



Primary Years  
Programme



# Al Zahra College Primary Years Programme Curriculum Guide



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
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## Welcome

We are delighted to have you join us on this exciting PYP learning journey.

The Primary Years Programme is more than a curriculum—it's an approach to education that nurtures curious, caring, and confident young learners. Through inquiry-based learning, your children will explore big ideas, ask meaningful questions, and make connections across subjects while developing the skills and mindsets they need to thrive in our changing world.

As PYP learners, our students will grow as inquirers, thinkers, communicators, and risk-takers. They'll learn to reflect on their learning, appreciate different perspectives, and take action to make a positive difference in their communities.

We believe that education is a partnership between school, students, and families. Your involvement and support are invaluable to your child's success. We encourage you to engage with your child's inquiries at home, ask about their learning, and share your own knowledge and experiences.

Together, we will create a nurturing environment where every child feels safe, valued, and inspired to reach their full potential. We look forward to getting to know you and your family, and to celebrating your child's growth and achievements throughout the year.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. Here's to a wonderful year of discovery, growth, and joy!

*Dr Ken Darvall*  
*Headmaster*

On behalf of the PYP team, I warmly welcome you to Al Zahra College. We are delighted to have you as part of our school community and look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child's educational journey. Guided by faith, knowledge, and wisdom, we aim to develop learners who are compassionate, reflective, and principled, grounded in their Islamic identity and prepared to make meaningful contributions to the world. Together, we aspire to inspire a love of learning, a sense of service, and a lifelong commitment to living with integrity and purpose.

*Mrs Michelle Ryan*  
*PYP Coordinator*



## About Al Zahra College

### Our Mission

Al Zahra College aims to develop faithful, knowledgeable and wise young people who take responsibility for creating a better and more peaceful world. We will challenge our students to become active learners and critical thinkers who promote intercultural understanding and respect. Therefore, we aim to develop internationally minded learners who strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.

### Our Vision

Al Zahra College will provide, for all students, an outstanding learning environment that offers high quality educational programs, encourages each student to pursue personal and academic excellence, develops a strong and productive relationship between our staff and our parents, and provides students with an excellent foundation for lifelong learning.

### IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the IB works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right (IBO)

### International mindedness at Al Zahra College

At Al Zahra College, our aim is for students to develop and demonstrate international mindedness, which shapes our students' way of thinking, being and acting. Internationally minded students are open to others and to the world and are aware of the deep interconnectedness of all things (IB 2017).

The Colleges appreciates that to be internationally minded is an integral part of education. International mindedness means to understand and promote basic human rights, to know the nature of our physical and social world, and to be aware that our actions impact others and the planet. This goal is best accomplished by knowing ourselves and knowing our place in the world through the cultural backgrounds of all members of our community. Through this knowledge, we strive for empathy that guides our actions.



## IB Learner Profile

The attributes of the learner profile represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that encompass intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth. The learner profile attributes provide all members of the learning community with a common language to describe and to reflect on the school culture, communications, feedback and expectations.

<b>Inquirers</b>	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
<b>Thinkers</b>	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
<b>Risk-takers</b>	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
<b>Principled</b>	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
<b>Caring</b>	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
<b>Open-minded</b>	We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Balanced</b>	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
<b>Reflective</b>	We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.



## The IB Continuum at Al Zahra College

As an IB Continuum school, Al Zahra College provides students with a continuous educational programme that embodies the IB mission from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12. The College also meets the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) curriculum requirements.

At Al Zahra College, we offer the three IB programmes that foster the skills and attitudes in the course of their school learning journey. An IB Continuum education:

- is learner focused.
- fosters effective approaches to teaching and learning.
- works within global contexts; and
- explores significant content.

Students come to school with a diverse range of unique and shared patterns of values, knowledge, and experience of the world and their place in it. Promoting open communication based on understanding and respect, the IB encourages students to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners. An IB education is holistic in nature – it is concerned with the whole person. Along with cognitive development, IB programmes address students' social, emotional, and physical well-being. The programmes emphasise a range of opportunities for students to become active and caring members of local, national, and global communities. They also focus attention on the values and outcomes of internationally minded learning described in the IB Learner Profile. These attributes reflect a diverse range of human capacities and responsibilities that transcend intellectual development and academic achievement.

These attributes reflect a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others, and the world around them. IB programmes aim to increase access to the curriculum and engagement in learning for all students. Learning communities become more inclusive as they identify and remove barriers to learning and participation. Commitment to access and inclusion represents the IB Learner Profile in action.

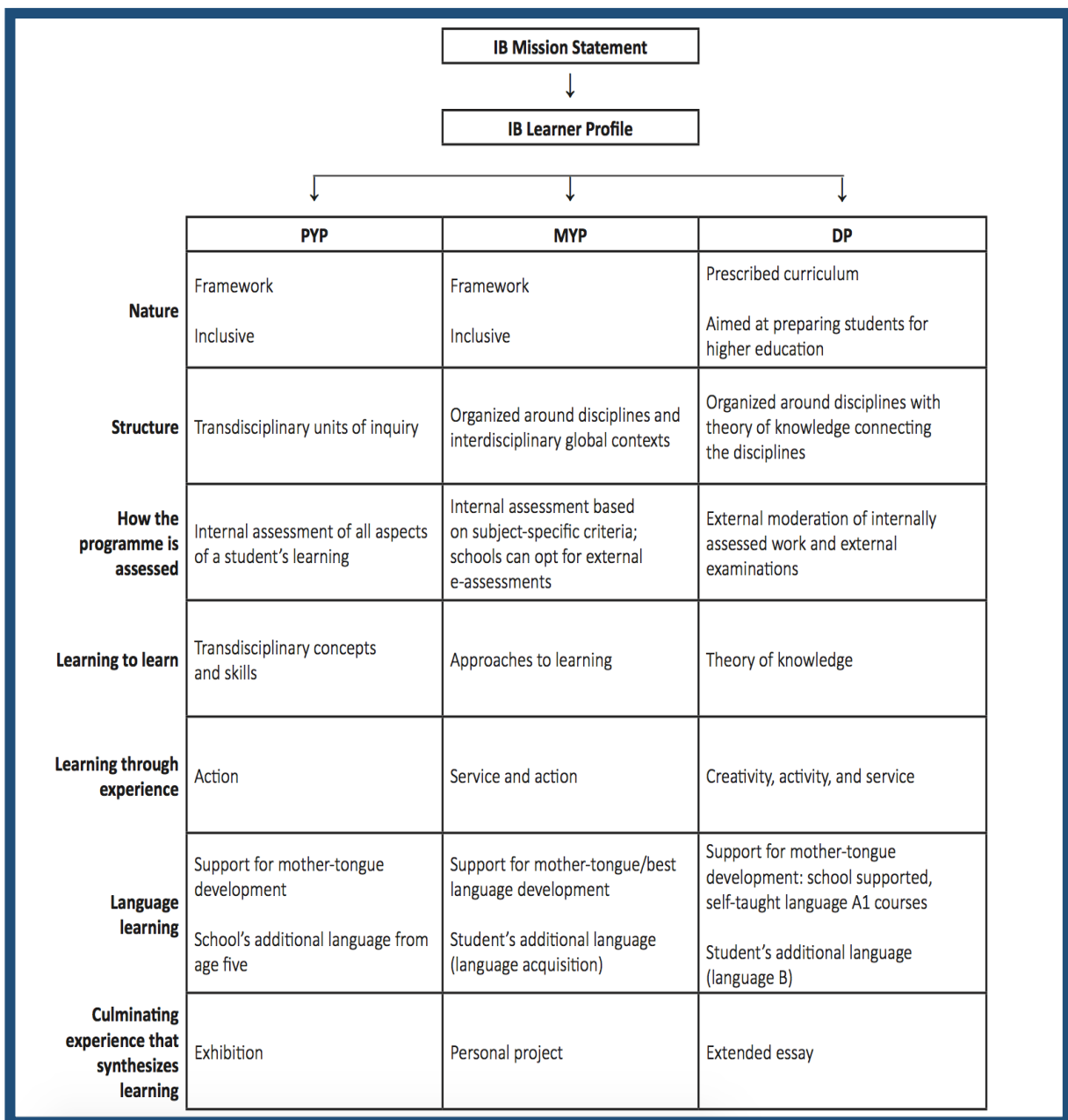
The IB Learner Profile brings to life the aspirations of a community of IB World Schools that reflects a commitment to student-centred education. We:

- facilitate educational opportunities that promote healthy relationships, individual and shared responsibility, and effective teamwork.
- assist students make informed, reasoned, ethical decisions and develop their perseverance, and confidence they need to bring about meaningful change.
- inspire students to ask questions, to pursue personal aspirations, to set challenging goals, and to develop the persistence to achieve them; and
- encourage the creation of rich personal and cultural identities.



As an IB Continuum School, Al Zahra College emphasises learning how to learn, helping students interact effectively with the learning environments they encounter, and encouraging them to value learning as an integral part of their everyday lives.

## The Transition in IB Continuum Schools



## General Curriculum Information

Al Zahra College is an IB World School. This means that we:

- Share the mission and commitment of the IB to quality international education.
- Play an active and supporting role in the worldwide community of IB schools.
- Share knowledge and experience in the development of IB programmes.
- Are committed to the professional development of teachers.

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) also meets New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) requirements. The PYP is designed to be responsive to young children’s ways of knowing. It provides schools with a thoughtfully designed way to give 3 to 5-year-olds stimulating, supportive interactions with their teachers and the effective use of curricula. Young learners are intelligent, resourceful and creative individuals who grow, develop and learn at different rates. They explore their environment and learn about their world through play and relationships with peers, teachers, family and community members.

Early learning in the PYP is a holistic learning experience that integrates socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development. In the PYP classroom, it takes place in dynamic environments that promote play, discovery and exploration.

The curriculum in the PYP includes three interrelated components:

- The written curriculum (What do we want to learn?)
- The taught curriculum (How best will we learn?)
- The assessed curriculum (How will we know what we have learnt?)





## The PYP Elements

Specified Concepts	Approaches to Learning	Approaches to teaching	Action	Knowledge
The 7 Specified Concepts have relevance within and across subject areas but also transcend them.	The ATL develop transferable cognitive and metacognitive skills. By combining ATL and the learner profile attributes, PYP students become self-regulated learners.	Approaches to teaching focus on the pedagogical principles that underpin the IB Primary Years Programme.	Agency supports action.  Agency is a mindset not a skill, and as such it cannot be measured.	Significant, relevant content we wish the students to explore and know about, taking into consideration their prior experience and understanding
Form Function Causation Change Connection Perspective Responsibility	Thinking  Communication  Social  Research  Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>based on inquiry</li> <li>focused on conceptual understanding</li> <li>developed in local and global contexts</li> <li>focused on effective teamwork and collaboration differentiated and inclusive to meet the needs of all learners</li> <li>informed by formative and summative assessment</li> </ul>	Voice  Choice  Ownership	<p><b>Transdisciplinary Themes:</b></p> <p>Who we Are Inquiry into what it means to be human</p> <p>Where we are in time and place Inquiry into orientation in place and time – local and global perspective</p> <p>How we express ourselves Inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas</p> <p>How the world works Inquiry into the natural world and its laws, the interaction between the natural world and human societies</p>



				<p>How we organize ourselves Inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities.</p> <p>Sharing the planet Inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things.</p>
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## Transdisciplinary Learning

A transdisciplinary approach to learning is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant. Transdisciplinary learning in the PYP conveys learning that has relevance between, across and beyond subjects and transcends borders that confine them to connect to what is real in the world. The IB PYP is underpinned by six transdisciplinary themes around which learning is planned. These themes are selected for their relevance to the real world. They are described as transdisciplinary because they focus on issues that go across subject areas. The transdisciplinary themes help teachers to develop a programme of inquiry. Teachers work together to develop investigations into important ideas, which require a substantial and high level of involvement on the part of students. Through the PYP curriculum framework, Al Zahra College curriculum ensures that students examine each theme in the course of the academic year.

The PYP transdisciplinary framework focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both at school and beyond. Informed by research into how students learn, how educators teach, and the principles and practice of effective assessment, the programme places a powerful emphasis on inquiry-based learning. Inquiry is an authentic way for students to explore and understand the world, nurturing their curiosity as they move from current to new and deeper understandings, and embark on a lifelong journey of learning.

## Al Zahra College Programme of Inquiry

The PYP Programme of Inquiry (POI) Central Ideas and Concepts Matrix summarises significant ideas that our Pre-Kindergarten -Year 6 students explore throughout the year. To view the central ideas and concepts for 2026, please download the updated PDFs on the College website.



## The Transdisciplinary Themes

### Who we are

An inquiry into identity as individuals and as part of a collective through:

- physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being
- relationships and belonging
- learning and growing

### Where we are in Place and Time

An inquiry into histories and orientation in place, space, and time through:

- periods, events, and artifacts
- communities, heritage, culture, and environment
- natural and human drivers of movement, adaptation, and transformation

### How We Express Ourselves

An inquiry into the diversity of voice, perspectives, and expression through:

- inspiration, imagination, creativity
- personal, social, and cultural notes and practices of communication
- intentions, perceptions, interpretations, and responses

### How the World Works

An inquiry into the understandings of the world and phenomena through:

- patterns, cycles, systems
- diverse practices, methods, and tools
- discovery, design, innovation, possibilities, and impacts

### How We Organise Ourselves

An inquiry into systems, structures, and networks through:

- interactions with and between social and ecological systems
- approaches to livelihoods and trade practices: intended and unintended consequences
- representation, collaboration, and decision-making

### Sharing the Planet

An inquiry into the interdependence of human and natural worlds through:

- rights, responsibilities, and dignity of all
- pathways to just, peaceful, and reimagined futures
- nature, complexity, coexistence, and wisdom



## NESA Curriculum Overview

### Stages of Learning

The NSW curriculum is organised into seven stages of learning. Kindergarten to Year 6 (K–6) includes four stages of learning.

Stage of Learning	Grades
Early-Stage 1	Kindergarten
Stage 1	Years 1 and 2
Stage 2	Years 3 and 4
Stage 3	Years 5 and 6

In the PYP, students explore the following subjects based on the NESA and IB curriculum guidelines.

- English
- Mathematics
- Science and Technology
- Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) – History and Geography
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Creative Arts
- Languages

### English

Students learn to read, write, speak, view and represent language. They learn about the English language and literature through working with a wide range of spoken, visual, multimedia and digital texts. Students learn how language varies according to context, and how to communicate with a range of audiences for different purposes. They learn to read for information and pleasure. Students gain a sound grasp of language structures, punctuation, spelling and grammar. They also learn to think in ways that are imaginative, creative and critical.

### Arabic

At Al Zahra College, we recognise the important status of the Arabic language as a fundamental part of students' rich cultural and religious identities. We appreciate the role of Arabic in allowing our students to realise their full potential. We aim to foster in our students a love for the Arabic language and culture, and to develop both academic and social skills in the language. Arabic is a part of the regular school day at Al Zahra College. The four language continuums (listening and speaking, viewing and presenting, reading, and writing) are taught and developed through the study of Modern Standard Arabic based on the five developmental phases.

### Mathematics

Mathematics in K–6 focuses on developing students' mathematical understanding, fluency, communication, reasoning and problem-solving through their study of Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. These capabilities enable students



to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations, using strategies to make decisions and solve problems relevant to their further education and everyday lives.

The PYP Mathematics teaching and learning also incorporates the continuums from the IB PYP Mathematics scope and sequence. The IB PYP Mathematics Learning Continuums are Data Handling, Measurement, Shape and Space, Pattern and Function, and Number. These continuums are based on four phases of development, that incorporate their specific conceptual understandings.

### **Science and Technology**

Learning about science and technology provides a framework for students to know, understand and make sense of the world. This study encourages students to embrace new concepts and learn to observe, develop testable questions, and test and evaluate ideas to refine their understanding.

### **Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)**

Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) incorporate the study of people, places and environments, as well as how people and events from the past have shaped societies over time. Through the foundational knowledge, understanding and skills of geography and history, HSIE introduces students to the complex interconnections between people and places, past and present so they can become active, confident, engaged and valued members of Australia's diverse community.

### **Creative Arts**

In Creative Arts, students engage in practical experiences that develop knowledge, understanding and skills in creative arts practices. They develop artistic and aesthetic understandings and the ability to think critically and analyse creative works. Students develop insights into personal, social, cultural, historical and contemporary contexts and perspectives.

### **PDHPE**

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) equip students with the knowledge and skills to positively influence their own and others' safety, health and wellbeing.

### **Islamic Studies**

The Al Zahra College Islamic Studies program is based on the teachings of the Shia Jaafari Ithna Ashari denomination. The College's ethos is based on strong Islamic principles, within a nurturing Islamic school environment. Students are taught a structured Islamic studies curriculum that involves: Quranic Studies, Islamic History, Islamic Theology, and Ethics. The College community also celebrates the various religious events throughout the year. The programme aims to nurture students' beliefs, values, behaviour, feelings and attitudes to develop within them, a sound moral and ethical compass, that will enable them to positively and actively contribute as global citizens to a more peaceful world.



## Assessment in the PYP

Assessment at Al Zahra College is integral to the processes of planning, teaching and learning. Teachers are engaged in assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning throughout the academic year. Through thoughtfully constructed, regular assessments that nurture authentic learning and reflect the learning objectives, students can develop and build on their skills and knowledge. All assessment in the Primary School consists of two types:

- Formative assessment is interwoven with daily learning and helps teachers and students find out what the students already know in order to plan the next stage in learning. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked: neither can function effectively or purposefully without the other. This form of assessment aims to promote learning through regular and frequent feedback.
- Summative assessment happens at the end of the teaching and learning process and gives the students the opportunity to demonstrate and reflect on what has been learnt.

The PYP encourages a range of school-based assessment practices, including student-teacher conferences, writing samples, checklists, observations, performance tasks, open ended tasks and portfolios.

### External and Standardised Achievement Tests

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 participate in National Benchmark testing (NAPLAN). The benchmarks articulate nationally agreed, minimum acceptable standards in Literacy and Numeracy for these year levels. The results from this testing are reported to parents. The College also uses standardised tests as part of the whole-school assessment process to inform teaching and learning, and to track students' learning growth over time.

### Portfolios

The portfolios in combination with the SeeSaw app are a celebration of students' learning and achievement. Together, these provide a collection of students' work that is designed to demonstrate success, growth, thinking and reflection. Portfolios are a representation of the child's process of learning, and progress over a period of time.

### Academic Report

The written reports have a summative grade based on NESA requirements and the Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards. Detailed written comments are also provided on the students' learner profile attributes and the ATLS, skills. Students also contribute a personal reflection on their learner profile. Academic reports are provided at the end of Semesters 1 and 2.

## The PYP Exhibition



All IB programmes include a culminating or consolidating learning experience in their final year. For the PYP, it is the Exhibition. Through the PYP exhibition, students demonstrate their understanding of an issue or opportunity they have chosen to explore. They undertake their investigation both individually and with their peers, together with the guidance of a mentor.

The exhibition is a powerful demonstration of student agency, as well as the agency of the Al Zahra College community that has nurtured them through their years in the PYP. The learning community participates in the Exhibition, supporting and celebrating the development of internationally minded students who make a positive difference in their lives and the lives of others.

The exhibition may be based on one of the six units of inquiry during the final year, or it may stand outside of the programme of inquiry to explore a global issue or opportunity that may cross all transdisciplinary themes. It may run concurrently with other units or be contained within a specific time frame during the year.

All exhibitions are student-initiated, designed and collaborative. All students take an active role in all aspects of planning, inquiring, investigating, communicating and assessing their learning in the Exhibition. All students will benefit from guidance and collaboration with teachers, peers and mentors to facilitate, direct and adjust their learning.

### **The purposes of the PYP exhibition**

The key purposes of the exhibition are for students to:

- engage in an in-depth, collaborative inquiry
- demonstrate agency and responsibility for their learning
- demonstrate the attributes of the learner profile in authentic contexts
- explore multiple perspectives
- monitor, document and present their learning
- synthesise and apply their learning
- take action as a result of their learning
- unite the students, teachers and other members of the learning community in a collaborative experience
- reflect on their PYP education
- celebrate their transition to the next stages of their education
- engage with the broader learning community and celebrate their achievements.

### **Academic Honesty in the PYP**



At Al Zahra College, students in the PYP begin learning about the key concepts associated with academic honesty including intellectual property, plagiarism and authentic authorship. Students learn that they are personally responsible for academic honesty and about the behaviours which are associated with academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, copying another's work, using unpermitted notes or collaboration, etc.). PYP teachers also highlight the importance of the ethical use of information (IBO, 2014). Teachers in the PYP encourage this by having clear learning objectives and assessment practices, while also giving time for individual evaluations of progress.

The PYP sets out clear student expectations to ensure academic honesty through:

- an emphasis on students' responsibility for their own work
- the provision of guidelines for individual and group work
- Age-appropriate expectations and practice regarding references, citations, quotations and paraphrasing
- Agreements related to the responsible use of information technology and media resources.

The College also uses the attributes of the IB learner profile and the PYP attitudes when providing examples and models of academic honesty for students that support approaches to learning, classroom and homework practices, group work and other activities.

## **Homework in the PYP**

At Al Zahra College, we believe that homework can serve several purposes. Homework creates a valuable link between school and home, keeping parents informed of the kind of work being done at school. The type of homework given should always consolidate the learning in the classroom. However, we also believe that the homework given should enable students to maintain a balanced after-school life. Students should be able to exercise, build relationships with their families and friends, and engage in creative and unstructured play.



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