



Parent Handbook

Kindergarten and Primary School Year 2021/22



INTERNATIONAL
MULTILINGUAL
SCHOOL

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School Director's Welcome



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you and your family to our wonderful school, Tandem IMS. As School Director I am extremely grateful and proud to lead our school and dedicated staff as we strive to bring your children the education and care that they deserve. As educators, we are passionate about the children whom we teach and believe strongly in the path that we are leading them along as we prepare each individual for the future.

As your child is with us, he/she will experience many moments of joy and feelings of success as he/she becomes confident and proficient in learning in a multilingual and demanding school environment. Your child will also develop strong friendships and bonds with peers as he/she is on this journey at Tandem IMS. Ultimately it is our aim to keep that familiar saying true – “School days are the best days of our lives”.

School provides opportunities for children to learn and to grow, but it also includes opportunities to develop in becoming responsible and independent. Without overcoming challenges – both academically and socially and emotionally – children will not develop coping mechanisms to solve problems and overcome more difficult challenges in the future. At Tandem IMS, we are committed to supporting our pupils in developing strategies that will enable them to confidently find solutions to obstacles that they encounter.

I can assure you that by joining our school community, your child will (through the guidance of our dedicated staff) learn, grow, and develop to reach his/her own individual potential. We are very much looking forward to supporting your child through this phase of their school life and to working in collaboration with you as parents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neal Brown', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Neal Brown
School Director

Mission Statement

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At Tandem IMS, we continually strive to provide a positive and dynamic learning climate within which diversity is celebrated and where language learning is key to encouraging open-mindedness, gaining international perspective, creative thinking and developing respect. We aim for your child to be fit for the future in a digitalised, ever-changing world.

WE ENSURE OUR STUDENTS GROW AND DEVELOP TO BECOME

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL EXPLORERS

thriving on multiculturalism, being actively multilingual, embracing change, being future focused and flexible.

SELF-CONFIDENT LEARNERS

being reflective, responsible, independent and taking initiative.

CREATIVE THINKERS

being inquisitive, active learners, challenging inquirers, visionary and inspiring.

TEAM PLAYERS

having honesty and integrity, a positive attitude, listening and understanding, giving equal opportunities, respecting, trusting and offering commitment.

DIGITAL DRIVERS

being comfortable with the latest technology and making the most of integrating the digital world in their lives.

INTERNATIONAL CITIZENS

showing respect and tolerance, building multicultural awareness, understanding tradition, having an active role in a changing society, celebrating diversity, being open-minded and socially interact.

PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN TO BE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

School Rules and Guiding Principles

At Tandem IMS, we believe in three guiding principles which all of our school rules are based around:

- Each child has the right to learn
- Each child has the right to feel and be safe
- Each child has the right to be respected

Please try to instil these principles in your children and encourage them to follow them whilst at school, but also in their daily lives. We certainly embrace these principles, and we focus on our school rules with positive reinforcement. Unfortunately, there are occasions when our expectations are not met. In such instances, reprimands and consequences are given in line with our behaviour policy to help children reflect on how they can adapt their behaviour in the future.

School Day

Please find below an outline of the key times for the school day in Kindergarten and Primary. During the “Meet the Teachers Evening” held by each teaching team at the beginning of the school year, parents will receive an individual timetable specific to their child’s class.

Kindergarten **08:50 – 15:50**

Drop-off time 08:30 – 08:45

School closure and collection 15:40 – 15:50

Primary **08:30 – 15:55**

Drop-off time 08:10 – 08:25

School closure and collection 15:55

Early Care* from 07:30

Homework Club and Late Care* 16:00 – 18:30

* Please note that these services have an extra fee and enrolment is necessary on a semesterly basis. In an emergency situation you may contact the school office to request one of these for an additional charge.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Children are dropped-off outside the school's main entrance in the morning. Children will be greeted at the door by one of our staff and will then proceed to their classrooms alone. This is an important part in developing our children's independence.

At the end of the day, the children will be brought down to meet their parents outside the school by one of the class teachers. Children must say good-bye to their teachers before leaving.

Any child not collected on time at the end of the day will be sent to Late Care and the parents will receive an invoice for this additional service.

Early Care and Late Care

Children who are registered may join Early Care from 07:30 until welcome time begins (Kindergarten: 8:30 / Primary: 8:10).

Children who are registered for Late Care may be collected at specific pick-up times at staggered intervals. These times are registered for in advance and children will be brought down to the main entrance at the time selected by their parents. If the parents are not there at the selected time, the child will be taken back to Late Care and brought down again at the next fixed time. These slots are signed up for via a "Google Form" at the beginning of each semester. Of course, if a parent needs to deviate from their regular pick-up time at short notice, they can inform the school office. If known in advance, this can also be communicated directly with the Late Care staff.

Please note, that for any family who has not picked up their child by 18:30, a Late Fee will be invoiced and paid directly to the supervisor who stayed to look after the child. This is charged at CHF 50 per each 15 minute segment begun after 18:30.

Late Arrival

Punctuality is important for our children, and we encourage that they are brought to school so that they have the time to settle before school begins. Entering the classroom late can cause embarrassment to a child and has a negative impact on learning. It also causes disruption to those who have already started the lessons. Kindergarten children should arrive in school no later than 08:45, and Primary children, no later than 08:25.

From time to time however late arrival can happen. In these cases the child should report to the school office and from there they will then be escorted or sent to the classroom (depending on the age of the child). Late marks are recorded in the pupil register and appear on Progress Report Cards. If a child is repeatedly late for school, a meeting with the class teachers and school management will be initiated to address the problem.

Sickness

Sickness should be reported to the school office before 08:30. This can be done via a phone call to the school, or by completing the absence form via your SchoolBase online portal.

Children who have a fever, vomiting or diarrhoea are expected to remain at home until they are free of symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours.

Children who are to miss sports and swimming lessons need a doctor's certificate to do so. Children who cannot attend swimming lessons must be collected from school before the class leaves for the pool as there is no spectator area where supervision can take place at the pool.

Contracts and Enrolment Changes

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As a non-profit school, Tandem IMS relies solely on its fees to provide the wonderful learning environment and stability for its children. All terms signed up to by our families in their contracts must be followed. No exceptions will be made.

School contracts are valid for one full school year and roll over automatically if they are not cancelled in writing by the 31st March for the next school year, which begins in August. Cancellation is only valid during the school year for families who are moving out of the Canton of Zurich with a 3 months notice period enforced.

Changes to enrolment blocks (including tuition times, care packages, school bus and school lunches) are only possible on a semesterly basis. Notification must be given at least 6 weeks in advance of the new semester start date.



Communication

Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communication with all parents and the wider community. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents well-informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

Our main method of communication with parents is via our SchoolBase application and online portal. This should be accessed regularly by parents, and we strongly encourage that you have this application installed on your mobile device with notifications turned on. This portal contains all the essential information regarding school life, and specific class information. In addition, short notifications will also be pushed out by school staff. Longer and more personalised messages may be sent to parents via email.

Addressing Staff

We are an international school and need to appreciate that a great number of cultural differences exist within the community. Whilst at school, children are to address all staff by their surname.

When addressing staff, it is suggested that parents first establish with the staff member how they would like to be addressed and vice-versa. As a general rule of thumb; surnames shall be used in school unless otherwise requested.

Appointments with Staff

Any parent who wishes to make an appointment with a staff member outside the scheduled Parent Teacher Conference days should make an appointment through the school office or directly with the staff member through school email. All teachers have email: first name initial and surname@tandem-ims.ch

Communication Methods

Tandem IMS values positive communication with our parents. It is by ensuring that we are collaborating and engaging to keep each other informed that our home-school partnership in helping your children to grow and develop is optimised.

In addition to email communication from the school, we also require all parents to be subscribed and to check our SchoolBase App. This allows parents to view important information, including: school documents, photographs, permission forms, calendars, timetables, teacher/class notifications and reminders etc.

First Point of Contact

The first point of contact for any pedagogical queries is always your child's class teachers. We recommend having both the English and German teachers copied in on any communication so that they are kept up to date of matters in the classroom. Instead of writing lengthy emails back and forth, we also recommend that teachers and parents communicate either in person, on the phone, or via a Google Meet video call.

Any matters that require the attention of the administration team should be directed to the school office on 043 500 10 30 or zurich@tandem-ims.ch.

Class WhatsApp / Chat Groups

Some classes have a WhatsApp group (or similar chat application) to communicate with parents of the class. These are great to communicate regarding private events or to share photographs of forgotten homework etc. These platforms should never be used to discuss an issue regarding the school or its staff. If there is something which concerns a parent, please approach the school staff directly to discuss the concerns that you have, and which relate to your child/ren.

What should children wear to school?

- Children should wear practical, comfortable clothes to school. It should be remembered that, at times, activities shall be undertaken which may result in clothes becoming soiled. We therefore advise that no expensive or sentimental pieces should be worn.
- For sports lessons, children must bring a change of clothes, and they should have suitable indoor sports shoes with a non-marking sole.
- No military style clothing may be worn (camouflage etc.).
- Children should also not wear sweatpants/ tracksuit bottoms to school, unless for sports activities.
- Children should not wear clothing that is too revealing. This includes shorts that are too short, t-shirts without straps over the shoulders, or t-shirts which do not cover the stomach area.

What should my child bring to school?

In Kindergarten, all items are provided by the school – including resource materials and snacks. It is however required that children in this phase of the school have the following items at school:

- Small backpack for bringing items to and from school
- Spare clothing
- Waterproof jacket and trousers
- Paint shirt
- Slippers
- Sports clothes
- Water bottle
- Toothbrush and toothpaste

For primary children, in addition to the items on the Kindergarten list, they also require:

- Pencil case with pencils, colouring pencils, rubber, ruler, sharpener and pens
- Geometry set (Primary 4 upwards)

Children in all classes should have their personal belongings (including clothing) clearly labelled with their names.

Lost Property

All items of personal belonging should be labelled with the child's name. For items that are not named, they will be kept in the lost property box until the last day of the term. Any collected items will be shown to each class, and parents have the chance to view the items at pick-up time on the day that school closes before each holiday.

Any unnamed items not collected or claimed before each holiday will be donated to charity.

Snacks

Families of primary children are asked to provide healthy snacks for their children. We ask that families adhere to the following guidelines when providing snacks:

- Children should only drink water at school
- Chocolate, or chocolate coated food items are not allowed at school
- Sweet biscuits are not allowed at school
- Tandem IMS also has a "nut" policy – please avoid sending children with Hazelnut, Walnut and Peanuts to school

Some examples of permissible snacks are:

- Yoghurt
- Crackers and cheese
- Savoury sandwiches
- Fruit
- Cut vegetables

We ask that you please reinforce with your children that they should not "trade" or share snacks as there are some pupils with severe food allergies.

In the case of birthdays, children may bring a cake or "special treat" to school to share with friends.

Children in Kindergarten have all snacks provided during the day. If they wish to bring their own snack for "Late Care" they are welcome to do so. We also ask that these follow all the guidelines above.

Lunches

Every meal is freshly prepared by the kitchen team at the “Restaurant Oase”, Hottingen and delivered to Tandem IMS. The food is healthy and provides balanced nutrition. All meat and poultry is exclusively from Switzerland and eggs are Swiss, free-range. Fish is either MSC or ASC certified – depending on whether it has been caught in the sea or specifically farmed. Additionally, all other products are seasonally and domestically sourced where possible.

The menu planning is characterised by its variety. We offer daily raw vegetables or salad and fruits. Wholemeal products and legumes, which are an important source of protein besides meat, are also included in the menu plan. We take food intolerances into consideration and deliver gluten-free and lactose-free meals. Furthermore, we offer a pork-free and vegetarian alternative.

All food is prepared daily, on the day of consumption with strict safety and hygiene regulations in practice. All food waste is collected to monitor how well the meals were received by the school as a whole. When something new is not well-received, it is removed from the menu.

Children will never be forced to eat all the food on their plates, but they are encouraged to try it.

Any family who does not wish for their child to have our school lunches is of course welcome to provide them with a packed lunch. Although there is a microwave available, we generally promote the use of thermos lunch boxes or flasks for bringing warm meals to school.

Excursions

Children in Kindergarten and Primary will have several excursions throughout the year (Nature Days, museum visits, specialised tours and educational workshops etc.) and all costs are covered by the “school excursion fee” which is payable at the beginning of the year. Fees for Project Weeks and overnight trips are billed separately, but participation in these are non-compulsory.

If children are going to be taken out of school and remain in the local area – for example to a nearby park where the use of public transport is not required – you will not normally receive a permission form to complete.

For all excursions which involve the use of public transport, or visiting another setting, you will be notified in advance, and you will be requested to complete the electronic excursion form before your child can attend. Any child not given permission will have to remain at home - no other form of care will be provided by the school.

Sports and Swimming Lessons

During the weekly timetable, all children in Kindergarten and Primary will have sports lessons once per week. Additionally, in Primary 1 and 2 the children have one full semester of swimming.

All sports and swimming lessons are compulsory and a doctor’s note is required if children are missing these lessons.

Please note, if your child is deemed not well enough to participate in swimming lessons, he/she will be required to be collected from school at 12:30 on this day as the class will be away for the entire afternoon. No alternative programme is available.

Library Visits

Children in Primary visit the Pestalozzi Library at the GZ Riesbach approximately every two weeks with their class teacher. The children have their own individual library cards. Teachers inform in advance when the children will be going to the library. Fines for any books not brought back on time are the responsibility of the child/parents.

Project Weeks

Tandem IMS runs two project weeks which are non-compulsory. These allow parents wishing for extra holidays further flexibility to have their child miss school, without missing compulsory elements of the curriculum. These weeks have an additional cost to the school fees (for those who do attend). Children who are not registered are automatically allocated as being on extra holiday.

French Project Week / French Camp (the final week of the first term)

Primary 1 to 3 have special activities and excursions based on the French language and countries which speak French, while Primary 4 to 6 go away on their French Camp from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. During this week, Kindergarten have a regular week of school.

Summer Project Week (final week of the school year)

This is in the final week of the school year before the summer holidays begin. Each year a new theme is chosen and communicated to parents by April at the latest. All children, from Kindergarten to Primary 6 are welcome to enrol for these special project weeks.

Events

During the school year we celebrate a diverse range of events in the yearly calendar. These include religious and non-religious festivals, Book Day, Sports Day, Summer Festival, Graduation, Christmas Performance etc.

Some events marked in the school calendar are celebrated by the whole school, while other events are “optional” and are selected via a voting system in the class. Unfortunately, in order to meet the demands of our curriculum, not all events can be covered by each class.

You will normally receive further updates on these events in your communication from the teachers throughout the year.

Homework

Homework plays a vital role in your child’s development at school, whilst also promoting independence and taking responsibility. Learning in two (or three) languages is demanding, and homework can therefore be more than in other school systems.

If your child is struggling with homework, we kindly ask you to reach out to your child’s class teachers.

Although the children will have time to begin homework at school, it will also be necessary for parents to support their child at home with preparation for tests, listening to reading etc. Taking the time to support your child ensures that he/she is encouraged and provides you with an insight into how your child is progressing.

Curriculum

The Tandem International Multilingual Curriculum for primary students is based on both Swiss, UK and international programmes with a strong focus on learning languages and on enquiring about different conceptual themes. We enable children to broaden their world perspectives in an interactive way. They learn the need to understand and respect other cultures as well as explore various ways of applying this knowledge. We are accredited by the canton of Zurich's educational authorities and follow Zurich's curriculum guidelines and holiday structure. Throughout the year, the students are assessed regularly by their teachers to help them reach high standards.

Parent Teacher Conferences (PTCs)

PTCs are scheduled twice per year, once in the autumn, and again in the spring time. These are valuable meetings which greatly contribute towards the development of each child. These are designed to provide parents with an update on their child's current progress as well as to identify and set goals to work on during the next stage of the school year. A protocol for these meetings is kept for both parental and school records.

School Progress Reports

School Progress Reports are official documents which provide feedback on our pupils' academic, social & emotional and working & learning skills. These are intended to supplement Parent Teacher Conferences by providing further feedback on a child's development at the end of each semester. Progress Reports are issued as a PDF after the first semester in February, while a printed booklet is sent to parents at the end of the school year.

Birthdays / Private Events organised outside of school

Birthdays are a fantastic way for children to celebrate with their friends. Here at Tandem IMS, we love to celebrate with your child as they grow up. For birthdays, parents are welcome to bring in a cake or cupcakes to school. These will usually be shared during snack time and not infringe upon learning. Please ensure the cake has no nuts as defined by the school's strict "nut policy". No other gifts are allowed for birthdays.

To avoid disappointment to children not invited, we ask that birthday party invitations are not handed out at school. We encourage families to organise birthday party events by directly contacting the parents of those children invited.

Please note, that children's behaviour is often different at a birthday party compared to how they behave in a controlled environment. Tandem IMS will not take any responsibility for children's behaviour at such external events and will not be involved in resolving any conflicts that have occurred.

Mobile Phones and Electronic Gadgets

Children should not use their mobile phone during the school day unless permission is given by their class teacher. Mobile phones must remain switched off and placed in a pupil's school bag or locker.

While we educate our children about the dangers of mobile phones and using the internet in Primary 5 and 6, we strongly discourage that children in Primary School are allowed to participate in chats with classmates, but if they are to do so, these must be monitored by parents. We would like to point out however that applications such as WhatsApp and Skype have age recommendations of between 13 and 16 years old. This is due to the children under these ages not being deemed to yet have the maturity, nor the training necessary to use these tools appropriately.

Smartwatches are also deemed as a communication device and are not permitted at the school. We strongly encourage the use of a regular analogue or digital clock for pupils in our primary school.

IT / Google Classroom

At Tandem IMS, we strongly believe in using IT as a tool to develop and enhance learning across the curriculum and its use is employed in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. Accounts are created for the children in many platforms approved by the Zurich education authorities, and in addition we use Google Classroom for our pupils. Each child in the primary school has their own Google account as part of the Tandem IMS domain. Tandem IMS ensures that data from these accounts is not able to be shared with persons outside the Tandem IMS domain.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Tandem IMS PTA is an active link between teachers and parents in order to support the school in a wide variety of ways and positively promoting school life.

Our PTA meets regularly and is responsible for setting up and supporting hard-working and dedicated volunteer groups that organise and help with enhancing school experiences. We seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible and ensure that everyone's contribution is valued.

Parent Representatives are elected at the beginning of each school year at the "Meet the Teachers Evening".

TEACH

TEACH is a non-profit organisation, founded in 2018, whose objective is to provide support, educational materials and training programmes for local teachers in purposefully chosen schools in Africa. Further details about goals, aims and the history of TEACH can be found on:

www.tandem-teach.ch

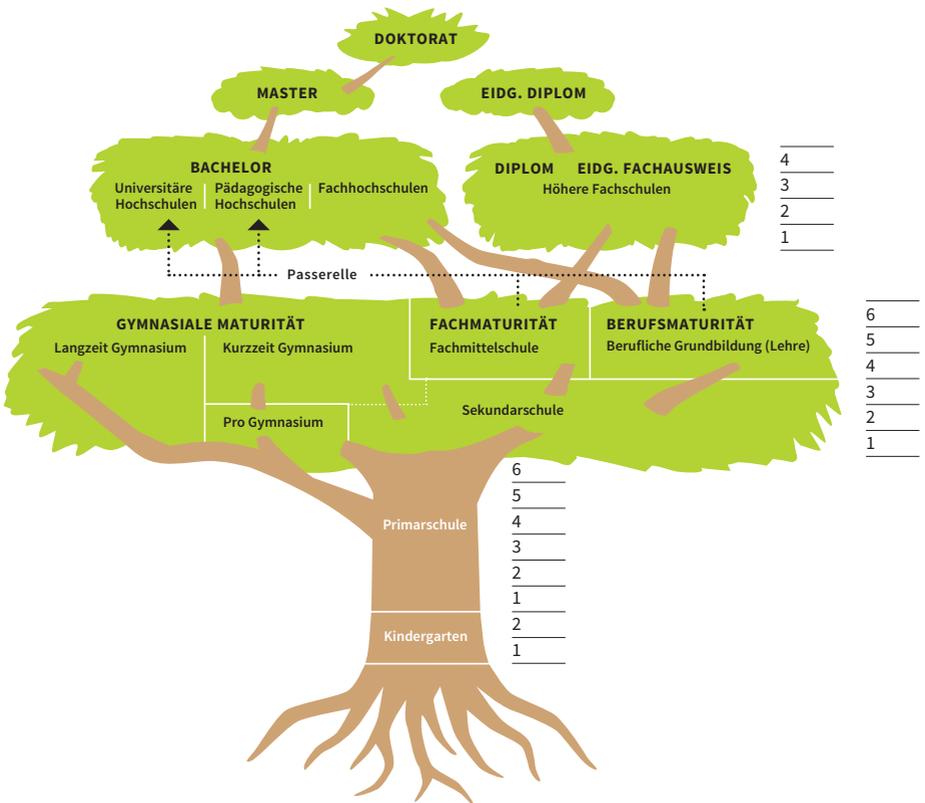
TEACH is Tandem IMS's chosen charity – it is very much part of the philosophy of our school. With all the parents and students that are currently at Tandem IMS, we regularly lead several fundraising events throughout the year – you will be notified of such events via regular newsletter updates.

Life After Tandem IMS

At Tandem IMS, we put a lot of emphasis on helping each child (together with his/her parents) choose and prepare for the next step after primary school.

This step/pathway will be different for each child - depending on his/her current academic, social, emotional, learning, and working skills. We would like to remind you that your children are individuals with many talents, and they are all at different stages in their development. This is what we as a school feel so passionate about, this is why we became teachers, to help children and provide them with the right challenges at the right time.

Towards the end of Primary School, in Grades 5 and 6, we discuss these options with our students and parents to ensure that each child is moving forward to the right path that suits them best at that given time. We are extremely proud to help and support our children in making this important and exciting step to the next level of schooling.





Tandem IMS

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