Primary Years Programme

Parent Information
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1</strong>      Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 2</strong>      The IBO in the Twenty-first Century</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3</strong>      The Primary Years Programme</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 4</strong>      The Basics of the Primary Years Programme</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 5</strong>      The Written Curriculum</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 6</strong>      The Taught Curriculum</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 7</strong>      The Learned Curriculum</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 8</strong>      The PYP Exhibition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 9</strong>      Quality Assurance and Professional Development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 1: Introduction

At Gold Creek School our aim is to develop students who are well educated and motivated to learn. They will obtain the skills that enable them to be successful at school, at university, and in the global world of the twenty first century. In this age of rapid technological development it is more vital than ever to teach students to be life-long learners who are adaptable and willing to accept change. As Socrates realised over 2000 years ago, “wisdom matters more than knowledge”. Today we must face the reality that there will be valuable knowledge that we will not have been taught at school and is worth knowing. What the PYP will have equipped our students with is the ability to find this knowledge, interpret and process it, and then use it effectively.

Gold Creek School is an IBO candidate school for the Primary Years Programme (PYP). Students will continue from the PYP – Preschool to Year 6 into the Middle Years Programme (MYP) – Year 7-10.

Section 2: The International Baccalaureate in the Twenty-first Century

International Baccalaureate (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 organization works with schools, governments and international organizations 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.

The continuum of international education

The IB offers four programmes of international education:
• the Primary Years Programme (PYP) – introduced in 1997
• the Middle Years Programme (MYP) – introduced in 1994
• the Diploma Programme (DP) – introduced in 1969
• the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) – introduced in 2012

The programmes have a common educational framework: a consistent philosophy about teaching and learning that focuses on the development of the whole person, and an overarching concept of how to develop international-mindedness. Each programme promotes the education of the whole person, emphasising intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth.

The IB’s mission statement and the IB learner profile connect the programmes, articulating the learning outcomes for IB students of all ages.
Section 3: The Primary Years Programme

The PYP is a transdisciplinary framework emphasising international understanding and responsible citizenship. It is implemented in every continent and has been taught in both state schools and private schools worldwide. The PYP incorporates the most up to date research on learning and the best practices from a range of national systems. The PYP has been recognised by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The PYP has been substantially influenced by the explicit acknowledgement that the learner constructs models of understanding based on personal experience. Vygotsky defined learning as “the creation of meaning that occurs when an individual links new knowledge with...existing knowledge (Williams and Woods, 1997). The PYP determines the prior knowledge that the child brings to new learning experiences through the curriculum. The teacher is expected to explore the children’s understanding in order to provide relevant experiences that will build on and make connections between their previous and new understandings. They are then given the opportunity to test and refine their understandings.

Section 4: The Basics of the Primary Years Programme

The PYP is structured so that it takes into consideration the written curriculum, the taught curriculum and the learned curriculum. These three interrelated components emerge as the PYP’s definition of curriculum.
The written curriculum focuses on what we want our students to learn. The PYP strives for a balance between the search for understanding, the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, the development of positive attitudes and the opportunity for positive action. To achieve this balance the PYP written curriculum emphasises five essential elements. The five essential elements include:

- **Concepts** powerful ideas which have relevance within and across the disciplines
- **Knowledge** significant, relevant, subject matter we wish the students to know about
- **Skills** those things the students need to be able to do in a changing, challenging world
- **Attitudes** dispositions which are expressions of fundamental values, beliefs and feelings about learning, the environment, and people
- **Action** demonstrations of deeper learning in responsible behaviour through positive action and service

### Concepts

The PYP is a programme which emphasises meaning and understanding, and great importance is attached in all areas of the curriculum – the written, the taught and the assessed components – to the exploration of a core set of concepts:

- **Form:** What is it like?
- **Function:** How does it work?
- **Causation:** Why is it like it is?
- **Change:** How is it changing?
- **Connection:** How is it connected to other things?
- **Perspective:** What are the points of view?
- **Responsibility:** What is our responsibility?
- **Reflection:** How do we know?

These concepts are important for two reasons. Firstly, they provide consistency among PYP schools, in which all students are working towards an understanding of these concepts. For example, "What are the points of view?" expands the thinking of the students in all PYP schools so that they take that essential first step in developing international awareness and the willingness to consider another's perspective. Secondly, they have relevance in all the traditional subject domains and influence the planning and delivery of the entire programme. They therefore provide one of the most significant transdisciplinary elements in the programme.

Expressed as open-ended questions, they provide the initial momentum and the underlying structure for the exploration of the content of the whole programme. These questions form a framework to which teachers can refer during the process of collaborative planning which is required by the PYP. They focus the teachers’ thinking as they generate guiding questions specific to particular content, whether it be subject specific or related to transdisciplinary themes.
The PYP acknowledges the importance of the traditional disciplines of particular subject domains: language; mathematics; social studies; arts; science and technology; personal, social and physical education. The knowledge and skills that constitute the essence of each of these subject domains are documented in the Australian Curriculum – which set out the overall expectations for each subject within each year level or phase.

However, the PYP also recognises that educating children in a set of isolated subject domains, while necessary, is not sufficient. Of equal importance is the need to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to children and transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects. “To be truly educated, a student must also make connections across the disciplines, discover ways to integrate the separate subjects, and ultimately relate what they learn to life” (Boyer, 1995). Ernest Boyer proposed children explore a set of themes that represents shared human experiences such as “response to the aesthetic” and “membership in groups”. He referred to these as “core commonalities”. In the PYP, this idea of human commonalities shapes the transdisciplinary themes.

The programme defines transdisciplinary themes that identify areas of shared experience and have meaning for individuals in different cultures. These themes are part of the common ground that unifies the curriculums in all PYP schools. They provide the opportunity to incorporate both local and global issues in the content. They are:

**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**

**Skills**

Both the traditional subject domains and the transdisciplinary themes provide a focus for children's inquiry. Within the subject domains children acquire the particular skills that define the discipline of that subject, for example, in language the students become literate, and in mathematics they become numerate. The acquisition of literacy and numeracy, in their broadest sense, is essential as these skills provide children with the tools of inquiry.

Within the transdisciplinary themes, the children acquire and apply a set of transdisciplinary skills: social skills, communication skills, thinking skills, research skills and self-management skills. These skills are valuable, not only in the units of inquiry, but also in all the subject domains and in events experienced outside the classroom.
Attitudes

The PYP also lists attitudes to be developed in the children which will contribute to the development of the whole child.

These are:

- Appreciation
- Commitment
- Confidence
- Cooperation
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Enthusiasm
- Independence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Tolerance

These attitudes should be explicitly accepted and modelled by the entire school community.

Action

The PYP believes that international education must extend beyond intellectual attainment to include not only responsible attitudes but also thoughtful and appropriate action. Schools can and should meet the challenge of offering all learners the opportunity and the power to choose their actions, to act and to reflect on these actions in order to make a difference in and to the world.

The PYP believes that every student, every year, has the right and the duty to be involved in such action. In order to make the action component of the curriculum as powerful as possible in terms of student learning the PYP advocates a cycle of involvement which provides students with opportunities to engage in meaningful action.

Section 6: The Taught Curriculum

How best will we learn?

The taught curriculum focuses on how best students will learn. Based on an extensive study of the literature, the PYP believes and is committed to purposeful, structured inquiry, which engages students in their own learning. The PYP has made a commitment to relevance and quality rather than quantity. The PYP is convinced that coverage is often the enemy of understanding. Students’ learning should be purposeful and should emphasise the active construction of meaning. Students are invited to investigate important subject matter by formulating their own questions, looking at the various means available to answer the questions. The teachers role in this process is to create an educational environment which encourages students to take responsibility for the own learning, to varying degrees.

In order to plan for this kind of learning, the PYP believes that links between the written and taught curriculum must be made. Inquiry represents an approach that is broad, inclusive and provides the context in which a wide variety of teaching strategies and styles can be accommodated.

Inquiry is the leading, but not exclusive, pedagogical approach of the PYP. In the broadest sense, inquiry is the process initiated by the teacher or learner which moves the learner from their current understanding to new and deeper levels of understanding. Inquiry involves active engagement.
whereby learners ask questions and reflect on the connections made. It requires the learner to interact with their environment in an effort to make sense of the world around them. It is an expectation of the PYP that successful inquiry will lead to responsible action initiated by the learner as part of the inquiry process.

Section 7: The Learned Curriculum
How will we know what we have learned?

The learned curriculum focuses on assessment. Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning in the PYP. Both students and teachers are actively engaged in assessing the students’ progress as part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills. Assessment is the means by which we analyse student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as the foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. The PYP believes in assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning.

Assessment can be divided into three main components. They are: formative, summative and evaluation. Formative assessments are interwoven into the daily learning and help teachers and students find out what they already know. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and neither can function effectively without the other. Summative assessments occur at the end of the teaching and learning process and provide opportunities for the students to demonstrate what they have learned. Evaluation is the process of making a judgement about student progress or the effectiveness of a programme.

Assessment is planned for and built into the taught curriculum. Assessments allow students to demonstrate the range of their conceptual understandings, their knowledge and their skills. They focus on big ideas and transdisciplinary skills rather than facts or specialised skills. They take into account different ways of learning and knowing and are sensitive to personal circumstances. Assessments produce evidence that can be reported on and understood by all stakeholders. They are continuous and cumulative and are subject to continuous review and improvement.

Reporting

There are several ways in which student progress is communicated at Gold Creek School. These include, but are not limited to, end of semester reports, three way conferencing, student led conferencing and take place periodically throughout the school year. Students play an integral role in the reporting to parents and are involved in reflecting upon their learning and setting goals for the future.

We believe that learning involves both the students, teachers and parents and we encourage open and honest dialogue in order to provide the best learning experiences for the students at Gold Creek.
Section 8: The PYP Exhibition

In the final year of the PYP the children participate in a culminating project, the PYP exhibition. This requires that each child demonstrates engagement with the five essential elements of the programme – knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes, action. It is both a transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in the spirit of personal and shared responsibility, as well as a summative assessment activity that is a celebration and rite of passage, symbolic and actual, from the PYP into the middle years of schooling.

Grade 6 students at Gold Creek will participate in their first PYP Exhibition in the 2016 academic year.

Section 9: Quality Assurance and Professional Development

All IB World Schools are required to participate in an ongoing process of review and development, using the same programme standards and practices.

As part of its ongoing commitment to the development of a highly skilled global learning community, the IB provides a wide range of high-quality professional development opportunities to help new, experienced and expert school leaders and educators understand, support, and successfully deliver IB programmes reflecting IB standards and practice.

In Summary

The PYP focuses on the heart as well as the mind and addresses social, physical, emotional and cultural needs as well as academic needs. The traditional academic subjects are valued. In addition, there is an emphasis on the balance between the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills and the search for meaning and understanding. The programme provides opportunity for learners to construct meaning, principally through concept-driven inquiry. The threads of children's learning are brought together in the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry, which in turn allows them to make connections with life outside the school. The PYP enables children to develop sensitivity to the experiences of others through the curriculum, the attributes listed in the IB learner profile, the attitudes that are an explicit element of the programme, and the expectation of socially responsible action as a result of the learning experience.

For further details regarding the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and the continuum of learning, please visit: www.ibo.org