



# STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Mission Statement and Description	2
2.	Overview of the School curriculum	3
3.	Presentation and Homework	6
4.	Admissions, Enrolment and Placement Procedures	7
5.	Daily Time Schedule	8
6.	Absences and Tardiness	8
7.	Transportation Policy	8
8.	Supervision	9
9.	Extra-Curricular Activities	9
10.	Liaison with Parents and School Reports	10
11.	Kid's Point	11
12.	Code of Conduct	11
13.	Respect for the Environment	13
14.	School Trips and Ski Week	13
15.	Health and Emergency Procedures	14
16.	First Aid	14
17.	Safety	15
18.	Lunches	15
19.	Castelli International Parents Association (CIPA)	15
20.	Role of Parent Class Representatives	16
21.	Community Activities	17

# Mission Statement

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

## 1. Description

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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, using music, sports, art and drama to enhance 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 the School's **sustainability features**, which include recycling, water conservation, energy-saving, waste reduction and working towards becoming a **plastic-free** school.

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 seasonal crops at KP (Kids' Point) during recess.

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## 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, with English being the core language.

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 English internal exams in all subjects. Students can choose to take the Cambridge Checkpoint and/or IGCSE exams in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and 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, who are 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. Other languages are offered upon request as extracurricular activities. French is compulsory from 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Latin is taught in 8<sup>th</sup> 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. 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. As students progress into Middle School, Pythagoras' and Euclid's theorems are investigated to enhance reasoning.

### **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. 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 characters of Goya and Picasso are 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 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 students who do not take the Italian State Exams. The course is totally student centred where they choose from a wide range of topics that link to their studies, take ownership of their learning and develop critical thinking skills through analysis and evaluation 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 **Harvard Model United Nations Conference (HMUN)** in Boston and the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

### *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)*

SPHE 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

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### *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 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

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

**Registration** for Grade 1 begins in October. Preferential enrolment is granted to returning students who register by mid-December 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 Fee Schedule and Financial Regulations document.

## 5. Daily Time Schedule

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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	<b>Classes begin</b> - Elementary students report to their class teachers. Middle school students report to the class coordinators. <b>Late arrivals</b> 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
12:30 – 13:15	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. Absences and Tardiness

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Families are requested to take any planned trips during the scheduled vacations on the school calendar. In the event that a student will be absent during term time, please note that homework is not given in advance. It is the students' own responsibility to catch up on any missed work upon their return to school.

Late arrivals must report to the school office. Should your child need to leave school before the end of the day, you must report to the school office to complete the sign-out register.

## 7. Transportation Policy

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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 8:15 and 8:30.

**Bus service** is outsourced and covers Castelli Romani and the 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 Schedule and Financial Regulations* form.

## 8. Supervision

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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 department. 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.

## 9. After-school Activities

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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
- Choir
- Drama
- Homework Hour
- Swimming
- Spanish
- Soccer

- Tennis
- Yoga
- Private lessons (piano, recorder, guitar, violin, percussion)

Parents who are late for pick-up, must inform the office and will incur a supervision fee as specified above (point 8).

## 10. Liaison with Parents and School reports

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

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 invited 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 20 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 (Castelli International School Parents' Association) representatives and sign up for after-school 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 and news 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, unforeseen school closures and extreme weather conditions**.

Parents are encouraged to regularly check the Castelli Community area of the site (<http://my.castelli-international.it>). 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.

## 11. Kids’ Point (KP)

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

## 12. Code of Conduct

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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.

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 students’ routine (parties, sleepovers, 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
- Jeans, trousers or skirts need to be blue, gray or black
- 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 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. 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 a 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.

## **13. Respect for the Environment**

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The school is making an effort to **reduce single use plastics**, therefore, any snack containers and personal water bottles should be **non-plastic or reusable**. Castelli International water bottles are available for purchase in the school office.

- **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.
- Please don't litter the school grounds and make sure any rubbish is disposed of in the correct bins.

## **14. School Trips and Ski Week**

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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. 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> graders have overnight trips of varying durations. Students not participating are expected to attend school and will be given assigned work. 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.

## 15. Health and Emergency Procedures

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

- Health forms and compulsory vaccination certificates must be submitted before the beginning of the academic year.
- **Children must stay at home should they have a fever exceeding 37.5°C**
- 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.
- Parent or guardians are required to administer any medication prescribed to be taken by the student during school time.
- 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.
- *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 cooperate and follow medical directions so that other students are protected from exposure. *Parents should check their child's hair regularly.*

**COVID-19:** Health and safety procedures will be announced at the beginning of the school year and will be posted on the my.castelli internal website.

## 16. First Aid

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

## 17. Safety

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In the event of **fire, earthquake, evacuation or extreme weather**, 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 department. In heavy rain, buses will be allowed to drive up to the elementary area to collect the children.

## 18. Lunches

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A weekly lunch menu is displayed on *my.castelli* and on the school bulletin board outside the office. School lunches include a first course, 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.

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.

## 19. Castelli International Parents' Association (CIPA)

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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 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. A copy of the volunteer description for PCRs can be found in section 20.

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 Head of School for approval prior to distribution.

## 20. The Role of Parent Class Representatives (PCRs)

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Parent Class Representatives are appointed by the class 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.

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. PCRs 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 provide feedback.
- 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.

## **21. Community Activities**

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1. Coffee Morning – day before school begins - September
  2. Elementary Open House – September
  3. Middle School Open House – September
  4. Whole School Christmas Performance/Pot Luck Supper – December
  5. Middle School Art Show – Spring term
  6. Middle School performance - March/April
  7. Trip Week – April/May
  8. Science and Humanities fair – 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
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For further information please log onto the website [www.castelli-international.it](http://www.castelli-international.it)  
or contact the School secretary at: [office@castelli-international.it](mailto:office@castelli-international.it)