

Nordic  
International School



# Welcome to Nordic International School

Nordic International School was founded with the ambition of offering students a school where they can achieve their full potential. A school where discipline and high expectations ensure a calm and safe study environment that favours learning, with a focus on knowledge and academic progress. A school with strong classroom leadership, where teachers concentrate on teaching, challenging, and interacting with students. A school where English is the primary spoken language, preparing students for a life in an increasingly globalised world.

Based on rigorous research on what works to maximise students' academic progress and achievement as well as their development of social-emotional skills – we have developed an educational model with three main features:



Knowledge, academic progress and discipline



An international profile



Evidence-based practices

# Knowledge, academic progress and discipline



At Nordic International School, we put great emphasis on knowledge and important social-emotional skills, such as conscientiousness, good manners, and grit. In this regard, our educational model is more 'traditional' than the 'progressive' student-led philosophy that has been dominant in Sweden since the 1990s.

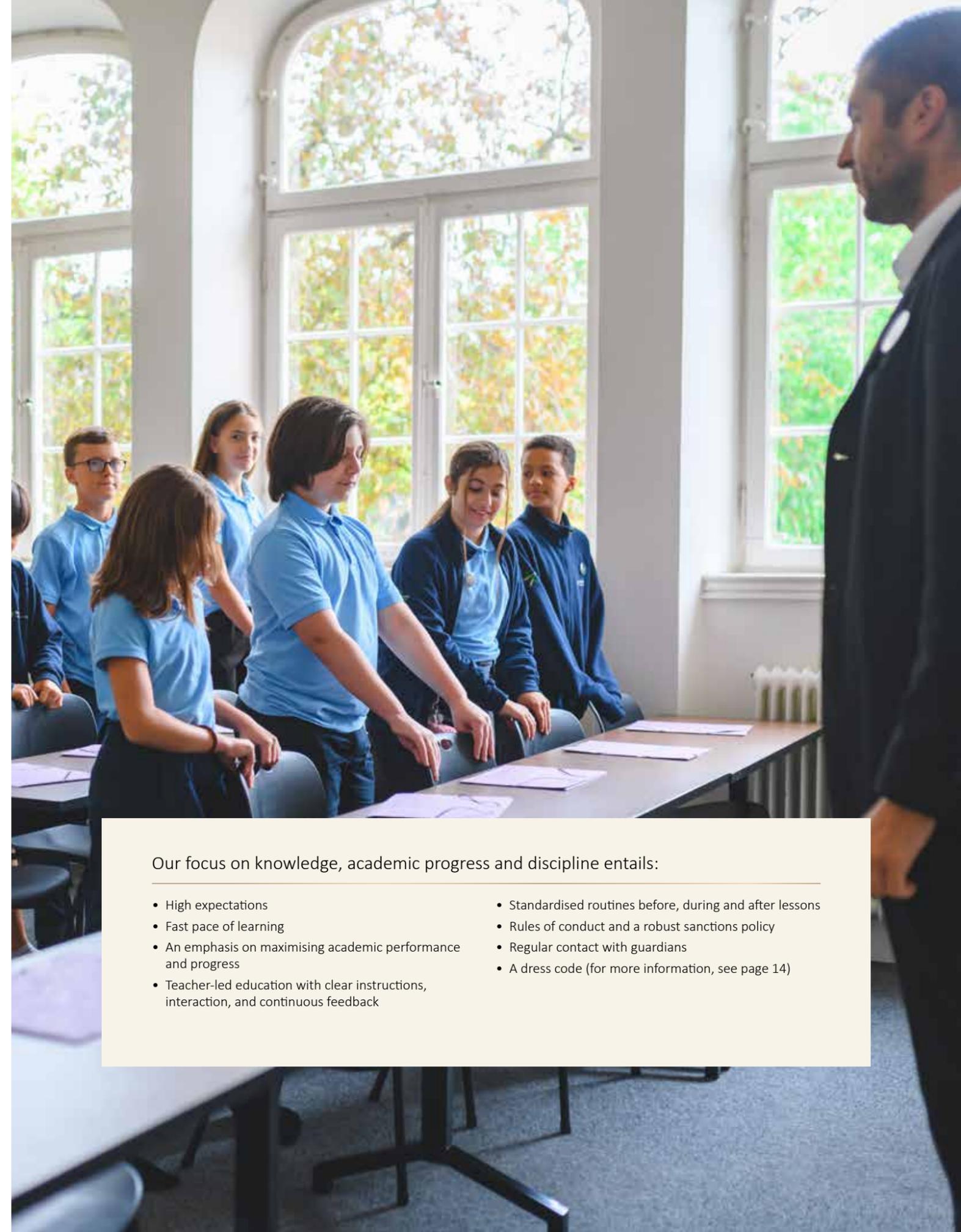
Subject knowledge and social-emotional skills are crucial for students to succeed in life. Therefore, we promote a structured school environment and traditional teaching methods. Research suggests that a strong focus on knowledge, teacher-led education, more time for teaching, and classroom discipline have positive effects on academic results and behaviour<sup>1</sup>. In combination with discipline and clear rules of conduct, these methods achieve the best possible results for our students.

In the calm and secure environment of our schools, teachers can devote their time to

teaching and helping students to deepen their critical thinking. Clear rules of conduct also create peace of mind for our students, which is an important prerequisite for learning. Our students know what is expected of them and are also aware of the consequences if they breach any rules.

We have high expectations of the attitudes of teachers, students and guardians towards the school and the studies conducted. Teachers and students are expected to be well prepared and disciplined, and to contribute to a positive and study-focused environment in the classroom.

We value regular contact with guardians, and we expect them to work with us to ensure that students have the pre-requisites to achieve their potential. ■



## Our focus on knowledge, academic progress and discipline entails:

- High expectations
- Fast pace of learning
- An emphasis on maximising academic performance and progress
- Teacher-led education with clear instructions, interaction, and continuous feedback
- Standardised routines before, during and after lessons
- Rules of conduct and a robust sanctions policy
- Regular contact with guardians
- A dress code (for more information, see page 14)

# An international profile



In an increasingly globalised and digitalised world, the understanding of and respect for different nationalities and cultures are becoming ever more important. Our international profile helps to spark students' interest in the outside world and prepares them for life in a situation where national boundaries are becoming less important.

At Nordic International School, we follow the Swedish curriculum, but, in contrast to most other schools, conduct up to 50 % of instruction in English. We encourage and support our students to express themselves in English, both in the classroom and during breaktime.

Our teachers speak both English and Swedish and we have a policy that all our schools have a mix of Swedish and international teachers. Teaching materials and written texts may be either in English or Swedish, depending on circumstances and specific needs.

Other essential elements of our international profile come from the British education system, including a 'house system', a dress code for teachers and students, rhetoric training for all students, and yearly activities where we learn about and celebrate festivals of different nationalities and cultures. ■



Ms Madeleine Muller  
*Teacher in English and Music*

*» Some believe that you need to be an expert in English to go to our school. The level of English varies among our students when they start at our school. Some have lived in other countries and have already become advanced in their language skills, others have not yet developed as far. What is most important is that you are motivated to study hard and learn.*



## Our international profile is characterised by:

- Bilingualism with English as the everyday spoken language, also outside the classroom
- International staff
- Up to half of all teaching for older students is in English
- International elements and traditions, including a 'house system' and celebration of world festivals



# Evidence-based practices



Students and guardians have high expectations of our ability to maximise each individual student's knowledge and social-emotional skills. At our schools, all teaching must be based on methods supported by rigorous research.

We promote teacher-led instruction, discipline, and other more traditional education features - not for ideological reasons, but because research has found that such features have positive effects on students' results.

At the same time, we know that research never stands still. New methods and resources are invented and tested continuously. For example, some research suggests that certain technological aids – a contemporary rather than traditional element in education – can have positive effects on academic performance and progress<sup>2</sup>.

We want to constantly develop and improve. This requires us to keep updated regarding new research and analyses that can help us moving further in a scientific direction.

The most important consideration is that we help to maximise our students' progress and performance. We always evaluate new methods and resources before we introduce them on a larger scale.

Our professional development programme for teachers is mandatory and aims to support teachers in the application of the right methods in the classroom and to ensure that our practices lead to the best possible progress and performance of our students – today as well as in the future. ■

Our focus on evidence-based practices includes the following:

- An international researcher as senior advisor to school management, who evaluates potential changes to the concept prior to adoption
- A professional development programme for the development of high-quality teaching methods
- Clear management structures
- Continuous monitoring of each student's performance and progress
- Regular evaluation of teacher performance, with continuous feedback and professional development





We have a rigorous quality-assurance process. We regularly measure and evaluate students' academic achievement as well as student and guardian satisfaction.

# Achievements

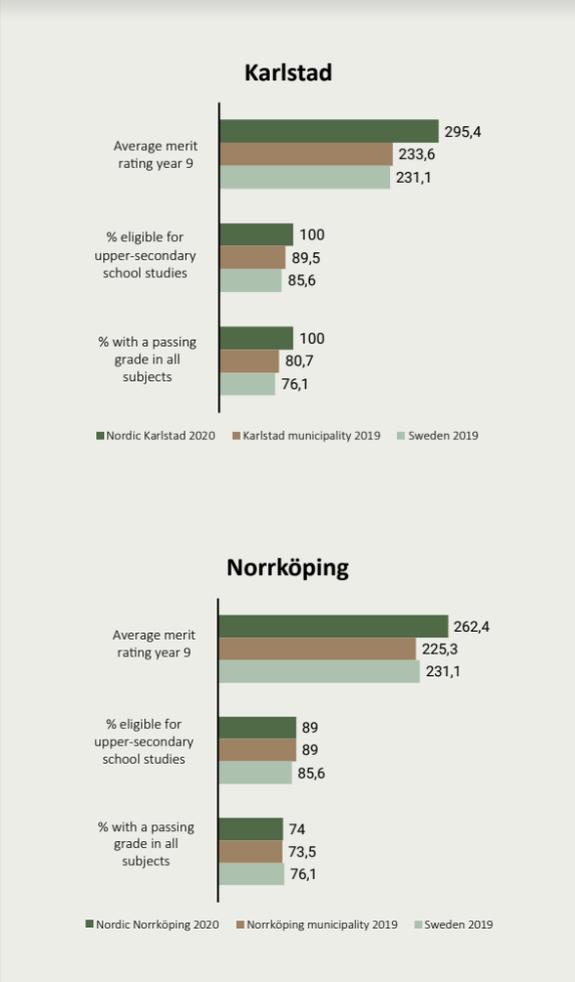
### Academic achievement

The first graduating class at Nordic International School Karlstad achieved top positions in the municipality in the spring of 2020, with an average merit rating of 295,4 points and 100 % of students qualifying for upper-secondary school studies. The graduating class at Nordic Norrköping also performed very well in the spring of 2020, placing the school among the top three in the municipality, with an average merit rating of 262,4 points and 89 % of students qualifying for upper-secondary school studies.

### Survey results

We perform annual surveys among students and guardians in order to better understand how they experience the education, the school atmosphere and also the school's work with basic values which is compulsory in all Swedish schools. The survey includes questions regarding perceptions of safety, the classroom environment, the teaching process as well as students' and guardians' overall satisfaction with the school.

In the survey conducted in the spring of 2020, 84 % of students (school year 6-9) say they have a good relationship with their mentors and 86 % say they feel safe at school. 87 % of students know what rules apply at school, while 76 % agree that school staff make sure that everybody is treated with respect. In the survey among guardians, 89 % of respondents say that discipline is well maintained at school, and 93 % perceive that their children like their school. 89 % of respondents say they would recommend Nordic International School to other guardians.



We also participates in the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's school survey, carried out among guardians and students in selected year groups. In the most recent survey among students in year 9, recommendation scores at Nordic International School were considerably higher than the national average. The average score of Nordic International School was 6,6 compared with the national average of 5,7. A similar story applies to school satisfaction, where Nordic International School achieved a score of 7,5 compared with the national average of 6,4. ■



# The role of the teacher

The teacher has a central role at Nordic International School and we carefully select our members of staff. Our teachers are passionate about their profession, with a love of teaching and helping students to learn and acquire relevant social-emotional skills.

Our teachers are expected to have mastered the English language. We strive to have a combination of teachers with a Swedish teaching certificate and teachers with foreign qualifications.

Our schools have a common approach and employ practices supported by research and proven experience. We have an open dialogue about successful practices, and we place great emphasis on professional development.

The most important role of a teacher at Nordic International School is to teach and to be a leader inside and outside the classroom. With creativity, dialogue, and feedback, our teachers stimulate students' interest in their subjects, challenge them, and inspire them to want to learn and perform to the best of their abilities.

The teacher also has an important social role as an adult role model with the ability to earn students' respect and trust. This includes proper appearance and formal clothing, as well as the attitude that everyone should live up to the agreed rules of conduct. A student who does something good should receive recognition and encouragement, whilst there must be consequences for any student who breaches the common rules or who does not behave in an acceptable manner. An important part of being a role model is also showing that you care about students, being mature enough to deal with both minor and major issues, and not leaving them to their own devices.

Teachers at Nordic International School are also expected to be in regular contact with guardians. They expect continuous feedback and information about how the student is developing and performing, and when problems or challenges arise. ■

 Mr Gabriel Gonzalez  
Social educationist

» For me it is very important to put the student first and to apply the teaching to each individual. At Nordic International School, every student gets the opportunity to learn and develop.





# House system for school spirit and student leadership

**Academic success is a key goal at Nordic International School, but personal development and school spirit is just as important.**

Every student at Nordic International School is placed into one of our houses, of which they remain members for the duration of their time at the school. A house is composed of a mixed group of students from different year groups. The houses allow students to make friends with fellow students with whom they would normally not interact. The house system promotes school spirit and gives students an opportunity to shine in their different fields of interest.

## House Masters and House Captains

Every house is allocated a House Master, a member of staff, who bears the overall pastoral care of the house. Their task is to encourage students, help them develop their leadership skills, and ensure good manners. In the beginning of each school year, the members of a house elect a student in year 9 as their House Captain with a Co-Captain from year 8.

Each house has its own symbol and motto, and students are encouraged to form the house identity themselves.



## A student forum

The houses have regular meetings where the House Captains get the opportunity to relay information from the Headmaster or the teachers to the other students. It is also an opportunity for house members to socialise.

The House Captains have the responsibility to organise house meetings, and to encourage and motivate the other members of the house. It is also their responsibility to keep order in the house and help younger students' transition into school.

Normally, a house competition is held once a month. The houses compete in both sporting and academic events. For example, house competitions are held in debating, science, poetry, swimming, athletics, and chess.

Winning a house competition earns points in the house tournament, which stretches over the school year. However, points are not awarded for academic performance or classroom behaviour. At the end of the school year, all points are added up and the house with the most points are awarded a trophy with the house name engraved on it.



## OUR HOUSES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Badger |  Lynx     |
|  Bear   |  Moose    |
|  Deer   |  Owl      |
|  Eagle  |  Squirrel |
|  Fox    |  Wolf     |



# Interior design and dress code

**One important aspect of the Nordic International School way of working is that we aim to remove different forms of distractions, in order to ensure that all students are able to succeed in the classroom. This relates to both student and staff clothing as well as the interior design.**

To ensure calm and safe spaces, Nordic International Schools are designed in ways that research and proven experience suggest help improve learning<sup>3</sup>. We use textile carpets and clean walls in the classrooms, which sets a disciplined learning environments. Social areas are characterised by more varied designs. Students are supposed to be able to be active during breaktime, both indoors and outdoors, and enjoy the company of their peers. Furthermore, there are calm areas where students can work together or read a book also during breaktime.

## **A dress code that removes distractions**

At the beginning of the school year, every new student is given three light blue polo shirts and two dark blue zip cardigans or v-necked cardigans, depending on the year group. Students wear their own trousers of choice as well as indoor shoes or socks. Outdoor clothes and shoes are kept in the student lockers.

The dress code ensures equality among students, regardless of their background. It signals that students are part of a community. It also signals that students are supposed to study when they



are in school, and that they should respect their work and other people. The dress code also helps to decrease visual distractions in the classroom and ensures that students and teachers can focus on the instructional process.

Similarly, all school staff follow a dress code. Teachers should lead by example and through their attire show that they take students' education seriously and that they aim to succeed in their mission.

## **No mobile phones**

Mobile phones are another distraction that has been removed at Nordic International School. At the beginning of each school day, students hand in their phones to teachers. The phones are returned to them before they leave school for the day. This ensures, among other things, that students communicate and engage with each other during breaktime, rather than focusing their attention on mobile phones.



## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

- Year 4-6
  - 3 light blue polo shirts
  - 2 dark blue zip cardigans
- Year 7-9
  - 3 light blue polo shirts
  - 2 dark blue v-neck cardigans
- At the beginning of the school year, students are given a new set of clothes (5 pieces) free of charge, to ensure they can abide by the dress code.
- Guardians can buy more school clothes at cost via a webshop.

# Testimonials

» I think learning in English is great, it's a good language to know. It was a bit different at first to have so many classes in English and to speak English so much but I have learned very quickly. You should go to Nordic if you are ambitious and want to succeed in life.

Student



» I like having a school uniform because it means you never have to think about what to wear in the mornings.

Student

» I get on very well at Nordic International School. The teachers are very good and I feel that I am learning a lot here.

Student



» Our children are very satisfied with all their teachers and we feel very confident in their competence and ambition for the students.

Guardian

» This school has very ambitious teachers. They structure the classes very well and the subject matter is interesting. They teach in a way that helps me retain what I learn even long after I learned it.

Student

» A school that puts the children's needs and requirements first.

Guardian



## Do you want your child to join Nordic International School?

Please see the next page for more information about our application process.

### Expectations and rules of conduct

Nordic International School is characterised by high expectations and a safe study environment, with a focus on knowledge and academic progress, where everyone is given the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability. We have clear rules of conduct, which everyone in the school is expected to respect and help to maintain. Prior to a student being enrolled at Nordic International School, the school, together with the guardian and student, carefully goes through the rules of conduct so that everyone agrees on them. The same applies when a new teacher starts working at the school.

#### 1. The school is a workplace

We shall all contribute to making the school a calm, quiet, and effective environment for studies and learning. All students have the same right to achieve their full potential in a stimulating study environment.

#### 2. Show consideration

Students and staff must treat each other with respect and understanding. We support each other and show respect for our differences. We always offer to help each other, both in relation to schoolwork and in social situations.

#### 3. Zero tolerance to bullying

Bullying or disrespectful behaviour is never accepted. We have guidelines for how we view and handle bullying. We also consider non-intervention to be equivalent to bullying.

#### 4. Physical school environment

Our rules of conduct also include respecting the school's physical environment. We must all

take good care of our premises, our furniture, and all materials. We clean up after we have finished our work, and we keep books and other material in specific places.

#### 5. Common dress code

Formal clothing for adults and a dress code for students contribute to our school identity and reduce the pressure on students to have the 'right' or expensive clothing. The school provides, without charge, the common elements of students' attire.

#### 6. Rewards and encouragement

Rewards and encouragement are important elements in our ambition to motivate students and build a culture that promotes discipline and hard work. Rewards and encouragement should also include other desirable behaviour, such as effort, endurance, manners, good companionship, and other social-emotional skills. Our system of rewards and encouragement includes, among other things, 'formal' commendations awarded by the principal to individual students, scholarships and end-of-term/year awards, as well as so-called 'house points'.

#### 7. Consequences

In order to achieve a calm and safe school environment, the school has a system of consequences for when the school's rules of conduct are breached. Before a student starts at Nordic International School, we go through the different levels of consequences with both student and guardian.



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### **Application**

To register your child in our queue, please visit our webpage [www.nordicinternational.se](http://www.nordicinternational.se).

### **Admission**

Admission to our schools is based on queue time and sibling priority. Sibling priority applies from a school's second year of operations. Admission is initiated at the start of the spring semester and admission offers are sent by e-mail.

### **School fees**

All our schools are free of charge and funded by the Swedish school voucher system. The school uniforms are supplied by the school free of charge.

## **Bibliography**

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Dobbie, Will and Roland G. Fryer Jr. 2015. "The medium-term impacts of high-achieving charter schools." Journal of Political Economy 123: 985-1037.

Dynarski, Susan et al. 2018. "Estimating the effects of a large for-profit charter school operator." NBER Working Paper No. 24428.

Escueta, Maya et al. 2017. "Education technology: An evidence-based review." NBER Working Paper No. 23744.

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Stockard, Jean et al. 2018. "The effectiveness of direct instruction curricula: A meta-analysis of a half century of research". Review of Educational Research 88: 479-507.

## **Footnotes**

1. Angrist et al. (2013), Clark et al. (2012), Dobbie and Fryer (2015), Dynarski et al. (2018), Lavy (2015), and Stockard et al. (2018).
2. Escueta et al. (2017).
3. Fisher et al. (2014).