

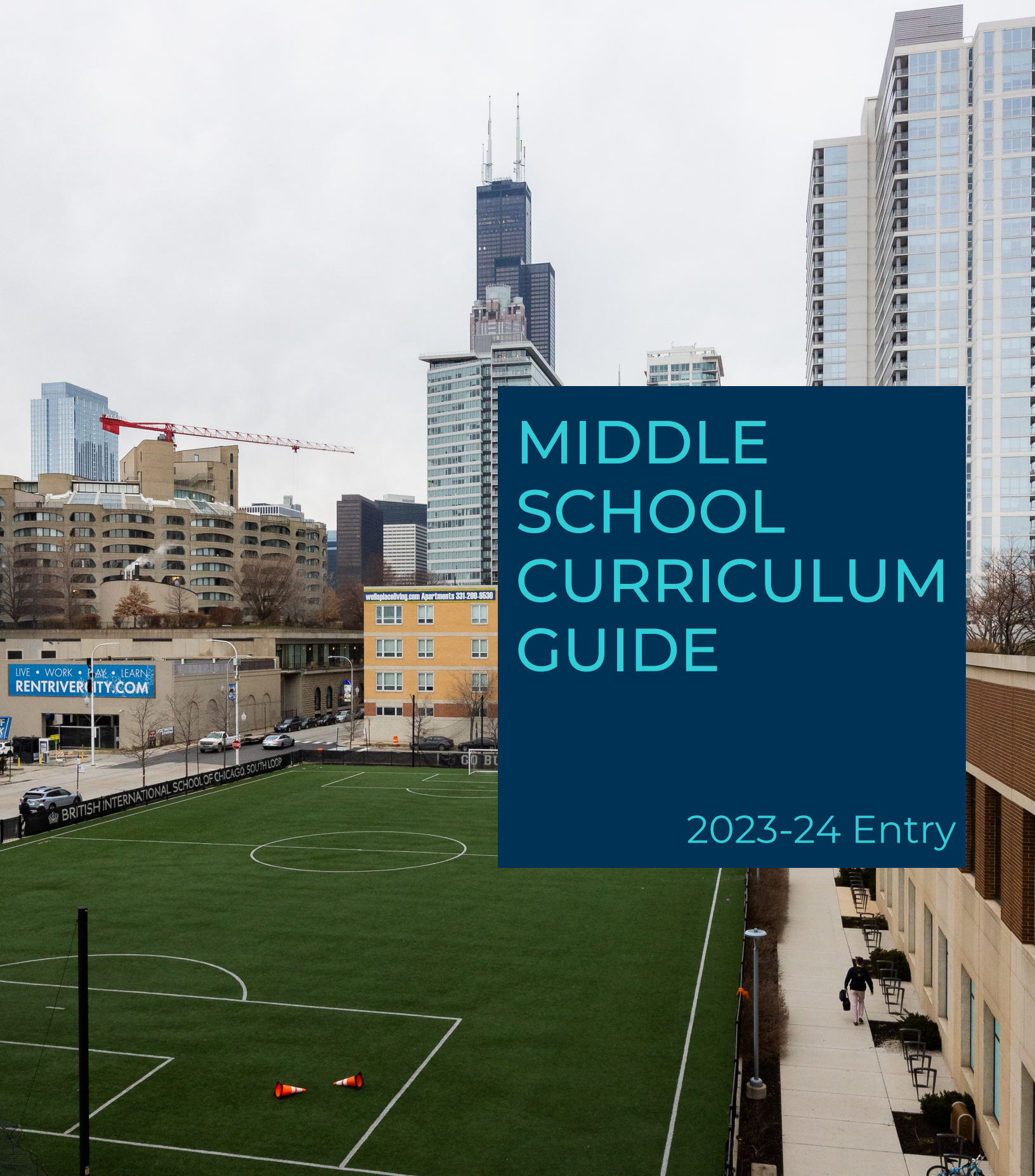


BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
OF CHICAGO, SOUTH LOOP

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

2023-24 Entry



Developing a Love of Learning

Whilst each year group presents an exciting stage of development for our students, the Middle School years are a time when children experience physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. At BISC South Loop, Middle School students further develop their interests and learn new skills while also encountering new challenges. The Middle School curriculum responds specifically to the needs of children ages 11 to 14 by enabling independence and interdependence through discrete subject learning and themes, as well as more traditional subject-based learning.

The Middle School curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects our goal to create an experience of a wide range of subject disciplines. BISC-SL Middle Schoolers are musicians, artists, actors, engineers and dancers. They are athletes with a clear sense of who they are in the world they are growing up in. They have a firm grounding in English, Math, Science, Languages, and Social Studies and are provided with opportunities to explore the world around them. They are ambitious, empowered, humble, and kind. They are curious, can take risks, can work independently but also learn from and collaborate with others. They work hard, they join in, and they are kind – they are the leaders of the future because of the education they have engaged with. When they graduate from Middle School, our Year 9 children are self-confident, socially conscious, and ready for High School life.

The transition from Year 6 to Year 7 can feel challenging, and our staff do all that they can to ensure a smooth passage in which children feel confident. The Primary and Secondary School staff work closely to ensure that the transition from Primary to Middle School is as easy for your child as possible.

We are passionate about learning and ensuring that every child has a school experience that will develop a love of learning and the skills and knowledge necessary for success in High School and beyond.



Middle School Pastoral System

The Middle School is divided into three year groups, each with a Head of Year who with the Head of Phase acts as the pastoral and academic leader for that year group:

Each Year group is divided into advisory groups. Every day, your child will start their day with their Advisory group and their advisor. Their advisor will check that their uniform is correct and that they have everything they need to be successful. They will take them through the Daily BISCuit - our Middle School notices - and will ensure that they are ready to learn.

The role of the advisor is to be a primary point of contact with home - they will contact you when your child experiences successes or with any concerns they may have about your child's well-being or progress. They will also lead on the delivery of our PSHE (Personal, Social, and Health Education) curriculum which takes place on Monday afternoons and a Virtues exploration which takes place Tuesday through Friday during the afternoon advisory time.. In addition to PSHE students will have weekly Head of Phase and Middle School assemblies where they will come together as a Year group or school.

Some children may at times require greater support than that which can be offered through their advisor and Head of Phase. To support children we have a Learning Support Manager, a Guidance Counselor and a Diversity Equity and Inclusion lead.

We also run a schoolhouse system of which there are four Houses: Great Wall, Pyramids, Rushmore, and Stonehenge. Your child will be placed in one of these houses as part of a bigger team of students and staff. Throughout the year your child will receive House based rewards, have the opportunity to attend team building activities in Houses, participate in House competitions, and make their contribution towards the coveted House Cup.



Middle School Curriculum

The Middle School curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects our goal to create students with experience of a wide range of subject disciplines. Students study the five core subjects (English, Math, World Languages, Science, and Social Studies) for three lessons per week. The remainder of their timetable is compiled of a broad range of subject disciplines outlined below.

In Year 9, students will begin to follow an honors program in Math. Students in Year 9 will be invited to select one elective from a range of subject electives to enrich their Year 9 program of study and begin to prepare them for their elective choices in High School.

English

English skills empower students in all aspects of their schooling and adult lives. As well as communication, grammar, and analytical skills, English provides students with an opportunity to enhance their ability to think critically and make evaluations. Through their study of English, Middle School students develop their formal essay writing, problem solving, presentation delivery, and persuasion. English is a challenging and rewarding subject that allows students to experience classical literature along with contemporary texts. In this sense, English is less a set of rules to be followed, and more a way of developing empathy by exploring culture, places, and people. Methods of assessment include creative writing, formal analytical essays, discussion with peers, speeches, and presentations about writers' skills and techniques. The study of grammar is embedded in all areas of the curriculum, and our goal is to foster students who reflect on their targets and evaluate the effectiveness of their choices. From the start of Year 7 (Grade 6), students are allocated to ability groups that are continuously monitored and reviewed against progress and assessments.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught holistically, covering algebra, number, geometry, and statistics. Focusing on these four topics throughout Middle School means students can consolidate and extend their learning. The course also incorporates investigation work and real-world applications. The curriculum is enriched by participation in both U.S. and U.K. math competitions, which take place in and out of school. From the start of Year 7 (Grade 6), students are allocated to ability groups that are continuously monitored and reviewed against progress and assessments.

World Languages

Learning world languages is a gateway to different cultures and countries. They help students develop awareness of their own languages, cultures, and customs, encouraging them to become sensitive to others and developing confident communication skills. Students are expected to effectively use the target language beginning with everyday conversation and spanning to more intricate and developed subjects, deepening their knowledge of culture and grammar along the way. Aside from grammatical rules, which are explained in English to ensure full clarification, World Languages teachers primarily instruct in the target language using a communicative approach. Teachers also employ a variety of creative resources and activities that appeal to all learning styles while encompassing the four key skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We offer a number of language options across our four taught World Languages: French, German, Mandarin and Spanish.

Science

Science is an essential skill and an inspirational subject that sets students on paths to a broad spectrum of opportunities. The enthusiastic nature of our approach to Science is one of the school's most exciting features.

Unlike the majority of schools in America, we do not select blocks of single Science courses. Instead, all students sit a rigorous and well-produced integrated course that builds from year to year. Beginning in Year 7 (Grade 6), students embark on a course that contains the foundations of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

Social Studies

Geography

The study of Geography has never been more relevant, and careers connected with Geography have never been more plentiful. Geographers become cartographers, climatologists, geographic information systems specialists, meteorologists, real estate developers, surveyors, and urban planners. Geographers think critically and globally, a key skill that employers seek. Students have the chance to apply their knowledge and understanding of Geography through a series of fieldwork studies at a local and regional level. Previous fieldwork studies include beach profiles, urban transects and environmental surveys.

History

History focuses on the core skills of interpretation, cause and consequence, change and continuity, and significance. The development of these transferable skills helps students gain meaningful understanding of the past and become independent, inquisitive historians. This course covers the Ancient era to the 20th century, with a focus on international and American history. Students delve into fascinating periods with a broad chronological and international scope. Focus is placed on writing throughout the course with the intention of developing literacy skills, building confidence and preparing students for an external examination, should they choose to take History in High School.

Civics

Civics aims to support students in better understanding the world around them. Topics include US History and Government, World Religions, Philosophy, Law, Crime and Punishment, and an understanding of the Holocaust and the importance of peacekeeping in today's world. By studying Civics alongside History and Geography, we aim to educate students on the world around them in a way that prepares them for life beyond school.



Performing Arts

Dance

Dance is the comprehensive study of the performing art in physical, artistic, aesthetic, and cultural context. In addition to helping students acquire subject knowledge, the curriculum promotes in collaboration with The Juilliard School a sense of creativity, fitness, teamwork, character, leadership and performance. Middle School students take part in units on performance/recall, research and choreography across six styles: Contemporary, Ballet, Hip Hop, Jazz, STOMP, and African dance.

Drama

From imagination and empathy to solid communication, Drama teaches skills that students can apply in all school subjects and their lives outside of school. The benefits of studying Drama are considerable, so Middle School students take part in one Drama lesson each week. Students cover a wide range of topics, learning technical elements and vocabulary across genres, styles, and famous works. Students work in a variety of group sizes and regularly create performance work during their lessons. Many elements are also cross-curricular and support learning in more than one subject.

Music

In music, students develop the ability to perform, compose and analyze music from a range of countries and cultures. They will develop skills on a range of classroom instruments, learn how to use music technology to express their ideas and be able to compose in a variety of styles, with the courses designed directly to allow them the skills they need to take music in the high school. The curriculum is supported and enriched by the Juilliard-Nord Anglia Performing Arts Program, which engages students in a range of carefully selected core works, which are explored through a range of activities created by specialists from the Juilliard School. Students are also able to enhance their musicality by partaking in extra-curricular music activities such as School Production, Orchestra and Choir.



Creative Arts

Art

Art, craft, and design embody some of the highest forms of human creativity. A high-quality art and design education should engage, inspire, and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft, and design. As pupils progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design. They should also know how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the cultures, creativity, and wealth of our society. Art is an important element of the curriculum, as we aim to nurture students' ability to express and communicate their ideas. While creating their artwork, students develop transferable skills: making observations, experimentation, and critical and contextual studies. Our middle school Art curriculum comprises of a range of projects, and we explore a range of materials that include painting, drawing, collage, textiles, sculpture, printmaking, and mixed media. The goal of our Art curriculum is to develop independent, inquisitive, and resilient learners, active researchers, and team players!

Engineering and Design

Students learn through a series of topics which span the breadth of Engineering and Design. In Year 7 the students are first introduced to Freehand Graphics as a topic of study where they learn to sketch and shade to overcome the hurdles felt by many in presenting design ideas. Our second topic of study for Year 7 is an electronics and coding topic where the students learn to use Arduino boards to solve a range of mechanical problems. The final project in Year 7 brings CAD to the students where we design and create a Jumping Bug. Designed on the computer, it offers an opportunity for the students to learn some CAD/CAM skills in creating parts for both the laser cutter and 3D printers. Students in Year 8 step up to the design challenge of our F1 in Schools inspired project. The research and investigation here bring opportunity for learning about Newtons Laws as well as the study of aerodynamics and the design of F1 race cars. The project offers a chance for the students to work in groups and to learn important skills in many aspects of project work. The second project for Year 8 is our Rocket Project. Students will design and make paper rockets to launch and compete to see who can go the highest, testing their understanding of the skills researched for aerodynamics and requiring some careful CAD work to maximize the effectiveness of their designs. In Year 9 our students' first project is focused on the study of Structures and Forces. Students learn about the influence of natural structures on our designs for building and everyday objects. They gain an understanding of the effects of both dynamic and static loads as well as being introduced to resonance and deflection through the study of bridges. The second part of the topic offers them a group challenge to build the best bridge from a strict set of criteria and to test this to see which group has the most efficient design. For the final project in Middle School our Year 9 will design a desk lamp and create a solution based upon the materials in our workshop – a practical hands-on project where they will learn to develop some tool skills and consider the needs of the end user. The Middle School Engineering and Design course is structured to provide the students with a taste of what is to come in High School and they are encouraged to take risks and step out from their comfort zone.

Computer Science

The study of Computer Science is unique because of the ever-changing subject matter, as software evolves at a rapid pace. Computer Science introduces students to the fundamentals of programming, data analysis and visual design. Middle School students work under three umbrellas of learning that build in complexity each year: Digital Literacy, Programming, and Digital Design Graphics. Students learn how and why a task is completed to understand the significance of the practical activities they perform. Learning is based on individual projects, through which students are assessed on their written understanding and practical skills. Students develop and improve skills through practice. They creatively demonstrate their skills to ensure they can adapt them in real-life situations and build upon previously acquired skills, which encourage confident use of computers and other technology tools. We also discuss related real-world topics such as digital divide and home and leisure.

P.S.H.E.

P.S.H.E. (Personal, Social, and Health Education) curriculum takes place on Monday afternoons and explores issues such as global citizenship, mental health and wellbeing, internet safety, personal development, sex and relationships education, and social skills. PSHE helps students acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to manage their lives now and in the future. The wide-ranging curriculum prepares students to manage the most critical opportunities, challenges and responsibilities they will face and helps them connect and apply the knowledge they gain in all school subjects to practical, real-life situations.

Athletics

Our Athletics courses provide students with opportunities to learn about personal health and fitness, and develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each week, all Middle School students take part in Physical Education and Games, resulting in three hours of physical activity. Both courses are designed to give each student a chance to explore a variety of activities. Physical Education is assessed on academic reports, while Games is not. Physical Education is assessed on students moral, social, and physical skills.

Topics include: badminton, baseball, basketball, cricket, gymnastics, indoor rowing, soccer, softball, swimming, track and field, volleyball, pop lacrosse, yoga, rounders', kinetic wellbeing (personal fitness), sports leadership, field hockey, and rugby.



Collaboration Projects

Middle Schoolers are provided with a number of opportunities made possible through our partnerships with world leading providers. Our students are given opportunities to participate in a range of activities linked to our collaboration projects including our Summer Term drop down program that immerses students in projects connected to world learning, MIT, Juilliard, Enterprise, and Sports.

UNICEF

In collaboration with UNICEF, BISC-SL students have their social consciousness raised so they care more deeply about the world and the people in it. Students will research, develop, and debate challenges facing our society, and take action to address them. Through special activities and events with UNICEF, students will be equipped to make their voice heard on the world stage and to make a lasting, positive difference. Together with UNICEF, all Nord Anglia Education students are challenged to participate in projects on the Sustainable Development Goals in their schools. The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 goals set by the United Nations regarding social and economic development issues that we hope to collectively achieve by 2030. Every year, UNICEF challenges students at Nord Anglia Education schools to raise awareness of these goals through creative projects and activities. Whether it's a recycling project for sustainability, turning plants into bio-fuels, fighting against poverty in their community, or other meaningful activities based on the 17 goals, our students are challenged to lead change.

MIT

By tackling real-world challenges across the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and By tackling real-world challenges across the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM), your child will develop transferable skills such as flexibility, creativity and communication. They will be encouraged to experiment rather than wait for instructions, and will learn that collaboration and critical thinking can solve even the trickiest of problems. Nord Anglia Education is also working with MIT to introduce your child to this innovative way of learning the STEAM subjects which encourages creativity, experimentation, and teaches them how to apply their skills to real-world situations.



Juilliard

Your child's learning of the performing arts will be enhanced using a repertoire of core music, dance and drama works encompassing a wide range of genres, styles, and cultures designed and hand-selected by Juilliard. Teachers will use the Juilliard Creative Classroom, an extraordinary online collection of educational resources that have been designed to enhance and supplement our performing arts curricula. Juilliard designed teaching materials, creative activities, historical information, rehearsal strategies, and professional development resources lead students through explorations of core works of music, dance, and drama and emphasize building students' personal artistry through their own creativity. Outside of the classroom, students also have the opportunity to take part in a range of global competitions, interact with alumni of the Juilliard school virtually and in person, take part in workshops led by specialists, and engage with other students across the globe in a range of collaborative projects.

Global Campus

The Global Campus enables all of our students to be part of more than just one school. We are a family of international schools and as such we are able to harness the power of the group, offering supplementary regional and global learning activities for students beyond those provided in their own school. The Global Campus therefore extends students' learning by connecting schools and students across all Nord Anglia schools through common curriculum experiences. These experiences, among other things, include in-school challenges, expeditions, and collaborations with world-leading organizations, supported and showcased via our online Global Campus platform. As a global family of schools, we are able to give students the benefit of learning as part of a global community so that they can achieve more than they thought possible. Students can participate in activities in one or all of three main areas: in school, worldwide, and online. These activities have been designed with teachers in our schools to support key areas of the curriculum, and to support students' personal, social, and academic achievement.



Questions?

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