



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mission Statement

The School's mission is to develop **caring, inquisitive and well-rounded** individuals who will make a positive impact towards creating a sustainable world and inclusive global society.

1. Description

Castelli International School is an integrated and dynamic community bringing together parents, alumni and students from different nationalities, cultural experiences and traditions. We welcome students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds to enrich our community.

Our primary purpose is to develop the individual talents of our students through knowledge, skills and understanding while encouraging them to be inquisitive and resilient in dealing with change throughout their lives. Through experiential learning, students collaborate to embrace the realities of the outside world.

A warm family atmosphere, small classes and beautiful countryside provide a challenging and stimulating environment for creative minds.

We believe in learning through structured and purposeful inquiry, using music, sports, art and drama to enrich individual development. Our hands-on approach is clearly expressed in the Chinese proverb:

*When I hear, I forget.
When I see, I remember.
When I do, I understand.*

The school promotes initiatives that enhance **sustainability**, which include recycling, water conservation, energy-saving, waste reduction and working towards becoming **plastic-free**.

Students are encouraged to **respect nature** and participate in its preservation. At harvest time, students collect grapes and experience the traditional way of making wine. In November, they pick olives and chestnuts, learn how extra virgin olive oil is made and enjoy eating the roasted chestnuts.

The students work on their garden plots to promote our **Earth to Table** project, where they eat what they grow and share their seasonal crops with their families.

2. Non-Discrimination Policy

Castelli International School welcomes individuals of all nationalities, ethnic backgrounds, genders, religions and sexual orientations. This policy is followed

both in admissions and recruitment. We believe that a diverse community is an essential component of an experiential and well-rounded education.

3. Overview of the School Curriculum

It is our belief that in today's world students need to develop the ability to receive and transmit knowledge in more than one language. They thus acquire valuable cognitive skills and flexibility in reasoning. Our international programme is a comprehensive, transdisciplinary and integrated curriculum in which the English and Italian programmes complement each other, with English being the core language. Castelli International School was the first school to devise this unique integration of these programmes, combined with the hands-on approach 48 years ago.

The school is a recognised Cambridge International School, offering the Cambridge Checkpoint (in maths and science) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) exam in English as a Second Language.

Students are required to take English internal exams in all subjects. Students can choose to take the Cambridge Checkpoint and/or IGCSE exams in 8th Grade and can also opt to take the Italian State exams ("idoneità" or "licenza media") held at the local Italian public school. Those not intending to take the Italian exams, may audit Italian classes (unless prior agreement for exemption is made), participate in class discussions and may do Italian homework after completing English homework assignments. Students, who are not fluent in Italian, may take Italian as a Foreign Language (IFL) and/or engage in supervised project-based learning (PBL).

All core subjects are taught in English by experienced graduate faculty. The language courses are taught by certified, mother-tongue language teachers. Italian and French are taught during school hours. Other languages are offered upon request as extracurricular activities. French is compulsory from 5th through 8th grades. Latin is taught in 8th grade.

Our successful international programme has facilitated the entry of CIS graduates into international schools worldwide, as well as the Italian high schools (including Liceo Classico, Scientifico, Linguistico and Artistico).

English

Students develop their communication, self-management, research and thinking skills through reading, writing and collaborative learning. The elements of language are explored through short stories, novels, non-fiction, drama and poetry. Students are expected to interact with texts in a variety of ways including multi-media presentations, character analysis, debates, public speaking and reading logs. Students enrich their vocabulary as well as reinforce grammatical usage by developing their writing skills through personal narratives, creative, descriptive, informative and persuasive writing.

Mathematics

The general aims of the course are to build understanding and confidence in mathematical concepts by exploring relationships with the real world. The content areas of *number*, *geometry* and *handling data* are all underpinned by *problem-solving*, which provides a framework for strengthening students' critical thinking skills. In *number work*, students consolidate mental maths strategies, compute with natural numbers, integers and rational numbers. They learn how to solve expressions, equations and formulae. In handling data, students collect, process, display data using diagrams, graphs and discuss results using appropriate statistics. In geometry, 2D and 3D shapes are connected to algebra and problem-solving.

Science and Technology

The goal of this course is to turn students into individuals who can question, research, observe and experiment. Scientific inquiry is taught in biology, chemistry and physics throughout the school.

The learning environment is further stimulated through activities based on experiments and termly projects. Cooperative learning allows students to solve problems together, develop critical thinking, exchange feedback and communicate effectively.

A positive attitude towards science and technology is developed through regular experiments and stimulating projects. Examples include: woodworking, building lamps with bio-materials, paper-making, robotics challenges and constructing hydraulic arms. By the end of the Middle School, students are able to communicate scientific concepts, interpret data and be aware of current events in science and technology. Weather permitting, lessons are held outdoors.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Students learn the aspects of ICT in terms of hardware, software, coding, robotics and on-line safety. They master the use of contemporary applications in the field of programming, integrate information into school curricula and thus connect more realistically to their learning experience. Throughout the Middle School, students are provided with tasks that help them develop new knowledge, concepts and skills, which enable them to work at their own pace.

Students are encouraged to use extended search skills to connect with other subjects and share their work through *multimedia* presentations. Networking with other schools on particular projects is encouraged. Students learn to communicate, record their learning and receive feedback by contacting groups and individuals where different cultural traditions and experiences are exchanged.

Humanities

Human achievements in the past reflect our actions in the present, which serve as a lesson for the future. Thus history, geography, art, literature and music provide the main ideas that give coherence to the humanities as an area of study.

History and geography are taught in English and Italian. Religion is not taught explicitly but is referenced in relation to the different beliefs and traditions of the various civilizations and peoples covered in the history programme. The arts, music and drama have strong cross-curricular links. For example, the revolutionary characters of Goya and Picasso are better understood against a historical background. Students are expected to read extensively, research, make multimedia presentations, use the interactive screens, organise debates and write extended essays to demonstrate their learning experience.

Global Studies (Middle School)

Global Studies is linked to all subjects and English language skills. Students read feature articles in newspapers, journals and magazines. They prepare reports, discuss and debate current affairs related to socio-political, economic, ecological, geophysical and environmental issues.

Project Based Learning (PBL)

PBL classes are for international students who follow Italian as a Foreign Language. The course is totally student-centred where each student chooses a topic that links to their studies. In this way, students take ownership of their learning and develop critical thinking skills by analysing and evaluating the results of their research. They learn to collaborate through teamwork, presentations and projects which they share with the school community.

Model United Nations (MUN)

The graduating class participates in the annual **Model United Nations Conferences** held in Boston, NYC or elsewhere. The 6th and 7th grades participate in an annual **Model United Nations** in Rome. Participation is voluntary, subject to invitation by MUN organizations. Delegates address a variety of issues ranging from disarmament and security to international law, health and development. They learn to debate according to parliamentary procedures, write position papers and discover the power and limitations of international negotiations.

Physical Education (PE)

Physical activity plays an integral role in a healthy lifestyle. It builds character, teaches problem-solving skills, promotes the value of teamwork and improves self-esteem. Team sports are taught and inter-school games are held regularly. The sports covered include: soccer, basketball, volleyball, hockey, tennis, tag-rugby and athletics.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is an integral part of the school curriculum. The primary goals are to develop emotional, social, mental and physical wellbeing among the student body and promote confidence in forming positive relationships as well as

respect for the values and beliefs of their peers. Students are encouraged to show initiative, take responsibility, develop resilience and independence.

4. Presentation and Homework

Presentation of work

- Handwritten work should always be neat and have a date and title.
- Work is to be proof-read for spelling, grammar and punctuation before submission.
- Layout: paragraphs and margins need to be clearly defined.
- Use of white-out is prohibited.

Homework

To help students keep a check on what homework has to be done and by when, assignments must be noted by students in their homework diary.

Homework is to be done, preferably, at the same time each day, in a quiet place that is free from distractions e.g. smart phones and smart watches.

It is important to plan ahead to make the best use of time and not leave projects, coursework or homework until the last minute.

Homework Policy

Homework is part of a continuous learning process for the following reasons:

It enables students to:

- Revise and consolidate their learning skills.
- Progress more rapidly in their learning experience.
- Work more independently and consolidate their studies.

It enables the teacher to:

- Monitor students' progress with a view to improving standards.
- Provide students and parents with relevant feedback, using the CIS Diary.
- Suggest strategies for improvement.
- Support those students in need of additional help.

All students are assigned homework appropriate to their age and class level. Reading is a priority and is considered additional to the following homework times.

The time required for homework varies by class as follows:

Kindergarten: 5 minutes of reading practice

Grades 1-2: 15-20 minutes

Grade 3: 20-30 minutes

Grade 4: 30-40 minutes

Grade 5: 45-60 minutes

Grades 6-7: Homework should not exceed 120 minutes

Grade 8: Homework should not exceed 150 minutes.

Parents should:

- Provide a quiet space, free of distractions for homework.
- Communicate with class teacher through the CIS Diary, should any problems arise.
- Ensure that after 40 minutes of studying, the student has a 10-minute break from books and screens.

5. Application, Admissions and Withdrawal Procedures

Enrolment is on a rolling basis. The Admissions Committee decides whether the prospective student can benefit and profit from the curriculum offered at CIS. A complete admission package must include the following:

- application form
- school report card
- teacher recommendation
- personal interview (if possible)

Registration for Kindergarten and Grade 1 begins in October. For grades 2 to 8 preferential enrolment is granted to returning students who register by mid-December, after which, placement will be open to incoming students who are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

Should it be necessary to take your child out before completing the school year, please refer to the **withdrawal procedure** outlined in the Fee Schedule and Financial Regulations document.

6. Daily Time Schedule

School office hours: 8:15 – 16:30.

8:00-8:25	Arrival
8:30	Classes begin - Elementary students report to their class teachers. Middle school students report to the class coordinators.
	Late arrivals must report to the school office.
9:45 - 10:00	Mid-morning break
11:55 - 12:25	Elementary School lunch
12:00 - 12:35	Middle School field break
12:35 - 13:10	Middle School lunch
12:25 - 13:15	Elementary School break
15:15	Elementary School classes end
15:30	Middle School classes end
15:30 - 16:30	After-school activities (Mon.-Thu. October- May)

7. Absences and Tardiness

Punctuality is of utmost importance and must be respected.

Families are expected to take any planned trips during the scheduled vacations on the school calendar. Should a student be absent during term time, please note that homework is not given in advance. No academic materials / tasks are provided to facilitate students who are absent during term time. In the case of middle school students, it is their responsibility to catch up on any missed work.

Late arrivals must report to the school office. **Leaving school before the end of classes is not permitted.** Only under exceptional circumstances will this be allowed and must be pre-authorised by the Head of School. Parents must report to the school office to complete the sign-out register.

8. Safety on the school premises

For safety reasons, on the school grounds motor vehicle drivers must respect the road signs, speed limits, park only in the designated spaces and follow the directions given by the parking supervisor. Precedence must be given to the school buses under all circumstances. Running in the car park, in the vineyards, olive groves and climbing on walls and railings is forbidden.

9. Transportation Policy and School Bus Service

The **bus service** is outsourced and covers the Castelli Romani and the South Rome area. Pick-up points are established as appropriate. Should parents require special arrangements to cover other areas, they need to contact the school office.

Students must be ready **5 minutes** before their scheduled pick-up time. **The driver cannot wait for students who are late.** A parent or guardian must collect the child at the designated drop-off point. It is essential to inform the office of any changes regarding bus transport. For further details refer to the *Fees Schedule and Financial Regulations* form.

10. Supervision

The school is responsible for the safety of the students from the moment the child enters through the school gate outside of the office until the child has been handed over to the parent, guardian or bus driver at the aforementioned gate.

Parents, guardians and bus drivers are responsible for the students' safety when driving or walking on the internal access roads and in the parking lots.

The school waives all responsibility for unattended children once students have been collected by their parents, guardians, or bus drivers at the school gate. They must assume full responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the children.

Drivers are responsible and liable for respecting all the road signs and traffic regulations on the school premises and in the parking lot.

Early morning drop-off. Should a parent need to drop off his/her child at school **between 7:30 and 8:00**, the parent needs to inform the office the day before and is required to take the child to the teacher on duty in the Elementary School. Parents delivering their children **before 8:00** will be charged € 5 per child for every 15 minutes or fraction thereof.

After-school pick-up. Parents who are late for pick-up, are required to inform the office and will incur a supervision fee as specified above.

Should you come to school with your dog, please make sure it stays inside your car.

11. After-school Activities

After-school activities are held at a cost from 15:30 to 16:30, from October through May. Parents are encouraged to sign up no later than the second week of September.

Except for private music lessons, the following activities will take place based on a minimum number of participants:

- Fencing
- Chess Club
- Art Club
- Kung Fu Club
- History and Games Lab
- Homework Hour
- Football Club
- Chinese
- Tennis
- Piano
- Percussion

Parents must come on time to pick-up their children at the end of the activity. Should parents be late for pick-up, they must inform the office and will incur a supervision fee as specified above (point 10).

12. Liaison with Parents and School Reports

We welcome parents to participate actively in our community. A child's education can only be successful if the school's core values of Care, Integrity and Sustainability are shared with the family.

The school encourages any form of communication that strengthens the positive sense of community spirit. **Parents are strongly advised to refrain from using social media** for complaints pertaining to school issues. These should be referred directly to school management.

We welcome parents who wish to participate actively in our community. There are many occasions when parents contribute to our learning by sharing their knowledge. Parents with specific professions, willing to make a class presentation, are invited to contact the class teacher.

Parent Class Representatives (PCRs): Each class teacher appoints **two PCRs**, who meet with the school management team to review and provide constructive support for the school community. Refer to point 20 for a description of the PCR role.

Welcome Morning is held at the beginning of the school year for new students and families. On this day, they have an opportunity to socialise with Castelli families, faculty and CIPA (Castelli International School Parents' Association) representatives.

Elementary and Middle School Open Houses are held in September. This evening allows parents to meet the teachers, PCRs and discuss the programmes.

School Reports: A **Progress Report** is issued in November for Middle School students. **Formal Reports** are issued in February and June, for both Elementary and Middle School students. Should a student have persistent difficulties in any particular area, the parent will be notified.

All students must acquire the CIS **school diary**, which is an essential means of communication between parents and teachers regarding homework, absences and other concerns. Diaries **should not** be used by students to draw or scribble on. If the diary becomes a "scrap" book, it will be confiscated and returned to the parents to be replaced by a new CIS diary.

The School's internal website [MyCastelli](#) is also an important means of communication between the school and parents. It includes the **Student/Parent Handbook** and is the platform required to **book appointments with teachers**.

It also covers recent school events, as well as a regularly updated student photo gallery.

Parents are encouraged to regularly check the [MyCastelli](#) section of the school website. Access to this area is restricted to parents, students and teachers by means of **usernames and passwords** which will be provided by the school office.

13. Code of Conduct

A high standard of self-discipline and behaviour is required from students, who are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and to show courtesy and respect to staff, visitors and one another. Students are expected to obey all members of staff without argument. If they feel that they have been unfairly

treated, then they may appeal respectfully to the teacher concerned or the school management.

- Students must not enter classrooms or laboratories until directed to do so by a teacher.
- Lesson-change bells are a signal to faculty that the lesson is about to conclude. Students should only pack up their books when they are instructed to do so by the teacher.
- Students are forbidden from using the coffee machine.
- Students must not film or record lessons.

Academic Honesty:

During tests, quizzes and exams, students are not allowed to give information to another student or receive information from another student. Copying homework is not acceptable. Academic dishonesty is a serious breach of our Code of Conduct and will result in disciplinary measures.

Students must cite the sources used. If citing directly, the text used must be put in quotations, followed by a footnote indicating the source and the exact location of the passage. Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in serious consequences.

Courtesy Rules:

- The classroom must be left in a neat and orderly fashion.
- Courtesy includes saying “please”, “thank you”, “you’re welcome” “excuse me” and not interrupting when conversations are held.
- Chewing gum is not allowed on school grounds.
- Kindness and respect is expected towards all members of the school community.
- School property must be properly used and preserved

Rewards:

- The school aims to promote high standards of behaviour, self-discipline and learning through positive reinforcement, rewards and consequences.

Dress Code:

The school uniform consists exclusively of school-branded clothes.

- School uniforms must be worn at all times
- Fingernails should be kept clean and short
- No make-up or nail polish is allowed
- Only small stud-type earrings are allowed
- Long hair should be neatly tied
- No exposed midribs
- Caps or hats must not be worn in class
- Jackets, overcoats and uniforms must be clearly labelled with the child’s name.

Mobile Phones and Wait Until 8th

Students are not allowed to bring mobile phones or smart watches to school.

“**Wait Until 8th**” is a school initiative designed to help families navigate the challenges of children and teenagers using smartphones. We understand that many parents feel pressured to buy their children smartphones because their peers have them, leading to fears of social exclusion. This initiative directly addresses that concern. Parents can make a legally non-binding pledge to other parents not to purchase a personal smartphone for their child until 8th grade at the earliest. When a significant number of students in each class participate, the fear of social exclusion is greatly reduced, creating a more balanced environment for everyone.

Conduct:

Aggression and bullying is taken very seriously. Strategies for conflict resolution are taught. If students cannot resolve conflicts on their own, they are encouraged to stay calm and seek help from an adult.

Vulgar and abusive language is strictly forbidden. A student who retaliates physically or through foul language will be disciplined.

Corrective Actions:

When appropriate, students are required to write a reflection sheet on incidents of bad behaviour, including academic malpractice. Corrective actions start with verbal apologies and may also include written apologies. These may have to be viewed by the student’s parents, signed and returned to the school. Persistent misbehaviour is recorded on the student’s *Behaviour Report* form and will result in parents informed and involved in the disciplinary process.

Repeated aggression or extreme behaviour may result in the following consequences:

- i) removal from the group or from school for part or all of the day
- ii) in-school or home suspension
- iii) expulsion.

14. Respect for the Environment

The school is making an effort to reduce single-use plastics, therefore, any snack containers and personal water bottles must be non-plastic or reusable.

Castelli International water bottles are available for purchase in the school office.

- **Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Repurpose and Recycle** resources
- Energy-saving includes closing doors in winter and turning off lights, when not in use.
- Water is scarce! Taps must be closed after use. Any leaks should be reported to the school office.

- **Non-drinking** water signs must be respected. Drinking water is available from the school fountains.
- Please don't litter the school grounds and make sure any rubbish is disposed of in the correct bins.
- Respect the "Private Property" signs.

15. School Trips and Ski-Week

School trips are an important part of the school curriculum and are organised either for academic or sporting purposes.

Throughout the academic year, the school makes local trips to museums, exhibitions and cultural events. 4th to 8th graders have overnight trips of varying durations. The cost of school trips is based on full-class participation. Refunds are not available should the student decide not to participate.

In February, the school closes for **Ski-Week** which is open to students, parents and teachers. This is a traditional educational event, as well as a marvellous opportunity to get families and friends together. After ski lessons, students revise and review their academic work as well as engage in stimulating debates with adults.

16. Health and Emergency Procedures

Parents are kindly requested to comply with the following rules/procedures:

- A sports certificate must be submitted before the beginning of the academic year (*per attività non-agonistica*).
- Parents must inform the school of any allergies or special medical needs and provide the relevant emergency medication/equipment.
- Children **must** stay at home should they have a fever exceeding 37°C.
- If a child appears to be ill, she or he will be taken to the office, where temperature readings and other observations will be recorded. The parent/guardian will be informed of the child's condition.
- Parents or guardians are required to administer any medication prescribed to be taken by the student during school time.
- Students **must not come to school** if they have fever, diarrhea, vomiting or conjunctivitis.
- The school advises that students **be symptom-free for 24 hours** before returning to school.
- Students absent due to illness should either check their email, Google Classroom or contact their peers to obtain academic assignments when they feel better.
- *Emergency Contact Form*: Parents are responsible for updating information on the *Student Emergency Contact Form*, which is kept in the school office. The parent is responsible for keeping the office informed of any

changes (address, telephone, allergies, medical conditions) that have been made.

- In case pediculosis is detected, parents will be informed and requested to take the child out of school until it has been appropriately treated. Parents need to co-operate and follow medical directions so that other students are protected from exposure. *Parents should check their child's hair regularly.*

17. First Aid

Only water and/or ice packs and disinfectant are used for wound care of any kind. The school is not authorised to administer any medicines to a child who is hurt, as this could affect the medication which the doctor might later prescribe.

If a student has a fever or does not feel well, is hurt or has an accident, the office will call the parent or emergency contact. The student will rest in an area where s/he can be observed until the parent/guardian arrives.

In case of a minor incident, an accident report will be filed, and the parent will be notified as soon as possible. In case of an accident requiring medical attention, the school will call the parent or emergency contact for instructions.

18. Adverse weather conditions and natural Events

In the event of **fire, earthquake, evacuation or extreme weather**, each classroom has an evacuation plan visibly displayed. Fire or earthquake drills are held unannounced twice a year.

In the event of **strong winds**, all children will remain in class or, weather permitting, play on the tennis court or sports field. Students are not allowed to walk under pine trees during strong winds or storms.

In the event of **heavy rain and lightning**, children stay in class or under the portico in the Elementary School. In heavy rain, buses will be allowed to drive up to the elementary area to collect the children.

19. Lunches

The lunch menu is displayed on MyCastelli and the school bulletin board. School lunches include a first course, a second course and fruit or dessert. Drinking water is available with lunch. Packed lunches are not allowed.

If the child requires a special diet due to food allergies, the school needs to be notified and a medical certificate specifying the nature of the allergy/ies needs to be presented to the school office.

Should a teacher notice that a child is not eating, the parent will be informed.

Birthday cakes are not allowed. Only individually-portioned treats are permitted. Home-baked treats are not allowed and the school requires the purchase receipt for each treat, together with an ingredient list.

20. Castelli International Parents' Association (CIPA)

CIPA is a parent-run organisation designed to enhance and support the wellbeing of school children and families. All parents are automatically members of CIPA.

The school welcomes and encourages parental involvement and support in CIPA-sponsored events and activities.

CIPA's Mission

- To serve as the official organisation of parents who individually and cooperatively work with faculty and administrators bringing a positive contribution to the school community spirit
- To initiate and execute projects designed to increase parental interest and participation in community activities
- To organise fundraising events for charity and school needs.

General Information

CIPA is run by Parent Class Representatives (PCRs), who are assigned to this post. PCRs are appointed by the class teacher or coordinator at the beginning of the school year. The description for PCRs can be found in section 21.

Parents, who wish to contribute new ideas for community activities or participate in existing ones, should contact the Parent Class Representatives.

Any communication, sent out by CIPA, is submitted to the school management team for approval prior to distribution.

21. The Role of Parent Class Representatives (PCRs)

Parent Class Representatives are appointed by the Grade teacher or coordinator at the beginning of the school year. There should be two Parent Class Representatives per class, preferably one English-speaking and one Italian-speaking.

The PCRs play an important non-administrative, non-didactic role in creating a cohesive school community. They support communication and encourage cooperation between families and school in a positive way and play an active role in organising all CIPA events.

Duties of the Parent Class Representatives

- a. Serve as the liaison between class teachers and parents.

- b. Serve as a liaison amongst parents and help any new parents integrate into the school community.
- c. PCRs are issued a school email account and are advised to ensure that email communications, using the school network, are strictly about school matters.
- d. PCRs are advised to direct any didactical or behavioural parental concerns to the class teacher and/or the school management.
- e. PCRs meet with the school management and the faculty representatives from Middle and Elementary School yearly.
- f. Participate in CIPA meetings and keep parents informed about events and fund-raising.
- g. If the teacher deems it necessary, PCRs may be asked to assist the class teacher with trips or any other extra-curricular educational activities.
- h. PCRs are invited to sample the school lunches and provide feedback.
- i. PCRs can manage parental financial contributions to organise fundraising, social events and arrange small gifts of appreciation for faculty.
- j. PCRs are expected to maintain confidentiality, during and after his/her elected term, concerning any sensitive issues which have become known to him/her.

22. Events and Community Activities

1. Welcome Morning – the day before school begins - September
2. Elementary Open House – September
3. Middle School Open House – September
4. Halloween Party – October
5. Whole School Winter Show – December
6. Music Concerts – March/April
7. Middle School House Events – October/March
8. Elementary Mini World Cup – October
9. STEAM Fair – May / June
10. Fundraising – Autumn/Spring
11. Sports Day – May
12. Music Under the Stars – June
13. Graduation Ceremony – June

For further information please visit our website:
www.castelli-international.it

or contact the school secretary at:
office@castelli-international.it