



**VIRGIN ISLANDS
MONTESSORI SCHOOL
& PETER GRUBER
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**

MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK

“Education for Life”

6936 Vessup Lane
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Phone 340-775-6360
www.vimsia.org

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Welcome

We are a school with a 60 year old tradition of excellence in education built upon Montessori principles. This handbook is designed to help guide you in understanding and participating with the Virgin Islands Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy.

Please read it thoroughly. If you have questions or comments, please contact the director for assistance. We have an open-door policy. It is important that lines of communication are kept open to ensure the smooth running of our school.

Helpful Terms

AMI	Association Montessori Internationale
LA CASA	Toddler Program for 15 months to 3 year olds
PRIMARY	Combined group of 3-6 year olds
LOWER ELEMENTARY	Combined group of 6-9 year olds
UPPER ELEMENTARY	Combined group of 9-11 year olds
SPARK	Spark Academy - after school program for 15 months -12 year olds
PGIA	Peter Gruber International Academy (6 - 12)
IB	International Baccalaureate
IBO	International Baccalaureate Organization
MYP	IB Middle Years Programme for 6 th -10 th grade – note European spelling of Program
DP	IB Diploma Programme for 11 th -12 th grade – note European spelling of Program

Accreditation

Montessori

Our Toddler Program, La Casa, and Spark Academy are licensed by the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services. Licensing occurs annually. Our Primary classes are accredited by the Association of Montessori Internationale (AMI). Re-accreditation takes place every year, and consultation visits take place every three years.

Peter Gruber International Academy (PGIA)

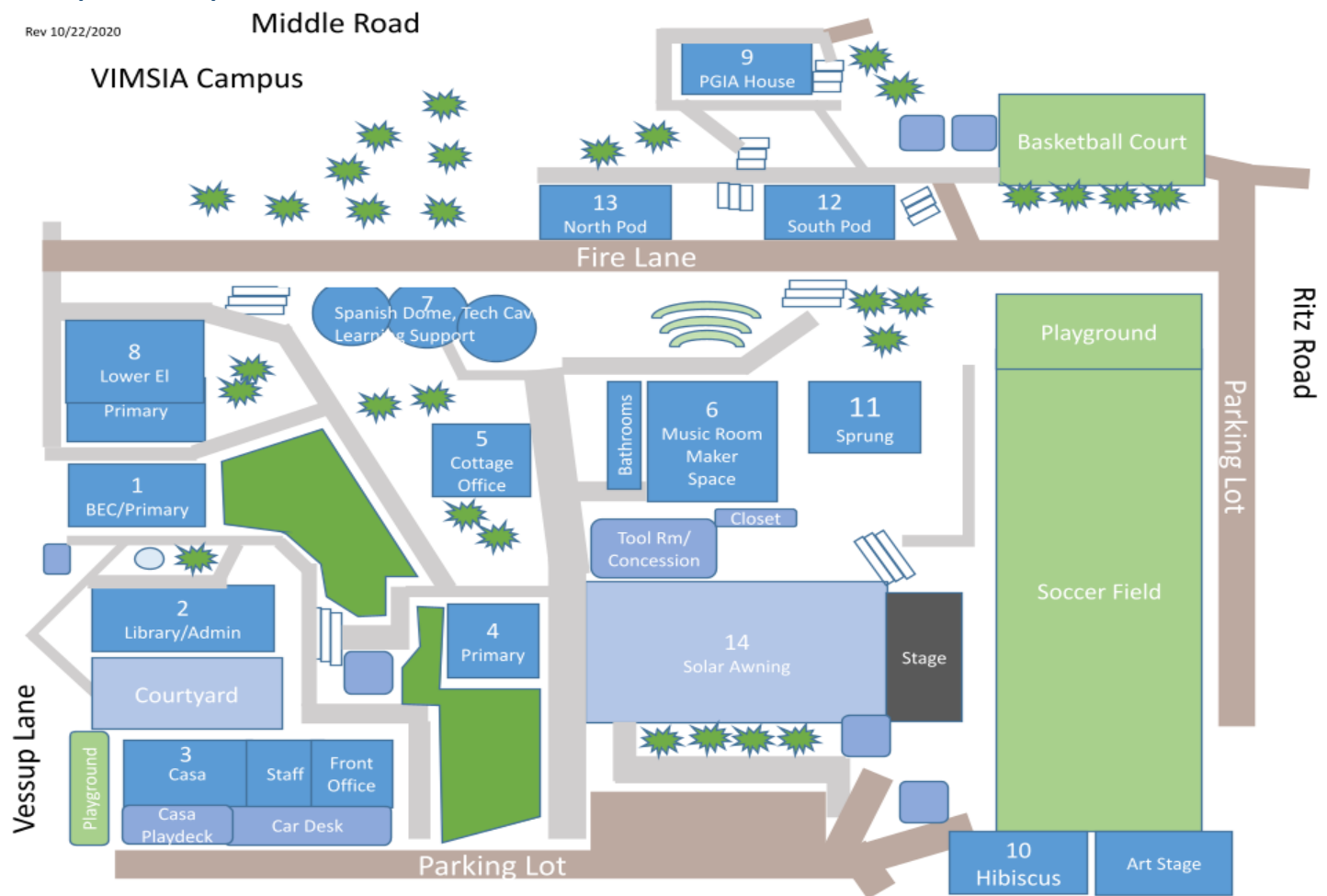
PGIA (6th grade through 12th grade) is authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) - IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) 6th-10th grades, and IB Diploma Programme (DP) 11th-12th grades. IBO reviews and reauthorizes our program every five years.

Middle States Association (MSA)

Our School is also proud to be accredited for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and offers a Middle States accredited PGIA high school diploma. Re-accreditation consultation occurs every 7 years.

Campus Map

Rev 10/22/2020



Administration

Head of School

The Head of School (HoS) is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the school's operations, including curriculum development, staff management, budgeting, and student welfare. The Head of School works closely with the school's faculty, staff, and students to ensure that the school's mission is being fulfilled and that the school is providing a high-quality education to its students.

PGIA Director

The PGIA director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the IB program. The director also ensures open lines of communications between teachers, assistants, parents, and students and oversees the hiring and training of staff. The PGIA Director is also responsible for curriculum standards and fostering a positive, high performance and collaborative environment.

Montessori Director

The Montessori director, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Montessori program, including SPARK. The director also ensures open lines of communications between teachers, assistants, parents, and students and oversees the hiring and training of staff. The Montessori Director is also responsible for curriculum standards and fostering a positive, high performance and collaborative environment.

Faculty

We are proud that our Montessori Guides and Assistants from Toddler through Elementary hold Montessori Teaching Diplomas and/or Orientation Certificates. Our Montessori teachers have attended some of the finest training centers in the world. The Montessori Guide and Assistant is a child advocate in the deepest sense and has a cultivated respect for the child's total being. As both the physiological and educational director of the classroom, through careful observation and implementation of the Montessori philosophy and curriculum, the Guide responds to the essential needs of the child. Assistants are an essential aid to the classroom environment and child. The role of the assistant is to support the Guide in maintaining the guidelines of a Montessori environment and ensure safe and caring relationships. Our website (www.vimsia.org) maintains up to date faculty and staff bios for your convenience.

General School Information

FACTS

VIMSIA uses FACTS as its Financial portal, digital student information system, and enrollment system from the Application Process through High School Graduation.

Calendar

The calendar for the upcoming school year is prepared and issued in early spring. The calendar will be given to each family and posted on the website. The calendar outlines important dates throughout the school year. From time to time additional items may be added or dates adjusted. All information from this calendar is included on the school website calendar, which is also updated with dynamic school event information. Please be sure to review the website calendar for any Parent Education meetings or school events.

Hours Of Operations

Normal school hours are 8:00 am to 3:15 pm, Monday through Friday. Any exceptions will be posted on the school calendar. Administration is available between 8:00 am and 4 pm to answer questions you may have.

School Closings

Dates of regular school closures are on our calendar. If the school needs to close in the case of an emergency such as inclement weather conditions, you will receive notification via email as well as a text message. Notification will also be posted on the school's website. In addition, we will notify the radio stations (AM radio WVVI 1000 and WSTA 1340) so they can also make the announcement.

Arrival And Dismissal Procedures

Students are expected to be punctual and honor arrival times. If a child arrives prior to 7:30 am, parents MUST stay with their child until a VIMSIA staff member is on duty. Drop off begins at 7:30am and your child will be marked Tardy if they arrive after 8:00 am

Regular School Day

Level	Age	Arrival / Dismissal	School Start & End
Toddler & Primary Half-Day	(15 months to 4 years)	8:00 - 8:15 am / 11:30 am	8:00 am – 11:30 am
Toddler Full Day	(15-months to 3 years)	8:00 - 8:15 am / 3:15 - 3:30 pm	8:15 am - 3:15 pm
Extended Day Primary <i>nap & afternoon activities</i>	(3 - 4 years)	7:45 - 8:00 am / 3:00 - 3:15 pm	8:00 am - 3:00 pm
Full Day Primary <i>afternoon Montessori work cycle</i>	(5 years)	7:45 - 8:00 am / 3:00 - 3:15 pm	8:00 am - 3:00 pm
Lower Elementary	(6 - 9 years)	7:45 - 8:00 am / 3:00 - 3:15 pm	8:00 - 3:00 pm
Upper Elementary	(9 - 10 years)	7:45 - 8:00 am / 3:15 - 3:30 pm	8:00 - 3:15 pm

Arrival Procedure

- Toddler families park their cars in a designated parking spot (not the carline) and walk their child to the classroom.
- Primary and Elementary use a drive through method and are asked to remain in their car. There will be staff ready to receive your child out of your car and onto the Car Deck.
- To ensure the safety of your child, place car seats on the right side of the car when applicable.
- Elementary Students proceed to their classroom at 7:50am.
- Primary Students are escorted to their classroom by their teacher or assistant at 8:00 am.

Late Arrival : It is important that all students arrive at school on time.

- Past 8:00 am, La Casa and Primary students must be escorted to class by a parent or guardian.
- Past 8:30 am, the parent should report to the front office before heading to the classroom to sign-in

Dismissal Procedure

- Toddler and Primary Half Day Program students are picked up at their classroom (Toddler), solar awning (Primary).
- For regular dismissal Primary & Elementary students will be escorted to their cars by staff.

- If your child's plan for dismissal changes, email dismissal@vimsia.org with the change by 9:00 am morning of.
- **Late pick-up extends no further than 3:45** and should not be taken advantage of. Teachers have meetings at the end of the school day and students are NOT allowed to be unsupervised on campus at any time and must be picked up before that time.

Pick Up Authorization: To be completed in FACTS enrollment process.

- To insure your child's safety we must have a list of people on file who have blanket permission to pick up your child.
- If anyone else is sent to pick up your child without notification from you, your child will not be released until we have called you to verify your permission has been given.

Transportation

Van Runs

VIMISA School Van offers pickup service in the mornings and drop-off in the afternoons to and from the ferry dock for St. John students. There is no 11:30 transportation provided to the ferry from VIMSIA. Seat belts **MUST** be worn at all times on the van. Please talk to your children about the importance of seat belts.

Morning pickup at the ferry is 7:30 am and afternoon drop-off to the ferry is 3:45 pm. St. John parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is accompanied once they get off the van. The youngest students will get first priority on the van. Older students may use this option. Van schedule will be determined when the school year begins.

Children under 3:

- Must provide a car seat that can stay with the van.
- Must be accompanied by their parent or guardian onto the van from the ferry and from the van onto the ferry.

Children 3 and 4 years old:

- A responsible adult to escort the child(ren).
- Driver will accept children from supervising adults in the mornings and handoff to supervising adults in the afternoons.

School Bus

Children must be 5 years old to ride the bus. School Bus Inc. provides morning and afternoon bus transportation, including pickup and dropoff to the ferry. A permission slip must be signed in advance by the parent/guardian before a child may ride the bus. The bus is to be used to get a child from home to school and from school back to their parents (home or office is typical). The bus driver is not expected to track schedule changes for each student.

At morning pickup, please stay with your child until they are safely on the bus. In the afternoon, your child should know when they are getting off the bus and someone should be there to greet them if necessary.

NOTE: There is no bus service on days when VI Public Schools are closed. On those days, transportation to and from school is the parent's responsibility. School Bus rules and forms are on our website.

Starting School

Toddler/Primary – New students will start at staggered intervals. This time may be shortened or lengthened depending on your child's adjustment to the new surroundings. Each child's needs are met on an individual basis. This settling-in period can vary from one day only to a week or more. Be assured that whatever the situation, your child's teacher will work with you to ensure that your child's needs are met. Some children adjust right away while others may need a longer period of time.

Items to bring on the first day for Montessori Students:

- A complete change of clothing. Two sets are needed for Toddlers & Extended day Primary students who nap. Clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name and placed in a labeled zip lock bag. This will be kept in a cubbyhole at school. Soiled clothing will be sent home daily and we ask that they be replaced the next school day.
- Backpack to carry letters and notes to and from school.
- Toddlers and Extended day Primary students staying for the afternoon will be taking a nap or engaging in Montessori activities for those children transitioning to full-day Primary. Cots are provided, but families should send a small pillow, sheet, and/or blanket for their child's comfort. Stuffed animals and pacifiers are not permitted.
- A packed lunch if applicable.

All New Students

ALL new students are accepted on a one-month trial basis. This is to ensure that each child benefits fully from our program. If your child is having difficulties, the teacher and/or Montessori Director will meet with you to discuss how best to assist your child.

Personal Belongings

Each student is assigned a designated space to keep personal belongings.

Book Bags

- Students are required to bring a book bag every day that has a water bottle, healthy lunch, snack & change of clothes.
- Please check the bag daily for important information from school.
- Older students are encouraged to organize their bags and pack only the materials required for the following day of the week.

School Supplies

Except for a few items at the Elementary level, VIMSIA supplies all necessary classroom materials for La Casa and Montessori students. A list of a few specific supplies needed for Elementary students will be sent home at the beginning of the school year.

Student Responsibility

Starting at the Elementary Level, personal responsibility for oneself as well as one's belongings is stressed at VIMSIA.

- Please assist your child in strengthening this skill by setting up a routine at home, working to pack their own lunch and bag.
- If a lunch kit, library book or after school program equipment is forgotten, logical consequences occur. In the case of lunch, we will make sure that your child receives something nourishing to eat. The same applies at the end of the day.
- If a lunch box or other item is forgotten at school, it may be retrieved the next day. It is not in the best interest of your son/daughter to request that exceptions be made or enable them by bringing the forgotten items to them. Your cooperation with this school policy will assist your child in developing important skills of independence and responsibility.

Parent Education - *All parent education is mandatory*

In Montessori education, there are three equally important roles; that of the child, parent/guardian and teacher. Together teachers and parents have a shared responsibility to communicate openly about your child's progress and needs. Our aim is to shape the optimal educational experience for your child through a shared understanding of our curriculum. In order to do this, we ask that parents take the time to understand Montessori Pedagogy through individual research and by taking part in yearly observation and parent education.

Observation

As part of your responsibility to our educational program, parents are required to schedule a classroom observation at once twice a year. We recommend observing twice (Fall and Spring). Observing prior to your Parent/Teacher conference is highly recommended. Observations begin in October once the classes are settled and students feel comfortable having visitors in their learning environment. We invite you to observe all class levels, not just your child's. This will give you an overall picture of how one level compliments the other. Your child's teacher will announce exactly when observations will start at each level.

You can schedule your classroom observation with the Front Office. We try to prevent too many visitors at the same time. On your observation day, you will check in with the Front Office. If you have any specific questions for your child's teacher from your observation, please make an appointment for a later date, as it is usually not possible for the teacher to meet with you during class time.

Meetings & Workshops

Teachers and the Montessori Director hold meetings and workshops throughout the school year to help parents understand the Montessori philosophy and to work in close partnership with parents. **Parents/guardians are required to attend at least 2 of these yearly opportunities.** The first Parent Night will take place soon after the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, additional Parent Nights, coffees, and book discussions are offered. These events focus on various elements of our curriculum and philosophy.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Formal Parent/Teacher conferences are held for the parents of each student twice per school year (dates are listed on the calendar). Montessori teachers will send home a note with a date and time that has been set aside for your conference. Montessori Parent Conferences are scheduled in person for 30 minutes and childcare is offered. Please arrive on time in order to help us keep to our schedule. If additional time is needed, another conference may be scheduled.

We feel that face-to-face open communication between parents and teachers is very important. Parents are not limited to the two formal conferences as the only opportunity to sit down and discuss your child's progress. If you would like an update or have a concern, we invite you to make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher.

Montessori Policies

Nutrition

As a Montessori school, we are invested in all aspects of a child's development, including nutrition.

- As a school we do not allow sugary or processed foods, this includes candy, cookies, chips, and surgery items.
- Healthy snacks include fresh fruit, vegetables, hard-boiled eggs, etc.
- Children may only drink water from their water bottles. No juices are allowed in school.
- Your child may come home with an item and be told it would be good for an afterschool snack at home rather than classroom food. It is our hope that your child will participate in making their lunch and therefore be excited about what is in it each day.
- As a part of our Green Initiatives, we ask that you partner with us and send your children to school with easy-to-manage, reusable containers.

Technology

Children in a Montessori environment are not exposed to technology until they arrive at Elementary where it is limited and focused on teaching skills. For the benefit of your child's development we strictly adhere to, and ask that families adhere to, the following policy:

In-school

Children are not allowed to have any personal devices with them during the school day i.e.

- cellphones
- Ipads
- Apple watches

At home

We require families to follow along with [Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) for child technology use in the home.

- **Until 18 months** of age limit screen use to video chatting along with an adult (for example, with a parent who is out of town).
- **Between 18 and 24** months screen time should be limited to watching educational programming with a caregiver.
- **For children 2-5**, limit non-educational screen time to about 1 hour per weekday and 3 hours on the weekend days.
- **For ages 6 and older**, encourage healthy habits and limit activities that include screens.
- **For all:**
 - Turn off all screens during family meals and outings.
 - Turn off screens and remove them from bedrooms 30-60 minutes before bedtime.
 - Learn about and use parental controls.
 - Avoid using screens as pacifiers, babysitters, or to stop tantrums.

We'd like to stress the importance that, under the age of 18 months families/caregivers strive to introduce zero screen time (unless facetime) and under age 5, children's screen time remains limited to educational videos or co-watching.

Overall screen time and regularly having a TV on in the background are linked with lower language and social emotional skills in young children. Watching educational content with a parent/caregiver is associated with increased language skills.

Dress Code

We ask all Montessori students to adhere to the following dress code which supports learning, comfort and individual expression.

Please, ensure that all clothing and shoes:

- allow for movement. *Children may not wear restricting clothing or flip flops.*
- are practical and not distracting. *We ask children not to wear superhero clothing, or shirts with distracting language.*
- allow children to take pride in their physical appearance.

Assemblies & Outings

- Students and staff are asked to wear their Montessori school shirts on school assembly days and class outings.

Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations

In the Montessori Environments, we enjoy celebrating birthdays and other special holidays at school. Each teacher arranges these activities for their classroom and often seeks support from room parents.

Regarding birthday traditions, we do not host "parties". We have carefully designed traditions that are meant to acknowledge the child's life thus far and highlight how they are a unique and valued individual within the greater context of the universe and their community.

Parents are invited to prepare a healthy treat with their child to share as well as a gift bag if they choose, but we do not have families come to set up or take part in the celebration. We know families have their own personal celebrations/parties at home with their children so we feel it is an appropriate balance.

Specials

At Montessori, children ages 5+ take part in additional classes during the course of their day outside of the Montessori work cycle. Your children learn to transition between spaces when they attend Specials and they have the opportunity to meet a variety of other adults on campus. We see these programs as an integral addition to the Montessori curriculum and encourage you to conference with these teachers each year.

- **Primary Full-Day (5 years)** : Spanish, Music, Movement and Library are formally offered weekly by our Montessori Specialists. We also offer swimming lessons with a partnership with the Swimming Association.
- **Elementary** : Movement, Library, Spanish, Music and Social Emotional Learning are provided by our Montessori Specialists. Our Learning Specialist provides academic support as needed for students beginning in the Lower Elementary.

Testing

VIMSIA offers the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) platform to students beginning in their 3rd year of Lower Elementary. These are taken twice a year and the information is shared with parents. Teachers use this information in live time to better understand exactly where each child is academically and support them in moving forward.

Occasionally we may need more information about your child in order to best serve them. VIMSIA may ask that you obtain further testing regarding your child's academics or emotions. When this is the case, we will offer you a list of providers who can do this testing. The cost for this specialized testing is the parent's responsibility.

Tutoring

If tutoring is recommended or you feel it is necessary for your child, we can provide contact information for qualified persons. Tutoring costs are the responsibility of the parent.

Lost and Found

All student belongings (water, bottles, clothing, lunch boxes etc) should be labeled with the child's name.

- Students and families are responsible for children's lost items. Encourage your child to look for lost items independently and support them in before or after-school hours as needed.
- Some items (not all) are collected in a Lost & Found bin in the front office.
- Due to the volume of lost items that are collected, unclaimed items will be disposed of at regular intervals.

Carnival Parade

VIMSIA participates in the Children's Carnival Parade. This offers great pleasure for our students and for the spirit of community involvement and cultural enrichment!

- All Elementary and older students are invited to participate. Students can choose not to be a member of our troupe and they may still be involved in the preparations.
- It takes much work on everyone's part to design and create the costumes as well as props. There are hours of practice needed for their entry in the parade.
- Every year parents, faculty and students come together in the true spirit of Carnival.

Library On Campus

We are fortunate to have two Libraries, one for Montessori students and the other for our PGIA students. The Librarian welcomes students and helps them learn how to navigate the library to find particular books, teaches them how to check books out and how and when to return them.

- Parents are welcome to come before or after school to check out a book and or video with their children or on their own.
- All students and parents have access to the library catalog [online](#).
- There is a Parenting section in our Montessori Library that contains a wide selection of books on Parenting as well as the Montessori Method.

- If books or videos checked out are lost, a replacement fee of \$25.00 (minimum) will be charged. There are no fines for overdue books. Fines collected for lost books and videos should be submitted to the Office Manager at the end of each semester.

Communication

Email

Most of our communication to parents is via email. If you feel that you are not receiving school communications, please check with the Administrative office to ensure we have your correct contact information. The Administration and/or your child's teacher(s) will keep you posted about school and class happenings.

Transparent Classroom & Montessori Newsletters

At the start of the school year you will be invited to our Learning Management System, Transparent Classroom to have access to photos and progress reports. In addition, La Casa and Montessori teachers prepare monthly Newsletters which update you on specific class news. The Montessori Director shares a quarterly update with school wide news and parent education opportunities.

VOLT

The Volt is our weekly newsletter that brings you up to date on what has happened, as well as upcoming events both at school and in the community. Please be sure to read it each week as it has lots of current information about our school as well as Community Events happening on St. Thomas.

Text

VIMSIA sends out texts via *OnSolve-OneCallNow* when there is a need to communicate quickly or if there is an emergency. We also use texting to send out reminders for calendar events.

Website

Our school's Website (www.vimsia.org) contains all current information and forms for your convenience. We continually update our website and encourage you to check it regularly.

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills are updated and practiced with staff and students. These drills include fire, earthquake, lock-down, tsunamis and general safety. Copies of the drill procedures are posted in each classroom and all communal areas. We send notice when we have had a drill at school for your information and to encourage discussions with your children.

Messages And Phone Calls

Students need their teacher's permission to make a phone call while at school. Lower Elementary and Primary students are not allowed to use cell phones during the school day. In Upper Elementary cell phones are collected at the beginning of each day and handed back at the end of the day.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Our PTA encourages communication and cooperation between Parents and Staff. The PTA's Representative to the VIMSIA Board of Trustees also attends Board of Trustees meetings. This provides a flow of information from the PTA to the Board of Trustees. All Parents and Staff are invited to PTA General Meetings held four times a year. These meetings provide a great forum for discussion of school issues, updates on school plans, and planning for PTA events. There are a variety of PTA-hosted events every year, offering a wide range of opportunities for participation. You can contact the PTA at: pta@vimsia.org

Volunteering & Room Parents

Families are required to volunteer for one Montessori school event a year. Opportunities are listed in the enrollment contract. Parents make valuable contributions to our school community and enhance learning opportunities when they volunteer. Volunteering also demonstrates to our students the commitment by everyone to provide the best possible education. Students are always proud when their parents volunteer.

General Campus And Playground Guidelines:

Children must always be attended by an adult (teacher or parent/guardian) when in a playground space.

- Walk at all times except during recess/sports
- Sit on bleachers and picnic table benches (no not stand on them)
- Walk on paths, not gardens
- Leave branches on trees and rocks on the ground
- Pick up any litter you find around campus

Pirate Ship Area

AGE: Primary and up

Swings

Children must be able to use it independently.

Swings must be sat on; no standing, laying, or twisting on them. Swing back and forth only.

Do not make the swing shorter.

Middle set of swings for Primary age (3-6) only.

Rope Ladder

Children must be able to use it independently.

No climbing over the top.

No sitting on the top.

Slides

Children must be able to use it independently.

One child at a time.

Slide down while sitting, feet first.

Outdoor Play Items

All items should be returned to their container after use.

Soccer Field

AGE: ALL

Children need to stay within visual contact of supervising adults.

Solar Awning

AGE: ALL

Equipment locker for VIMSIA staff only.

Staff will remove and replace equipment. Students are not permitted into the locker.

Stage is off limits.

No running around, jumping off or standing on bleachers.

Fire Truck

AGE: Primary through Lower Elementary

Swing rules; as before.

No running on the sidewalk.

Toddler Playground

Supervision is needed if children are playing here.

AGE: Toddlers only

Swing rules; as before

In order to ensure the safety of all students, our rules apply at all times, both during the school day and when visiting our campus or playground outside of school hours. Adults must supervise children at all times. All equipment should be replaced at the end of a play session. Equipment locker is for VIMSIA staff only.

Financial Information

Advance Deposit

An advance deposit must accompany a signed enrollment contract by the due date in order to guarantee your child's enrollment for the upcoming school year. This Advance Deposit is non-refundable.

Tuition & Costs

A Tuition Schedule is provided with your enrollment application. You can also access all information regarding financial procedures and obligations on our website (<https://www.vimsia.org/tuition-and-fees>)

Financial Aid

Financial Aid can be available for families in need of assistance. See the [school website](#) for application instructions and for deadline dates. Financial aid is reviewed for all students after the first quarter and may be revoked if the student is having discipline/behavioral issues.

Qualification Criteria:

- Satisfactory evaluation of child's Montessori/PGIA experience
- Demonstrate need for financial aid
- Parents active in school sponsored activities
- Student is in good academic and behavioral standing

All-School Policies

Policy details may be found on our website (www.vimsia.org). We ask that you read through each policy with your child as you are required to acknowledge and agree to school policies as a part of the FACTS enrollment process. Below is a short synopsis of each policy.

Enrollment Policy

Our school has a non-discriminatory admissions policy. We welcome applications from students of all ages who are transferring from other schools on a space available basis.

- Toddler Program (15 months to 3 years old) - Children who are 15 months to 3 years of age must have an interview with a teacher to determine readiness. Children may enter our Toddler Program at key intervals during the school year or on a space-available basis. The Toddler program is from 8:00-11:30 five days a week. An extended day program is available until 3:00pm and after-school care until 4:30 pm.
- Primary (3 – 6 years old) – 3-year olds enter our Primary level. Occasionally exceptions are made to accept 4 and early 5 years olds without previous Montessori. Toilet Training is required for entry into this program.
- Lower Elementary (6 – 9 years old) - Children are accepted into this level upon completion of our Primary Program, which takes 3 to 4 years, depending on the individual child. We accept students with no Montessori experience case by case.
- Upper Elementary (9 – 11 years old) – Upon completion of our Lower Elementary Program, students move to Upper Elementary (combined 4th/5th grades.) We also accept students with no Montessori experience on a case by case basis.
- International Academy (6thGrade 12th grade) - Montessori experience is not required to enter our International Academy.

Transcripts

For students transferring from VIMSIA to any other institution, VIMSIA will send the student progress reports directly to other institutions provided the students' accounts are in good standing. We require a minimum of five working days advance notice to prepare transcripts.

Attendance, Absence and Tardiness

Excused absences include illness or a family emergency, please notify us by calling the office. Missing school days for family vacations and trips are not considered excused absences. Please inform the classroom teacher whenever there will be planned absences. We are unable to make any financial adjustments for days that your child is absent, arrives late, or leaves early.

If a student is absent more than 10% of the school year (or 18 days) this will be considered chronic absenteeism and will be addressed by the school with the family and classroom teacher. If a child is consistently tardy and it is affecting their progress, it will also be addressed with the family by the school and classroom teacher. Chronic absenteeism may result in non promotion to the next grade.

Guidelines And Behavior Expectations For Students

Our Whole School Philosophy

VIMSIA has an obligation to provide a safe, productive, and positive learning environment for all students. Students are expected to display a reasonable level of self-control, responsibility, respect, and accountability. Students in the Montessori Program should be aware of their actions and how they affect those around them. Therefore, they will be held to the highest of behavioral standards while at school or at school-sponsored activities.

General Guidelines for Montessori Students

- Respect themselves and all other students, teachers, and staff.
- Respect the environment; buildings, grounds, classroom materials, etc.
- Follow any specific rules or requests, either written or spoken by a staff member.
- Recognize the difference between having a real problem to report and tattling. Telling tales is not encouraged.
- When in line, a group, or an assembly raise your hand when needing to be recognized by a teacher.
- Primary students will be accompanied by an adult when outside of their classroom environments.
- When moving around campus, sidewalks must be used.
- When moving in a line from area to area, lines should be orderly and students need to walk quietly. Hand signals from teachers or assistant teachers will be used to get student attention and to signal time for lining up.
- Climbing trees is not permitted. Picking fruit may only be done with adult supervision.
- Playground and safety rules must be followed at all times.
- Electronics (such as: phones, iPods, iPads, game devices, cameras, etc.) are not permitted to be used on school grounds.

Behavioral Supports

When a child is having a hard time being successful in the classroom, a variety of actions may occur including; observation to further understand where the behavior is coming from, inviting the child to visit another environment, inviting the child to speak with the Director or calling a meeting with parents and child to discuss the issue and ways to support the child's success in the classroom.

In cases where behavioral issues persist, a behavioral plan will be developed by the Montessori Director, classroom teacher and school counselor. This plan will include goals for growth, accommodation plans, recommendations for therapy and logical consequences (i.e. losing playtime if work is continually left incomplete.) Plans are implemented for 6 - 8 weeks. If a behavioral plan is implemented and agreements are not followed through upon, dismissal from the Montessori program is possible.

Academic Supports

When a child is showing they require additional academic support to be successful in the classroom, a teacher submits a Student Concern form outlining the challenges, our Support team observes and meets with the teacher to suggest supports, interventions are established for 6 - 8 weeks. If support beyond that is needed, outside reports or an evaluation are recommended to parents/guardians.

Destructive Behavior

The philosophy statement of VIMSIA includes a commitment that "We will provide an environment that guides the individual progress of students to their fullest potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically." We acknowledge that behavioral mistakes are learning experiences, we anticipate violations and therefore such violations will be utilized as learning opportunities.

It is well established that destructive behavior, whether self or other-directed, impedes young people from attaining their full potential. Therefore, such behavior is inconsistent with the VIMSIA philosophy statement and deemed unacceptable at VIMSIA. While VIMSIA primarily believes in, and is pursuing strategies that discourage and/or prevent destructive behavior, it also is necessary to establish a range of consequences for those who engage in destructive behavior and thereby undermine the VIMSIA philosophy and environment. This policy extends to and prohibits all destructive behavior that undermines the VIMSIA philosophy statement.

Destructive behavior violates the VIMSIA Philosophy statement and is prohibited by this Policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Use of violence
- Possession or use of weapons, gunpowder or any items which contain gunpowder
- Engaging in conduct based on racial, ethnic, sexual and other prejudices
- Improper use of chemical substances
- Engaging in any conduct that violates the laws of the United States or the United States Virgin Islands
- Possession or use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco

Computer And Internet Use

VIMSIA believes technology is an important tool in learning, however we constantly strive to find balance between technology and the use of other didactic materials.

Student Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy - All Students Upper EI - 12th Grade

(Please Read This With Your Child) All students in grades 4-12 and their parents/ legal guardians must acknowledge that they have read, understand and will abide by the following:

I agree to comply with each of the requirements of the School Network Internet Acceptable Use Agreement. I also understand that the following is a non-exhaustive list of activities that will not be tolerated, and that violations may result in the losses of access privileges, as well as other disciplinary and/or legal action. Specifically, I agree that I will:

1. Be polite and use technology resources so as not to disrupt others.
2. Use appropriate language when communicating online.
3. Keep personal information including passwords, address and telephone numbers confidential.
4. Not access, receive, display or present material that could be considered obscene, profane, offensive, unlawful, dangerous, or may cause a security risk (including music lyrics, pictures, jokes, videos, etc.).
5. Not upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any content that is considered obscene, profane, offensive, unlawful, dangerous, or may cause a security risk (including music lyrics, pictures, jokes, videos, etc.).
6. Not copy or download other people's work from the internet without permission.
7. Not copy or use other people's work in my assignments without citing the source of my material.
8. Only share appropriate information via email, which excludes any profane, derogatory or abusive material.
9. Conduct serious conversations in person.
10. Email only that which I would share in person at school.
11. Always be polite and respectful in digital conversations.
12. Tell my parents/guardians or teachers if any information I receive makes me feel uncomfortable.
13. Not use computers or school email for entertainment/recreational purposes during any work time.
14. Strive to fulfill my obligations regardless of computer related issues.

15. Resolve conflicts with other students over computer use in a positive and proactive process.
16. Not violate any laws.
17. Not use the school network for any commercial purposes.
18. Not use computer networks maliciously, or attempt to circumnavigate school network security regulations.

VIMSIA faculty and administration reserve the right to view the running and not-running content of the students' devices at any time while used at school or on the school network, whether school owned or student owned. If a teacher asks you to stop the use of a computer/device, you must not press any key or press any mouse or interface mechanisms. You may not close or hide any applications if a teacher or administrator wants to see your device. VIMSIA faculty and administration reserve the right to delete inappropriate material from any computer and follow with any disciplinary activity.

I understand that failure to follow the above policies and rules may result in the following consequences:

- No classroom computer access for a period of time to be determined by the classroom teacher.
- No access to computer technology of any kind at school for a period of time to be determined by school administration, as well as a parent conference.
- Suspension from school for a period of time to be determined by school administration.
- Expulsion from VIMSIA and termination of the student's enrollment contract.

In the event that violations of the agreed-to rules and policies become a significant problem, Virgin Islands Montessori School & Peter Gruber International Academy reserves the right to terminate the student's enrollment contract. If infractions of this agreement result in the termination of the student's enrollment contract, all other financial agreements pertaining to enrollment obligations for the school year remain in effect.

As the parent or legal guardian, I have read, understood and agreed that my child or dependent is required to comply with the provisions of the Student Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy of the Virgin Islands Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy (VIMSIA). I accept full responsibility for the supervision of my child or dependent use of the internet at home or while not in a school setting. I understand and agree in the event of any third party claims against VIMSIA, VIMSIA reserves the right to respond to such a claim as they see fit and to hold all offending parties, including my child or dependent, responsible.

I release VIMSIA, their affiliates, and their employees, from any claims or damages of any nature arising from my child or dependent access or use of the computer or network provided by VIMSIA. I also agree not to hold VIMSIA responsible for materials improperly acquired on the systems, or for the violations of copyright restrictions, user's mistakes or negligence, or any costs incurred by users.

Signatures attesting to the agreement of this form will be found with the student contract for the given year.

Please note: parents and students should also be aware of VIMSIA's Social Media Policy found in the Parent Handbook. In short, this policy states that students should not post any material on social media that is discriminatory, disrespectful, disparaging or derogatory against VIMSIA or its community members. Such actions on or off campus can result in serious consequences.

Grievance Policy And Procedure

The ability to resolve issues of serious concern through constructive conversation is the ultimate desire of the VIMSIA Administration. Should a satisfactory resolution not be reached, a Grievance Procedure has been developed to provide any individual (parent or staff) with private, clear and timely recourse with accountability. A copy of the Grievance Procedure and Grievance Form are available on the school website.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Please sign and date to acknowledge that you have read the Montessori parent handbook. Submit your signed copy to the front office by your child's first day of school.

Your child's first and last name

parent/guardian signature

date