



THE NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

School Year 2010 – 2011

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Fact Sheet

North American International School

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Organization: NAIS has 2 directors, a parent-based school board, and a parent-teacher organization.

Grades: NAIS currently offers Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. For the 2009-2010 school year it will offer Grade 9 and will add a grade each year until it reaches Grade 12.

Curriculum: NAIS follows the North Carolina public school curriculum. Instruction is in English. In addition to the core subjects, art, music, physical education, foreign language (Spanish and French), and character education are taught in all elementary and middle school grades including Kindergarten.. Extra-curricular activities are available such as ballet, drama, karate, tennis, scuba diving and swimming. The high school offers both an American and British curriculum.

School Calendar and Hours: NAIS runs on the northern-hemisphere school calendar, from mid-August to mid-December and from mid-January to end of May. School hours are from 8:30A to 2:55P for Grades 1-8; from 8:30A to 2:00P for Kindergarten; and 8:30A to 12:30P for Pre-Kindergarten.

Enrollment: Enrollment is approximately 120 students per year. There are regularly 25-30 other nationalities besides U.S. citizens.

Facilities: NAIS is located in Waterkloof Glen, a residential area of Pretoria in which many diplomats live. It consists of four modern building joined by colonnades, plus a separate building / former house. A mountain field center 1+ hour from Pretoria is also available to the school.

Finances: NAIS is a non-profit organization. One hundred percent of the school's income is derived from tuition and other fees. Consult website or business office for current-year fees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction.....	1
a) Purpose of the Handbook.....	1
b) School Organization.....	1
c) Mission Statement.....	1
d) Beliefs.....	1
2. Parental Involvement.....	2
a) How Parents Can Contribute at School.....	2
b) How Parents Can Contribute at Home.....	2
3. School Program.....	3
a) Academic Program at NAIS.....	3
b) NAIS Curriculum.....	3
c) Basic Educational Policy and Standards.....	4
d) Daily Schedule.....	4
e) Lunch.....	5
4. Student Expectations.....	5
a) Attendance.....	5
b) Conduct Expectations.....	6
c) Playground Rules.....	6
d) Lunchroom Procedures.....	6
e) Discipline.....	6
f) Homework.....	7
5. School Reports and Grades.....	9
a) Grading Periods.....	9
b) Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	9
c) Grades.....	9
d) Honor Roll.....	10
e) How Can I Tell How My Child Is Doing In School?.....	10
f) Standardized Testing.....	11
6. Health Issues.....	11
a) Student Medical Profiles.....	11
b) Procedure for Medical Emergencies.....	12
c) Administering Medication.....	12
d) Sick at School (or at Home).....	12
e) HIV Prevention.....	12
f) Other.....	13
7. Security and Safety.....	13
a) School Security.....	13
b) Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child.....	13
c) Disasters and Other Emergencies.....	13
8. Transportation Guidelines.....	13
a) Bus Policy.....	14
b) Bus Rules for Students.....	14
c) Private Transportation.....	15

9. Uniforms and School Supplies	15
a) Uniform Policy	15
b) School Supplies	16
c) Other	16
10. Enrollment Procedure.....	17
a) Step 1 – Documents.....	17
b) Step 2 – Discussion of Financial Arrangements	17
c) Later Steps – Vision and Hearing Tests	17
d) Explanation of Fees	17
e) Payment Conditions	18
f) Refunds	18
11. Organizations at NAIS.....	19
a) NAIS School Board	19
b) NAIS Parent-Teacher Organization	20
c) Student Council.....	20
12. Extracurricular Activities	21
a) School-Sponsored.....	21
b) Parent-Sponsored.....	21
13. Birthdays	22
14. Whom to contact at NAIS	22
15. Conclusion	22

1. Introduction

a) Purpose of the Handbook

This Handbook has been prepared to acquaint parents and students with the purposes, operations, and policies of the North American International School.

While it is not possible to detail every aspect of the school's operation in this booklet, every effort has been made to provide information that will be helpful to you. As changes and additions become necessary, they will be incorporated into subsequent versions. Moreover, notes will be sent home with students when particular information needs to be conveyed.

The policies and procedures found here are not meant to be a hindrance to your family, but rather are intended to make NAIS a special place for your child.

We welcome your feedback. Please feel free to contact us with your questions and comments.

b) School Organization

The North American International School is a private, non-profit school offering an English-language, U.S. curriculum. It was established in August 2001 with the goal of meeting the educational needs of expatriate children living in Pretoria. By South African law, the school can only admit children from the diplomatic community at the moment.

NAIS has two directors, a parent-based school board, and a very active parent-teacher organization

The constitution of the school as a non-profit organization under South African law provides for an annual independent audit of its finances.

c) Mission Statement

Our goal at the North American International School is to participate with parents in helping children to develop:

- by providing education which is outstanding in quality, using a primarily North American curriculum,
- by being sensitive to the educational needs of an international and culturally diverse body of children,
- by keeping families both informed and involved at all times, and
- by proactively fostering ethical, responsible, and caring behavior in individuals within our school community.

d) Beliefs

NAIS is all about children – joining with parents and the community to help individual children grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially.

NAIS believes in community. Children are nurtured within a community not within a set of buildings. We seek to establish a school community which is itself a part of the family and international communities in Pretoria.

NAIS believes in a learning culture. We seek to set an example in personal growth for your

children which will be a continuing part of their lives once they leave South Africa.

NAIS believes in partnership. We believe that we are accountable first to your child, but this is expressed by our accountability to you, the parent or guardian. We pledge to keep you informed, to respond to your concerns, to be available and to be open. We pledge to work with you. If we don't do this, call us on it.

NAIS believes in a school culture of joy as we respect the dignity of all. We believe in imagination, inventiveness, flexibility. We believe in excellence in all our involvements with your child and with you.

2. Parental Involvement

Families are a valuable part of our school. A parent is a child's first and most important teacher, and NAIS shares your goals of helping your child grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. Greater family involvement in children's learning is crucial to student achievement in school and in life. As a partner in education, you are welcome in our school. You can support our joint goals by getting involved in school activities and/or by what you do at home.

a) How Parents Can Contribute at School

At school, you can get involved in the following ways:

- getting involved in the Parent-Teacher Organization (see Section 12);
- serving on the School Board (see Section 12);
- attending parent-teacher conferences;
- attending school functions (e.g., open houses, meetings, and events);
- maintaining close and open communication with school personnel about your questions and concerns;
- volunteering in your child's classroom, in the school, or in extra-curricular activities in co-ordination with the proper contact person;
- becoming a room mother or father;
- letting your child's teacher or the principal know of your interests and skills – whether it's accompanying a class on a field trip, sharing your professional skills or hobbies, helping in the classroom with a special project, working with an individual child or a small group of children, etc. Remember that, as a school family, we rely on one another's talents and gifts;
- joining your child for lunch by simply phoning the day before;
- scheduling a classroom visit with your child's teacher.

b) How Parents Can Contribute at Home

Even if you cannot volunteer to do work at the school, you can support your child's success when you are at home by:

- showing you are interested in what he/she is doing in school;
- talking and listening to your child every day;
- reading and talking about information sent home from school;
- reinforcing learning in everyday life;
- being a good example yourself that learning is a lifelong process;
- encouraging good habits and skills, and others;
- assisting with and monitoring homework assignments as appropriate (Section 11);
- providing encouragement and praise;

- setting a good schedule at home (especially for homework and bedtime);
- ensuring that your child attends school regularly;
- encouraging your child to talk to teachers when he/she has trouble understanding;
- teaching your child to set goals;
- helping your child develop self-confidence and self-discipline;
- recognizing your child's special gifts;
- teaching your child proper conduct and respect for others.

Note: A wealth of information is available from websites dedicated to the subject of family involvement in education. One website you are sure to find useful is the U.S. Department of Education's <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/pfie.html>, which has downloadable publications on this subject.

3. School Program

a) Academic Program at NAIS

In the current school year, NAIS is offering Grades K-8, plus Pre-Kindergarten. With the addition of grades each year, NAIS will eventually become a K-12 school. Grade 9 will be added in August, 2009.

NAIS endeavors to provide the students with skills, knowledge, and experiences that will enable them to be successful in an international environment. We are committed to providing education which is outstanding in quality.

The academic program is based upon the students' mastery of specific units and skills. These skills are clearly defined in all subject areas and at all instructional levels. Learning outcomes are also clearly defined. Teachers prepare annual plans based on the North Carolina public-schools curriculum. Students receive report cards every 6 weeks and parents have the opportunity for conferences with the teachers (Section 5). Teachers have performance standards and receive formal performance appraisals.

b) NAIS Curriculum

The base curriculum is that of the state of North Carolina in the United States. Instruction is in English. Subjects for elementary school are: Arts, Computer Technology, English Language Arts, Guidance, Healthful Living, Information Skills, Mathematics, Second Language, Science, and Social Studies. The entire curriculum can be found on-line at www.NCPublicSchools.org/curriculum.

The curriculum is expanded in subjects such as history and geography to include cultural aspects of other countries according to the backgrounds of the children in a particular class. International skills and themes are incorporated into the curriculum.

Music, art, sports, and foreign languages are important parts of the school's life and are integrated into the curriculum. Extra subjects such as ballet, karate, swimming, tennis, scuba diving, etc. are offered as possible. Student organizations such as the Student Council and the Girl Scouts provide other extra-curricular activities (Section 11).

NAIS seeks to join the best of the past with the educational expectations of the 21st century. That means concentrating on basics such as reading, math, and science – while at the same time adding information technology and using it to advance the learning process.

NAIS works to meet the needs of all students. English as a Second Language and Special Education services are addressed as needed according to resource available within the school.

The NAIS curriculum also includes Character Education which consists of teaching such traits as: courage and perseverance, good judgment, integrity, kindness, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline. The traits are featured as monthly themes and are supported by an array of activities.

c) Basic Educational Policy and Standards

NAIS follows the state of North Carolina public school curriculum. To the extent practicable, NAIS also follows the North Carolina educational policy and standards that were developed to properly implement that curriculum.

The following NC educational policies and standards are adopted by NAIS:

- Minimum Instruction Days: 180 days.
- Instructional Time: 1000 hours minimum per year, corresponding to approximately 5½ hours per day,. Instructional time is defined as the teaching of coursework that is geared toward meeting the curriculum objectives.
- Course Time: 50 minutes per class session; for “full course” sessions. Because NAIS' class size is significantly smaller than North Carolina's, this minimum can be adjusted as appropriate.
- Course Units per Year: 150 hours minimum per year. The duration of the class sessions will ensure that this requirement is met. The same flexibility as above also applies.
- Teacher Time at School: includes not only instructional time, but also availability before and after school, and professional development days. Teachers are at school for a minimum of 7½ hrs per day. They are present ½ hr before and ½ hr after school hours to prepare coursework and to be available for students and/or parents.

In addition, goals from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are incorporated as part of the definition of a teacher's role at NAIS.

d) Daily Schedule

The following school hours are observed:

Grade	School Hours
Pre-Kindergarten	8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Kindergarten	8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m
Grades 1-12	8:30 a.m. to 2:55 p.m

Each classroom teacher develops the schedule that suits the needs of the class and developmental needs of the children. The schedules vary from grade to grade. Please contact your child's teacher for a schedule.

e) Lunch

Lunch is included in the tuition fee, except for Pre-Kindergarten children. Healthy and kid-friendly foods are the focus during lunchtime and on any day a child may choose a sandwich over the hot meal. Menus are sent home weekly to allow you and your child to make your selections. Fresh fruit and vegetables are available on the lunch tables for children to help themselves. Parents are welcome to join their children for lunch but they must phone ahead of time.

Snacks are not provided at school, except for Pre-K children who will be given a half-sandwich, fruit, and milk at mid-morning. Kindergarten children may need a morning snack. For those children, please send a healthy snack (i.e., no sweets) every day.

4. Student Expectations

a) Attendance

Regular attendance is the joint concern of pupils, parents and school personnel, all of whom should strive to cooperate with school requirements and regulations. It is expected that children enrolled in school shall attend all the time it is in session. NAIS will contact you if your child's attendance becomes a matter of concern.

Excused absences. Illness, dental and medical appointments that cannot be scheduled other than during school time, and absences for religious observances will be considered excused absences if a note is sent to the school office

Other absences for personal reasons, for example to extend holiday, long weekend, etc. are normally seen as unexcused absences. A maximum of two such days per year will be excused. Special circumstances should be discussed with the principal.

Late arrival or early departure. Parents should ensure the student's prompt arrival at school, as tardiness is a serious matter. If a child arrives after the 8:30 a.m. start time, please accompany him or her to the classroom. If a child needs to leave early, please send a note to the school office ahead of time. Children will only be released to a parent or identified person.

Long illness. In the event of a long illness, please discuss the possibility of at-home work with your child's teacher in order to minimize disruption to the learning progress.

Long absence. A long absence during the school year for vacation or home leave can have negative consequences on your child's learning. Since having to prepare home study work for a student can place an undue burden on the teacher, absences for reasons other than illness are discouraged. If a child must be away for more than a couple of days, please discuss this with the principal. See the comment on Excused Absences, above.

Possible consequences. Please bear in mind that a grade of Incomplete in one or more classes may be given if a child misses more than 21 school days or class periods. Exceptions can be made for long illnesses when work is being done at home at the discretion of the principal after consultation with teachers.

b) Conduct Expectations

It is expected that students will commit themselves to achieving these standards of conduct:

- To respect the dignity, rights, and property of others.
- To respect the authority of faculty and staff.
- To co-operate with fellow students and with the faculty and staff.
- To follow the school and class rules.
- To come to class with materials, supplies and completed homework.
- To give each task their best effort at all times and to ensure that any work submitted is their own.
- To play fairly in any athletic endeavor.
- To represent themselves and their school in a dignified manner.
- To be willing to take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences which arise from them.

Student discipline relies on the cooperative effort of students, staff and parents. Rules established for classroom behavior will be discussed with students and the consequences for inappropriate behavior reviewed at the beginning of each school year.

c) Playground Rules

1. No playing until recess or the end of the eating period is announced.
2. No fighting or roughhousing.
3. No throwing rocks, dirt, etc.
4. Use equipment as it was intended to be used and return it to its proper place promptly at the end of the play period.
5. Share and take turns.
6. Obey the adult in charge.

d) Lunchroom Procedures

In order to have a more enjoyable lunch period, a few simple procedures are to be followed:

1. Students should get their lunches at the appropriate time.
2. Good manners are in order in the lunchroom.
3. Students should speak quietly and refrain from throwing food or making rude noises.
4. Running is not permitted in the lunchroom.
5. The lunchroom should be kept neat and clean. Each child should clear his/her area after eating, placing tableware in the containers provided and waste in the waste container.
6. All food and drink is to remain in the lunchroom.
7. Once students have left the lunchroom for recess, they may not return to the building during the lunch period except to go to the bathroom.

e) Discipline

The rules regarding conduct at NAIS can be grouped under the banner of good manners. By behaving with good manners, students are free to explore the learning opportunities available to them. Everyone is here to learn.

In the event of misconduct, the following approach will be used in order of seriousness:

1. an explanation of the unacceptable behavior with a warning – responsibility of teacher

2. a time-out – responsibility of teacher
3. loss of recess privilege for an appropriate number of days – responsibility of teacher
4. conference with the principal
5. conference with the parents
6. possible suspension
7. possible expulsion

f) Homework

Homework is a meaningful after-school activity which reinforces and supports students in their efforts to achieve academic standards successfully. Homework is an integral part of an effective, well-planned instructional program. Homework relates directly to classroom work, it is not punitive, nor is it intended to place an undue burden on students and families. We ask that you convey to your children the clear message that their schoolwork is important.

Objectives of Homework

- To reinforce learning through the practice, application, integration, and extension of knowledge and skills.
- To encourage independent learning by developing study and research skills, work habits, and a sense of personal responsibility.
- To stimulate originality and creativity.
- To enhance academic skills taught in school and help students become life-long learners.
- To prepare for classroom participation.
- To transfer school experiences to leisure and career interests.
- To enhance home-school communication.

Responsibilities

Teachers, students, and (when appropriate) parents all share responsibility for ensuring the success of homework.

- The teacher has the responsibility to communicate and explain expectations for homework to students and parents, and to monitor homework. Teachers:
 - communicate to parents that they should expect their children to have regular homework assignments and to complete them promptly
 - assign homework in a timely manner to allow for student questions and planning
 - evaluate assignments promptly
 - inform students of results
 - notify parents when students are not meeting requirements.
- The student is responsible for the completion of homework when appropriate according to the age of the student. To successfully complete assignments, the student is expected to listen carefully to all directions in class and ask questions if the assignment is not clear, and to gather needed materials.
- The parent is responsible for monitoring the completion of homework. This includes assisting the student to plan and schedule time, establishing an appropriate

environment, participating in assignments which call for parent involvement, and maintaining communication with the teacher. The guidelines below should be helpful.

General Homework Tips For Parents

Helping your child develop a regular study habit will lead to success in school and will help him/her develop self-confidence as well as self-discipline.

Keep in mind that some work may be sent home when it is not completed in school. This is not considered "homework assigned" as the majority of the class has finished at school. If your child continually brings home work he/she should have completed at school, discuss the situation with the teacher.

In addition to homework, it is advisable to get your child in the habit of reading. Research shows that kids who spend a little time each day reading books, magazines, and newspapers are more likely to become good readers. They are more likely to read faster, score higher, and do better in high school and college.

Here is a homework checklist for parents (mostly from *familyeducation.com*):

- ❑ Provide a quiet, well-lit space, away from TV or other distractions and with all the right study materials -- paper, pens and pencils, books, a dictionary, a desk, etc. Encourage the use of a desk or table rather than a bed or easy chair.
- ❑ Agree with your child on a regular schedule, allowing for adequate study and free time.
- ❑ Encourage your child to divide the homework assignment into "what I can do myself" and "what I need help with." You should help only with clarifying assignments and with that part of the homework your child cannot do independently. This builds responsibility and independence.
- ❑ Be supportive but avoid doing the homework for your child. If your child can't get started, talk through the assignments with him or her. Be available to answer questions. Try doing a problem or two together, then watch as the child tries the next one. Avoid simply giving an answer; instead, ask questions that let your child see the problem in smaller, sequential steps.
- ❑ Review completed and graded assignments if appropriate. Discuss errors to be sure your child understands the material. Parents of older children often give full responsibility for homework to the students.
- ❑ Share any concerns with your child's teachers about the amount or type of homework assigned. Be sure to let them know if the child is having difficulty or is unable to do most of it by himself.

Note: There are dozens of other websites that provide guidelines for parents on homework. Two very useful ones to consult are:

- ❑ <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Homework/index.html>, which contains a comprehensive U.S. Department of Education booklet titled "Helping Your Child With Homework", for parents of elementary and junior high school children. This book is in the public domain and may be reproduced for educational purposes.
- ❑ <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/parents/homework/>, relating to the new U.S.A. national educational standards.

5. School Reports and Grades

a) Grading Periods

Written reports are provided every 6 weeks. The school year has 180 days; the school week has 5 days. Thus, each 6-week grading period has 30 school days, and there are six such periods in the school year.

b) Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences take place at scheduled times during the year, on days when students attend for half days. Please refer to the school calendar for specific dates (See Appendix). Moreover, since teachers are on duty half an hour before classes and half an hour after, you may arrange additional conferences with your child's teacher at these times.

How do I get the most out of parent-teacher conferences?

- Be prepared to listen as well as to talk. It helps to write out questions before you leave home. Also jot down what you want to tell the teacher. Be prepared to take notes and ask for an explanation if you don't understand something.
- The teacher will offer specific details about your child's work and progress. If your child has already received some grades, ask what went into them. Ask how your child is being evaluated.
- Discuss your child's talents, skills, hobbies, study habits, and any special sensitivities such as concern about weight or speech difficulties.
- Tell the teacher if you think your child needs special help. Tell the teacher about any special family situation, such as a new baby, an illness, or a recent or upcoming move. It is important to tell the teacher about things in your children's lives that might affect their ability to learn.
- Ask about specific ways to help your child at home. Try to have an open mind.
- At home, think about what the teacher has said and then follow up. If the teacher has told you your child needs to improve in certain areas, check back in a few weeks to see how things are going.

c) Grades

Grades are always an area of concern for everyone involved. They are a topic of formal discussion among educational scholars who have different opinions about whether to grade at all, at what year to introduce letter grades, what type of grades to give, etc. The areas of discussion seem limitless.

At NAIS, we give letter grades in all subjects, starting at Grade 2. How these letter grades relate to number grades is stated on the report card form. For Kindergarten and First Grade we give primarily "comment only", but it is at the discretion of the teacher to include letter grades on report cards, for example, those given by specialist teachers.

Parents need to consider carefully their own reactions to the grades which their children receive. Expressions of delight, disappointment, or indifference over grades can have various effects on your child. Reaction to grades can unintentionally put pressure on your child, or they can act to help the child strive to meet potential.

In some situations, a particular grade may indicate that the child has not been working up to his/her potential while in other situations the same grade may mean the child is meeting potential.

Please feel free to discuss grades with the teachers. Teachers want everything to be understood.

d) Honor Roll

There are two levels of honor students: 1) High Honor Roll, and 2) Honor Roll.

A grade point system with the following grade point equivalents will be used:

A=4 B=3 C=2 D=1 F=0

A student who is in an advanced class (example: middle school students taking a high school subject; second grader doing third grade math) will have the grade points increased by one point.

There will be no distinction between subcategories of grade; for example, a B+, B, or B- will all receive a grade point of 3.

To attain the **High Honor Roll**, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5, with no grade below B in the following subjects: English, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

To attain the **Honor Roll**, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3 but less than 3.5, with no grade below B in English, Math, Social Studies, or Science.

e) How Can I Tell How My Child Is Doing In School?

- Ask your child to show you his or her school work, and note the grades and comments by the teacher.
- Check report cards carefully for grades in each subject, attendance, conduct, and teacher observations. Ask the teacher for other kinds of information about your child's performance such as test scores.
- Attend your school's regular parent-teacher conferences and bring any questions or concerns. Ask for a special meeting if necessary. E-mail messages and notes are also a good way to increase the information shared between teachers and parents.
- Ask to see examples of successful work and compare it to your child's work. Listen to the teacher's comments on the work, and what your child needs to do to improve. Plan with the teacher how you both can work together to help your child learn more.
- If you see a serious problem, ask the teacher to report on your child's progress by a note or phone call each week during the next grading period.

When Should I Talk With My Child's Teacher?

- Early and often. Contact the teacher at the beginning of the year or as soon as you can. Get acquainted and show your interest.
- Let teachers know what they need to know about your child. If your child has special needs, make these known right from the beginning.
- If you notice a big change in your child's behavior or attitude, contact the teacher immediately.
- The teacher will tell you before the end of a grading period if your child is having trouble; keeping parents informed is an important function of the school.

Remember, parents and teachers work together to help children want to learn and to help them gain self-confidence and self-discipline.

Do not criticize teachers in front of a child. This makes children less responsible for their behavior and can cause them to act disrespectfully toward the teacher.

f) Standardized Testing

At NAIS, standardized tests are administered annually for Grades 1 through 9. These tests allow a child's academic achievement to be compared to that of children in the same grades in the United States. NAIS uses the CTBS test by CTB/McGraw Hill (<http://www.ctb.com>), the most widely used in the United States. Testing normally takes place in April.

Assessment is used mainly to:

- measure student achievement
- evaluate students' mastery of skills, and
- evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices.

g) Confidentiality

All grades and behavioral concerns are confidential between the School and a student's parents. NAIS does not release information about student performance to others except by written authorization of the parents/guardians.

It is inappropriate for parents to seek to discuss children other than their own with NAIS staff.

6. Health Issues

a) Student Medical Profiles

A Medical History Form must be completed, and proof of immunizations and tests must be provided. The forms can be obtained from the enrollment package, the business office, or the website www.nais.org.za. This documentation is required for enrollment and must be submitted to the business office prior to the start of school. Please update the emergency contact information as often as needed so that it is available in the event of an emergency.

b) Procedure for Medical Emergencies

Every effort is made to prevent injury to the student. Safety education is a part of every child's program. However, accidents do occur, and emergency first aid will be administered unless we are specifically instructed otherwise. The parent will be notified of any accidents or injuries. **NAIS cannot be held responsible for injuries that occur at school or during school-related events.**

- In case of illness, the parent will be called to pick up the child within a reasonable time.
- In case of simple injury: abrasions, skinned knees, splinters, the nurse (or a staff member trained in first aid) will perform routine first aid.
- In case of a medical emergency, parents will be called immediately. If circumstances require - and unless your child's emergency card indicates otherwise - emergency medical services will be called and this may involve taking the child to the closest emergency room. Parents will assume financial responsibility for such services.
- If you do not want medication administered to your child, please inform the school nurse in writing.

c) Administering Medication

If your child must take medication during the school day, discuss those needs with the nurse. The school will not administer any form of medication to a student unless it is sent to the office with clear, written instructions and the permission of a parent or guardian.

d) Sick at School (or at Home)

A student will be sent home from school if signs of illness are detected. Please notify the nurse if a child has been diagnosed as having a communicable disease, as other parents may need to be notified.

When is a student too ill to be at school?

Please keep children at home when they exhibit any symptoms of illness. Children should be kept at home when the child:

- has a severe cold or cough;
- has had a fever within 24 hours;
- has conjunctivitis or eye discharge;
- has a contagious disease.

When your child is to be absent from school, please notify the school office as early in the day as possible.

e) HIV Prevention

With HIV and AIDS being of such great concern in the world we live in, NAIS follows certain general precautions. The nurse will provide guidance to staff and students about what to do when someone is injured. Student will be instructed not to touch a friend's injuries but to call an adult. Staff will wear gloves when treating injuries or when cleaning up bodily fluids. Open wounds will be covered with adhesive strips. All surfaces where bodily fluids may have accidentally spilled will be immediately disinfected.

f) Other

NAIS suggests that children be treated with sun protection and that they bring hats to school to wear when needed.

7. Security and Safety

a) School Security

NAIS has 24-hour guard security that controls access to the property. All guards are linked to a rapid response unit. The property is also protected by electric perimeter fencing. Gates to the outside are locked at all times, with a sentry on duty to admit visitors.

b) Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child

If you drop off and pick up your child, you must enter the premises through the Perseus Street entrance. If a child is being brought at a time other than the start or end of the school day, in the case of a medical appointment for example, please accompany the child to the classroom. A responsible person such as the teacher needs to know that your child is present at school. If you need to pick up your child during the school day, or if you want someone other than yourself or the regular driver to pick up your child from school, you or the driver need to come by the school office and notify the school secretary. If someone other than you or the regular driver is going to take your child from school, you must give approval of this in writing. Although the secretary and I recognize most parents voices on the telephone, for legal and insurance purposes we need to have your approval in writing. Simply telling the teacher is not sufficient.

c) Disasters and Other Emergencies

The NAIS emergency manual will be distributed to all families. This manual was based primarily on the U.S. Department of State's Emergency Procedures Manual. The manual deals with emergency potentials at school and appropriate response procedures, as well as psychological aftereffects of disasters. It includes a handout for students entitled "Information for NAIS Students About Emergencies". In addition, handouts for young children from the American Red Cross are available at the school or can be downloaded from the Internet. Parents are encouraged to discuss emergency issues with their children at home.

8. Transportation Guidelines

NAIS commits itself to transporting your children in a safe, responsible and cheerful manner. We pledge to keep your children secure and to provide an environment of respect and cordiality while they are using our transportation services.

In order to honor our commitment to all parents and children, we ask that you and your children abide by the following policies and rules.

a) Bus Policy

1. There will be an adult monitor on the bus at all times who will assist the students and enforce the bus rules.
2. Bus drivers are bound by their contract to obey strict safety standards.
3. Please have an up-to-date direct contact phone number on file with the school at all times, in case it is necessary for the driver or monitor to contact you.
4. Please give the school 7 days notice of a move to a new residence.
5. Parents will be given an approximate **Bus Arrival Time** for their residences. Please be sure students are ready at their gates a few minutes before the scheduled pick-up time in the morning and that someone is at the gate at drop-off time in the afternoon.
6. If a student is so tardy getting to the bus as to be left behind, it will be the parent's responsibility to bring the child to school.
7. In the afternoon, the bus will leave the school as promptly as possible, always checking that each student is accounted for. If a student is tardy getting to the bus and left behind, it will be the parent's responsibility to pick him/her up.
8. For afternoon drop-off, an adult the student will recognize must be present before your child will be allowed to leave the bus. Otherwise, the child will be returned to the school and the parent will be notified.
9. To convey changes in pick-up/drop-off – for example, if your child will not be coming to school, if your child is to be taken to another child's home, if your child is to remain at school if an adult will not be at home, if another parent is to pick up the child, or if you want to pick up the child yourself – please do the following:
 - for a change in drop-off, we need something in writing. Please send a note with your child. The school needs a signature, so e-mails are not acceptable.
 - for a change in pick-up you may use telephone or e-mail. In the early morning (for example, if the child is sick), please notify by telephone.
10. Should you need to contact the bus driver or the bus monitor while the bus is en route, you must call the school's business office. The school secretary or the principal are always at the office while the bus is on the road. They will contact the driver or the monitor, as needed.
11. In the event of significant traffic problems which might result in your child reaching home much later than scheduled, the bus monitor will contact the school and the secretary or the principal in turn will call each parent to inform them of the situation.
12. Please remember that the school cannot be held responsible for students before they get on the bus in the morning and after they get off the bus in the afternoon.
13. Unsafe, disrespectful, loud or similarly distracting behavior on the bus can lead to suspension of bus privileges.

b) Bus Rules for Students

1. Remain seated at all times and keep seat belts fastened securely.
2. Keep hands, heads, and possessions inside the bus.
3. Speak quietly and use an "indoor voice".
4. Be polite and keep hands and feet to yourselves.
5. Refrain from distracting behavior such as the use of radios.
6. Follow the instructions of the bus driver or bus monitor.
7. Rude or disruptive behavior, such as inappropriate gestures, arguing or fighting, using inappropriate language or name-calling will not be tolerated.
8. Littering is not allowed! Put all trash in the trash can as you leave the bus. No throwing anything out of the window.
9. Food and drink may not be consumed on the bus.
10. Clean up after yourself and keep the bus neat.
11. Look around your seat when leaving and take your possessions with you.
12. You can only get off the bus at your designated stop - unless the administration office was notified in advance.

13. Proceed to the bus promptly and in an orderly fashion at the end of the day.
14. If you have to bring unsafe items to school (such as glass jars for projects, etc.), give them to the bus monitor for proper storage.

c) Private Transportation

If you wish to drive your child to school rather than use the bus, please have your child at school by 8:15 a.m. Please enter through the side driveway and see the child safely into the inner gate. Students waiting to be picked up in a private vehicle should remain on the playground or in the case of bad weather, wait in the lunch room/library area.

For security reasons, no cars may be parked on the grass or sidewalk outside of the school gates, or inside the gates at the entrance between the Elementary and Middle Schools. We ask that you respect this rule and that you do not give problems to the security guards at the gate. They are simply carrying out instructions. This decision is made for the safety and well-being of your children.

9. Uniforms and School Supplies

a) Uniform Policy

NAIS parents have expressed a preference for a school uniform for their children, for reasons of discipline, propriety, allowing the children to concentrate on schooling rather than what to wear, and economic reasons. A School Board committee prepared the uniform policy. Since the policy cannot detail all the possible do's and don'ts, parents and students are requested to exercise good judgment at all times and to cooperate with the spirit and intent of the policy.

Grooming. Students should observe basic standards of cleanliness and good grooming.

Uniforms. NAIS elementary students will wear uniforms that consist of navy blue bottoms and red or dark green tops. NAIS middle school students will wear uniforms that consist of khaki bottoms and navy blue tops.

Tops:

- Uniform tops must be red, dark green or navy blue (depending on grade) and solid in color, without any logos, trim or embroidery, designs, or print. They may be of any style or sleeve length, as long as they meet propriety standards. In colder weather, sweaters or sweatshirts may be worn but should be solid red, dark green or navy blue. Outerwear meant to be removed, such as jackets, raincoats, and the like, may be of any color.
- T-shirts. Official school T-shirts are considered part of the uniform. Ordinary T-shirts are not acceptable on uniform days, but may be worn on Friday Color Days (see Color Days below), as long as they meet propriety standards.
- On Physical Education days, students may want to bring an extra uniform top to change into afterwards.

Bottoms:

- Uniform bottoms must be solid in color with no logos, trim or embroidery, designs, or print. They may be shorts, pants, corduroys, skirts, skorts, sweat pants, overalls, or jumpers.

- Jumpers, overalls, and shortalls are acceptable as bottoms on uniform days, so long as they are navy blue in color and are worn with a red or dark green top underneath. (A jumper is a sleeveless one-piece dress worn with a blouse or shirt.)
- Denim bottoms (blue jeans, denim skirts, etc.) are not part of the uniform, but may be worn on Friday Color Days.
- Dresses are different from jumpers in that they are worn without a blouse/shirt and, hence, do not reflect the designated top/bottom color combination properly. Therefore, they do not fit into the uniform guidelines. Dresses may be worn on Color Fridays.

Shoes. All shoe types are acceptable. Sandals, sneakers, boots, and dress shoes are all fine. Still, parents should avoid shoes that are not safe (for example, slippery soles, high heels, skinny straps, etc.).

Color Days. Every Friday, NAIS students will have "Color Day". On these days students will not have to wear their uniforms, but will be able to wear clothing of their choice. It is expected, however, that clothing worn on "Color Day" will be appropriate for school.

Propriety. Appropriateness for school must always be kept in mind. Clothing that is suggestive, revealing, distasteful, vulgar, provocative, displays offensive or profane messages, or is otherwise inappropriate for a school environment is not allowed. Spaghetti straps, short skirts, short shorts, bare midriffs, low waistbands, and the like are all inappropriate for school.

Possible sources for tops and bottoms include: online (JCPenney, Sears, French Toast, New Moves, and others), U.S. stores (Walmart, Target, etc.), and local stores (Mr. Price, Ackermans', Woolworths, Edgars, Jet, Pick 'n Pay, etc.).

b) School Supplies

School fees include textbooks, but not personal stationery items. In general, parents are responsible for providing supplies such as the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| • pens and pencils | • eraser |
| • colored pencils | • small box of tissues |
| • markers | • pencil case |
| • crayons | • book bag |
| • scissors | • exercise books |
| | • file folders |

Kindergarten children will also need to provide a sleeping bag or sleeping mat.

A specific list of supplies for each grade will be made available to parents on the orientation day prior to school starting (welcome-back-to-school night). Otherwise, feel free to contact your child's teacher.

c) Other

- Specific clothing is required for special activities and for extra-curricular activities, for example, ballet, swimming, girl scouts, etc. You are responsible for providing the appropriate items for your child.
- In general, we ask that **you label your children's clothes, jackets, supplies, and other appropriate articles.** Articles are often left behind and it is difficult, especially with the younger children, to identify the owners.

- Only school supplies are to be brought to school. No games, toys, radios, electric devices, or equipment are to be brought at anytime – except when approved by the teacher and/or principal.

10. Enrollment Procedure

The school offers grades K-8, plus a structured Pre-Kindergarten program for 4-year-olds. Children may begin Pre-K during the year in which they turn 4 and grade K during the year in which they turn 5, but admission age is agreed in consultation between parent and school according to the best interests of the child.

Applications and forms for enrollment are available from the business office or can be downloaded from our website www.nais.org.za.

a) Step 1 – Documents

Documents to Complete:

- Application for Enrollment - includes application agreement
- Medical History Form - includes agreement covering medical emergencies
- Immunization Requirements - includes written proof of immunizations

Other Documents to Present:

- Official records from last school(s) attended, covering 3 years if possible. Not required for preschool.
- Photocopy of child's passport identification pages.
- Photocopy of passport identification pages of parent who signs application.

The above documents may be sent by post, or fax, or may be personally presented at the school.

b) Step 2 – Discussion of Financial Arrangements

Once the child is accepted, the parent taking financial responsibility will meet with the business office for discussion of financial arrangements. At that time, all the completed documents should be with the school.

Steps 1 and 2 complete the enrollment process.

c) Later Steps – Vision and Hearing Tests

After the child has started classes, there will be vision and hearing tests as well as class readiness testing. These tests will be conducted in an informal and non-threatening fashion. Parents will be informed of the results.

d) Explanation of Fees

There are three types of fees for parents paying full fees, all of which cover a period of 1 year:

Tuition Fee	The tuition fee is required for all children enrolled. It includes <u>textbooks</u> and <u>lunches</u> . Note: Pre-K children do not get lunch but they get a mid-morning snack.
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Building/Entrance Fee	This fee is applicable to each child, except Pre-K children. It is a one-time fee for the first time that a student is enrolled. If an equal or higher fee has been paid to another school in South Africa, this fee is not payable. If a lesser fee has been paid, the NAIS fee is payable on a pro-rata basis.
School Bus Fee	This is an optional fee depending on whether transport is requested. Bus transport is only available for children living in Pretoria on the designated bus route. If a Pre-K child has a sibling in K or higher paying full fees, the bus fee for the Pre-K child is discounted.

Excluded from above fees: snacks, uniforms and personal stationery items, which are purchased by parents. Field trips of a special nature might require a small extra fee.

Consult the business office or the website for current-year fees.

e) Payment Currency and Timing of Payment

Fees are quoted in U.S. dollars but payment may be made in Rand if the payer does not have access to U.S. dollars.

Kindergarten through 8

- The Building/Entrance Fee is payable before the student enters school if the parents are already in the country.
- Tuition and Bus Fees are payable on or before the first day of school.

Pre-Kindergarten Pre-School Tuition and Bus Fees may be paid on a full-year or semester basis although enrollment is for the full year. The first semester payment is payable on or before the first day of school.

f) Overall Payment conditions and refunds

Enrollment in NAIS is a contract for a full year for those starting at the beginning of a school year. For those starting after the beginning of the school year, the contract is for the remainder of the school year. (A school year at NAIS begins in August and continues until the end of May / early June of the following calendar year.) NAIS, like all good schools, discourages the movement of a student from school to school during an academic year. Many studies have shown that this is to the detriment of the student. When parents leave the country, this is of course inevitable.

Parents are responsible for the payment of all fees as set out in the document "Payment conditions and fees".

Fees payable are for the full school year. A one month written notice period (which is part of the enrollment period) is required for those leaving during a school year. Pupils who are enrolled at NAIS for four weeks of a semester will be charged for a full semester. Enrollment for one day of a quarter of a school year (a quarter is a nine week school period) will be charged for the full quarter. In practice this means that a parent / guardian who gives notice during a semester will pay for that full semester.

NAIS will consider giving a refund to students moving to another school within South Africa during the academic year under the following conditions:

- All school fees owed for the year have been paid in full.
- All library books have been returned and any library fines or other outstanding debts have been paid.
- The parent/guardian has informed NAIS in writing four weeks before the date of withdrawal.
- The parent/guardian or receiving school has asked in writing for all school records to be sent to the receiving school. These will be sent from school to school and will not be delivered by the parent.
- No refund will be given for a semester in which a pupil is enrolled for a period of four weeks or more, or a quarter in which a pupil has been enrolled for one day.

An administration fee of \$1,000.00 will be charged for such withdrawals during a school year. The entrance / building fee is non-refundable.

A refund for what NAIS deems to be frivolous reasons will be made at the discretion of NAIS. An example of a 'frivolous reason' would be leaving NAIS to attend a school which a friend is attending.

11. Organizations at NAIS

There are organizations at NAIS aimed at fostering good communication, good administration, enjoyment, and well-being for all the members of our school. NAIS has:

- a School Board
- a Parent-Teacher Organization
- a Student Council

a) NAIS School Board

The School Board's role is to develop policies on issues that directly relate to the education of your children as well as to provide support to staff, parents, and students relating to educational issues.

The Board will consist of nine members including a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary, who are elected by Board members. The school Director and the President of the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) are automatically on the Board as *ex-officio* members. *Ex-officio* members are included in the membership of nine. Vacant slots may be filled by volunteers. If more persons volunteer than there are open seats, then parents will vote to elect those Board members. **Your involvement** is important and is welcomed. At present, being a parent of a NAIS student is the only eligibility requirement to serve on the Board.

The Board meets once a month. A quorum to hold any meeting is five member excluding *ex officio* members. The Board will distribute the monthly meeting's agenda 1 week in advance of the meeting. Parents, teachers, and interested members of the school community can attend the non-confidential portion of Board meetings, if advance notice is given to the Chairperson. Only Board members may be present when confidential issues are discussed. To keep parents and teachers abreast of general-interest issues, excerpts from approved minutes of Board meetings can be made available at PTO meetings, with any confidential matters excised.

It is Board policy to maintain an atmosphere of transparency and openness while still preserving confidentiality. In communicating directly with Board members, we ask parents to realize that Board members must refrain from discussing matters of a sensitive, confidential, or unsettled nature outside the School Board forum. If you wish to communicate with the School Board about any such matters, you must make an advance request through the PTO to attend a Board meeting and to have items placed on the agenda for discussion. The avenue for teacher and parent input and communication with the School Board is the PTO. This avenue should be utilized fully.

b) NAIS Parent-Teacher Organization

The Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) was established by a group of NAIS parents and teachers for the purpose of:

- promoting the welfare of the children and youth in the home, school, community, and place of worship;
- bringing into closer relationship the home and school, so parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; and
- developing between educators and the community united efforts so as to secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

The PTO coordinates with the School Board and the Director/Principal on relevant issues. The PTO is also the avenue for teacher and parent input and communication with the School Board. The elected officers are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Some of the activities the PTO has been involved in are:

- newsletter
- fundraisers
- room mothers and room fathers
- teacher and staff appreciation
- school dances

PTO membership is open to all parents with children at NAIS and to teachers of NAIS. The PTO welcomes enthusiastic and concerned parents who want to help provide the best for our children and school. **You can serve as one of the PTO officers or chair a committee.** The PTO also looks for ideas on fundraisers, activities for the children, and other ways the school community. Please don't hesitate to share your ideas and to lend a helping hand. There are no membership dues.

c) Student Council

NAIS students created a Student Council, with a president and representatives elected from each class. The Student Council is the voice of the students. Students who are interested in becoming involved with planning activities such as dances, spirit days, fund-raising activities, special assemblies, and in having a voice in school decisions should run for Student Council.

12. Extracurricular Activities

a) School-Sponsored

Music, art, sports, and foreign languages are part of the regular curriculum and are integrated into the school day. Extra subjects such as ballet, modern dance, karate, gymnastics, swimming, pottery, etc. are offered as possible. Their availability depends on the level of interest from students and parents, with a minimum of students participating. The school brings in professionals for these classes.

b) Parent-Sponsored

Scouting programs are held only on a voluntary basis with parents leading the groups when parents wish to operate the programs. The school provides meeting space and miscellaneous support upon request and when possible. Parents are solely responsible for organizing and running the troops. Each student member pays a yearly membership fee. If no parents step forward to take charge, NAIS cannot hold the Scouting programs.

The Girl Scouts program and the Boy Scouts program share similar goals – to help each child develop:

- Character and Virtue
- Spiritual Growth
- Good Citizenship
- Sportsmanship
- Family Understanding
- Respectful Relationships
- Personal Achievement
- Friendly Service
- Fun and Adventure

Girl Scouts is for girls starting in Kindergarten:	
Daisy Girl Scouts Brownie Girl Scouts Junior Girl Scouts Cadette Girl Scouts	Grade K Grades 1– 3 Grades 4 – 6 Grades 7 – 9
Boy Scouts is for boys starting in Grade 1:	
Cub Scouts Tiger Cubs Wolf Cubs Bear Cubs Webelos Boy Scouts	Grades 1- 5 Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3 Grades 4 and 5 past Grade 5

As a parent, you can support the Girl Scouts or the Boy Scouts. You can volunteer to be a Troop leader, co-leader, or assistant leader, or you can help coordinate specific activities, some of which are one-time with others lasting a weekend or a month.

13. Birthdays

NAIS will celebrate each child's birthday. The school cook will bake cupcakes or other treats for the occasion and the child will be honored during lunch in the cafeteria. Parents are welcome to attend, but are asked not to bring anything.

Normally, the celebration will take place on the date itself, if it falls on a school day. If it falls on a weekend or holiday, or during school breaks, arrangements for an alternative celebration date will be made.

If you do not wish your child's birthday to be celebrated, please let the school know with advance notice.

If you are planning a private party for your child and wish to invite other children, we ask that you do not distribute invitations in class or ask our staff to distribute them— unless all the children in the class are invited.

Children will not be allowed to leave school early to attend parties. NAIS does not provide bus service to private parties.

14. Whom to contact at NAIS

We are committed to keeping families informed and involved at all times. But communication is a two-way effort and we ask that you please contact NAIS with any concerns or comments you might have. You will find contact information on the last page of this handbook.

Please contact the principal for operational or policy matters. You are also invited to contact the School Board chair person to discuss school policies and procedures.

For academic and behavioral matters, we recommend that your first point of contact be your child's teacher.

15. Conclusion

NAIS has tried to provide the basic information that students and parents will need to make this year a successful one. We realize we may not have covered all the issues that might be of concern to you. Please know that we will continue to develop policies as appropriate and share them with you. Your input is welcome! Send your comments or questions to NAIS via the Internet, letter, or phone call.

This is your school! Help us to make it the best it can be.