



# Early Years Handbook 2024-2025

# Welcome

The Early Years team welcomes your child and family into our vibrant learning community.

We value the relationship between parents, students, and teachers. This is essential to ensure your child enjoys an engaging and productive year. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, the Associate Principal, or the Principal with any questions or concerns that you may have.

This handbook contains important information about the school year.

Warm regards,

Tiffany Hill  
Early Years Principal

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# Organization

## Contacting the Early Years Team

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Principal	Tiffany Hill	808 6365	<a href="mailto:tiffany.hill@thekaustschool.org">tiffany.hill@thekaustschool.org</a>
Associate Principal	Susannah Wilcox	808 6403	<a href="mailto:susannah.wilcox@thekaustschool.org">susannah.wilcox@thekaustschool.org</a>
Office Coordinator	Vaishnavi Upadhyaya	808 6320	<a href="mailto:ey.tks@thekaustschool.org">ey.tks@thekaustschool.org</a>
East Reception	Janine Engelbrecht	808 6408	<a href="mailto:ey.tks@thekaustschool.org">ey.tks@thekaustschool.org</a>
West Reception	Tracy Rahmer	808 6267	<a href="mailto:ey.tks@thekaustschool.org">ey.tks@thekaustschool.org</a>
EY Nurse West	Hasna Basudan	808 6312	<a href="mailto:ey.nurse1@thekaustschool.org">ey.nurse1@thekaustschool.org</a>
EY Nurse East	Nina C Cuales	808 6212	<a href="mailto:ey.nurse2@thekaustschool.org">ey.nurse2@thekaustschool.org</a>

## Contacting Your Child's Teacher

Please understand that during the hours that children are in school, teachers may not be free to check emails. Teachers check parent communications before and after school. If you need to contact your child's teacher urgently, please call reception, and we will do our best to get a message to the teacher.

## Early Years Faculty

**Pedagogical Coaches:** Elizabeth Denhartigh, Aricia Cox

**Director of Learning & Innovation:** Julian Edwards

**Director of Learning Support:** Zachary Berezowski

**Learning Support Teachers:** Inna Polianska, Angelle Thibodeaux, Che'te Bey, Stephanie Huestis

**Educational Psychologist:** Fatima Rehman

**Counselors:** LaTanya Weaver, Lujain Alafif

**Library Media Specialist:** Elaine Manalastas

Pre Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1
<b>Grade Level Teachers</b> Samantha Wilson Dawn Verdoni Sanne Pfefferkorn Amnah Abu Shaheen Sezin Bozkurt Mutlu Gitta Bakonyi Smita Vaidya Kate Couling Sara Alaslani Lama Khalofa	<b>Grade Level Teachers</b> Susan Bryceland Elena Granato Chelle Jones Jerae Gamble Kunimi Bermudez Nicola Antoniuk Gayani Newns Katherine Adaci Olga Pacheco Hamad Moussa	<b>Grade Level Teachers</b> Ashley Rowell Glenda Forgie Katarina Sladakovic Shani Laulua Ben Tan Toluwalogo Daramola Fabiana Queiroz Charis Fack
<b>Single Subject Teachers</b>		
<b>Islamic Studies:</b> Dina Akeel <b>Arabic:</b> Afnan Abdu, Wid AlSulaimani, Wejdan Khan, Ahmad AlAsawedah <b>PE:</b> Te Haurawhiti Teddy, Milan Micic <b>Visual Arts:</b> Katie Hoffman <b>Music:</b> Lisa Barrington		

## School Calendar

[2024-2025 School Calendar](#)

## School Hours

Students may arrive between 7:45 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. School hours are as follows:

### First Day of School

Monday, August 19th is the first day of school for all students. Student drop-off begins at 7:45. Class instruction begins promptly at 8:15 each morning. Students are counted as tardy from 8:15. Dismissal times are as follows:

Pre Kindergarten: 1:00 p.m.  
Kindergarten: 2:30 p.m.  
Grade 1: 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday Early Release time: 1:00 p.m.

## **Absent Students**

### **Sickness day 1 and 2**

For the first two days of sickness, parents must notify the teacher, copying the school receptionist (ey.tks@thekaustschool.org) by email before the school day begins.

### **All Other Absences**

If your child will be absent for other reasons, including the following, you must inform the teacher and complete the [Student Absence Notification Form](#).

- Illness greater than two days
- Hospital visit - (appointment letter required)
- Compassionate leave
- Birth of sibling

### **Leaving School Early/Arriving at school late**

If students need to leave before the end of the school day, a parent must contact the school at the beginning of the day to inform the teacher. A student cannot leave early unless notification has been received from the parent. When you collect your child please advise the receptionist that they are leaving the building. It is expected that students are dropped off and picked up on time.

### **Late Attendance (Tardy)**

Attendance will be taken between 8:15AM and 08:30AM by all teachers. Students arriving after 8:15am are recorded as tardy.

If your child is late, please report to reception to change their attendance status from absent to tardy. Your child will receive a tardy slip to present to their teacher. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure your child reports to reception when they are late.

Tardies that are beyond the control of the parents or the student (for example: school bus arriving late) will not be recorded.

### **Procedure for Addressing Attendance**

Where there is concern regarding a student's attendance, the school will take the necessary steps to address the absences. This could include meetings between the student's family, school administrators, and a representative from Human Resources.

- After 8 absences, the parents will be contacted by email to remind them of the Attendance Policy/Guidelines in addition to the impact on learning of inconsistent attendance.
- After 13 absences a meeting will be arranged between the school and the parents to address the student's attendance, reiterate the impact of attendance on learning and ensure parents are aware of the Attendance Policy and Procedures/Guidelines.
- At 16 absences, a final written warning will be issued to the parents and a copy of the written warning will be shared with KAUST HR.
- If a student exceeds 18 absences (accumulating 19 or more absences for the year): the student will receive a modified report card noting that there is not enough learning evidence to report progress.
  - Grade promotion will be reviewed with the Principal and Director of Student Services given the learning time missed during the year.
  - A meeting will take place with a representative from KAUST HR and the division principal to discuss the continuation of enrollment at TKS. Violation of the school attendance policy may result in the discontinuation of enrollment.

### **Releasing Students**

During the school day, students may not leave the school grounds without permission. Students who leave school during the school day must be accompanied by a parent. Parents will sign students out at the reception. Students may only be released to adults who have been authorized by parents to take the child home from school. If both parents will be away from home overnight or longer, parents are requested to notify your child's teacher following child wellbeing guidelines.

### **Travel or Vacation Days**

It is hoped that families will plan travel and trips during the school vacations. Should you know ahead of time that your child will be absent from school for any reason, please inform your child's teacher and complete the [Student Absence Notification Form](#).

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

### **Parent drop off**

- Parents or guardians who drive their child to school must park their car in a designated space and walk their child to the main entrance or to the classroom. Dropping students in the parking lot is not permitted. Students must be supervised by parents or school staff at all times.

### **Parent pick up**

- Students who walk or bike to/from school, must be accompanied door-to-door by their parents.
- Parents should collect their child(ren) from reception in each building at dismissal time.

### **Bus**



Bus services are available before and after school, based on registration and availability. Buses and bus stops are organized and operated by SAPTCO, and a EY staff member supervises the students on each bus. Parents or caregivers must supervise children at their bus stops; Pre K students may not walk to and from home alone. Only students may ride school buses. Please note the following expectations for students riding the bus:

- Follow the bus supervisor's instructions
- Stay seated with seatbelt on
- Use indoor voices
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- No eating on the bus

For Pre K students, if there is no one at the afternoon stop to collect your child, they will be brought back to school, and you will be contacted to collect them. Please note that the bus supervisors can only release your child to their parents or regular adult caregivers. Any changes should be advised to the relevant Building Receptionist.

Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will be allowed to walk home alone from their bus stop if parent permission is given. Permission can be given on [PowerSchool](#) for each child. Pre-K students must be supervised by an adult at the bus stop in the morning and picked up in the afternoon. Older siblings cannot pick up their younger PreK siblings.

To register your child for the school bus service or to make any changes, please fill out the bus forms- [Morning bus form](#), [Afternoon Bus form](#). Your bus details will be forwarded to the next grade level at the end of the year. There is no need to re-register each school year. If you have more than one child in school you must complete a link for each child. Note a child must be registered for the bus in order to ride it.

If your child usually travels home on the bus and you collect him/her from school instead, please advise the Building Receptionist of the change.

### **Bikes**

Students are allowed to ride bikes to and from TKS Early Years only if they are accompanied by an adult. Students cannot ride bikes to school alone.

### **After School services by Building Blocks and Children's Center**

Daycare services are available after school for Pre Early Years and Early Years children on a paid basis and provided by a separate organization, [Building Blocks](#), which is located near to TKS Early Years. AfterSchool services are available on a paid basis for Grade 1 students by a separate organization [KAUST Children's Center](#). Staff from Building Blocks will collect registered students from the Early Years school.

- Parents should confirm with Early Years reception and the teacher if their child will be going directly to Building Blocks to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the day.

- It is the responsibility of parents to communicate changes in transportation to or from the school to the homeroom teacher and reception.

## Items Students Need for School

Items that should be brought to school daily are as follows:

- backpack (small and lightweight)
- lunch/snack box
- a reusable water bottle (labeled clearly with your child's name) filled with drinking water

Items that may be stored at school (clearly labeled):

- a sun hat for outside time
- an extra set of clothes (to be replaced as needed)

Please do not send personal items or toys from home, including communication and recording devices. These may get lost and cause distress. If your child has difficulty leaving a very special item at home, please talk with the teacher.

Please apply sunscreen before your child comes to school. The first 'outside time' is between 8 and 10 am. The number of insects has diminished due to the efforts of Pest Control, but if your child is susceptible to insect bites, please apply insect repellent before they come to school in the morning. If you wish to leave insect repellent and/or sunscreen in the classroom for re-application, please label this clearly with your child's name and give it to the teacher.

## Dress for Students

Clothing should be comfortable, keeping in mind that children will be involved in play, which may be messy. Shoulders and mid-sections should be covered. We recommend that students wear suitable footwear and clothing that does not restrict or obstruct movement for active play, such as sneakers/trainers/runners.

## Snacks and Lunch

Within the daily schedule, two breaks are set aside for eating. Please make sure your child comes to school each day with enough food and drink to cover the time (s)he is at school, as food is not provided by the school.

Students should bring refillable bottles to school with names marked clearly on them. Water fountains in the hallways dispense filtered drinking water and chilled water is available. Students are encouraged to stay hydrated and can drink water whenever they need to.

There is no availability of microwaves to heat food or refrigerators to keep food cold.

We place an emphasis on nutritious food and drink. General eating habits are formed in the first few years of life. Sweets and processed foods are not a balanced nutritional snack and should not be packed. Children are encouraged to drink water whenever they need to. Drinking water is readily available for children to refill their own bottles.

Please speak to your child's teacher should you have any questions or concerns about your child's eating habits at school.

## Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the reception area. Please mark/label all items and check periodically for your child's missing items. Items not claimed within a semester will be donated to a government-approved charity via the KAUST Reuse Center.

## Birthdays

Children's birthdays are recognized and celebrated within each class, as part of our focus on building strong class communities and developing a sense of belonging. Each class has its own routine for celebrating. Contact your child's teacher 24 hours in advance if you would like to bring small, individualized food treats to share with the class during snack time. Do not bring presents or party bags for children; these should be reserved for private birthday parties. While we are happy to sing Happy Birthday and have a small celebration at school, we don't host parties. Birthday party invitations may only be distributed at school if the entire class is being invited.

# Learning and Teaching

## Early Years Philosophy Statements

As an IB World School, we use the PYP Early Years framework to guide our curriculum. We provide a standards-aligned, concept-based, inquiry-driven program where children are empowered to be active participants in their own learning. Through play, children inquire, question, wonder, and theorize about themselves, others, and the world around them.

**Children are unique, curious, and creative individuals who are natural learners and rich in potential.**

We believe that our youngest students come to us as unique individuals with a wealth of prior knowledge, skills, and experiences. They are curious and capable learners with a sense of agency, bringing valid skills, preferences, and understandings to the educational process. They have an innate desire to learn and make sense of the world around them.

**Children's play is an inquiry into the world around them.**

Through play, children learn who they are and how they connect to those around them; they learn how the world works by constructing, testing, confirming, and revising their early perceptions and ideas. Play enables children to develop a sense of autonomy and identity, as well as an ability to make informed decisions, express their ideas and demonstrate their understanding in multiple ways.

**Children learn through relationships with other people.**

Children construct their knowledge and understanding of the world by interacting with other people. They learn through engaging socially and participating in collaborative learning activities. Our learning community is committed to building partnerships between parents, teachers, and children in order to optimize children’s learning and well-being.

**The learning environment actively supports physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development.**

Environments are intentionally designed to include all children and to meet their diverse needs. Provocations are created to invite exploration, provoke curiosity, engage the senses and celebrate the children’s learning journeys. Children are encouraged to be active and take thoughtful risks, recognize their own accomplishments, take responsibility for their actions, and develop resilience and positive self-esteem. Spaces are flexible and can be transformed in multiple ways to respond to learners’ interests.

**Teachers are facilitators of learning, researchers, collaborators, and co-learners.**

Teachers support and encourage children on their learning journeys, taking into account the diverse needs of our learners. They recognize the reciprocal relationship of teaching and learning and provoke and challenge the children’s ideas through the use of open-ended questions and provocations. By observing children closely and listening carefully to their theories, teachers come to understand the children’s thinking and make informed decisions about how to guide children in their learning.

## **Curriculum Framework**

The Early Years is part of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) at TKS and therefore our program is based on this philosophy and curriculum framework ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)). Four units of inquiry are planned collaboratively in each grade level each year based on the PYP transdisciplinary themes. The units of inquiry are developed around a central idea for the children to explore, while also developing knowledge, understanding, skills, and personal attributes through the inquiry process. Units take into account the children’s natural interests, with room left for emergent projects to develop. All subject areas: Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, and Physical, Social, and Personal Education (PSPE), are integrated in the units of inquiry wherever possible. The IB provides information for parents about the Primary Years Programme [here](#).

# Early Years Programme of Inquiry

The Program of Inquiry is a dynamic document and may change throughout the year as teachers plan and reflect on units of inquiry. Units vary in length according to students' interests and inquiries.

	<b>Who We Are</b> <i>An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.</i>	<b>Sharing the Planet</b> <i>An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.</i>	<b>How we express ourselves</b> <i>An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.</i>	<b>How the world works</b> <i>An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.</i>
<b>PK</b>	<b>Developing personal strategies help us learn and build relationships.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizing Feelings</li> <li>Our Rights &amp; Responsibilities</li> <li>How our actions affect others</li> </ul>	<b>Through connecting with the natural world we can make discoveries and be inspired.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How we connect to the natural world</li> <li>What discoveries we can make about the natural world</li> <li>How the natural world inspires us</li> </ul>	<b>Through the process of investigation, we develop theories and come to new understandings.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of investigation</li> <li>How we develop investigations to test theories</li> <li>Discoveries made through our investigations</li> </ul>	<b>Stories are created, expressed and live in our world.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where stories live</li> <li>Different forms of telling stories</li> <li>How we respond to stories</li> </ul>
<b>KG</b>	<b>Experiencing, observing and recording changes helps people understand themselves and their world.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in our world</li> <li>Changes that we experience</li> <li>Observing and recording changes</li> </ul>	<b>People create and interpret signs and symbols to communicate ideas and information.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signs and symbols in our daily lives</li> <li>How people use signs and symbols to communicate</li> <li>How we create and understand signs and symbols</li> </ul>	<b>Investigating living things builds understanding of how we share the natural world.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How we understand living things</li> <li>The relationship between living things and their environment</li> <li>Our responsibility towards living things</li> </ul>	<b>Constructing and deconstructing helps people develop their understanding of the world.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constructing and deconstructing in the world around us</li> <li>Effective construction and deconstruction techniques</li> <li>How (scientific) understanding helps us to construct and deconstruct</li> </ul>
<b>G1</b>	<b>Who We Are</b> <i>An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.</i>	<b>How We Organize Ourselves</b> <i>An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function or organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.</i>	<b>Where We Are In Place and Time</b> <i>An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.</i>	<b>How We Express Ourselves</b> <i>An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic</i>
	<b>Interactions with others can shape our</b>	<b>Systems can help support our well-being</b>	<b>As Earth moves it creates patterns</b>	<b>Exploring light and sound offers</b>

	<p><b>relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How we can be respectful in our interactions</li> <li>• Ways we can work together</li> <li>• Strategies we can use to self-regulate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How systems work</li> <li>• Connections between systems</li> <li>• Our responsibility as community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations of the Earth's movements</li> <li>• How patterns can help us make predictions</li> </ul>	<p><b>opportunities to think like scientists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How light and sound work</li> <li>• Developing and investigating hypothesis</li> <li>• How we use light and sound in our daily lives</li> </ul>
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## Social Competence

In the Early Years, the joy of learning and respect for others are considered a primary focus. Communication with families is key. We work together to resolve discipline problems and to plan for guidance. The efforts of staff, parents, and administrators are all important in the creation of an optimal learning environment. Teachers work with parents as partners in their child's development of social competence. Parents will be contacted when a pattern of challenging behavior emerges or an incident occurs involving the safety of their child and/or others (another child or staff member).

## Assessment

“Young children’s development proceeds in a complex, and often non-linear, trajectory where individual children follow different pathways simultaneously.” ([The PYP learner in the early years](#).)

Assessment in Early Years is based on our understanding that each child comes to Early Years, not as a blank slate or “tabula rasa”, but rather brings with them a rich and varied set of knowledge, skills and experiences. Progress in learning develops when attention is paid to children’s strengths, interests and dispositions. In order to extend our children’s learning, we must first get to know each child as a learner. We use assessment to help us recognise and build upon existing behaviors so that we can determine the most appropriate “next steps” for each child, in line with our curriculum standards and learning outcomes.

### Documenting learning

In Kindergarten, assessment is an ongoing process of collecting and analyzing information about children’s learning. We call this **documenting learning**. By gathering evidence of children’s thinking, behaviors and skills, teachers can answer the questions, “What does this child already know?”, “What is he or she already able to do?”, “What are the next steps on this particular child’s individual learning journey?”

Documenting Learning:

- Is an ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, reflecting and acting on evidence of student learning
- Happens every day during regular, everyday activities

- Helps teachers meet each child where they are and identify next learning steps for each individual child
- Assesses both learning outcomes and learning process
- Helps children meet challenging and achievable learning goals
- Involves teachers and students collaborating to monitor, document, measure, report and adjust learning
- Is linked to learning outcomes and standards identified in our curriculum documents

### Assessment Tools

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to inform themselves about children’s learning. **Observation** is one of the most powerful assessment tools. Through observation, teachers can understand more about children’s interests, knowledge base, level of involvement and social skills. When observing, the teacher may take many roles including facilitator, researcher, participant, provocateur, observer, and documenter. By listening carefully to the dialogue between children, and by observing the children as they go about the serious business of their self directed work, the teacher comes to know better the inner world of the children. Such observations allow the teacher to analyze the interactions within a group, discover individual strengths and difficulties and reflect on the effectiveness of the practices used to implement the curriculum in the classroom.

Other assessment tools include:

- Annotated photographs
- Learning artifacts such as children’s drawings and 3D creations
- Recordings or transcripts of conversations
- Narrative observations of children as they go about their work
- Snapshot observations of achievements of specific learning outcomes
- External assessments designed to monitor growth of specific areas
- When appropriate, external diagnostic assessments to help identify [articular areas for support

### Reporting Children’s Learning

In Early Years,, we recognize that parents are a child’s first and most enduring educator. We place enormous importance on the “home-student- school” triangle and seek to involve parents as much as possible in their children’s learning journey. To that end, we strive to share children’s learning in many different ways throughout the year.

- **Children’s learning** is documented digitally on Toddle throughout the year so that parents can stay up to date with the learning as it happens. The learning stories show evidence of children’s thinking and learning. They are curated by teachers and students and celebrate the child and their learning journey through the year.
- **Written reports** are sent home at the end of each semester. All teachers contribute to the written reports, commenting on the learning so far.
- **Parent -Teacher Conferences** take place throughout the year. These conferences are an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss their children as learners and to reflect together on the learning journey so far. Parents may request additional conferences at any time during the year. Whenever a teacher is

concerned about a student's performance, the teacher will contact the parents to request an additional conference.

- **Celebrations of Learning** take place during the second Semester. They are an opportunity for parents to see how the curriculum comes alive in the learning spaces. Children play an active role in sharing their learning journeys with their parents as they show spaces, routines, processes, learning artifacts and thinking.

## Single Subject Classes

In addition to homeroom teachers, we also have specialist teachers who support teaching and learning in the subject areas below:

### Host Country Culture and Language

In Early Years, we promote diversity and inclusion by embedding Host Country Culture and Language into our curriculum. Our aim is to promote multilingualism, engage families and help all children understand, experience, and value linguistic and cultural diversity. By linking children's various linguistic and cultural worlds to our host country, we open the door to all languages and cultures and bring cultural and linguistic diversity to life.

The transference nature of multilingual learning means that all children, irrespective of their home language, benefit from exposure to both English and Arabic. As children listen to stories, sing songs, and interact meaningfully in English and Arabic, they notice what is the same and different between the two languages and make connections to other languages they speak. Teachers help children draw on their linguistic repertoire naturally and flexibly, using language skills from one language to support another. Children have opportunities to inquire into the similarities and differences between writing systems in Arabic and English (and their home languages) as they compare their name labels and other classroom writing in Arabic and English and experiment with mark-making in both scripts.

### Islamic Studies

Islamic Studies in the EY is an optional class, opted into at the time of joining TKS. Parents may inform the school should they wish to opt their child into or out of the class at any time. The EY Islamic Studies program aims to develop knowledgeable and caring students. It is integrated across time, place, and culture and built upon a variety of resources. The curriculum is arranged into four strands: Quran, Islamic beliefs, stories and lessons, and Islamic practices. These strands are linked to each other. They also provide links to other subject areas of the PYP. The Islamic Studies program is taught through units of inquiry using a play-based approach.



## **Prayer**

Grade 1 students are provided time to pray at school on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12:45 p.m. to 1:10 p.m. Prayer time will officially begin after Saudi National Day. Parents will receive a form to indicate their preference and let us know if they would like their child to pray at school. The Islamic Studies teacher will oversee prayer and teach the students the routines and procedures. The school provides students with supplies for prayer (headscarves and prayer mats). Students who do not pray are given time to engage in quiet activities in the classroom.

## **Arts**

Arts are an integral part of our Early Years curriculum. The Arts (dance, drama, music, and visual arts) provide opportunities for learning, communication, and expression. Through the Arts, children are stimulated to think and to articulate their thoughts in new ways through a variety of media and technologies. Learning about and through arts is fundamental to the development of the whole child, promoting creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and social interactions.

Our Visual Arts and Performing Arts studios offer a wide variety of open-ended, natural, and man-made materials that support inquiry into symbolic and creative expression through sound, movement, and visual art. Learning experiences are carefully planned to encourage experimentation, creativity, imagination, and problem-solving. We offer novel and familiar materials, inviting children to uncover the extraordinary within the ordinary. Through objects in their daily environment and through loose parts such as beads, bottle tops, shells, and leaves, children explore possibilities of sight, sound, and movement, representing familiar ideas in new ways and deepening their appreciation of the Arts.

## **Physical Health Education (PHE)**

Our mission is for children to develop the confidence, positive attitude, and joy of movement necessary to live healthy, active lifestyles. We provide a wide range of carefully designed spaces, including gyms, perceptual motor spaces, conceptual play worlds and outdoor climbing, swinging and balancing areas. Children participate in a variety of physical experiences, such as locomotor and non-locomotor movement exploration, creative movement, individual and team games, and more. Students gain a greater sense of agency in relation to their surroundings, their own capabilities, and their responsibilities as part of a team. This develops children's foundation skills and promotes a lifetime of physical literacy.

## **Swimming**

Swimming lessons are taught to all Early Years students by our dedicated swim program staff, including our PHE teachers. Our PAL (Preschool Aquatic Levels) program is a progressive sequence of skills, based upon the internationally-recognized American Red Crescent Swimming and Water Safety Aquatics Preschool program. This program focuses on stroke techniques in addition to teaching children to be safe around water. Swimmers are placed into small groups of 5:1 swimmer to instructor ratio and stay with the same instructor for the duration. On swimming days, children will need a one-piece swimsuit,

towel, and cap. A parent viewing session will take place on the last swim day for each class. More information about the swimming program will be shared before lessons begin.

## Information and Digital Literacy

Children are introduced to a variety of technologies, which in Early Years is defined as "digital and non-digital tools and resources that facilitate and expand learning opportunities." All such experiences allow children to develop a balanced range of literacies. Included here is the [Information and Digital Literacy Philosophy](#).

Each of the Early Years buildings offers various spaces such as libraries and tinker spaces where children can interact with technology and resources through facilitated programming as well as individual exploration. Children borrow library books for home use at least once per week. Parents of children attending the Early Years may also check out up to ten books under the parent's name from the EY school library to support home reading.

The privilege of borrowing resources from TKS libraries is available to those with accounts in good standing, and students and families are responsible for the loss or damage of borrowed resources. For items lost, overdue for two months, or damaged beyond reasonable use or repair, the responsible family will be charged 100% of the item cost, plus 50% to cover shipping and processing fees. To avoid any disruption in borrowing privileges for the whole family, timely payments must be made upon notification by the TKS Business Office.

Please see the [Early Years library website](#) for more information.

## Student Support Services at TKS

Student learning experiences at The KAUST School are designed to support all learners so they can "thrive in and contribute to" a complex world. We embrace learner diversity through the delivery of an inclusive learning program that celebrates and supports the unique learning strengths and the unique learning needs of our students. Central to this inclusive learning approach is to understand how our collective contributions can support student wellbeing.

Student Support Services are the responsibility of **ALL** educators at TKS. The expertise of the roles within the Student Support Department allow for a specialized approach to work with identified students as well as build capacity within the greater faculty. Our shared identity and goals within the learning community promote interdependence and require meaningful participation to ensure a truly inclusive learning environment. This commitment begins with drawing on our TKS core values of Adaptability, Innovation, Diversity, Inclusivity and Responsibility.

## TKS Collaborative Model of Inclusion

Inclusion is to create an environment that intentionally respects, celebrates and incorporates the values of each individual's similarities and differences in order to provide a mutually beneficial learning experience. It is the act of intentionally cultivating a culture of belonging and appreciation for the inherent diversity each person contributes to the learning environment. Inclusion requires equity in access and the recognition that each person deserves the right to an appropriately challenging, supportive and quality education. TKS recognizes that this is the responsibility and the privilege held by its educators, administrators and the wider KAUST community.

Our student support procedures incorporate the three important IB principles of inclusion:

- It is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.
- It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment.
- Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support, and problem-solving.

## Learning Support in Early Years

Learning Support Services (LSS) are available to students who may benefit from additional support in one or more developmental areas. These services can be accessed by a referral process which incorporates collecting data, meeting with a multidisciplinary team and identifying a plan for a cycle of observation, intervention and reflection. Students will be assigned a case manager to oversee their learning plan and work in collaboration with parents, teachers, and students. LSS works in partnership with parents and teachers to develop a range of teaching and learning strategies to assist students with being successful within an inclusive context.

## Counseling Program

In Early Years, we believe students learn best when they have the skills and resources to communicate and interact effectively in a social setting. The focus of the counseling program is to foster a positive school environment for all students. In collaboration with all stakeholders, i.e., students, families, teachers, and administration, the school counselors provide:

- Transition support
- Ongoing social skills development including friendship and conflict resolution
- Bi-weekly social and emotional guidance lessons
- Individual or Group School Counseling (as needed)
- Family support

- Teacher support
- Child Safety and Well-being
- Effective consultation and collaboration with the entire educational team, as well as any other relevant external resources regarding students with identified concerns and needs

## School-Home Communication

Our school newsletter, The Focus, comes out weekly and is considered required reading for all families. The Focus is delivered to your email on the last day of the week (typically Thursday). Reminders and other just in time information is sent to our opt-in Early Years WhatsApp Broadcast Group. You may join this WhatsApp Broadcast Group [here](#).

## Parent-Teacher Communication

As parents, you are considered partners in the education of your children. We value your input and strive to maintain open communication on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. Should you ever have any questions or concerns, let's arrange a time to discuss these with the teacher.

Please inform your child's teacher if both parents will be away from home overnight or longer or regarding any other changes in your child's routine.

## Toddle

The primary form of communication with parents about the classroom is via Toddle. Your child's teacher will email you with information about how to set up and subscribe to Toddle.

### *Announcements*

You will receive frequent updates about what is happening in class and in the Early Years through one-way announcements in Toddle; it is important that parents read these announcements as this will help to keep you informed about learning, events being organized, and materials that you may need to send in.

### *Journal*

A digital portfolio (journal) will be developed for each child in the Early Years through Toddle. A portfolio is a celebration of a child's growth and development over the course of the year. It highlights each child as a unique, capable, and competent individual in all areas. The construction of the portfolio reflects the Early Years philosophy and curriculum.

### *Unit Planning*

Your child's teacher will share the unit planning with you when the unit of inquiry begins. The unit plan provides information about the child's inquiry, such as the transdisciplinary theme, central idea, and key concepts.

## **Email**

Email is used for individual communication about your child between the teacher and parents. Please feel welcome to contact the teacher by email with any information, questions, or concerns related to your child. Email is also used for occasional whole Early Years communications, such as letters from the Principal or Director.

## **Written reports**

You will receive a written report twice per year for your child at the end of each semester. The reports reflect what your child has learned, the progress made, and which areas require further development. This will be shared via Toddle and available in the Parent Portal in PowerSchool for as long as your child remains enrolled.

## **Early Years Events**

### **Meet the Teacher**

We host a parent/child drop-in session before school starts. This is an opportunity for you and your child to meet their teacher and to find out where their classroom is before the first day of school. Details will be communicated by email.

### **Back to School Night**

Early in the academic year, you are invited to meet with your child's teachers to receive an overview of the school year and your child's day-to-day life at school. Dates and times for this event will be communicated through The Focus.

### **Parent-Teacher Check-ins**

These take place twice a year. In August, before the first day of school, your classroom teacher connects with you to discuss your hopes and concerns for your child for the new school year. The second Parent Teacher Check-in occurs in May and serves as an opportunity to bring closure to your year in EY.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

These take place twice a year. Early in the year, these conferences are an opportunity to connect teachers and parents individually and discuss the year ahead, focusing on how your child is settling into Early Years, progress to date, and next steps. This conference is key in establishing an effective partnership. The second Parent-Teacher Conference serves as a follow-up to the first semester written report, focusing on your child's progress and providing the opportunity to discuss next steps. In each conference, teachers will share insights about your child's development, as well as seek your insights and perspectives about your child. Conferences will be scheduled through PowerSchool. The scheduling will be available closer to the date.

## **Celebrations of Learning**

You are invited twice during the school year to a Celebration of Learning. Your child will show you his/her learning and engage you in learning experiences around the learning spaces. Details will be communicated via Toddle.

## **Parent Education Sessions**

Each month Early Years will host parent education sessions. These sessions help build our home-school partnership and will focus on curriculum, counseling/wellbeing, and whole child development.

## **Special Events**

The Early Years celebrates various divisional and school-wide events throughout the year. Information about these events will be shared closer to the date in The Focus, with reminders sent to the grade-level WhatsApp groups that you have the option of subscribing to.

## **Parent Connection (PC)**

We believe that education is enhanced by a strong partnership between home and school. The Parent Connection is a group of TKS parents who serve as ambassadors to the school, drive school spirit through community building events and represent the parent voice by serving as a liaison. There are opportunities for involvement in the PC as part of the PC Leadership Team, the Division Ambassadors, the Spirit Committee, working groups, as well as many volunteer opportunities throughout the year. You can learn more about the Parent Connection on our website or reach out to a Parent Ambassador using [this form](#).

# **Health and Safety**

We are aware of the need for a healthy and hygienic environment. Hand washing is taught and carefully monitored, and care will be taken with cleaning tables, toys, door handles, etc. If your child shows signs

of illness, do not send him/her to school. This is to minimize the risk of other children or adults becoming sick as well.

## **Nurse Information**

Nina C Cuales  
EY EAST School Nurse  
ey.nurse2@thekaustschool.org  
Tel: 808-6212

Hasna Basudan  
EY WEST School Nurse  
ey.nurse1@thekaustschool.org  
Tel: 808-6312

## **When children should stay home from school**

Children must stay home if they have symptoms of possibly contagious or serious illnesses that they might spread to other children, including and not limited to:

- Fever
- New onset of persistent cough with fever (more details below)
- Congestion / runny nose with fever or feeling unwell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Sore throat (Kindly Read the Common Childhood Illnesses for more information)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Please review the guidelines for [Common Childhood Illnesses](#) for more details.

## **When children will be sent home from school**

Our school staff serves as the link between parents and children. When a child complains of illness, it is the responsibility of the school nurse to note and communicate common symptoms, such as fever, vomiting, and diarrhea to parents. School nurses are not allowed by law to diagnose specific illnesses, and we are not equipped to care for an ill or injured student for an indefinite amount of time. Parents are responsible for picking up their child in a timely manner once notified by the school. If the parents are unable to come when notified, they must inform the nurse who they are allowing to act on their behalf to pick up their child. If parents are unable to answer the nurses calls after a period of time, the emergency contact number will be used.

### **Colds**

A runny nose is not necessarily the cause to keep your child home unless they have a cold with fever, bad cough, or if the child is too tired or too uncomfortable to function at school.

### **Cough**

A child needs to remain home if he/she has a new onset of dry/productive persistent cough with fever/and or difficulty in breathing (follow COVID-19 protocol). The same also applies if your child has a cough/sneezing and is unable to practice respiratory etiquette (turning away from others, proper hand washing, and unable to wear a mask when required).

### **Fever**

Children must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the aid of fever-reducing medicine), before returning to school. They need to stay home if they have the following temperature:

Mouth (oral): 37.5 C/ 99.6 F and higher

Ear (tympanic): 37.8 C/ 100 F and higher

### **Head Lice**

Parents are responsible for monitoring their children for head lice. Please notify the school nurse and grade-level teacher if your child has head lice.

If signs of lice or nits are observed at school (itchy scalp, frequent scratching, redness behind the neck or ears), the school nurse will perform a private examination. If the nurse confirms head lice is present, she will contact the child's parents to collect him/her. The nurse will also check the siblings of the student. Parents will be taught how to spot lice/nits and how to remove them manually and a brochure will be given for further information. Children must be lice free before they return to school and should visit the Health Office for a check and clearance before being allowed back in class.

The nurse will check all children in the class when there is a case of head lice identified. The nurse will also inform the parents of all children in the class that a case was identified and advise on how to check for lice/nits and how to treat them.

### **Conjunctivitis**

Children with red/pink eyes with eye pain and white or yellow eye discharge or eyelids matted after sleep, may have Purulent Conjunctivitis. They should not be in school until they have been examined and treated. Children with pink eyes who have clear drainage and no fever, no eye pain, and no eyelid redness do not need to be kept home.

### **Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease**

Child must be seen by a health care provider and must stay home until all blisters have dried. Your child will need to be seen by the School Nurse before returning to class.



## Returning to School After Sickness

If the child has been sick at home for any of the above-mentioned illnesses, they must be free from sickness for at least **24 hours without the aid of medication** (please review the guidelines for [Common Childhood Illnesses](#)). In the case of diarrhea, the child should stay home until it is settled for at least 48 hours. If your child is absent for three days or more, ensure that you visit the school nurse prior to returning to class. A Doctor's note is required following any prolonged illness (5 days or more) or specific health concern.

### Medical Report:

A valid medical report will be required if your child has a significant health condition where a care plan is needed. Also a medical note is required if your child has been absent due to sickness for more than 5 consecutive days and for any conditions in section 8 in the guidelines for the [Common Childhood Illnesses](#)).

### Fractures

Please provide a medical report from your child's Orthopedic Doctor regarding limitations and special needs. Please notify the school nurse for evaluation of any modifications to physical activity, length of day, or mobility needs before your child returns to school.

### Surgery

Please provide a medical report from your child's surgeon regarding limitations and special needs and notify the school nurse for any modifications to physical activity, length of day, or mobility needs.

## Administration of Medication at School

Where possible, medication should be given at home. If necessary, only prescribed medication (provided with the pharmacist's label attached in English with the name of the student) may be administered at school by the school nurse, with written permission from the parents. Please refer to the school's [Administration of Medication at School – A Guide for Parents](#). Doctor notes must be translated into English if special treatment is needed and for attendance records.

### Care Plans

Please contact the school nurse at your child's designated area if your child requires a Care Plan such as a care plan for asthma, allergies, seizures, diabetes etc. Please note that a new care plan is required every school year. The Care Plan is a means of communication and organizing an action plan for staff members involved in your child's care during school days. This is to ensure that the school is aware of the management of actual and potential medical care needs, recognizing signs and symptoms, and

administering medication in medical events. The care plan will be provided to key school staff members as needed.

For your child's safety, [all care plans must be completed and signed by your child treating doctor and submitted to the School Health Office with the prescribed medication before your child starts school](#) and to be updated when changes arise.

## Medical Bracelet

Medical bracelets play a crucial role in providing vital information to school staff and emergency responders in the event of an emergency. They serve as a quick reference point for any medical conditions, allergies, or special requirements that your child may have with your emergency contact number. If your child is diagnosed with a significant medical condition, a medical alert bracelet is recommended to be worn all the time.

## Immunization

All students must be up to date with TKS required immunizations. The school nurse will reach out to parents when a student requires further vaccines. Parents will be required to provide the updated immunization record before the cutoff date to the school nurse with the completed immunizations to avoid any issues with attending school.

## Health Information

Please remember to keep your child's health information updated in PowerSchool. Accurate records allow us to provide the best possible care in case of an emergency. If your child has a medical condition that has improved, please also inform the Health Office and keep PowerSchool updated. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in keeping our school community safe and healthy.

## Health Notice

In the event of a serious communicable case being identified in a classroom, we prioritize the safety and well-being of our students. As soon as we receive confirmation of a case by a medical report, a health notice will be sent out to all parents in the same classroom via an email or other designated communication channels. This notice will provide essential information about the situation, including preventive measures that have been taken and any necessary actions to be followed. Please rest assured that the issuance of this health notice is purely precautionary, and not to cause for an alarm. The school staff and health office will be actively monitoring the situation and implementing appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all students.

## School Health Screening

TKS Health Office together with KAUST Health (KH) conducts dental, vision, hearing and growth screening for all consented Pre-Kindergarten. The health screening program is designed to identify and address preventable health issues with the potential to hinder students' learning ability. Health screening does not substitute regular medical checkups and will not screen for all medical conditions. Students whose measurements fall outside the expected range will be referred to KAUST Health for further assessment.

The screening takes place at TKS Health Office, students are screened individually and confidentiality is maintained. Only students with consent granted through the PowerSchool Portal will be screened.

## Toileting

Children must be toilet trained and not wear diapers to attend TKS. A child is considered toilet trained when he or she can complete the following steps unassisted:

- Know when he/she needs to use the bathroom
- Alert the teacher or get to the bathroom on his/her own
- Know how to get his/her trousers and underpants off and on
- Clean his/her own private parts with paper or hose
- Put all toilet paper in the bowl/bin
- Flush the toilet
- Wash their hands

We understand that young children have occasional accidents, particularly during transition times, such as when a child begins school. A child who has had an accident needs to know when he/she has had an accident, alert the teacher, be able to clean him/herself, and be able to change his/her own clothes with minimal assistance. The school does not keep extra clothing and parents are responsible for providing spare clothing that the child may need throughout the day.

If staff have reason to believe a child is not completely toilet trained, the teacher will arrange to discuss the matter with the parents; the child may need to stay at home until he/she is fully toilet trained.

## Guidelines Regarding Biting

Although biting may be part of normal development for toddlers, when children reach the age of three, it is not regarded as acceptable behavior.

In Early Years, we take every instance of biting seriously. We have strategies to deal with biting and take the following action:

#### **First biting incident**

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm reminder, such as "No Biting. Biting hurts."
- The injured child will be comforted and attended to. Any injury shall be assessed and addressed.
- Staff will work with both children to understand what led to the incident. The rule will be restated, an example being "Biting is not allowed." Staff will discuss how the child can respond to similar situations in the future while maintaining eye contact, using a calm, firm voice and language the child can understand.
- The parents of both children will be notified of the incident.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

#### **Second biting incident**

- The classroom teacher will meet with parents to let them know that there is a problem and the procedures that will be followed to deal with it. Teachers and parents will collaborate to form a plan of action for both home and school to address the behavior.
- The classroom teacher will be mindful of children who indicate a tendency to bite to avoid biting situations before they occur.
- The classroom teacher will reinforce non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior.

#### **Third biting incident**

- If an occurrence happens a third time, the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the biting child. The child may return to class the following day.

If the bite is severe and breaks the skin, the child who has bitten will be sent home even if it is the first bite. We encourage parents to work in collaboration with us to reduce and eliminate biting using positive approaches to behavior guidance.

## **Transitions**

### **Transitions**

TKS has structures and processes in place to support students' transitions between divisions (Early Years -> Grade 2, Grade 5 -> Grade 6) and into and out of the school. This includes information sessions for students and parents, visits to classrooms with teachers and support groups, as needed. If your child will be transitioning into, through or out of the school, the homeroom teacher or a counselor will contact you with more information.

### **New Students**

The KAUST School (TKS) welcomes students from a wide range of countries, backgrounds and abilities who wish to study an international curriculum (International Baccalaureate, IB) and receive an

English-language education. Following acceptance into the school, families are required to set up an intake appointment to ensure appropriate classroom placement.

**Exiting students**

Before your child's departure from TKS, you will need to complete the on-line exit form [here](#). Make sure you begin the departure process at least 10 days before your child's last day in school and sooner if possible. Please leave a personal email address and indicate if you wish to receive your child's progress report if you are leaving mid-academic year.