



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

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Mission Statement

The School's mission is to develop **inquisitive, caring, ethically minded** individuals who will make a positive impact towards creating a sustainable, global society.

1. Description

Castelli International School is an integrated and dynamic community bringing together parents, alumni and pupils from different nationalities, cultural experiences and traditions.

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 a beautiful countryside provide a challenging and stimulating environment for creative minds.

We believe in learning through structured and purposeful inquiry. 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 the School's **sustainability features**, which include recycling, water conservation, energy-saving and waste reduction. Students are encouraged to **respect nature** and participate in its preservation and conservation. At vintage time, students collect grapes and experience the traditional way of making wine. In November, they pick olives and learn how extra virgin olive oil is made.

The students work on their garden plots to promote our **Earth to Table** project, where we eat what we grow and share their seasonal crops at KP (Kids Point) during recess.

2. 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 programs complement each other.

The School is a recognized Cambridge International School offering the Cambridge Checkpoint (in Maths and Science) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) exams.

Students are required to take the English internal exams in all subjects. Students can choose to take the Cambridge Checkpoint and/or IGCSE exams in 8th grade. Students can also opt to take the Italian State exams 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 not fluent in Italian may take Italian as a Foreign Language (IFL) and/or engage in supervised project based learning (PBL) work.

All core subjects are taught in English by experienced graduate faculty, except for language courses that are taught by certified mother tongue language teachers. Italian and French are taught during school hours; Chinese and Spanish are offered 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 (Liceo Classico, Scientifico, Linguistico, Artistico and Professional Institutes).

English

Throughout the Elementary and Middle School, 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 presentations, character analysis, debates and reading logs. Students enrich and expand their vocabulary as well as reinforce grammatical usage by developing their writing

skills through personal narratives and creative, descriptive, informative and persuasive writing.

Mathematics

The general aims of the course are to build understanding and confidence of 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 math strategies, compute with natural numbers, integers and rational numbers, learn how to solve expressions, equations and formulae to represent unknown terms. In *geometry*, 2D and 3D shapes are connected to algebra and problem solving. Pythagoras' and Euclid's theorems, amongst others, are investigated to enhance geometric reasoning. In *handling data*, students collect, process, display data using diagrams, graphs and discuss results using appropriate statistics.

Science and Technology

The goal of this course is to turn students into individuals who can question, research, observe and experiment. Scientific enquiry is taught in Biology, Chemistry and Physics throughout the school.

The learning environment is further stimulated through activities based on experiments and practice. Cooperative learning allows students to solve problems together.

A positive attitude towards science and technology is developed through the use of visual aids such as, documentaries, animations, scientific models, robotics and periodicals. 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, electricity and magnetism. 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. Italian classes cover events and cultural achievements pertinent to Italy. English classes include global studies relating to social studies and the environment. 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 program. The Arts, Music and Drama have strong cross-curricular links. For example, the revolutionary character of Picasso's and Braque's cubism is better understood against a historical background. Students are expected to read extensively, to research, make multimedia presentations, use the interactive whiteboard, organize debates and write essays as well as term papers to demonstrate their learning experience.

Global Studies

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.

The graduating class participates in the annual **Harvard Model United Nations Conference** (HMUN) in Boston and the 6th and 7th grades participate in the annual **Italian Model United Nations (IMUN)**. 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, cricket, rugby and athletics.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE)

PSHE is an integral part of the school curriculum. The primary goals are to develop spiritual, moral, social and physical well-being among the student body which, promotes confidence in forming positive social relationships and respect in the values and beliefs of their peers. Students are encouraged to show initiative, take responsibility and develop independence.

3. Presentation and homework

Presentation of work:

- Handwritten work should always 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

The homework diary is a guide to help students keep a check on what has to be done and and by when it must be completed.

Homework is to be done, preferably, at the same time each day, in a quiet place that is free from distractions.

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 as an addition to the following homework times.

The time required for homework varies by class as follows:

Grades	1-2:	15-20 minutes
Grade	3:	20-30minutes
Grade	4:	30-40minutes
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 CIS Diary, should any problems arise.
- Ensure that after 40 minutes of studying, the student has a 10 minute break.

4. Admissions, Enrolment and Placement 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 admissions package must include the following:

- application forms
- school transcripts
- teacher recommendation
- personal interview (if possible)

Registration for class 1 begins in December. Preferential enrolment is granted to returning students who register by mid-January at the latest, after which, placement will be open to incoming students who are encouraged to apply as soon 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 Schedule of Fees and Financial Regulations document.

5. Daily Time Schedule

School office hours: 8:30 – 16:30.

To avoid keeping teachers from their class time, parents are kindly asked to make appointments through the school secretary.

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 recess
12:00- 12:30	Elementary School lunch/Middle School recess
12:30- 13:00	Middle school lunch/ Elementary School recess
15:15	Elementary School classes end
15:30	Middle School classes end
15:30- 16:30	Homework hour and extra-curricular activities

6. Transportation Policy

To alleviate daily traffic jams in the car park, please use the bypass when exiting and please respect the displayed signs and the directions given by the Parking Supervisor. **Parents must give precedence to the school buses under all circumstances.**

Should parents need to stay on at school, they are kindly requested **NOT to block** the entrance or the exit of the car park, **nor to exit** the parking lot between 8:20 and 8:35.

Bus service is outsourced and covers Castelli Romani and South Rome area. Pick-up points may be 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 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 and Financial Regulations* form.

7. Supervision

The school is responsible for the safety of the students on school premises from **8:00 until 15:30**, when children are collected by parents or taken to the buses.

The school waives all responsibility for unattended children before 8:00 and after 15:30. Under no circumstances must a child be left unsupervised on the school grounds.

A.M. - Should a parent need to drop off his/her child at school **before 8:00** and cannot remain, the parent is required to take the child to the teacher on duty in the elementary section and sign the *Supervision Register*. Parents delivering their children **before 8:00** will be charged 5.00 Euros for every 15 minutes or fraction thereof.

P.M.- Unless the child has extra-curricular activities, parents **must** supervise their children on school premises after **15:30**. Parents who are late for pick-up, are required to inform the office and will incur a supervision fee as specified above.

Early dismissal: if a child is to be dismissed earlier, the parent or guardian is obliged to fill out the *Early Dismissal Register* in the school office.

8. Extra-Curricular Activities

After school activities are held at cost from 15:30 to 16:30, from October through May. Parents are encouraged to sign up during Coffee Morning or no later than the third week of September.

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

- Arts & Crafts
- Chess Club
- Chinese
- Yoga
- Spanish
- Chorus
- Percussion
- Computer

- Photography
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Private lessons (piano, recorder, guitar, violin, drums)

Parents who are late for pick-up, must inform the office and will incur a supervision fee as specified above (point 7).

9. Liaison with Parents and School reports

The school welcomes any form of communication that strengthens the positive sense of community spirit. A child's education can only be successful if values taught at the school are shared with the family.

However, parents are strongly advised to refrain from using social media to comment and discuss 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 where parents contribute to our learning by sharing their knowledge. Parents with specific professions (dentistry, medicine, health, environment, etc.) willing to make a class presentation are encouraged to contact the class teacher.

Parent Class Representatives (PCRs): each class teacher appoints **two PCRs**, who meet with the head of school twice a year to discuss any problems, queries or ways to provide positive support for the school community. Refer to point 19 for a description of the PCR role.

Coffee Morning is held at the beginning of the school year. On this day, parents have an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones, socialise with the faculty and CIPA representatives and sign up for extra-curricular activities.

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

School Reports: a **Progress Report** is issued in November. **Formal Reports** are issued in February and June. Should a student have persistent difficulties in any particular area, the parent will be notified by the teacher.

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 my.castelli is also an important means of communication between the School and parents. It covers events, new releases regarding the **Student/Parent Handbook**, calendar changes, upcoming **Parent/Teacher meetings** held in the Autumn and Spring terms, student exhibitions, as well as important announcements in case of **emergencies and extreme weather conditions**.

Parents are encouraged to regularly check the Castelli Community area of the site (<http://my.castelli-international.it>), where it is possible to sign up for email alerts. Access to this area is restricted to parents, students and teachers by means of **usernames and passwords**. Please contact website@castelli-international.it, to get yours.

10. Kid’s Point (KP)

KP is a meeting point for students open from 8:30 to 16:30. Students can buy healthy snacks here during morning recess.

11. 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 to 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 staff, do not pack-up your books until the lesson is concluded by your teacher.

Academic Honesty:

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

When writing essays and research papers or any other written assignment, 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.
- Changes in the student’s routine (parties, stay overs, etc.) must be communicated in advance to the school secretary and bus driver when applicable.
- Party invitations can be distributed at school only if the whole class is invited, otherwise the invitations need to be made privately, outside of school.

Rewards:

The school aims to promote high standards of behaviour, self-discipline and learning through positive encouragement and reward.

Dress Code:

- School uniforms must be worn at all times
- Fingernails should be kept clean and short
- Nail varnish and make-up is not allowed
- Only small stud type earrings are allowed
- Hair should be well-groomed and neatly tied, if long
- No exposed midriffs
- Torn, cut-off jeans are not allowed
- Caps or hats must not be worn in class
- Jackets, overcoats and uniforms must be clearly labelled with child’s name

Students who persistently avoid the dress-code rules will face consequences.

Cell Phones:

Students bring their cell phones to school at their own risk. During school, all cell phones must be turned OFF and either kept in their bags or in the school lockers. All communication should be done through the office, preferably during recess.

Conduct:

Aggression and bullying is taken very seriously. Principles of 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. However, a student who continues to retaliate 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 behaviour starts with verbal apologies and may also include written apologies. These may have to be viewed by the student's parent, signed and returned to school. Some examples of corrective behaviour are silent lunch, at which time one thinks about the infraction, an assigned seat in class, work tasks to help others and community service. Persistent misbehaviour is recorded on the student's *Behaviour Report* form and parents are informed after the first entry.

In case of repeated aggression or extreme behaviour: i) removal from the group or from school for part or all of the day ii) in-school or home suspension iii) expulsion may result.

12. Respect for the environment

- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover** resources.
- Energy saving includes closing doors in winter and turning off lights when not in use.
- Water is scarce! Faucets must be closed after use. Any leaks should be reported to the school office
- **Non potable** water signs must be respected. Drinking water is available from the school fountains.
- Running on driveways, in vineyards and climbing on walls is forbidden.
- School grounds must be kept clean by picking up rubbish.

13. School Trips and Ski Week

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

Throughout the academic year, the school makes local trips to museums, expositions and cultural events. 5th to 8th graders have overnight trips of varying durations. Students not participating are expected to attend school and will be given assigned work.

In February, the school closes for **Ski Week** which is open to students, parents and teachers. This is a traditional school educational event, as well as a marvellous opportunity to get families and friends together to reinforce relations in a relaxing environment. At the same time, students will revise and review their academic work after the ski lessons and engage in challenging debates with adults.

14. Health and Emergency Procedures

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

- Every child must bring updated health forms and compulsory vaccination certificates to school before the academic year starts.
- If a child appears to be ill, s/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.
- A doctor's certificate is required for absences exceeding 5 days stating that the child can return to school.
- Parent or guardians are required to administer any medication prescribed to be taken by the student during school time.
- The school advises that students are free from fever symptoms 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.
- *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) to be made on the form.
- 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.*

15. First Aid

Only water and/or ice packs and disinfectant are used for wound care of any kind. The school is not authorized to administer any aspirin or food 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 directions.

16. Safety

In the event of **fire, earthquake, evacuation, weather and on site risk procedure**, each classroom has an evacuation plan visibly displayed. Fire or earthquake drills are usually held unannounced once a term.

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 section. In heavy rain, buses will be allowed to drive up to the elementary area to pick-up the children.

17. Lunches

A weekly lunch menu is displayed on *my.castelli* and on the School Bulletin board outside the office. School lunches include a first course and second course and a fruit or dessert. Drinking water is served with lunch. Pack 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, in order to prepare her/his menu accordingly. Should a teacher notice that a child is not eating, the parent will be informed.

Birthday cakes are allowed only if accompanied by a receipt from the seller. In order to avoid the time consuming practice of cutting up and distributing portions, parents are kindly requested to provide individual portions of cupcakes, muffins, etc.. Soft, fizzy drinks are not allowed.

18. Castelli International Parents' Association (CIPA)

CIPA is a parent run organization designed to enhance and support the well-being 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 organization 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 organize fund raising events to raise money for charity and school needs.

General Information

CIPA is run by Parent Class Representatives, who are assigned to this post. Classroom representatives are appointed by the class teacher/coordinator at the beginning of the school year. A copy of the volunteer description for classroom representatives can be found in section 19.

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

Any communication sent out by CIPA is submitted to the Head of School for approval prior to distribution.

19. The Role of Parent Class Representatives (PCRs)

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

The PCRs play an important non-administrative, non-didactic role in creating a cohesive school community. They support communication and encourage co-operation between families and school in a positive way and play an active role in organizing 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 and/or international 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. Meet with the school management and the faculty representatives from Middle and Elementary School twice a year.
- f. Participate in CIPA meetings and keep parents informed on events and fund-raising.
- g. Help organize refreshments for *Coffee Morning*. This is a good occasion to meet and assist new families.
- h. **If** the teacher deems it necessary, PCRs may be asked to assist the class teacher with trips or any other “extra-curricular” educational activities.
- i. PCRs are invited to sample the school lunches and give input.
- j. PCRs can manage parental financial contributions to organize fundraising, social events and arrange small gifts of appreciation for faculty.
- k. PCRs are expected to maintain confidentiality, during and after his/her elected term, concerning any sensitive issues which have become known to him/her.

20. Community Activities

1. Coffee Morning – day before school begins - September
2. Elementary Open House – September
3. Middle School Open House – September
4. Middle School Christmas Performance/Pot Luck Supper – December
5. Middle School Art Show – March
6. Middle School performance - March/April
7. Trip Week – April/May
8. School Science and Humanities fairs – May/June
9. Fundraising – Spring
10. Sports Day– May
11. Music Under the Stars - International pot luck dinner and dance – June
12. Graduation Ceremony – June

For further information please log onto the website www.castelli-international.it
or contact the School secretary at: office@castelli-international.it