



PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP)

International School of Debrecen

School	International School of Debrecen (ISD)
Programme	IB Primary Years Programme (Kindergarten 1 to Grade 5)
School code / status	IB World School 061164 PYP authorized 18 May 2022
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Scope of this document

The sections below describe the philosophy, curriculum framework, learning design, assessment approach, language support, inclusion structures and quality-assurance processes that guide PYP implementation at ISD.

1. Purpose of the document

This document sets out the school-level design and implementation of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) at the International School of Debrecen. It is intended to provide a coherent pedagogical description of the PYP as implemented at ISD and to clarify how the school organizes curriculum, learning and teaching, assessment, inclusion, language support and programme review.

2. School context

The International School of Debrecen (ISD) is an English-language international school founded by the Local Government of the City of Debrecen. The school serves students from kindergarten through Grade 12 and offers all three International Baccalaureate programmes: Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), Diploma Programme (DP). ISD became Hungary's first IB Continuum school in 2023 after completing authorization for the PYP, MYP and Diploma Programme.

Within this whole-school context, the **PYP** serves children from Kindergarten 1 through Grade 5. The programme includes the early years and elementary years and is delivered as a coherent continuum. The language of instruction is English, with Hungarian also present in the life of the school and in the host-country context.

ISD is an international learning community with a diverse student population and a strong commitment to learner-centred education, inquiry, wellbeing, innovation and positive action in local and global contexts.



3. Mission and educational philosophy

ISD's mission states: "We are an international community that shapes the future of learning, empowers innovation and inspires positive action, to effect change locally and globally." This mission is closely aligned with the IB mission and provides the guiding purpose for the design of the PYP at ISD.

The school believes that high-quality learning is inquiry-based, concept-driven, inclusive, socially grounded and relevant to the lived experiences of students. Learning at ISD is designed to help students develop as knowledgeable, reflective and compassionate young people who can communicate effectively, think critically, work collaboratively and take meaningful action. In alignment with the ISD Graduate Profile, the school intentionally nurtures learners to be **Curious, Caring, Creative and Changemakers**.

The PYP at ISD therefore emphasizes the development of the whole child. Academic growth, language development, conceptual understanding, social-emotional wellbeing, learner agency and responsible action are understood as interconnected rather than separate goals.

4. The PYP at ISD

The Primary Years Programme is the curriculum framework used by ISD for students aged approximately 3 to 12. At ISD, the PYP is implemented from Kindergarten 1 to Grade 5 and provides a transdisciplinary, inquiry-based and student-centred educational experience.

The programme is organized through the three pillars of the current PYP framework - the learner, learning and teaching, and the learning community - and through a collaboratively developed Programme of Inquiry that reflects the local context of the school. In the early years, play, relationships, learning spaces, symbolic exploration and expression are recognized as essential drivers of inquiry. In the primary years, inquiry continues to be shaped through authentic investigations, conceptual learning, disciplinary understanding and opportunities for action.

4.1 PYP framework and school implementation

PYP pillar	What it emphasizes	How it is implemented at ISD
The learner	Student outcomes, agency, self-efficacy, knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and learner profile development.	Students are supported to inquire, reflect, set goals, make choices and demonstrate learning in multiple ways across classroom and specialist contexts.
Learning and teaching	Inquiry, concept-based learning, assessment for learning, differentiation and authentic experiences.	Teachers design transdisciplinary units, use formative assessment, respond to student voice and connect learning to real-world contexts and subject-specific learning.

The learning community	Relationships, inclusion, wellbeing, language, culture, resources and the shared responsibility for learning.	Homeroom teachers, specialists, EAL teachers, student support staff and families work together to create a safe, inclusive and internationally minded learning community.
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5. Curriculum framework and local implementation

The PYP at ISD is organized as a transdisciplinary curriculum framework. Students build knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and learner profile attributes through learning engagements that connect subjects with issues, ideas and contexts that matter. Subject-specific learning remains important; however, the programme is designed to help students work between, across and beyond traditional subject boundaries.

The school develops and reviews a [Programme of Inquiry](#) that maps how the six transdisciplinary themes are explored across the grade levels. The Programme of Inquiry ensures breadth, balance and progression over time and helps the school articulate the conceptual journey of learners from the early years to the end of Grade 5.

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

ISD's curriculum is standards-based and aligned with IB programme requirements. The school also draws on collaboratively adopted national and international standards frameworks to define learning targets in literacy, numeracy and other subject areas. This enables the school to maintain the integrity of the PYP while ensuring clear expectations for student progress in each curriculum area.

5.1 Early years and primary years design

In the early years, learning is intentionally designed around inquiry, play, relationships and environments that invite exploration. ISD recognizes that young children learn through symbolic exploration, expression, interaction and repeated opportunities to test theories about the world. The role of the teacher is to notice, provoke, document and extend learning in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

In the elementary years, students continue to build agency through increasingly sustained inquiries, collaborative problem-solving, disciplinary and transdisciplinary investigations, and opportunities to take action. Learning design supports students in making connections between ideas, using feedback, revising thinking and applying understanding in authentic contexts.

6. Learning and teaching

Learning and teaching in the PYP at ISD is guided by inquiry, concept-based learning, student agency and purposeful assessment. Teachers design learning experiences that are



engaging, significant, challenging and relevant. Classroom practice aims to help students ask questions, build theories, investigate, interpret evidence, communicate understanding and reflect on how their learning can influence themselves and others.

ISD's broader learning principles reinforce this approach. Learners are placed at the centre; learning is social and collaborative; international mindedness is fostered intentionally; challenge is differentiated and appropriate; assessment is used to inform learning; and connections are made across experiences, concepts and disciplines.

Teaching teams plan collaboratively. Homeroom teachers, specialists and support teachers work together to connect learning where appropriate, identify essential understandings, align expectations and respond to student needs. Planning is informed by observations, evidence of learning, student questions, prior knowledge and ongoing reflection.

6.1 Core pedagogical commitments

- Inquiry is central to the learning process and may be structured, guided or open depending on the age of learners and the purpose of the unit.
- Conceptual understanding is prioritized so that students move beyond isolated facts toward transferable meaning.
- Student voice, choice and ownership are intentionally developed in age-appropriate ways.
- Learning is differentiated to support readiness, language profiles, interests and pathways for challenge.
- Classrooms and shared spaces are designed to support collaboration, reflection, independence and flexible grouping.
- Action is understood as a natural outcome of learning and may be individual, collective, immediate or sustained over time.

7. Language and access

Language is central to learning, identity and participation in the school community. At ISD, English is the main language of instruction within the PYP. The school also values multilingualism, the languages students bring from home and the importance of Hungarian as the language of the host country.

The EAL programme supports students whose first language is not English and who require additional assistance in developing the English language skills necessary for academic success. In the elementary years, EAL teachers are integrated into the classroom environment and also provide targeted interventions. The school uses WIDA MODEL assessments to support diagnostic understanding and programme decisions.

Teachers are expected to recognize that all teachers are language teachers. This means planning for language demands in each unit, making key vocabulary visible, modelling language structures, using visuals and multimodal supports, and ensuring that students can access learning and express understanding in developmentally and linguistically appropriate ways.

Home and family languages are regarded as assets. The school encourages the maintenance and development of students' linguistic identities as part of international mindedness and belonging.



8. Inclusion, wellbeing and student support

ISD aims to provide an inclusive learning environment in which students can experience belonging, challenge and support. Inclusion within the PYP is understood as a whole-school responsibility rather than as a separate service. The goal is to reduce barriers to participation and learning while maintaining high expectations and respect for learner diversity.

Student Support Services work across the school to provide holistic support for students' academic, social and emotional development. This includes counselling support, psychological services, collaboration with teachers and parents, and interventions or accommodations where appropriate. The school's support structures are designed to help students thrive while participating as fully as possible in the common learning life of the classroom.

Wellbeing is embedded in daily practice through routines, relationships, classroom culture, social-emotional learning, transition support and a safeguarding-informed approach to student care. The early years and elementary teams work closely with families to support adjustment, development and a sense of security for learners.

9. Assessment, reporting and documentation

Assessment at ISD is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment is used to make learning visible, to support next steps, to inform teacher planning and to help students develop ownership of their growth. Evidence of learning may be gathered through observation, conversation, student products, performances, conferences, reflections, documentation panels, tasks and more formal assessments when appropriate.

The school uses a balanced approach that includes diagnostic, formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is frequent, purposeful and closely connected to instructional decisions. Summative assessment provides students with meaningful opportunities to demonstrate understanding at important points in the learning process. Students are also encouraged to reflect, self-assess and participate in feedback processes that strengthen metacognition.

Reports are issued twice a year at ISD: a mid-year progress report and an end-of-year final report. In addition to formal reporting cycles, the school communicates with families through conferences, digital platforms, classroom communication and ongoing dialogue about learning.

Documentation is especially important in the PYP. Teachers document not only final products but also the process of inquiry: student questions, shifts in thinking, collaboration, use of feedback, evidence of conceptual understanding and moments of action.

10. The PYP Exhibition

The PYP Exhibition is the culminating collaborative inquiry of the programme. At ISD, the exhibition takes place in Grade 5 and gives students the opportunity to synthesize and apply their learning in a significant, student-led inquiry. Through the exhibition, students demonstrate agency, research and communication skills, conceptual understanding, collaboration and action.



The exhibition is understood as both a process and a product. Students engage with a real issue or opportunity, work with mentors and teachers, reflect on their learning and share their understanding with the school community. The exhibition therefore serves as an important bridge from the PYP to the next stage of the IB continuum.

11. Closing statement

The PYP at ISD reflects the school's commitment to providing a coherent, inclusive and future-oriented education grounded in the IB philosophy and responsive to the needs of its learning community. Through inquiry, conceptual understanding, meaningful action and a strong culture of collaboration, the programme aims to support learners in becoming curious, caring, creative and capable changemakers who are prepared to contribute positively in local and global contexts.

Documents attached: [ISD Programme of Inquiry](#)