION DAYS	Tracksuit White sports T-shirt White socks White trainers	Tracksuit White sports T-shirt White socks White trainers

* Maroon and white checkered smock * (Reception and Year one only)

Navy parka or coat (any model). It is not mandatory to wear the school coat however the colour must be navy blue.

Please consult the school web page for the full uniform policy.

27. SCHOOL BUS

All students travelling on school routes are under the supervision of bus monitors. They should show respect for the authority they embody. Pupils must apply School rules of conduct and behaviour at all times. The bus stewardesses will report any issues of behaviour to the Head teacher.

Bus service changes:

- The School Office should be notified of any changes **before 14.30pm**.
- If the person that collects the child is not the usual person, a parent authorisation needs to be handed to the bus personnel as well as informing the school by phone or email.
- The bus stewardesses are not authorised to receive/take messages. If parents wish to communicate any issues related to the bus service, they must do so by contacting the Secretary's Office.

28. LUNCH

All items on the school menu are freshly prepared in the School kitchens on a daily basis. The School is happy to cater for pupils on special diets prescribed by a doctor or religious reasons and there is also a menu for vegetarians. The School menu is sent home every month.

The educational aims of the school dining service are the following:

- To encourage good table manners
- To encourage good manners and respect
- To improve pupils' eating habits

The main aim of the staff on duty in the dining room is to see these objectives are achieved.

What if my child doesn't eat anything?

Eating is monitored by the lunch staff and teachers who are on duty. Children are encouraged to eat a balanced lunch and to try a range of foods. If there are concerns about what your child is eating this is recorded and you will be contacted to discuss ways forward.

All children are allowed to bring in a small sized healthy snack to have before their morning playtime. The Team recommends healthy snacks such as peeled fruit, a handful of raw veggies, whole wheat biscuits or yogurt.

29. BIRTHDAYS

- The School celebrates student birthdays by allowing the birthday student (if they wish) to bring in one or two sweets for each pupil in the class or a cake. Please note: due to reasons of allergy, sealed or individually wrapped items are preferred. These will be given to the children to take home at the end of the day.
- Party Invitations are distributed in the classroom only when there are enough for the entire group.

30. SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND BOOKS

- Parents can purchase textbooks at school if desired. Please take into account that some of the requested books are imported, and it is essential that all students have the necessary books the first day of School. The School only orders the number of books that have been requested when asked to do so and is unable to meet last minute requests.
- The School Diary is compulsory for primary pupils. It is on sale at School in September.
- All books should be plasticised (at home) and marked on the cover page with the name and year group
- All other equipment (notebooks, folders, boxes, etc.) should be named to avoid loss. Lost property will be handed into the School Office.
- Pupils must come to school with their schoolbag and all necessary materials for their classes. Parents should check their child's schoolbag frequently.
- The School is not responsible for any unauthorised objects or money lost.
- Pupils must respect and care for school materials, equipment, furniture and books etc.

31. FIRST AID

Simple first aid is given at school when necessary. If an accident needs hospital attention we will make every effort to contact you first. Please ensure information from you is up-to-date so that you can be contacted.

32. HEAD LICE

Head Lice can be a real problem in schools. Cases of head lice should be reported to the class teacher. Advice on treatment is available from the school office if necessary. Please note that the School is not responsible for treatment.

33. WATER

Children may be bring a named normal plastic water bottle or in sports style bottle of water for drinking during the day. We ask that children only bring water and not juices or squashes. The bottle should be taken home each day to be washed or changed for a new bottle. Please note that children also have access to a drinking water around the school.

34. EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND TRIPS

Activities, trips and outings organised by the School during the year complement the curriculum and enrich the pupil's experiences. Trips and outings focus on cultural or educational interests: theatre, concerts and exhibitions.

The Extra-curricular activity clubs are organised both at lunchtime and after school.

Activities offered this year include:

SPORTING FOCUSSED ACTIVITIES

- Football
- Tennis
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Rugby
- Multi-sports
- Horse riding
- Ballet

INTEREST FOCUSSED ACTIVITIES

- Chess club
- Arts club
- Music
- Drama club
- School band

ACADEMIC FOCUSSED ACTIVITIES

- School newspaper
- School radio

35. SUMMER COURSES

Every year, O Castro International British School organises a Language Immersion Summer Camp, with native teachers and open to external students: The ENGLISH HOUSE takes place in the Real Club Nautico facilities in Nigrán, near Vigo.

The School also organises a Sports Summer Camp in our facilities in Camiño de San Cosme s/nº 36419 San Pedro De Cela (Mos) Pontevedra

Please contact the School Secretary for more information.

36. SCHOOL WEBSITE

The School's website is available for parents at: www.ocaastrointernationalschool.es

37. DATA PROTECTION

The school requires specific information from parents and students. This information is strictly confidential and is used solely for the purpose of managing and tracking the progress of a student at our school. At the time of admission an authorisation form is filled in by parents and a written commitment of confidentiality is given by the School.

38. A FINAL THOUGHT...

If I had my child to raise all over again
I'd build self-esteem first and the house later
I'd finger paint more and point my finger less
I'd do less correcting and more connecting
I'd take my eyes off my watch and watch with my eyes
I would care to know less and know to care more
I'd take more hikes and fly more kites
I'd stop playing seriously and seriously play
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars
I'd do more hugging and less tugging
I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often
I would be firm less and affirm much more
I'd teach less about the love of power
And more about the power of love
(Translated from a Welsh poem – author unknown)

