

Junior School overview

Dover Campus





UWCSEA is an exciting place to learn and grow, and our Junior School provides that all important bridge between the uninhibited curiosity of Infant School and the confident striding out of Middle School.

Our Junior School students are able to take full advantage of all the opportunities offered by the five elements of the UWCSEA 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 individual. Our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme provides transitional support for students as they join the College.

The Junior School is organised into smaller teams to ensure that students feel welcome and supported. The school day begins at 8am and ends at 3pm, and most students participate in the after school activity programme until 4.15pm.

We encourage parents to be as connected as possible to their child's experience in school. A grade-level blog outlines the areas of focus and gives parents a window into their child's learning, as do online portfolios created by each student during the year. Above all, we encourage face-to-face communication, and parents are welcome to meet with the class teacher at any time, to discuss their child's progress and wellbeing at school.

Students have a weekly timetable of lessons with specialist teachers, including languages, physical education, music and art. This helps them to approach Middle School, with its greater focus on specialist subject areas, which in turn amends the structure of their lessons to prepare them for the independence and self-regulated learning required in High School.

At all levels of the school, we provide exceptional opportunity 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 university, but for life, and 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	132	6
3	8–9 years	154	7
4	9–10 years	176	8
5	10–11 years	198	9
Total		660	30

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

Our academic programme is structured around a holistic, inquiry-based approach to learning. Guided by the UWCSEA profile and learning principles, in the Junior School the academic curriculum is integrated with a Personal and Social Education programme that supports our students as they explore issues such as friendships, family, personal identity and self-awareness.

A student's main contact is with their classroom teacher who is supported by a teacher assistant. Specialist teachers are provided for Physical Education, Music, Art and Languages, and coaches work with classroom teachers to support Maths, Literacy and the integration of technology to support learning into the classroom.

The table below outlines the subjects covered in each grade. The exact number of periods per week per subject varies according to need; the average length is just under 40 minutes per period.

Junior School programme	Number of periods per week			
	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Literacy (Reading, Writing, Word Study and Library)	12	12	12	12
Unit of Study (Science and Humanities)	6	6	6	6
Mathematics	8	8	8	8
Language other than English <i>or</i> English as an Additional Language (EAL)	4	4	4	4
Physical Education	4	4	4	4
Visual Art	2	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2	2
Personal and Social Education (PSE)	2	2	2	2
Total	40	40	40	40

Language other than English/English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Students take a Language other than English or EAL as part of their timetabled lessons:

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

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

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

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

Some other 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.

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 the framework of reading and writing workshop, developed in Columbia University, which provides a clear structure for students to gain skills and develop confidence.

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

A wide range of Literacy resources is available to both students and teachers, to support the Literacy curriculum. In addition to the extensive book collection in both libraries, each classroom has a wide variety of genres in an individual classroom library.

Activities

A vital part of student life and learning, our activities programme is designed to provide students with opportunities to discover new interests, develop their strengths and pursue their passions. Participants have the chance to make like-minded friends from across age groups and interact with students from other school sections.

The Activities 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 sports, arts (dance, drama, music and visual arts and music), leadership, clubs and special interests.

Activities take place during lunch or after school in fixed time slots, and students who take the bus home are provided with an 'activity bus' to take them home after activities have concluded at no additional cost. Teachers and parents work with students to make sure they are not over-extended and can manage their time.

Sports

A full programme of after school sport is offered with several recreational options, and representative teams participating in 10&U (Grades 2 to 4) and 12&U (Grades 5 and 6) age groups in the Athletic Conference of Singapore International Schools (ACSIS). Teams currently include: badminton, basketball, cricket (boys), cross country, gymnastics, netball (girls), rugby (boys), football, swimming, tennis and touch football.

Arts

There are many opportunities for students to participate in a number of performance activities, including Junior Choir, Band and Strings, along with dance and drama activities.

The instrumental teaching programme offers access to music lessons on a number of instruments. These lessons are at an additional cost to parents, and are separate to the music lessons timetabled as part of our academic learning programme. Instrument hire is also available. Students have an opportunity to join several ensembles to ensure they have access to performance opportunities to showcase their musical talents.

Leadership, clubs and special interests

The Junior School Student Council and several other groups provide students with the opportunity to work in cooperation with each other and step in and out of leadership roles.

The offerings of clubs and special interest are varied but have included activities such as chess, Minecraft, newspaper, gardening, science and language clubs. These options are intended to give students the opportunity to extend their interests beyond the classroom. There are a number of Chinese-language activity options offered at various stages during the academic year.



Outdoor Education



Our outdoor education programme in the Junior School takes 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 outdoor education programme is to set each student up for success. In each new environment, students are challenged to reveal their willingness 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. The trips are an additional cost.

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.

Grades 3, 4 and 5 travel early in the school year in order for the peer group to form bonds that will benefit the students in the classroom as well as the playground throughout the year. Grade 2 students settle into their routines and travel later in the year, usually in Term 2. The expeditions are:

- Grade 2 students spend a night at the Singapore Zoo
- Grade 3 enjoys a Forest Adventure Camp 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

In Grade 5, each class group also spends half a day tackling the College's high ropes course under the guidance of our qualified Outdoor Education staff.

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

Optional trips

In alternate years, Grade 4 and 5 students are offered the opportunity to travel to Bali with one of their parents and UWCSEA staff on a service trip to undertake a volunteer project at one of the children's homes supported by the Grade 4 Bali Bridges Global Concern. This alternates with a visit by a group of children from Bali to the UWCSEA Junior School.

A ski trip to Japan is another opportunity offered to students in Grades 4 and 5 during the holidays, usually coinciding with Chinese New Year.

Personal and Social Education

In the Junior School, we understand that in order for learning to be effective, students must feel secure and supported. The Personal and Social Education (PSE) element of the learning programme is focused on teaching students to better understand themselves and how they relate to one another.

Student wellbeing is a primary responsibility for the class teacher who closely follows the personal development of their students and maintains communication with parents about their progress and developmental needs. Teachers are supported in this endeavour by a Head of Grade and Vice-Principal.

In addition to teaching the core subjects, the class teacher also delivers the PSE programme through dedicated sessions each week. Creating a culture of wellbeing and mutual respect is a foundational principle within all classrooms and teachers aim to integrate key messages into their teaching across the curriculum. To create a sense of community and belonging within the grade the students' classrooms are grouped around shared learning spaces (pods) and there are many opportunities for students to engage with other classes.

Activities such as circle solutions, assemblies, grade talks and a consistent focus on personal relationships help our Junior School students to explore issues of friendship, communication, self-discipline and responsibility. PSE is both proactive and responsive. Much of what we teach is planned based on predictable issues that arise at each grade level. However, there are times where the lessons and assemblies will be based on response to a particular need that has developed.

Using older students as mentors has also proven to be an effective way to ensure wellbeing on the playground. Grade 5 and Middle School students organise playground activities for our younger students to ensure all students are engaged in play.

Through information sessions, such as on Internet safety, bullying and emotional wellbeing, we support parents and guardians in keeping up to date with issues that are current for their children.

Professional guidance from the College counsellors is also available for students and families if necessary.

Technology

The use of technology to enhance student learning is deeply embedded in the Junior School. We provide an appropriate device for all primary aged students to use in the classroom, including to develop an eportfolio in order to share their learning. In the Junior School, students use individual laptops, which stay in the classroom and are 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. The programme empowers students to become aware, able and active contributors in their community.

Students participate in College, local and global service projects both during and after school. Every student is encouraged to be involved in some way, and to take their service commitments seriously. From Grade 3, students are encouraged to reflect on their service experiences by recording their thoughts on and reactions to the service they have performed.

College and Local Service

College Service takes place on the campus, and activities may include being a monitor in the library, becoming a buddy to younger students in our 'Peer Play' activities or taking part in the campus gardening service.

All Junior School students also participate in Local Service, which may involve visiting elderly Singaporean residents at a nearby nursing home or hosting a group from the Genesis School. Singaporean children from a local after-school care facility also come for literacy and art activities hosted by our students and staff. Other students utilise their IT expertise teaching computer skills to domestic workers. Students also have an opportunity to volunteer for service-based activities linked with organisations such as Riding for the Disabled and ACRES.

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. Where possible, links are made between classroom learning and issues raised by the GC, and students are encouraged to take personal action based on their interests and passions.

For more information, please contact Admissions

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