

Infant School overview

East Campus





Welcome to the Infant School on East Campus. Our school is an incredibly exciting place for 4–7 year olds to learn and grow in an environment that is welcoming, safe and where all children feel valued. These early years are an important stage of schooling as our students develop a love of learning that will serve as a firm foundation throughout their education and life.

Our unique learning programme reaches far beyond academics. Along with our stimulating academic programme, our activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service programmes are central to each child’s education. Learning takes place in a highly intentional, supportive and developmentally responsive environment.

Our Infant School has distinct structures in place to support the specific needs of students in their early years of schooling. Classroom routines support Infant School children in developing the mindset and attitudes of a learner. Students love coming to school each day and, through the programme, build curiosity, develop resilience and embrace challenge.

At all levels of the school, we provide exceptional opportunities for our students to develop independence and leadership skills, and the Infant School is no exception. At the heart of our educational philosophy is the belief that we prepare students not just for university, but for life. It is the skills and qualities students develop, as much as the knowledge and understanding they gain, that will define the quality of the life they live and the contribution they make to the lives of others. For our youngest students, this involves growing in independence, developing some important skills in self-regulation and taking responsibility for their belongings, their friendships and their daily actions. Risk taking and making mistakes are viewed as essential opportunities for learning rather than errors to correct.

School begins at 8am and finishes at 2pm, with optional after-school activities available 2-3pm.

Infant School enrolment

| Grade | Age of students* | Number of students | Number of classes |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| K1 | 4–5 years | 88 | 4 |
| K2 | 5–6 years | 110 | 5 |
| 1 | 6–7 years | 132 | 6 |
| Total | | 330 | 15 |

*Students must be born on or between 1 September and 31 August. Refer to the age-grade boundary chart on our website for guidance, or contact Admissions.

Available places may be offered up to the start of Term 2 (January) of the academic year.

About the UWCSEA curriculum

Developed from our mission, the concept-based curriculum at UWCSEA enables students to embrace challenge and take responsibility for shaping a better world. This is achieved through all five elements of our holistic learning programme—academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service.

Our concept-based curriculum organises learning around the development of transferable ideas, which may be disciplinary or interdisciplinary. Knowledge and skill acquisition is vital, but not the end goal in a concept-based curriculum. Using their knowledge and skill learning, students construct and express conceptual understandings, which transfer to new contexts. This allows our students to apply critical thought in any situation, now or in the future.

The curriculum model also takes into account the reality of our international school community. Students who spend only a few of their overall schooling at the College, due to the relocation of their family, are equipped by our focus on transferable concepts rather than specific content. This ensures a smooth transition from one school system to another, if a family must leave the College.

Standards: Standards are the significant concepts from each learning area, articulated into 'conceptual statements'. These apply to all grade levels from K1 to the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). This ensures that these concepts are revisited in developmentally appropriate ways as students transition from grade to grade. Because the standards are conceptual in nature, students who join us from different countries can transfer access the curriculum regardless of their educational background.

Conceptual Understandings: Under each standard are conceptual understandings, which are conceptual statements written for specific developmental stages. These may be grade-specific. This allows students to access the broader concepts in the standard, while simultaneously developing an understanding of specific concepts appropriate to the grade-level.

Benchmarks: Benchmarks are attached to each conceptual understanding in each grade. These describe what a student should know or be able to do at each stage of their learning in order to develop understanding in each subject.

In the High School, the standards, conceptual understandings and benchmarks specifically take into account the requirements of the external examining bodies that set the (I)GCSE and IBDP examinations that students sit at the end of these two-year courses in Grade 10 and Grade 12.

How the model works

Using English as an example, all students work towards a standard in writing for an audience. The conceptual understandings in each grade then outline what students should understand at each stage—in early Primary School this is a conceptual understanding around making deliberate word choices in their communication. By Middle School the complexity of the conceptual understanding has developed and students are asked to create pleasure and coherent meaning through their choice of words. This in turn is further refined in the High School as students in the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) are asked to influence the reader through selective word choice.

Below is an example of a standard in English, and the conceptual understandings for that standard in Grades 1 and 7 and the IBDP.

K1–Grade 12

Standard: Writing expresses selfhood, creativity and intellect in a medium shaped by audience and purpose.

Grade 1

Conceptual Understanding: We create real or imagined experiences when writing stories by using characters and setting.

Benchmark: Develop the story through character, focusing on specific actions.

Grade 7

Conceptual Understanding: All parts of a text work together to shape meaning.

Benchmark: Write narratives, using time and plot deliberately in order to influence mood and focus attention on the important moments in a story.

Grade 11 and 12 (IBDP)

Conceptual Understanding: Writers manipulate structure to convey meaning effectively.

Benchmark: Sequence and sustain structure to strengthen and develop the logic and persuasive impact of a claim.





Academics

The academic curriculum in our Infant School is developed around an holistic, inquiry-based approach to learning. Guided by the UWCSEA profile and learning principles, students explore:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Art
- Humanities
- a Language other than English
- Science
- Music
- Physical Education (PE)

In developmentally appropriate ways, students explore concepts and develop their conceptual understandings in these areas through interdisciplinary Units of Study.

Each student is supported by a teaching team that includes their classroom teacher and teacher assistant. Specialist teachers deliver music, languages (Chinese and Spanish) and physical education. Our curriculum coaches work with classroom teachers to support Literacy, Mathematics and Digital Literacy.

The learning experiences of infant-aged children are interdisciplinary in nature, reflecting their experiences outside of school and valuing their extensive existing understanding. While learning in the Infant School is intentional and connects to our College curriculum, teachers adjust their plans on a regular basis to ensure students' current understanding, interests and ongoing learning needs inform their next steps of learning.

Literacy

We offer a balanced literacy programme that is integrated in all areas of the day. The students experience a variety of literacy practices that support the development of skills and understandings about and through language. Through literacy, we aim to encourage creativity and build the students' confidence as speakers, listeners, readers and writers in many ways.

We encourage the students to make choices as they explore literacy through focused group sessions with their teachers, classmates and during play-based activities.

The literacy programme is made up of the following components:

- Speaking and Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Language/Word Study

Our literacy programme supports students in understanding the process involved in reading and writing and the importance of stamina in becoming a reader or writer. Classrooms are communities of readers and writers who share and celebrate their achievements.

The teaching and learning of and about the English language system pervades everything in the Infant School. One element of our approach involves the word study programme. Students learn about letters and sounds, locating patterns in words and rules in the English language. This allows children to inquire into language instead of merely memorising discrete words or groups of words.

Languages other than English

Students have four lessons a week with a specialist teacher in one of the following languages:

- K1 – Chinese
- K2 – Chinese
- G1 – Chinese or Spanish

Some home language (mother tongue) classes are taught after school in small groups at additional cost. These classes are available subject to demand. See our Languages factsheet for more information or contact Admissions.

Mathematics

Young children learn mathematical concepts by engaging in meaningful, practical activities that connect to their daily lives. Our students take part in a variety of activities that support them in moving from the concrete to symbolic level of understanding. In K1 for example, concepts such as addition and subtraction might be modelled and explored through play with the use of concrete materials in practical situations. As children move into Grade 1, these concepts are recorded symbolically with numbers and symbols.

Manipulatives, such as counters or interlocking cubes, are used to introduce and reinforce mathematical concepts in number or pattern. Play and hands-on experiences, such as cooking, are utilised on a regular basis to teach concepts in measurement, such as capacity, mass or length.

The development of reasoning, communication and problem-solving skills are integrated into our learning engagements and reflected on by students as part of mathematical inquiries. We want the students to be comfortable articulating their mathematical understanding in a variety of ways.

Science and Humanities

Infant School students learn about science and humanities through interdisciplinary Units of Study. These units allow them to explore the conceptual understandings (their 'big ideas') by applying their knowledge, skills and understanding from a variety of curriculum areas. For example, in a unit on light and sound, students might use their knowledge of graphing skills to make sense of data collected during scientific investigations. The teaching of science and humanities also focuses on the core skills required in undertaking an inquiry. Both research skills and investigation skills are explored through hands-on experiences and follow up discussion and analysis.

Art

Recognising that creating and appreciating art is important for young children's cognitive, motor and emotional development, our students have regular opportunities to express themselves through art in the classroom. Through learning centres and class projects, students paint, work with clay, create collages and build sculptures out of recycled materials, using the work of various artists both to study specific techniques and as an inspiration.

Music

Through our music programme, students listen, sing and respond to music, exploring musical concepts such as rhythm, pitch and melody. In K1 and K2, the music teachers work closely with the class teachers to integrate music into the ongoing inquiry in the classrooms. In Grade 1, the students enjoy two separate music lessons per week. Our students love music; it is a time when they can express themselves in playful ways both with and without instruments.

There are opportunities throughout the year for the students to practise, rehearse and celebrate their musical repertoire and hone their performance skills.

Physical Education

Delivered by a specialist PE teacher, all students have PE lessons twice a week. Students explore fundamental skills and movement through evasion and invasion games, gymnastics, athletics, adventure games and swimming. The Infant students have access to an indoor sport hall as well as a swimming pool dedicated exclusively for the use of the Infant School students.

Community time in K1 and K2

Our youngest students are given space and time to pursue their own interests within the curriculum framework. Centres for art, discovery, construction, mathematical discovery, reading, writing and dramatic play ensure that students can explore areas of interest as they emerge over the course of the year.

In K1 and K2, bi-weekly dedicated 'community time' allows students to collaborate with students from other classes on large-scale, long-term projects that they design together, with minimal guidance from the teacher. Students have access to the entire pod area, as well as the classrooms of their peers. This also supports students in their social and emotional development as they broaden their social networks and learn to collaborate with others.

Technology

The College provides an appropriate device for all primary aged students to use in the classroom. This is a tablet for the youngest students, moving to a laptop in the older primary grades.

The teachers are supported by a Digital Literacy Coach, whose role is to help integrate technology into the classroom.



Activities

Infant School students have plenty of opportunities to explore their interests through the learning programme. There are myriad opportunities for them to try out new things, to build social skills and develop resilience and perseverance—all the skills and qualities that the activities programme is designed to develop.

When the Infant School finishes at 2pm, we have a variety of after school activities open to students, available on a fee-paying basis. These activities have included art, ball skills, chess, coding/robotics, dance, gymnastics, Lego, and swimming.

The formal after school activities programme begins in Junior School in Grade 2 and is designed to provide students with opportunities to follow their passions and develop new ones, alongside like-minded peers who share their interests.

Outdoor Education

Our outdoor education programme is designed to take students into the unfamiliar and present them with age-appropriate challenges.

Infant students explore the campus and take many field trips locally, for example to Chinatown, the zoo or local theatre productions. Parents are welcome assistants on these field trips.

All of these experiences pave the way for students to have the more independent experience in Grade 1 and later in Junior School, when they spend night away from home.

There are no overnight outdoor education trips in K1 or K2. The programme begins formally in Grade 1, with a sleepover in the classrooms towards the end of the academic year. Students explore the campus as the sun goes down, 'camp out' in sleeping bags and wake up to new morning routines. Although some students find this more challenging than others, the invariable outcome is an increase in confidence and resilience for each student.

In Grade 2, students then build on this experience by spending a night at the Singapore Zoo.

Personal and Social Education

We know that in order for learning to be effective, learners must feel valued, cared for, secure and supported. The Infant School emphasises the importance of personal and social education for students. The ability to know themselves and to interact effectively with others, to collaborate, negotiate and identify what's important to them is at the heart of the Infant School experience.

The Infant School personal and social education (PSE) programme is taught holistically, embedded into classroom routines and highlighted during learning activities. Strategies, such as morning meetings and circle time, are employed to encourage meaningful discussions about how to problem solve during conflict situations, how to communicate one's feelings or needs and demonstrate caring for others.

Student wellbeing is of paramount importance to the class teacher and teaching assistant who closely follow the personal development of their students and maintain communication with parents about their progress and developmental needs. Each grade also has a Head of Grade who assists teachers and parents. All are supported by the Vice Principal for the Infant School, who has an overarching responsibility for our Infant School students.

While they spend the majority of their time with their classroom teacher and teaching assistant, students have plenty of opportunities to develop meaningful relationships with other adults as well. This ensures that there is a group of adults around each child who knows them well. The Head of Grade, the learning support team and their teachers all work together as a team to support each child. This collaborative approach to learning and wellbeing is a key part of our success.

Partnership with parents is a critical part of ensuring the wellbeing of our youngest students, and parents are encouraged to be involved in the classroom. We like parents to be as connected as possible to their child's experience in school, and encourage face-to-face communication. Parents are welcome to meet with the class teacher at any time, to discuss their child's progress at school.

Professional guidance and workshops for parents are also offered by the College counsellors.



Service

Service is at the heart of the UWC mission, and even our youngest students become involved in service activities. As part of their Units of Study, Infant School students identify local problems they can solve and reflect on their ability to be agents of change. This introduces the idea of service and helps to foster empathy in our students.

All Infant School students participate in local service throughout the year. As an Infant School, we support Happy Lodge Home for the Elderly in Tampines. Our goal is to create caring, compassionate children who recognise the needs of others and consider ways to help them.

Global Concerns (GC) are service projects which take place outside Singapore. In the Infant School, the GC supported by students across all grades is Kuma Cambodia, a school supporting marginalised communities in Takhmau province in Cambodia. Our Infant School students learn about the Kuma Cambodia community, with a focus on raising awareness to help foster the notion that children like them, but without their advantages, can benefit from education, healthcare and a safe environment. Grade 1 students in particular look for ways to connect directly with the Kuma school students; in the past this has included planned weekend visits where a group of students travel with one of their parents and UWCSEA staff to visit the school in Cambodia.

For more information, please contact Admissions

+65 6305 5353 | admissionseast@uwcsea.edu.sg
www.uwcsea.edu.sg/admissions

