

Junior School overview

East Campus





Our learning programme has been carefully planned to enable all our Junior School students to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by all five elements of our holistic learning programme: academics, activities, outdoor education, personal and social education and service. It is a truly exciting and crucial stage in their school careers and we aim, in partnership with parents, to make it a successful one for every child.

The Junior School is organised in smaller teams to ensure that students feel welcome and supported. The day begins at 8am and lessons end at 3pm, although many students join activities until 4.30pm. Our personal and social education programme is designed to help our new students adjust to their new environment and routines.

Students stay in their class groups for lessons in specialist subjects, but are taught in dedicated classrooms and facilities by specialist teachers in Physical Education, Music and Art. In their elected Language Other than English, students move classroom and are grouped with students of similar ability from other classes for these lessons with their specialist language teacher. This helps our students to approach Middle School, where they are taught in class sets by specialist teachers, before the greater independence and need for more self-regulated learning that is required in High School.

We encourage parents to be as connected as possible to their child's experience in school. A grade-level blog gives parents a window into their child's learning and students build an ePortfolio over the year. Above all, we encourage face-to-face communication and provide several opportunities to meet with the teacher through the course of the school year. Of course, parents are welcome to meet with the class teacher at any time, to discuss their child's progress and wellbeing at school.

At all levels of the school, we provide exceptional opportunities for our students to develop independence and leadership skills, and the Junior School is no exception. At the heart of our educational philosophy is the belief that we prepare students not just for further education, but for life. We believe 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. For this reason, students in the Junior School are encouraged to take on leadership roles, to experience both success and failure, and to grow in the belief that they can make a difference in the world.

Junior School enrolment

Grade	Age of students*	Number of students	Number of classes
2	7–8 years	154	7
3	8–9 years	154	7
4	9–10 years	176	8
5	10–11 years	176	8
Total		660	30

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

In Grades 2 and 4, 22 new places are created each year due to a new class being added to the grade level. In Grades 3 and 5, places become available if existing students withdraw from the College.

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

Guided by the UWCSEA profile and learning principles the academic curriculum in Junior School is structured around a holistic, inquiry-based approach to learning. This is integrated with a personal and social education programme that supports students in exploring topics such as friendships, family, personal identity and self-awareness.

A student's main contact is with the classroom teacher who is supported by a teaching assistant who works across the grade-level. Specialist teachers provide lessons in Physical Education, Music, Art and Languages, and coaches work with classroom teachers to support Mathematics, Literacy and the integration of technology in their classroom practice.

The table below outlines the subjects covered in each grade. The school week is divided into 40 periods, and while periods can vary in length according to the time of day and the day of the week, the average length is just under 40 minutes per period.

Junior School subject offerings	Number of periods per week			
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Literacy (Reading, Writing, Word Study and Library)	12	12	12	12
Mathematics	8	8	8	8
Unit of Study (Science and Humanities)	6	6	6	6
Language other than English (see below)	4	4	4	4
Physical Education	4	4	4	4
Music	2	2	2	2
Visual Art	2	2	2	2
Personal and Social Education (PSE)	2	2	2	2
Total	40	40	40	40

Languages other than English

Grade 2: Chinese (beginner, continuation, advanced), French (beginner), Spanish (continuation)

Grade 3: Chinese (beginner, continuation, advanced), French (continuation), Spanish (beginner, continuation)

Grade 4: Chinese (beginner, continuation, advanced), French (beginner, continuation), Spanish (continuation)

Grade 5: Chinese (beginner, continuation, advanced), French (continuation), Spanish (beginner, continuation)

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 of contact Admissions.

Literacy

Our overarching literacy goal is for students to become independent lifelong readers and writers, who communicate effectively through reading, writing, listening, speaking and presenting. To help students achieve this goal, we use a workshop approach, which provides a clear structure for students to gain skills and develop confidence.

We also recognise it is not isolated to one specific area of study and is transdisciplinary by nature. Literacy occurs all day, every day, living within all traditional subject areas and so where appropriate, is integrated into other areas of the curriculum to make for more powerful learning connections.

A wide range of literacy resources are available, to both students and teachers, to support the Literacy curriculum. In addition to the extensive book collection in the Primary School Library, each class has a wide variety of genres in the classroom library for individualised reading.

Activities

Our activities programme is a vital part of student life and learning. It is designed to provide students with opportunities to discover new interests, develop their strengths and pursue their passions. Participants also have the chance to make like-minded friends from across age groups and interact with students from other school sections. Teachers and parents work with students to make sure they are not over-extended and can manage their time.

The programme runs across four 'seasons' each year, allowing students to try as many new activities as they would like throughout the school year. It is divided into the categories: wellness for life, mind matters, arts and performance, Dragons sports, learn and lead, and create and innovate. Activities take place before school, as part of lunchtime or after school in fixed time slots. Students who take the bus home are provided with an 'activity bus' to take them home after activities have concluded at no additional cost.

Dragons Sports and Wellness for Life

A full programme of after-school sport is offered to students with recreational options and representative teams participating in 8&U, 9&U, 10&U and 11&U age groups in the Athletic Conference of Singapore International Schools (ACSIS). Sports currently include badminton, basketball, cricket, cross country, football, gymnastics, netball, rugby (boys), swimming, tennis, touch rugby (girls) and track and field.

The activities help students develop an understanding of the relationship between a healthy body and a healthy mind and instil self-discipline, awareness and confidence.

Arts and Performance

There are many opportunities for students to join performance activities, including an annual Junior School drama production, music ensemble concerts and the recital evenings for those who take part in the instrumental teaching programme.

Separate to the music lessons timetabled as part of our academic learning programme, our Instrumental Teaching Programme offers access to music lessons on a variety of instruments, at an additional cost. Instrument hire is also available.

Students have the opportunity to join a variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles, including Band Together, Strings United, Global Voices, Kutandara, and Epic Samba. In these groups, everyone from beginners to advanced students has opportunity for musical development and performance.

Learn and Lead, Mind Matters, Create and Innovate

There are several groups that provide students with the opportunity to work in cooperation with each other and step in and out of leadership roles, including Student Council, the Service Executive Committee, UWCSEA Ambassadors and a number of College Service activities.

The clubs and special interests are varied and have included activities such as aerial gymnastics, arts and crafts, gardening, science and engineering, writing and yoga. These options are intended to give students the opportunity to extend their interests beyond the classroom. Chinese-language activity options are offered at various times of the years, and home languages are also offered (subject to demand).





Outdoor Education

A core element of our learning programme, outdoor education expeditions take students into unfamiliar environments to share the experience of developing new skills away from the comforts of home and family, often for the first time.

The main aim of our programme is to set each student up for success. In the new environment, students are challenged to take risks, to show compassion to others, to demonstrate initiative and enterprise, skill and care, teamwork and leadership.

During the school year, each grade completes an expedition involving overnight stays of varying lengths. Every student is expected to participate, as the opportunities for personal and social development offered by participation in these expeditions are impossible to replicate in the classroom. An important component of every grade expedition is the idea of 'team challenge' activities, in which students are given challenges to overcome as a group. Developing a sense of the individual's own responsibility to the group effort is a very important aim of the programme. Field work conducted by students on these trips is also often used in the classrooms. The class expeditions are an additional cost.

All expeditions travel early in the school year in class groups. This allows the students to form bonds that will benefit them in the classroom as well as the playground throughout the year. The expeditions are:

- **Grade 2** students spend a night at the Singapore Zoo
- **Grade 3** goes on a Forest Adventure in Malaysia for two nights
- **Grade 4** visits Pulau Sibul in Malaysia for three nights
- **Grade 5** students travel to Nomad Adventure in Gopeng, Ipoh in Malaysia for four nights

The activities and venues are thoroughly checked and annually reviewed to ensure safety of all participants.

Optional trips

Students in all grades have annual opportunities to travel with their parents to participate on family service trips. Generally the students plan activities to share with the hosts in-country while parents undertake a service project of some kind (i.e., house building, painting a dormitory, clearing a vegetable patch, upgrading facilities such as kitchens or demolishing a building).

In the past these trips have included:

- Colours of Cambodia – a week-long trip visiting our NGO partners in Cambodia which includes service projects as well as opportunities to explore and learn about Cambodian culture and history
- Epic Arts – Grade 5 students visit one of our longest running GC partners in Kampong Speu, Cambodia which offers inclusive arts programmes for people of all abilities
- IndoChina Starfish Foundation – students in Grades 4–7 compete in football tournaments against ISF teams in Cambodia accompanied by UWCSEA staff; there is also a family visit to two schools supported by our GC groups
- Green Umbrella – Grade 3 students and their parents spend four days visiting the school built by funds raised by Grade 3 students at East Campus
- Bali Bridges – Grade 4 students travel to Bali with one of their parents and UWCSEA staff on a service trip to one of the children's homes supported by the Bali Bridges GC
- Gili Trawangan - Grade 2 students visit the Lombok-based NGO supported by their grade-level GC to learn about reef and marine conservation, with a particular focus on turtles; students travel with one of their parents and UWCSEA staff

Personal and Social Education

We know that in order for learning to be effective, learners must feel secure and supported. The personal and social education (PSE) element of our learning programme is focused on helping students to understand themselves and each other.

Student wellbeing is the main responsibility of the class teacher who closely follows the personal development of their students and maintains 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 who has an overarching responsibility for the wellbeing of students in the grades they take responsibility for, and also work where necessary with the Principal.

Every student is under the care of a class teacher, and this teacher covers the core subjects and also delivers the PSE programme through dedicated sessions, as well as by integrating key messages into their teaching. Assemblies, grade talks and a daily focus on personal relationships help our Junior School students to explore issues of friendship, communication, self-discipline and responsibility. A focus for 25 minutes during each class' Morning Meeting time provides an opportunity for students to understand and explore their own development.

The grade-level classrooms are grouped together, and also share a large central learning space (pod) to encourage a sense of affinity within the grade. This pod is also shared with one other grade, providing links between grades.

Through talks on topics such as online safety, emotional well being and changes we try to provide parents and guardians with knowledge they need to keep abreast of issues that are current for their children.

Professional guidance from our counsellors is also available for students and families on a limited basis.

Technology

The use of technology to enhance student learning is deeply embedded in the Junior School, and we provide 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. This laptop stays in the classroom and is not brought home.

We have a strong focus on professional development for teachers which in turn helps to ensure that students use technology extensively and appropriately. Junior School teachers are supported by a digital literacy coach who helps to maximise the use of technology for learning.

Students are also supported in their use of technology by the introduction of age-appropriate digital citizenship concepts as part of the PSE programme.



Service

Service is at the heart of the UWC ethos, and even our youngest students become involved in service activities. Our service programme intentionally empowers students to become aware, able and active contributors to the community in areas which speak to their own interests and life experiences.

Students participate in College, local and global service projects both during and after school. Every student is encouraged to be involved in age-appropriate action, to take their service commitments seriously and to reflect on their experiences.

College and Local Service

College service takes place on the campus, and activities may include being a monitor in the library or taking part in recycling or campus gardening services.

All Junior School students participate in local service activities, which may involve visiting elderly Singaporean residents at a nearby nursing home or volunteering at a soup kitchen. Links are created with the Middle School, as many local service activities are co-hosted by students in both the Junior and Middle School.

Global Concerns

Global Concerns (GC) are service projects which take place outside Singapore, and form the third tier of our service programme. Through the GC programme, students are educated about global issues, introduced to concepts of leadership and organisation and encouraged to establish their own initiatives. Many of our GCs are linked with grassroots NGOs in the region. Where possible, links are made between classroom learning and issues raised by the GC.

As outlined on page 6, all grades have an optional trip available to enable students to travel with a parent and UWCSEA staff to visit these (and other) GCs.

For more information, please contact Admissions

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